Ulcer Size and Gastric Cancer Prognosis

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Dear Sir,

I read with great interest the article by Xu et al. [1]. The authors present the ulcer size as a novel prognostic criterion for gastric cancer. The authors also emphasize the preoperative predictive use of ulcer size. In fact, it is not surprising that the patients with larger tumors and wider ulcers have greater invasion into the gastric wall in terms of depth of invasion and more frequent lymph node metastasis than the patients with smaller ulcers. However, there is one item missing. Nearly half of gastric cancers are fungating or polypoid and we cannot ignore these patients. Moreover, there is considerable overlap between dif-

ferent types of macroscopic appearances (polypoid, ulcerative, fungating) of gastric cancer. Accordingly, several studies have already shown the prognostic importance of tumor size [2, 3]. In their study, there is a significant relationship between ulcer size and tumor size (4 cm). In the U2 group (ulcer >3 cm), 94% of the patients had tumor diameters >4 cm. If the authors had chosen to compare tumor size of 5 cm instead of 4 cm, it might have been 100%. For that reason, I think that tumor size is a much better prognostic criterion than ulcer size in clinical practice when we consider all gastric cancer patients.

References

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Reply

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Dear Sir,

We sincerely appreciate Dr. Filik's comments. He mentioned that half of gastric cancers are fungating or polypoid, apart from ulcerative gastric cancer. We agree that there are different types of gastric cancer. However, the aim of our study was to investigate the relationship between ulcer size and patient survival. Therefore, we only selected the ulcerative gastric cancer patients.

Dr. Filik also mentioned that 94% of patients in the U2 group (ulcer size >3 cm) have tumor size >4 cm, and this result may possibly lead to the idea that all patients with ulcer size >3 cm might have tumor size >5 cm. However, our results showed that 80% of patients in the U2 group had tumor size >5 cm. The significant relationship between ulcer size and tumor size can be confirmed in any study. Whether or not the tumor size is an independent factor

in survival in gastric cancer is still controversial. Kim et al. [1] analyzed 10,783 gastric cancer patients, and the results showed the tumor size had a prognostic significance on univariate analysis, but it was not an independent factor on multivariate analysis or an independent predictor of survival. Yokota et al. [2] showed a similar result. However, another paper showed that tumor size may be an independent predictor of survival [3].

In our study, only patients with ulcerative gastric cancer were included in the analysis. Our study as well as the ones mentioned above showed that tumor size was not a predictor of survival in ulcerative gastric cancer patients. This discordant result may be influenced by gastric cancer stage, mean tumor size, number of patients studied, etc.

References

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