

SCREENING OF THE THYROID PATHOLOGY IN THE POPULATION OVER 60 YEARS

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Recently an increasing of the thyroid pathology in Europe including Bulgaria (3) is observed and that is considered as a medical and social problem. In most of the cases the attention is drawn to young people, grouped in collectives. A large-scale research among elderly is considerably difficult (2). Our aim is to carry out every year screening of the thyroid pathology in the people over 60 years.

At present time screening has taken place during two consecutive years-1990 and 1991- among 320 (each year) randomized cases treated in nonendocrine clinics in Medical University - Varna. Inquiries, palpation of the thyroid gland, ultrasound diagnostic (USD) and if needed fine needle biopsy (FNB) has been carried out.

The distribution of the patients according to sex is: female-1990 -166, 1991 -162 and male-154 and 158. The mean age of the patients is 66,82-1990 and 67,34-1991. In 1990 among 320 cases 72 have had a pathology of the thyroid (22,5%); in 1991-73 (22,81%). This percentage is considerable, although there are authors (1) who report of a higher percentage (up to 30%) even in general population. Women to men proportion is respectively as follows 4,4:1 and 3,86:1. Table 1 reveals determined pathological processes. A diffuse hyperplasia of the thyroid has been found in 43 (59,72%) and 48 (65,75%) cases. In about one third of the diffuse goitre there is one-sided hyperplasia. There was a doubt for a knot in the revealed lobe in some of the cases at first. But in view of the fact that the USD has been performed in all of the patients it was possible to define whether it concerns either the hyperplasia of the whole lobe or the nodule. We have recommended treatment with potassium iodine instead of thyroid hormones according to advanced age and the presence of IHD among most of our patients. Nodular goitre has been found out in 17 patients (23,60%) in 1990 and in 13 (17,80%) in 1991. Uninodular form predominates-12 (16,67%) and 10 (13,69%) resp. After detailed examination in 4 /resp.5/ cases discreet hyperthyroid symptoms have been determined Surgically treatment has been advised. Two (resp. 3) patients are operated. In the remaining patients with nodular goitre there were no hyperthyroid symptoms. We recommended them to be operated but only one person gave his assent. The others are under endocrine

supervision twice yearly. When there is a suspicion of Hashimoto thyroiditis except palpation and USD, FNB is done. Cytological result proved thyroiditis of Hashimoto in 4 (resp. 3) cases, in others it was diffuse euthyroid goitre. For the first time we found out Grave's disease in 3 cases each year. In 1990 a relapse of the disease 20 years after its first symptoms has been proved.

A computerized analysis of the data from the two years show no significantly difference in the results.

Table 1

Pathology	1990		1991	
	number of patients	%	number of patients	%
Diffuse goitre	43	59.72	48	65.75
Nodular goitre	17	23.60	13	17.80
Hashimoto's thyroiditis	4	5.56	3	4.10
Grave's disease	4	5.56	3	4.10
Operated thyroid gland	4	5.56	5	6.84
Atrophic thyroid	-	-	1	1.37
Total	72	100	73	100

In conclusion, by screening is determined the thyroid pathology in the patients over 60 years - 22,50% in 1990 and 22,81% in 1991. Diffuse euthyroid goitre is predominant - 59,72% of all pathological cases. There is no significant difference in the results of two consecutive years. The research is an initial step in the comparative every year screening studies.

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