

RELIEF OF DYSPHAGIA BY PALLIATIVE INTRACAVITARY BRACHYTHERAPY FOR RECURRENT ESOPHAGEAL CANCER ---- TWO CASES REPORT

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Purpose: To report the result of palliative intracavitary brachytherapy in recurrent esophageal cancer patient.

Materials and Methods: Since January 1996, there were two recurrent esophageal cancer patients with symptoms of severe dysphagia who received intracavitary brachytherapy as palliative treatment. The treatment were carried out by a microSelectron-HDR afterloading device with Iridium-192 radiation source and a special catheter which was designed for esophageal applications. One patient was treated by a treatment volume including the middle third of the esophagus, 9 cm in length, the prescribed dose point was one cm in depth from the central axis of the source. The total treatment dose was 2000 cGy in 10 fractions within 2 weeks. The brachytherapy for another patient was arranged to cover the upper part of the esophageal tumor with 2 cm in length and the prescribed dose point was one cm in depth. The total treatment dose was 2000 cGy in 4 fractions within 12 days.

Results: The symptoms of the first patient had improved after the first 5 fractions of HDR treatments. He could eat liquid diet after this treatment but odynophagia occurred. Two months later, he expired due to tumor bleeding and cachexia. After 2 fractions of intracavitary brachytherapy, the second patient could swallow some saliva, and the NG tube could be inserted more deeply. He felt better due to less production of saliva after treatment. He expired due to pneumonia in two months. The purpose of improving quality of life could be reached via this kind of treatment without severe acute toxicity except for grade one esophagitis.

Conclusion: Palliative intracavitary brachytherapy can be a successful treatment for relief of dysphagia for patients with recurrent esophageal cancer patients with previous external beam radiotherapy.

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Key words: Intracavitary brachytherapy, Esophageal cancer

INTRODUCTION

Carcinoma of the esophagus is more prevalent in Taiwan than in the United States. In the Cancer Registry Annual Report, Republic of

China, 1994 (the latest available data), esophageal cancer represents 1.95% of all new cancers [5] (compared to about 1% of all cancers in the United States [6]). Esophageal cancer has the ninth highest morbidity rate and the sixth

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