Gastric Cancer

What is Gastric Cancer?

Gastric cancer (stomach cancer) is a cancer that starts in the lining of the stomach and tends to develop slowly over many years. It is the fifth most common cancer and the third leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide. Most gastric cancers are adenocarcinomas, which start from cells that form the lining of the innermost layer of the stomach, the mucosa.

90–95% of gastric cancers are adenocarcinomas.

Key Risk Factors

- Smoking
- Male gender
- Older age
- Diet high in salty, smoked or preserved foods
- Low consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Family history of gastric cancer
- Having an inherited cancer syndrome
- Pernicious anemia
- Other chronic gastric disease or long-term stomach inflammation
- Exposure to certain hazardous materials (i.e. lead compounds, asbestos)
- Epstein–Barr virus infection
- Helicobacter pylori infection

Diagnosis and Prognosis

Gastric cancer is most often diagnosed when it is already at an advanced stage and has metastasized to different parts of the body. About two-thirds of patients with gastric cancer present with locally advanced or metastatic disease at diagnosis.

Although advances in therapy have improved outcomes, the 5-year overall survival rate for gastric cancer is approximately 30%. For patients with metastatic disease, overall survival is only around 8–10 months.

Incidence

Rates of gastric cancer vary across the world, with a generally higher incidence in Central/Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia and South America. In 2012, there were an estimated 1 million new cases of gastric cancer diagnosed worldwide, with more than 139,000 cases diagnosed in the E.U. In 2016, it is estimated there will be about 26,000 new cases of gastric cancer diagnosed in the U.S.

Treatment

Current treatment options for gastric cancer may include:

- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Chemoradiotherapy (a combination of radiotherapy and chemotherapy)
- Surgery
- Targeted therapies

Need for Further Research

The prognosis for gastric cancer patients remains poor, especially if the disease has metastasized. There is a clear unmet medical need for new treatment options. To learn about current clinical trials in gastric cancer, visit www.clinicaltrials.gov and search for ‘gastric cancer’ or ‘stomach cancer.’
References


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