

TREATMENT RESULTS OF TONGUE CANCER IN PATIENT YOUNGER THAN 40 YEARS OLD

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Purpose : To evaluate treatment outcomes in patients under 40 years of age with cancer of the mobile tongue.

Method and Materials : Between January 1990 and September 1999, 35 patients under 40 years of age suffering from mobile tongue cancers were treated at the LinKou Chang-Gung Memorial Hospital (LK-CGMH). External beam radiotherapy was used as either adjuvant management after surgery or primary treatment. All patients were followed for at least three years or until death. Median follow-up was 1.35 years.

External radiotherapy of at least 60 Gy was administered to all patients. Twenty-eight patients received adjuvant radiotherapy. Six people who refused or were unsuitable for surgery were treated with radiotherapy only. One patient underwent radiotherapy as primary therapy but required surgical salvage after recurrence. The treatment results were analyzed, as were pre-treatment habits, tumor staging, and treatment modalities.

Results : The three-year overall survival and disease-specific survival rates for the group were 42.8%, and 48.2%, respectively. After excluding patients who chose not to undergo surgery as primary treatment, the rates were 50% and 57.6%. The median survival of all patients and patients who received primary surgery was 1.42 and 3.26 years, respectively. In all patients who did not undergo surgery as primary treatment, tongue tumor control was not achieved, and all died within 16 months, except for one who experienced complete remission after induction chemotherapy and concurrent chemo-radiation. Univariate analysis indicated that primary surgery, 1997 AJCC staging group III or IV and histological differentiation significantly affected overall survival. Multivariate analysis found that poor histological differentiation was the only significant factor affecting overall survival.

Conclusions : These findings concur with those of other series for the age group studied. Surgery continues to be the first-line, primary treatment for patients under 40 years of age with cancer of the mobile tongue.

[Therapeut Radiol Oncol 2003; 10(4): 219-228]

Key words: Tongue cancer, Young age, Radiotherapy.