

MALIGNANT MELANOMA OF THE RECTUM: A CASE REPORT

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Malignant melanoma of the rectum is a very rare but aggressive malignancy. Long-term survival is rare as most patients die of disseminated disease regardless of treatment. Surgery is the mainstay of treatment for patients with local-regional disease. Most studies did not show difference in survival between patients who underwent abdominoperineal resection (APR) and those who underwent wide local excision, although APR was noted to result in improved local-regional control rate. Some investigators propose to treat these patients with conservative surgery and adjuvant radiotherapy in an attempt to both preserve the sphincter function and improve local-regional control.

We managed a 67-year-old female patient with malignant melanoma of the lower rectum with transanal wide excision and postoperative irradiation to the primary tumor site and pelvic regional lymphatics. At present, she is well and continent without evidence of recurrence 15 months after the initial treatment.

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Key words: Malignant melanoma, Rectum, Local excision, Adjuvant radiotherapy

INTRODUCTION

Malignant melanoma of the rectum is a very rare mucosal melanoma, with documentation limited to case reports [8]. Our first encounter with a patient diagnosed with malignant melanoma of the rectum was in June, 2005. In this report, we describe our first experience of adopting combined-modality treatment for this patient.

CASE REPORT

A 67-year-old female, presented with rectal

bleeding, decreased stool caliber and defecation difficulty for 9 months. She visited our clinic of colorectal surgery on June 28, 2005. On recto-digital examination, a rectal polyp was found. Colonoscopy revealed a polypoid tumor measured 1.5 cm in size at the posterior wall of the lower rectum, 7 cm above the anal verge, susceptible to contact bleeding. Biopsy was done and the pathology of the specimen showed the tumor invading deeply into the muscularis propria, composed of spindle and epitheloid shaped cells, the nuclei of which were round to oval and appeared hyperchromatic with conspicuous, sometimes multiple