Response to concurrent chemoradiotherapy as a prognostic marker in elderly patients with locally advanced esophageal cancer

Se-Il Go¹, Won Sup Lee¹, Myung Hee Kang¹, Haa-Na Song¹, Moon Jin Kim¹, Min Jeong Lee¹, Hoon-Gu Kim¹, Gyeong Won Lee¹, Jung Hun Kang¹, Jeong-Hee Lee², Ki Mun Kang³, Kyung-Nyeo Jeon⁴, Jae Min Cho⁴, Woon Tae Jung¹, and Gyung Hyuck Ko²

Departments of ¹Internal Medicine, ²Pathology, ³Radiation Oncology, and ⁴Radiology, Institute of Health Sciences, Gyeongsang National University School of Medicine, Jinju, Korea

ABSTRACT

Aims and background. Little is known about chemoradiotherapy in elderly patients with locally advanced esophageal cancer. We compared the efficacy and toxicity of chemoradiotherapy in elderly and non-elderly patients with locally advanced esophageal cancer and determined the variables affecting the treatment outcome in the elderly patients with locally advanced esophageal cancer who had received chemoradiotherapy.

Methods. Fifty-seven elderly patients (age ≥ 65 years) and 30 non-elderly patients (age < 65 years) were reviewed retrospectively.

Results. The median age of the elderly group was 69 years and in the non-elderly group, 56.5 years. Although treatment compliance appeared to be poor, the response rate and median survival were similar in both the groups (elderly versus non-elderly; 84.4% vs 87.5%, and 11.2 months vs 11.3 months) and so were G3/4 hematologic and non-hematologic toxicities. The treatment-related mortality of the elderly patients appeared to be higher than that of the non-elderly group (7.0% vs 3.3%), but did not reach statistical significance. In prognostic factor analysis, a major response to chemoradiotherapy was a good prognostic indicator in the elderly group (response versus non-response; median overall survival times of 19.5 vs 5.4 months, respectively, P < 0.001).

Conclusions. The study suggests that chemoradiotherapy for locally advanced esophageal cancer in elderly patients, even though treatment compliance appears to be poor, is as safe and effective as in non-elderly patients and that the response to chemoradiotherapy is related to prognosis in elderly patients.

Key words: concurrent chemoradiotherapy, elderly, esophageal neoplasms.

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Correspondence to: Prof Won Sup Lee, MD, PhD, Division of Hematology-Oncology, Department of Internal Medicine, Gyeongnam Regional Cancer Center, Gyeongsang National University School of Medicine, 90 Chilamdong Jinju, 660-702 Korea.
Tel 82-55-750-8733, fax 82-55-758-9122; email lwshmo@hanmail.net / lwshmo@gshp.gnu.ac.kr

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