



Research Article

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Assessment of Changes in Tumor Size for Carcinoid Tumors of the Stomach Receiving Neoadjuvant Systemic Treatment



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Abstract

Objective: Carcinoid tumors represent a heterogeneous group of relatively rare neoplasms that can arise in various anatomical locations and often secrete a range of bioactive substances, including serotonin, histamine, prostaglandins, gastrin, ACTH, among others. Within the gastrointestinal tract, the most frequently affected sites are the small intestine, followed by the rectum and stomach. We evaluated tumor size changes for patients receiving neoadjuvant systemic therapy for carcinoid tumors of the stomach in this study.

Materials and Methods: Department of Radiation Oncology in Gulhane Medical Faculty, University of Health Sciences has long functioned as a tertiary cancer center, providing care for patients from both Turkey and abroad. Over the years, we have treated a wide range of benign and malignant tumors using advanced radiotherapy technologies and techniques, including IGRT, IMRT, ART, stereotactic radiotherapy, automatic segmentation, and molecular imaging. Main purpose of this study was to assess changes in tumor size after neoadjuvant systemic therapy in patients' patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach. To address this objective, we analyzed patients with carcinoid tumors of the stomach who had accessible imaging data. All selected patients received neoadjuvant systemic therapy. A comparative analysis of tumor sizes was performed using imaging scans obtained before and after systemic treatment. Changes in tumor size have been recorded to facilitate evaluation and interpretation.

Results: For the primary endpoint of this study, we observed reduction in tumor size after neoadjuvant systemic treatment in patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach.

Conclusion: From a certain perspective, our findings may support the broader application of systemic therapies for carcinoid tumors of the stomach; however, further clinical studies are necessary to validate these results.

Keywords: Stomach; Carcinoid tumor; Neoadjuvant systemic treatment; Adaptive Radiotherapy; Gastrin

Abbreviations: ACTH: Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone; ART: Adaptive Radiotherapy; IGRT: Image-Guided Radiotherapy; IMRT: Intensity-Modulated Radiotherapy

Introduction

Carcinoids comprise a diverse group of relatively rare tumors which could be encountered in several body sites and might secrete various bioactive substances, including serotonin, histamine, prostaglandins, gastrin, adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), and others [1-7]. Most common sites in the gastrointestinal tract include the small intestine, followed by the rectum, and stomach. Carcinoid tumors of the stomach may be categorized based on

the level of the hormone gastrin and the amount of stomach acid which could facilitate defining the specific type of gastric carcinoid tumor. While type 1 carcinoid tumors are associated with typically elevated gastrin levels and low stomach acid, tumors rarely invade deeper stomach layers or spread to other organs.

Type 2 carcinoid tumors are associated with elevation of both gastrin and stomach acid levels, and the tumors are usually

small and multiple, with limited invasiveness and spread like type 1 carcinoid tumors. Type 3 carcinoid tumors present mostly as a single tumor with a higher predilection for invasion of deeper tissues or spread to lymph nodes or other organs (e.g., liver). While these tumors are not too common, management could require multidisciplinary input [1-7]. While surgery could serve as a curative option, neoadjuvant treatment might be considered for selected cases to reduce tumor size, rendering surgical removal easier and potentially lowering recurrence risk.

Particularly more advanced tumors may benefit more from neoadjuvant therapy, and multidisciplinary decision making with expert surgeons and oncologists may be strongly recommended to provide tailored and individualized therapy based on tumor type, stage, symptoms, and patient health. From the perspective of radiation oncology, recent years have witnessed significant technological advancements which have substantially contributed to improved outcomes in radiotherapy. Innovations such as automatic segmentation, image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT), molecular imaging, intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), stereotactic radiotherapy, and adaptive radiotherapy (ART) have all been integrated to enhance therapeutic effectiveness [8-106].

In the broader context of cancer care, achieving optimal treatment outcomes relies heavily on close interdisciplinary collaboration. Multidisciplinary tumor boards play a crucial role in fostering coordination among surgical, medical, and radiation oncologists. These boards provide a valuable forum for discussing patient profiles, tumor characteristics, treatment options, and expected outcomes. Neoadjuvant systemic therapy might be considered for management of selected patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach, and we evaluated tumor size changes for patients receiving neoadjuvant systemic therapy for carcinoid tumors of the stomach in this study.

Materials and Methods

Department of Radiation Oncology in Gulhane Medical Faculty, University of Health Sciences has long functioned as a tertiary cancer center, providing care for patients from both Turkey and abroad. Over the years, we have treated a wide range of benign and malignant tumors using advanced radiotherapy technologies and techniques, including IGRT, IMRT, ART, stereotactic radiotherapy, automatic segmentation, and molecular imaging. Main purpose of this study was to assess changes in tumor size after neoadjuvant systemic therapy in patients' patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach. To address this objective, we analyzed patients with carcinoid tumors of the stomach who had accessible imaging data. All selected patients received neoadjuvant systemic therapy. A comparative analysis of tumor sizes was performed using imaging scans obtained before and after systemic treatment. Changes in tumor size have been recorded to facilitate evaluation and interpretation.

Results

The current study has been designed to analyze changes in tumor size after neoadjuvant systemic treatment in patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach. All patients included in the analysis have been thoroughly evaluated by a multidisciplinary team of experts, and patients with available pre- and post-neoadjuvant systemic treatment imaging data were selected. Systemic treatment was administered as the initial treatment modality. Tumor sizes were recorded using imaging scans obtained before and after neoadjuvant systemic therapy, and a comparative analysis has been conducted to assess changes. For the primary endpoint of this study, we observed reduction in tumor size after neoadjuvant systemic treatment in patients suffering from carcinoid tumors of the stomach.

Discussion

Carcinoid tumors represent a heterogeneous group of relatively rare neoplasms that can arise in various anatomical locations and often secrete a range of bioactive substances, including serotonin, histamine, prostaglandins, gastrin, ACTH, among others [1-7]. Within the gastrointestinal tract, the most frequently affected sites are the small intestine, followed by the rectum and stomach. Gastric carcinoid tumors are typically classified based on serum gastrin levels and gastric acid secretion, which aids in determining the tumor subtype. Type 1 gastric carcinoids are associated with elevated gastrin levels and hypochlorhydria (low stomach acid). These tumors are usually small, non-invasive, and rarely metastasize. Type 2 tumors also exhibit elevated gastrin levels but are distinguished by increased gastric acid secretion; they are generally small, multiple, and, like Type 1, demonstrate limited invasive potential.

In contrast, Type 3 gastric carcinoid tumors usually present as solitary lesions, with normal gastrin and acid levels, and have a higher likelihood of local invasion and metastasis to lymph nodes or distant organs, such as the liver. Although gastric carcinoid tumors are uncommon, their management often necessitates a multidisciplinary approach. Surgery remains the mainstay of curative treatment. However, in selected cases-particularly those with advanced or invasive disease-neoadjuvant systemic therapy may be employed to reduce tumor burden, improve resectability, and potentially decrease the risk of recurrence. Multidisciplinary decision-making involving surgical, medical, and radiation oncologists is essential to develop individualized treatment strategies tailored to the tumor's type, stage, symptomatology, and the overall health status of the patient.

From a radiation oncology standpoint, recent technological advancements have significantly enhanced radiotherapeutic outcomes. Innovations such as automatic segmentation, image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT), molecular imaging, intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), stereotactic radiotherapy, and

adaptive radiotherapy (ART) have been integrated into clinical practice to optimize therapeutic efficacy [8-106]. In contemporary cancer care, effective management increasingly depends on interdisciplinary collaboration. Multidisciplinary tumor boards are instrumental in facilitating coordination among different oncology subspecialties by providing a structured platform for discussing patient-specific factors, tumor characteristics, therapeutic strategies, and anticipated outcomes.

In this study, we focused on evaluating tumor size changes in patients with gastric carcinoid tumors who received neoadjuvant systemic therapy. By analyzing pre- and post-treatment imaging data, we aimed to assess the impact of systemic therapy on tumor sizes prior to surgical intervention. Our department has served as a tertiary cancer center for many years, providing comprehensive care to patients from both Turkey and abroad. Throughout this period, a broad spectrum of benign and malignant tumors has been managed using state-of-the-art radiotherapy technologies, including image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT), intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), adaptive radiotherapy (ART), stereotactic radiotherapy, automatic segmentation, and molecular imaging techniques.

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate tumor size reduction following neoadjuvant systemic therapy in patients diagnosed with gastric carcinoid tumors. To achieve this, we retrospectively analyzed cases with available imaging data both before and after systemic treatment. All included patients underwent neoadjuvant systemic therapy prior to further oncological management. Tumor size measurements were compared using pre- and post-treatment imaging, and changes were systematically documented to support clinical interpretation and outcome evaluation. From a certain perspective, our findings may support the broader application of systemic therapies for carcinoid tumors of the stomach; however, further clinical studies are necessary to validate these results.

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