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FMUP FACULDADE DE MEDICINA
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Ana Sofia Gonçalves de Figueiredo

Melhoria na Abordagem do Carcinoma Anaplásico da
Tiroide: novas perspetivas

New Perspectives for Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma
Approach Improvement

março, 2018

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New Perspectives for Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma Approach Improvement

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Dedicatória

Um obrigada especial aos meus pais e a minha irmã pelo apoio incondicional e pela companhia na realização deste caminho pela arte da Medicina. Obrigada por me ajudarem a alcançar os meus sonhos.

New Perspectives for Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma Approach

Improvement

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Abstract: Anaplastic thyroid carcinoma is rare but it represents the deadliest type of thyroid cancer, characterized by a rapid course. Diagnosis is usually made on a late stage, when more than half of the patients have distant metastasis. Thus, treatment options are mainly palliative and lack of efficacy. With the mutational landscape investigation and the discovery of new targets, new directed treatments are also being tried.

Considering the current tendency to be more conservative at multinodular goiter approach and some differentiated thyroid carcinomas treatment, it is very important to understand which may evolve to anaplastic cancers.

Our main purpose is to review the current information on anaplastic thyroid aetiology and risk factors which may contribute to an earlier diagnosis, and also to give new perspectives about the most recent treatment options and future directions, in particular, multikinase inhibitors, BRAF inhibitors and other directed agents aiming to stabilize the tumour growth and enable radical surgery with curative intent.

Keywords: anaplastic thyroid carcinoma, aetiology, prognostic factors, risk factors, treatment, new approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

Anaplastic thyroid carcinoma (ATC) is a rare and lethal form of thyroid cancer. It presents with a quick progression and overall survival remains very poor. Diagnosis is usually late and local or distant metastases are frequently present (50-75%)¹, so most of the patients only receive medical treatment with palliative intent. It is therefore imperative to perform a rapid evaluation and discussion of treatment goals with a multidisciplinary team.

Several attempts have been made to identify ATC risk factors, but its aetiology essentially remains unknown. Nevertheless, the most known prognostic factors are age, sex, local tumour extension and the presence of distant metastases².

During the last few years, new data about its tumorigenesis suggest that ATC can develop after goitre, arise from dedifferentiation of pre-existent well-differentiated thyroid cancer (WDTC), or can develop *de novo*³. Recent studies relate ATC with additional mutations gain, beyond the ones usually related to most thyroid cancers, BRAF^{V600E} and RAS. Identified genetic mutations are TERT promoter mutation, TP53 mutation, along with alterations in PIK3CA-PTEN-AKT-mTOR pathway, SWI-SNF complex, histone-methyltransferases, and mismatch repair genes⁴.

This review aims to summarize the most recent information about ATC, risk factors and treatment, as well as to create a Portugal Universal Form to collect ATC data from all hospitals to facilitate future analyses and understanding (more information on “Apêndice”).

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2. METHODS

The data used in this review was searched with “anaplastic thyroid carcinoma” as query in database MEDLINE via Pubmed®, between 01/01/2000 and 25/09/2017. From the initial search (n=1855) were selected 276 articles which title contained “Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma”, “Anaplastic Thyroid Cancer” or “Anaplastic Carcinoma of the Thyroid”. All abstracts were read resulting in 51 articles (included in this bibliography). Additionally, 17 articles were manually selected from the bibliographic analyses of the included articles.

3. EPIDEMIOLOGY AND HISTOLOGY

Anaplastic thyroid cancer is a rare form of cancer, more common in women, which accounts for 1-4% of all thyroid malignancies in Europe⁵⁻⁶. Currently, the incidence of ATC is decreasing in several countries due, in part to the early detection of small tumours related to the wide use of ultrasonography, the increase of dietary iodine and the higher detectability rate of lymphomas and mixed forms of ATC^{2,7}.

The age of presentation is more advanced than in differentiated thyroid cancer, with a median age at initial diagnosis ranging from sixth to seventh decade^{1-2,8}. Besides its rarity, it has a median survival of 5 months, 1-year survival of 20% and 5-year survival varying from 5 to 14%, depending on the study^{5,8-9}.

WHO defines ATC as a *highly aggressive thyroid malignancy composed of undifferentiated follicular thyroid cells*¹⁰. Other characteristics are necrosis, haemorrhage and

invasiveness, occupying and replacing most of the parenchyma and infiltrating the surrounding soft tissues and adjacent structures of the neck. Histologically it's divided in three major growth patterns: spindle cell, pleomorphic giant cell and squamoid. These patterns are not related with patient's outcome, except for the paucicellular variant (another rare histological variant) that has been related to a more indolent course affecting young patients¹¹⁻¹².

3.1. Aetiology

ATC has an extremely high proliferative rate, easily invades the surrounding neck structures and metastasize to other organs¹³. The most common type of carcinoma to coexist with ATC is papillary thyroid carcinoma (PTC), particularly the aggressive tall cell variant, followed by oncocyctic type of follicular thyroid carcinoma (FTC)². Besides that, anaplastic transformation may also take place in a metastatic focus¹¹, again suggesting that ATC can develop from WDTC, through dedifferentiation, a complex process of multiple gains and deletions in several chromosomal regions. However, some ATC seem to arise *de novo*, suggesting a direct pathway between normal follicular cells and ATC cells⁹. This fact raises an important question "Is there a way to predict which are PTC/ FTC that will evolve to ATC?"

4. CLINICAL PRESENTATION AND STAGING

The most frequent presentation of ATC is a rapidly growing neck mass causing mechanical compression, hoarseness, dysphagia, dyspnoea, cervical pain and in fewer cases is related do cough, haemoptysis and superior vena cava syndrome^{1, 14}. In Table 1, we can confirm that ATC is more frequent in the elderly, with a 60% women ratio.

In the past all diagnosed tumours were considered as stage IV. Intrathyroidal lesions (T4a), N0, M0 were categorized as a stage IVA and primary tumours with extrathyroidal extension, with or without locoregional metastasis, M0 were categorized as a stage IVB; in stage IVC the tumour had distant metastases¹². Now, in TNM (8th edition) system staging ATC will use the same T definitions as differentiated thyroid cancer. Nevertheless, the stage groups stayed the same with intrathyroidal disease classified as stage IVA, while the presence of lymph node metastases or gross extrathyroidal extension is stage IVB and distant metastases are classified as IVC disease¹⁵. At diagnosis, stage IVA patients represent 10.2%, stage IVB 40.2% and IVC 45.8%, according to several studies⁶.

Fine needle aspiration biopsy is the most important diagnostic tool, although it may be unsuccessful due to extensive necrosis. In that case, a core biopsy might be needed^{6, 16}. The main differential diagnoses are: poorly differentiated thyroid carcinoma (PDTC), well differentiated thyroid carcinomas with uncommon patterns, Riedel thyroiditis (mimics paucicellular variant) and medullar thyroid carcinoma (sometimes present features of dedifferentiation), in which cases immunohistochemistry may also be helpful. Distinguishing ATC from other thyroid neoplasms is crucial because the chances of survival and treatment options are drastically different. For instance, anaplastic tumour cells don't concentrate radioactive iodine as well as differentiated thyroid carcinomas².

In addition, primary evaluation should include laboratory tests: complete blood count with platelets, electrolytes, glucose and biochemistry with liver and kidney functions. Free thyroxine and thyrotropin serum levels should also be measured because thyroid function may be compromised by the tumour¹⁷.

Due to ATC rapid progression, 40% of the patients have

| Authors | N | Female (%) | Age (y) | Previous or concomitant DTC (%) | Tumour size (cm) | Confined to thyroid (%) | WBC count $\geq 10\ 000\text{mm}^3$ (%) | Distant metastasis (%) |
|---------------------------|------|------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Mclver <i>et al.</i> | 134 | 60 | 67 | 4,5 | 6,6 (1,5-16) | 2 | | 46 |
| Kihara <i>et al.</i> | 19 | 63 | 73 | 42,0 | 5,7 (3,6-10,5) | 16 | 16 | 47 |
| Goutsouliak <i>et al.</i> | 75 | 68 | 74 | 2,6 | | | | 16 |
| Kebebew <i>et al.</i> | 516 | 67 | 71 | | 6,4 (1,0-15,0) | 7,5 | | 43 |
| Akaishi <i>et al.</i> | 100 | 80 | 68 | 13,0 | $\leq 5 - 79\%$ $> 5 - 21\%$ | 11 | 33 | 58 |
| Sugitani <i>et al.</i> | 677 | 62 | 69 | 30,0 | $\leq 5 - 5\%$ $> 5 - 64\%$ | 20 | 33 | 43 |
| Sun <i>et al.</i> | 60 | 53 | 58 | | $< 6 - 52\%$ $\geq 6 - 48\%$ | 7 | 37 | 27 |
| Paunovic <i>et al.</i> | 150 | 64 | | 57,6 | | | | 33 |
| Wendler <i>et al.</i> | 100 | 52 | 71 | 17,0 | | 9 | | 54 |
| Baek <i>et al.</i> | 329 | 64 | 69 | | $\leq 5 - 45\%$ $> 5 - 54\%$ | 22,2 | 24,9 | 31 |
| Glaser <i>et al.</i> | 3552 | 60 | | | $\leq 6 - 37\%$ $> 6 - 32\%$ | 8,9 | | 47 |

Table 1 Characteristics of patients with ATC

extra thyroidal extension and lymph node metastasis at initial presentation, also supported by Table 1. Extensive local invasion might occur in up to 70-76% of the patients, affecting muscle, trachea, oesophagus and larynx. The most frequent metastatic sites are lung (25%- 78%), cervical lymph nodes (51-83%) mediastinum (25%), pleura (29-31%), adrenal glands (24-33%), liver (10-23%), brain (8-23%) and bone (6-23%)¹⁷⁻¹⁸. For that reason, we need to perform complete body imaging exams, such as computerized tomography (CT), positron emission tomography (PET), and in some cases whole body magnetic resonance (MRI)¹⁹.

The airway compromise can result in suffocation, pointed, along with distant metastasis, as the main causes of death in these patients^{2, 6}.

5. RISK FACTORS

Risk factors for ATC are not fully understood, but several authors discovered newsworthy connections over the past decade. A long-standing goitre, the prior existence of differentiated thyroid cancer and age over 65 years are recognised as the main risk factors^{9, 12}. More than 80% of patients have long history of goitre and DTC is associated with ATC in 7% to 89% of the patients, according to different studies².

Besides that, ATC is twice as common in areas with endemic goitre³. However, the definition of long standing goitre is not clear, some authors point to an average of 18

years standing goiter²⁰, while others only state the history of thyroid mass for more than 9 months²¹. On the other hand, other studies verified the presence of goiter for more than 10 and 20 years²², showing it as an independent factor for survival, not a risk factor^{18, 23}. It's important to understand which longstanding goiters presents at risk and how should they be monitored.

Interestingly, new investigations show low education level, type B blood group, history of nonthyroidal malignancies, late menarche, early first pregnancy and diabetes as independent risk factors for ATC^{9, 20}. In molecular research TERT promoter mutation was independently associated as a risk factor for ATC; in fact, TERT mutation is related with anaplastic transformation of papillary carcinoma²⁴. The molecular progress may allow, in the future, the evaluation of a patient's risk profile based on his genetic mutations. Nowadays a few identified mutations are already being studied to identify which of them increase the risk of ATC.

6. PROGNOSTIC FACTORS

Several studies have suggested that younger age is related with a better prognosis and overall survival (OS) in patients with ATC, as demonstrated in Table 2^{12, 25}. Most of the studies found age <70 years as a good prognostic factor^{8, 26-28}, except *Kebebew et al.* that identified age<60 years as independent predictor of lower cause-specific mortality²⁹.

Smaller tumour size (<5-6 cm), disease confined to

| Author | Age | Gender | WBC>10000mm ³ | Extra-thyroid invasion | Confined to thyroid | Tumour multicentricity | Tumour size >5 cm | Distant metastasis | No metastasis | Surgical resection | No resection |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Akaishi et al.</i> ²⁶ (n=100) | >70y 1.03* (1.01-1.05) | 1.40 (0.77-2.48) | 2.04* (1.26-3.24) | 3.02* (1.17-10.39) | | | | 1.94* (1.18-3.25) | | | 3.99* (2.37-6.66) |
| <i>Kebebew et al.</i> ²⁹ (n=516) | <60y 0.482* (0.268-0.867) | 1.089 (0.746-1.590) | | | 0.572* (0.366-0.893) | | 1.245* (0.854-1.816) | 1.492* (1.113-2.000) | | 0.779 (0.312-1.946) | |
| <i>Sugitani et al.</i> ²⁷ (n=677) | >70y 1.28* (1.04-1.58) | 1.09 (0.88-1.36) | 1.48* (1.18-1.87) | 1.47* (1.11-1.96) | | | 1.42* (1.12-1.81) | 1.83* (1.48-2.27) | | 0.35* (0.28-0.43) | |
| <i>Sun et al.</i> ³⁰ (n=60) | >55 1.829 (0.984-3.397) | 0.879 (0.469-1.646) | 1.869* (1.069-3.269) | 1.78 (0.486-6.665) | | | >6cm 1.075 (0.566-2.044) | 0.607 (0.129-2.845) | | 1.219 (0.823-1.804) | |
| <i>Paunovic et al.</i> ²² (n=150) | <50y 0.68* (0.49-0.95) | 1.22 (0.82-1.72) | | | | 4.76* (1.76-12.50) | | 2.56* (1.43-4.54) | | 0.43* (0.29-0.63) | |
| <i>Wendler et al.</i> ⁸ (n=100) | >70y 1.048* (1.015-1.082) | | | | | | | 2.718* (1.384-5.342) | | | 2.201* (1.186-4.086) |
| <i>Baek et al.</i> ²⁸ (n=329) | >70y 1.493* (1.134-1.965) | | * | 1.648* (1.074-2.527) | | | * | 1.561* (1.136-2.146) | | 0.505* ** (0.339-0.659) | |
| <i>Glaser et al.</i> ²⁵ (n=3552) | >65 1.42* (1.26-1.60) | | | 1.36* (1.13-1.62) | | | >6cm 1.36* (1.23-1.55) | | 0.62* (0.55-0.70) | | 1.76* (1.52-2.03) |

Table 2: Prognostic factor: multivariate analyses

Relative risk; 95% confidence interval; p<0.05 is represented with *.

**The group treated with surgery and adjuvant RT/concurrent QT had a RR of 0.340, p<0.01

thyroid gland and the absence of distant metastasis at diagnosis were significantly associated with improved OS. In a retrospective review of 677 patients, white blood cell (WBC) count of $>10,000/\text{mm}^3$, acute symptoms and distant metastasis are risk factors for poorer survival²⁷. In another study, *Akaishi et al.* reported similar results²⁶. In fact, almost all studies present on Table 2 found distant metastasis as a bad prognostic factor, excepting for *Sun et al.* probably related with the smaller sampler size.

Concerning the treatment related factors of prognosis, multimodal treatment (combining surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy) is the recommendation of American Thyroid Association¹². The complete tumour resection is the best surgical treatment^{21, 26, 28}, more specifically *Scott M. Glaser et al.* found that negative margin status improved survival, with an absolute 2-year survival of 27% for the patients with negative margin status versus 11% for the patients with positive/unknown margin status²⁵. The data published by *Sugitani et al.* and *Smallridge et al.* identified the use of a high dose of radiation $>40\text{Gy}$ as a factor that significantly prolonged survival^{9, 27}.

7. MOLECULAR BIOMARKERS

7.1. Gene alterations and signalling pathways

Several studies have shown the possibility to evaluate the mutational tumour profile preoperatively through fine needle biopsy aspirates analysis. This strategy could allow the increase of precision targeted therapy, according to the most significant pathway mutations present³¹.

The molecular mechanisms responsible for the clinical aggressiveness are not well known, but BRAF^{v600E}, ERK1/2-MEK1/2, PI3K-AKT, TP53 are commonly mutated in ATC³².

The prototypic progression to ATC can be considered as a process of dedifferentiation of WDTC, such as PTC or FTC. The BRAF^{v600E} mutation is the most frequent in PTC, while NRAS/KRAS/HRAS variants are more common in FTC. The prognostic significance of RET/PTC is still uncertain, but tumours harbouring these alterations rarely progress to undifferentiated thyroid cancer³¹.

Two important signalling pathways in thyroid cancer, PI3K-Akt pathway and the MAP kinase cascade (Ras-Raf-MEK-ERK), are regulated by the RAS oncogene family³¹. RAS mutations can occur in both benign and malignant tumours, and are found in 42,6% of all ATC patients, NRAS more frequently than HRAS^{9, 33}. For this reason, this mutation doesn't seem enough for itself to cause ATC. In contrast, some authors showed increased frequency of distant metastases in patients harbouring thyroid tumours with RAS mutation³¹.

The BRAF^{v600E} point mutation (13.8% - 38%), leaves BRAF and MAPK signalling pathway (Raf-MEK-ERK) constitutively activated, to induce changes in tumour microenvironment through extracellular matrix protein (ECM), promote tumour invasion and metastasis. BRAF^{v600E}

mutation was demonstrated to decrease NIS membrane localization and NIS gene expression, which mediates the active iodine uptake in thyroid follicular cells³³⁻³⁴.

Somatic mutations in the promoter of TERT (human telomerase reverse transcriptase) gene have been described as recurrent in several cancers, including melanomas, CNS tumours and thyroid cancers¹¹. TERT promoter gene mutation is found in up to 54% of all ATCs, and the prevalence seems to increase with dedifferentiation, fluctuating from 11,4% in PTC, 17,3% in FTC to 40,1% in ATC³³. Enhanced TERT promoter activity, significantly increasing cell proliferation, has been related with two mutations, C228T and C250T. The C228T mutation has been associated with BRAF^{v600E} mutation, providing aggressiveness to papillary thyroid cancer and a possible genetic mechanism involved in tumour progression¹³. *Oishi et al.* concluded that a papillary carcinoma harbouring TERT promoter mutation is at higher risk for anaplastic transformation²⁴. BRAF appears to be frequently associated with TERT mutation suggesting an effect on patient's prognosis, although more studies are needed to clarify this issue³⁵.

Gain of function mutations in the PI3K3CA gene is found in 25-40% of anaplastic cancers, however it's rare in typical PTC ($<3\%$). In contrast, PI3K3CA gene mutation is frequent in poorly differentiated thyroid carcinoma and in PTC with distant metastasis (31%) suggesting a late stage mutation in dedifferentiation process^{11, 24}. The PI3K-Akt pathway is a very important intracellular signalling pathway for mammals, acting in the phosphorylation of downstream target proteins, like caspase 9, forkhead, Par-4, Bad, p21 and mTOR. This pathway could be related with tumour development, promote tumour metastasis through the increase activity of NF- κ B and promote tumour growth by the VEGF gene expression³⁶. Nonetheless, unlike BRAF and TERT mutations, PI3K3CA mutation was only present in half of the antecedent papillary cancer, becoming a less useful alteration to evaluate patient's risk.

ATC also harbours mutation in CTNNB1 gene (25-60%), which is a major component of E-cadherin cell-cell adhesion complexes and constitutively activates *Wnt* pathway^{11, 32}.

In a retrospective study of 144 cases, TP53 mutation was found in 54,4%, representing the most frequently anomaly observed³³. TP53 gene mutations are frequent in several human cancers, reported as the most common genetic alteration in malignant cells. Loss of TTF-1 expression and PAX-8, strongly expressed in WDTC, is a hallmark of anaplastic carcinoma³³. High PPAR γ levels are also found in ATC, against the low levels found in DTC¹³.

In an exome-wide analysis of the mutational landscape of ATC, were found mutations in genes related to malignancy not previously associated to thyroid tumorigenesis, such as mTOR, NF1, NF2, MLH1, MLH3, MSH5, MSH6, ERBB2, EIF1AX and USH2A. Somatic recurrent mutations were also found in TP53, RAS-family genes, PIK3CA and BRAF (BRAF^{v600E} and RAS were mutually exclusive)³². *Weinberger et al.* analysed the gene expression microarray of

three different studies, and discovered an important role for M-phase cell cycle genes in ATC, along with 6 novel upregulated genes (*TMEM158*, *CXCL5*, *E2F7*, *DLGAP5*, *MME*, *ASPM*) and 3 downregulated genes (*SFTA3*, *LMO3*, and *C2orf40*), which had not been specifically implicated in ATC³⁷. The increase in genetic and molecular knowledge about the dedifferentiation process has introduced new targeted-therapy drugs, targeting specific pathways³⁸.

7.2. Epigenetic alterations and miRNAs deregulation

Strict controlled epigenetic regulation is essential for normal tissue growth, development and maintenance. Deregulation of epigenetic controls may influence the origin/progression of several disease processes, including cancer. The Aurora group, found overexpressed in ATC, act as the regulators of mitotic events; in fact, Aurora kinase inhibition has been shown to significantly reduce the growth of ATC cells *in vivo*. Enhancer of Zeste homolog 2 (EZH2) is a histone lysine-methyltransferase, overexpressed in ATC. This overexpression contributed to altered histone methylation, transcriptional silence of PAX8, leading to an aggressive behaviour of the tumour^{13, 39}. Several histone modifications were found: overexpression of histone-deacetylases (HDAC) affect the ERK1/2-MEK1/2 and PI3K-Akt pathways through the altered expression of cell cycle control proteins and the histone-methyltransferase KMT2A, KMT2C, KMT2D and SETD2 overexpression, involved in chromatin accessibility³⁹. *Landa et al.* suggested the participation of SWI/SNF chromatin remodelling complex in the aggressive behaviour of advanced thyroid tumours^{24, 40}.

Modifications in micro-RNA expression are also present in ATC, interfering with gene expression and tumour progression². The micro-RNA family miR-30, implicated in suppressing tumour migration and metastasis *in vivo* and *in vitro*, has been found to have reduced expression in ATC. Furthermore, miR-200 family has a crucial role in the control of epithelial-mesenchymal transition, being a useful way to distinguish ATC from WDTC^{2, 13, 39}. Let-7 family has the potential to overexpress TTF-1, altering NIS gene expression, and miR-138 is being pointed as potentially related with TERT transcript³⁹.

8. TREATMENT

Multimodal treatment consists in surgery and external beam radiotherapy with radiosensitizing chemotherapy¹⁶. Complete surgical resection is generally recommended for stage IVA patients and systemic therapy (clinical trials and/or palliative treatment) is usually advocated for stage IVC patients⁴¹. Systemic chemotherapy and radiotherapy may be considered in three clinical settings: (I) as neoadjuvant therapy for locoregional ATC downstaging; (II) as adjuvant therapy after complete surgical resection or for low-volume locoregional and distant residual disease; and (III) as palliative therapy⁴².

8.1. Surgery

At presentation, 10% of patients have intrathyroidal tumour, 40% have extrathyroidal invasions and/or lymph node metastasis and the rest present with metastatic disease. Complete surgical resection with therapeutic lymph node dissection remains the cornerstone for prolonging ATC patient's survival. According to ATA guidelines, surgery should be performed if grossly negative margins (R1) are achievable¹².

Several authors correlate maximal debulking, negative margin status and total thyroidectomy with a statistically significant better survival rate^{8, 21, 23, 41, 43}. *Goffredo et al.* analysed 335 patients undergoing surgery and found a median overall survival among operated vs non-operated patients, of 9.7 vs 3.0 months for stage IVA, 4.2 vs 3.4 months for stage IVB and 3.4 vs 1.7 for stage IVC ($p < 0.001$)⁴⁴. Nevertheless, the most important aspect in the management of ATC treatment is to select patients who might benefit from surgery-based treatment, which are mainly stage IVA and some selected stage IVB patients, with grossly negative margins (R1) achievable^{29, 45}. In stage IVB tumours, neoadjuvant preoperative radiotherapy can sometimes be considered to downstage locally irresectable disease and subsequently enable complete resection¹². *Baek et al.*, also suggests that surgery-based multimodal treatment should only be performed in patients with age under 70 years, no acute clinical symptoms and no distant metastasis²⁸.

The most common complications of ATC resections are haemorrhage, vocal cord paralysis, chylous fistulae, surgical site infection, dysphagia, salivary fistulae and hypoparathyroidism⁴².

In stage IVC patients, palliative resection of the tumour should be considered to avoid airway compromise or oesophageal obstruction, and provide better quality of life⁴². However, airway compromise recurrence may occur and tracheostomy should be performed in life-threatening asphyxia. Tracheal stent presents as a less invasive palliative option than tracheostomy, relieving dyspnoea and improving the quality of life of patients, but has a minimal impact in survival. Besides that, tracheostomy is surgically challenging in these patients, deteriorates quality of life and requires extensive care⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷. Selective embolization of thyroid arteries may become an interesting option of palliative treatment for patients with intractable bleeding, pain or signs of local compression⁴⁸.

8.2. Radiotherapy

External Beam Radiation (EBR) is given with the aim of improving overall survival and local control; unfortunately due to the high level of toxicity, rapid mass progression and quick development of metastatic disease the results are unsatisfactory⁴⁹. When available, patients should be irradiated with intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) instead of conventional radiotherapy⁵⁰. Hyperfractionated radiation consists in multiple small radiation doses that allow

more than one radiation treatment a day, reducing toxicity and decreasing the time of the treatment needed for a course of radiation, which is important in tumours that grow rapidly⁵¹. *Tennvall et al.* found a strong correlation between local control and accelerated radiotherapy⁵². Although unresectable ATC remains a challenge for treatment, *Todd A. Pezzi et al.* demonstrated that higher doses of radiotherapy were associated with improved survival, in patients treated <45Gy the median survival was 4.24 months compared with 6.77 months in patients that received from 45 to 59.9Gy⁵³. *K So et al.* also reported a good locoregional control in 70% of ATC patients treated with radiotherapy (>50 Gy) with or without surgery or chemotherapy, and 66,7% of locoregional control in patients treated with palliative intent (<40 Gy)⁵⁴.

8.3. Chemotherapy

The most effective class of agents in systemic therapy are taxanes (paclitaxel or docetaxel), the anthracyclines (doxorubicin) and the platins (cisplatin and carboplatin)².

One of the most studied chemotherapy agents is doxorubicin, but no significant survival benefit has been observed^{23, 52}. Other recent studies point the use of taxanes as radio-sensitizing agents, in a multimodal treatment, as a more effective chemotherapeutic agent than those traditionally used in a selected group of patients^{51, 55-56}. *Ain et al.* reported a 53% response rate with continuous infusion of paclitaxel⁵⁷. *Higashiyama et al.* described a 33% response rate in stage IVB and 25% in stage IVC patients, treated with paclitaxel weekly administration⁵⁸. *Troch et al.* reported the promising results of a small series of 6 patients treated to 60Gy with docetaxel⁵⁶.

8.4. Novel agents

8.4.1. Multikinase Inhibitors

A phase II trial, in 20 patients with advanced disease treated with daily sorafenib resulted in overall median progression-free survival of 1.9 months with a median and a 1-year survival of 3.9 months and 20%, respectively⁵⁹. On the other hand, *Yasuhiro Ito et al.* concluded that sorafenib is ineffective in ATC treatment⁶⁰. Similar to sorafenib, pazopanib - a multikinase inhibitor including VEGFR, PDGFR and c-kit - demonstrated no activity in ATC¹⁶.

Tahara M. et al. reported a single arm, phase II trial, using lenvatinib - a multikinase inhibitor that targets the vascular endothelial growth factor receptor 1–3, fibroblast growth factor receptor 1–4, platelet-derived growth factor receptor-alpha, and RET and KIT proto-oncogenes. Although the small number of patients, only 17, the results were promising, with a median progression free survival of 7.4 months and median OS of 10.6 months⁶¹. Lenvatinib is currently approved in Japan for ATC treatment.

8.4.2. BRAF inhibitors

In one patient with BRAF V600E mutated ATC, therapy with vemurafenib improved her condition rapidly with

nearly complete tumour regression⁶². Another patient, which tumour is BRAF V600E and programmed death-ligand 1 (PD-L1) positive, was in complete radiographic and clinical remission for 20 months after treatment with vemurafenib and nivolumab⁶³. De novo mutations of BRAF to vemurafenib were associated to rapid rebound of MAP kinase ERK signalling.

The combination therapy of dabrafenib and trametinib in subjects with BRAF^{V600E}-mutated is still ongoing, with significantly improved outcomes (NCT02034110).

8.4.3. mTOR inhibitors

Some clinical trials using everolimus in thyroid cancer are currently ongoing. Further, *Wagle N. et al.* reported the case of a patient with a sustained response to everolimus for 18 months, followed by tissue resistance with tumour progression⁶⁴.

8.4.4. PPAR γ agonists

A phase I study using efatutazone in combination with paclitaxel was well tolerated, one patient achieved partial response and half maintained stable disease. A randomized phase II study is ongoing⁶⁵.

8.4.5. Other Targeted Therapies

Although it is rare, some ATC harbour oncogenic mutations in the ALK gene. In these patients, a huge decrease of lesions volume was reported with crizotinib – ALK inhibitor⁶⁶.

Combretastatin A-4 phosphate, a microtubule destabilizing agent that can alter endothelial-cell and stromal-cell biology, has demonstrated preclinical single-agent activity. On this basis, a randomized trial was conducted with fosbretabulin (combretastatin A4 phosphate) showing a trend toward improved overall survival when added to carboplatin - 5,2 months versus carboplatin alone - 4 months⁶⁷.

Selinexor inhibits exportin-1 (XPO1) a nuclear export receptor involved in transport of many tumour suppressor proteins and is overexpressed in human cancers. A recent study showed that selinexor inhibited growth in ATC human xenografts, providing rationale for further investigation⁶⁸.

9. CONCLUSION

ATC is a rare form of cancer with a dismal prognosis and few understanding about its origin. The discovery of risk factors or early events in ATC transformation or ATC *de novo* may help to increase patient's outcome.

Now none of the known mutations can predict ATC development. The crucial thing, in the future, is to find/select a group of highly prevalent mutated genes in ATC, which can serve to predict or suspect the evolution from DTC to ATC.

Treatment options are still very limited, even with multimodal treatment. The knowledge of each patient

mutational landscape can create a new precise treatment model using directed molecular therapies.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATC: Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma

DTC: Differentiated Thyroid Carcinoma

PTC: Papillary Thyroid Carcinoma

FTC: Follicular Thyroid Carcinoma

PDTC: Poorly Differentiated Thyroid Carcinoma

WDTC: Well Differentiated Thyroid Carcinoma

OS: Overall Survival

PFS: Progression Free Survival

WHO: World Health Organization

TNM: classification of malignant tumours; T- size of the tumour; N – regional lymph nodes invasion; M - metastasis

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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Anexo(s)

Normas da revista “Endocrine, Metabolic & Immune Disorders - Drug Targets”

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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The total number of words for a published comprehensive review article is from 8000 to 40000 words, and for mini-review articles from 3000 to 6000 words.

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The maximum total page length for a drug clinical trial study published in the journal is four journal pages. Each journal page is on average 900 words.

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Case reports should describe new observations of findings or novel/unique outcomes relevant to the field. The total number of words for a published case report is 1500 to 2000 words.

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The manuscript should be written in English in a clear, direct and active style. All pages must be numbered sequentially, facilitating in the reviewing and editing of the manuscript.

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It is advisable that authors prepare their manuscript using the template available on the Web, which will assist in preparation of the manuscript according to Journal's Format. (<http://benthamscience.com/journal-files/template-files/emiddt-template.doc>)

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- Title
- Title Page
- Structured Abstract
- Graphical Abstract
- Keywords
- Text Organization
- Conclusion
- List of Abbreviations (if any)
- Consent for Publication
- Conflict of Interest
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Appendices
- Figures/Illustrations (if any)
- Chemical Structures (if any)
- Tables (if any)
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The title of the article should be precise and brief and must not be more than 120 characters. Authors should avoid the use of non-standard abbreviations. The first letter of each word should be in capital letters except for articles, conjunctions and prepositions.

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Title page should include paper title, author(s) full name and affiliation, corresponding author(s) names complete affiliation/address, along with phone, fax and email.

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The abstract of an article should be its clear, concise and accurate summary, having no more than 250 words, and including the explicit sub-headings (as in-line or run-in headings in bold). Use of abbreviations should be avoided and the references should not be cited in the abstract. Ideally, each abstract should include the following sub-headings, but these may vary according to requirements of the article.

- Background
- Objective
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion

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A graphic must be included with each manuscript for use in the Table of Contents (TOC). This must be submitted separately as an electronic file (preferred file types are EPS, PDF, TIFF, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and CDX, *etc.*). A graphical abstract, not exceeding 30 words along with the illustration, helps to summarize the contents of the manuscript in a concise pictorial form. It is meant as an aid for the rapid viewing of the journals' contents and to help capture the readers' attention. The graphical abstract may feature a key structure, reaction, equation, *etc.* that the manuscript elucidates upon. It will be listed along with the manuscript title, authors' names and affiliations in the contents page, typeset within an area of 5 cm by 17 cm, but it will not appear in the article PDF file or in print.

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6 to 8 keywords must be provided.

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The main text should begin on a separate page and should be divided into title page, abstract and the main text. The text may be subdivided further according to the areas to be discussed, which should be followed by the List of Abbreviations (if any), Conflict of Interest, Acknowledgements and Reference sections. For review, the manuscript should be divided into title page, abstract and the main text. The text may be subdivided further according to the areas to be discussed, which should be followed by the Acknowledgements and Reference sections. For Research Articles the manuscript should begin with the title page and abstract followed by the main text, which must be structured into separate sections as **Introduction, Material and Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, Conflict of Interest, Acknowledgements and References**. The Review Article should mention any previous important recent and old reviews in the field and contain a comprehensive discussion starting with the general background of the field. It should then go on to discuss the salient features of recent developments. The authors should avoid presenting material which has already been published in a previous review. The authors are advised to present and discuss their observations in brief. The manuscript style must be uniform throughout the text and 10 pt Times New Roman fonts should be used. The full term for an abbreviation should precede its first appearance in the text unless it is a standard unit of measurement. The reference numbers should be given in square brackets in the text.

Italics should be used for Binomial names of organisms (Genus and Species), for emphasis and for unfamiliar words or phrases. Non-assimilated words from Latin or other languages should also be italicized *e.g. per se, et al., etc.*

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Section headings should be numbered sequentially, left aligned and have the first letter capitalized, starting with the introduction. Sub-section headings however, should be in lower-case and italicized with their initials capitalized. They should be numbered as 1.1, 1.2, *etc.*

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RESULTS:

Results should be precise.

DISCUSSION:

This should explore the significance of the results of the work, present a reproducible procedure and emphasize the importance of the article in the light of recent developments in the field. Extensive citations and discussion of published literature should be avoided.

The Results and Discussion may be presented together under one heading of “Results and Discussion”. Alternatively, they may be presented under two separate sections (“Results” section and “Discussion” Sections). Short sub-headings may be added in each section if required.

CONCLUSION:

A small paragraph summarizing the contents of the article, presenting the final outcome of the research or proposing further study on the subject, may be given at the end of the article under the Conclusion section.

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the risk of working with misidentified and/or contaminated cell lines, tests such as isoenzyme analysis, karyotyping/cytogenetic analysis and, more recently, molecular techniques of DNA profiling may be carried out to authenticate cell cultures. These tests may help confirm or establish the identify profile for a cell line. Bentham Science recommends that all cell lines be authenticated prior to submitting a paper for review. Authors are therefore required to provide authentication of the origin and identity of the cells by performing cell profiling either in their own laboratory or by outsourcing an approved laboratory or cell bank. Authentication is required when a new line is established or acquired, before freezing a cell line, if the performance of the line is not consistent or results are unexpected, if using more than one cell line, and before publication of the study.

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All clinical investigations must be conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki principles. For all manuscripts reporting data from studies involving human participants, formal review and approval by an appropriate institutional review board or ethics committee is required. For research involving animals, the authors should indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the standards set forth in the eighth edition of *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals_prepub.pdf; published by the National Academy of Sciences, The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.).

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Authors must clearly state the name of the approval committee, highlighting that legal and ethical approval was obtained prior to initiation of the research work carried out on animals, and that the experiments were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations stated below.

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- Trial registry name, registration identification number, and the URL for the registry should be included at the end of the abstract and also in the space provided on the online manuscript submission form. If your research

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- The manuscript must include a statement identifying the institutional and/or licensing committee that has approved the experiments, including any relevant details.
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- [1] Bard, M.; Woods, R.A.; Bartón, D.H.; Corrie, J.E.; Widdowson, D.A. Sterol mutants of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*: chromatographic analyses. *Lipids*, **1977**, *12*(8), 645-654.
- [2] Zhang, W.; Brombosz, S.M.; Mendoza, J.L.; Moore, J.S. A high-yield, one-step synthesis of o-phenylene ethynylene cyclic trimer via precipitation-driven alkyne metathesis. *J. Org. Chem.*, **2005**, *70*, 10198-10201.

Book Reference:

- [3] Crabtree, R.H. *The Organometallic Chemistry of the Transition Metals*, 3rd ed.; Wiley & Sons: New York, 2001.

Book Chapter Reference:

- [4] Wheeler, D.M.S.; Wheeler, M.M. D. Stereoselective Syntheses of Doxorubicin and Related Compounds In: *Studies in Natural Products Chemistry*; Atta-ur-Rahman, Ed.; Elsevier Science B. V: Amsterdam, **1994**; Vol. *14*, pp. 3-46.

Conference Proceedings:

- [5] Jakeman, D.L.; Withers, S.G. E. In: *Carbohydrate Bioengineering: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Proceedings of the 4th Carbohydrate Bioengineering Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden, June 10-13, 2001; Teeri, T.T.; Svensson, B.; Gilbert, H.J.; Feizi, T., Eds.; Royal Society of Chemistry: Cambridge, UK, **2002**; pp. 3-8.

URL(WebPage):

- [6] National Library of Medicine. Specialized Information Services: Toxicology and Environmental Health. sis.nlm.nih.gov/Tox/ToxMain.html (Accessed May 23, **2004**).

Patent:

- [7] Hoch, J.A.; Huang, S. Screening methods for the identification of novel antibiotics. U.S. Patent 6,043,045, March 28, **2000**.

Thesis:

- [8] Mackel, H. *Capturing the Spectra of Silicon Solar Cells*. PhD Thesis, The Australian National University: Canberra, December **2004**.

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- [9] Citations for articles/material published exclusively online or in open access (free-to-view), must contain the accurate Web addresses (URLs) at the end of the reference(s), except those posted on an author's Web site (unless editorially essential), *e.g.* 'Reference: Available from: URL'.

Some important points to remember:

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Appendices:

In case there is a need to present lengthy, but essential methodological details, use appendices, which can be a part of the article. An appendix must not exceed three pages (Times New Roman, 10 point fonts, 900 max. words per page). The information should be provided in a condensed form, ruling out the need of full sentences. A single appendix should be titled APPENDIX, while more than one can be titled APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, and so on.

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All authors must strictly follow the guidelines below for preparing illustrations for publication in *Endocrine, Metabolic and Immune Disorders-Drug Targets*. If the figures are found to be sub-standard, then the manuscripts will be rejected and the authors offered the option of figure improvement professionally by Eureka Science. The costs for such improvement will be charged to the authors.

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Line Art image type is normally an image based on lines and text. It does not contain tonal or shaded areas. The preferred file format should be TIFF or EPS, with the color mode being Monochrome 1-bit or RGB, in a resolution of 900-1200 dpi.

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- **TIFF**
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| | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
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| Bond spacing | 18% of width |
| Fixed length | 14.4 pt (0.500cm, 0.2in) |
| Bold width | 2.0 pt (0.071cm, 0.0278in) |
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| Margin width | 1.6 pt (0.096cm) |
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Text settings:

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| Font | Times New Roman |
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| | |
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Member of Cope



Apêndice(s)

Proposta de Registo Hospitalar Nacional de Dados

e-mail: carcinomaanaplasticotiroide@gmail.com

(base de dados fica acessível em modo Excel no Google Drive)

password: carcinomaanaplasticotiroide2018

preenchimento base de dados:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqUcZ_9XxhfSY8Kz7pARPMF-EuwAmYg3FC32wR6uvHAiuVtg/viewform?c=0&w=1

BASE DE DADOS CARCINOMA ANAPLÁSICO DA TIRÓIDE

Nº de processo:

Género

- 1-Masculino
- 2-Feminino

Data nascimento:

Ano de diagnóstico:

Raça:

- 1-caucasiana
- 2-negra
- 3-asiatica

Patologias crónicas:

- 1-Diabetes Mellitus
- 2-Antecedentes neoplásicos
- 3- Doenças auto-imunes
- 4- Outras

Patologia Tireoideia Prévia:

- 1-Hipertireoidismo
- 2-Hipotireoidismo
- 3-Bócio multinodular
- 4-Carcinoma diferenciado

Possíveis fatores de risco:

- 1-Medicação habitual com levotiroxina
- 2- Exposição profissional a químicos
- 3- Bócio multinodular
- 4- Baixo nível educacional
- 5- Menarca tardia
- 6- Primeira gestação em idade jovem
- 7- Tipo sanguíneo do grupo B
- 8- Carcinoma diferenciado da tiroide (coexistente ou prévio)
- 9- Antecedentes de neoplasias malignas não tireoideias
- 10- Diabetes Mellitus
- 11- Idade superior a 65 anos
- 12- Mutação TERT
- 13- Leucocitose

Principal sintoma de apresentação:

- 1-Tumefação cervical
- 2-Assintomático (achado acidental)
- 3-Disfonia
- 4-Disfagia

Paralisia pré-operatória de corda vocal

- 0 - Não
- 1 - Sim

Ecografia

- 0 – Sem ecografia
- 1 – Nódulo <4cm
- 2 – Nódulo > ou igual a 4cm
- 3 - Outro

Invasão extra tiroideia em ecografia:

- 0- Ausente
- 1- Presente

N+ (invasão ganglionar):

- 0- Ausente
- 1- Presente

Dimensão nódulo em eco:**Valor de TSH:****Valor de T3:****Valor de T4:****Anticorpos anti-tiroideus:**

- 0- Negativos
- 1- Positivos

Tomografia Computorizada

- 0- Não realizou
- 1- Realizou

Resultado de citologia/histologia:**Metastização à distância:**

- 0- Não
- 1- Mediastino
- 2- Pulmões
- 3- Pleura
- 4- Ossos
- 5- Outro

Mutações:

- 1- p53
- 2- BRAF V600E
- 3- TERT promotor
- 4- Família RAS

Tratamento multimodal:

- 0 - Não
- 1- Sim

Cirurgia

- 1- Não operado
- 2- Tireoidectomia total (TT)
- 3- Tireoidectomia total + esvaziamento compartimento central (ECC)
- 4- Tireoidectomia total + esvaziamento Comp lateral (ECL)
- 5- TT + ECC + ECL unilateral
- 6- TT + ECC + ECL bilateral

- 7- Traqueostomia
- 8- Colocação de Stent
- 9- Outra

Margens Cirurgicas

- 0-R0
- 1-R1
- 2-R2

Invasão linfovascular:

- 0 – Ausente
- 1 – Presente
- 2- Desconhecida

Gânglios linfáticos

- 0- Negativos
- 1- Positivos
- 2- Não examinados

Presença de outras neoplasias na peça:

- 0- Não
- 1- Sim

Radioterapia (dose):0- Não realizou

- 1- <45Gy
- 2- >45 Gy

Quimioterapia (selecionar todos os utilizados)

- 0- Não Realizou
- 1- Paclitaxel
- 2- Docetaxel
- 3- Doxorubicina
- 4- Cisplatina
- 5- Carboplatina

Novos alvos terapêuticos:

- 1- Sorafenib (inibidor multikinases)
- 2- Lenvatinib (inibidor multikinases)
- 3- Pazopanib (inibidor multikinases)
- 4- Vemurafenib (inibidor BRAF)
- 5- Everolimus (inibidor mTOR)
- 6- Efatutazona (agonista do PPAR γ)

Data de falecimento:

Agradecimentos

Agradeço a todos os que em algum momento me ajudaram a alcançar este objetivo.

Um agradecimento especial à minha orientadora, a Mestre Patrícia Andrea Ferreira, por todo o apoio, em particular pela disponibilidade desde o primeiro momento. Agradeço todas as dicas e sugestões, desde a escolha do tema ao finalizar desta monografia.

Muito Obrigada!