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PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

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Annual Academic Sessions**

"Converting Adversity to
Opportunity"

Low-risk thyroid cancer in Sri Lanka: Are we overusing radioiodine?

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Introduction and Objectives

Radioactive iodine (RAI) is the most effective treatment to ablate remaining thyroid tissue following total thyroidectomy in differentiated thyroid cancer. Evidence suggests non-treatment with RAI is non-inferior to adjuvant RAI treatment in low-risk thyroid cancer patients.

Methods

We retrospectively analysed prospectively collected data from a sample of 268 patients with thyroid cancer who underwent thyroidectomy in 2019 and 2020 at a dedicated tertiary cancer treatment centre in Sri Lanka.

Results

The majority were females (224, 83.6%) with a mean age of 41.6 years (SD=13.5) at diagnosis. Commonest pathological types were papillary (75.4%) and follicular carcinomas (17.5%). Tumour stage was T1, T2, T3 and T4 in 137 (51.1%), 87 (32.5%), 40 (14.9%) and 4 (1.5%) patients, respectively.

Nodal staging of N0, N1a, and N1b were seen in 215 (80.2%), 32 (12%), and 20 (7%), respectively. Total thyroidectomy accounted for 98% of the surgeries.

A total of 111 patients who were T1N0M0, without aggressive histological features were categorized as low risk. Of this low-risk group, 68.4% (n=76) had received RAI treatment. The mean duration from surgery to RAI treatment was 8.6±5.2 months. Four recurrences (3.6%) in the neck (n=1 in RAI group) were detected after a median follow-up duration of 12.5 (SD=11.2) months.

Conclusions

Over treatment with RAI was commonly seen in patients with low-risk thyroid cancers in this study. This is a likely reason for the observed long delays in treatment. Avoiding RAI in low-risk thyroid cancers will help reduce delays, cut costs and minimize treatment-related side effects.

Factors Affecting Nurses in Providing Nutritional Care for Hospitalized Head and Neck Cancer Patients on Enteral Tube Feeding in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Head and neck cancer (HNC) is the commonest solid cancer among Sri Lankan males. Enteral nutrition is recommended for them to prevent malnutrition and nurses play a vital role in nutrition therapy. The current study explored the factors affecting nurses in providing a quality nutritional care to these HNC patients who were on enteral tube feeding at Apeksha Hospital, Sri Lanka.

Method

This qualitative study was conducted from May to December 2021, via semi-structured in-depth interviews which employed a structured interviewer guide. Purposively selected staff nurses in the ward setup at Apeksha Hospital were interviewed until data was saturated. Nine interviews were conducted, and audio recorded. Recordings were transcribed, verbatim into transcripts and analyzed via thematic analysis. Trustworthiness was maintained throughout the study.

Results

Four main themes were identified which explained the factors affecting the nurses when providing nutritional care for these patients, namely, Holistic nursing care, Attributes of the patient and family, Challenges experiencing and Availability of Resources. Patient's cooperation over the tube feeding process, economical background, level of support from the family and the by standers, high patient count, shortage of nursing staff and limited time, and effect of COVID 19 pandemic were some significant factors concerned by most of the participants.

Conclusion

The nurses had a good insight in to the nutritional needs of the HNC patients on enteral tube feeding and had worked through many challenges while providing holistic care, dealing with the patient, family and the situations arise and utilizing the available resources.