Differentiated thyroid cancer with liver metastases: lessons learned from managing a series of 14 patients

Liver metastases from differentiated thyroid carcinoma (LMDTC) are rare and usually occur in disseminated metastatic disease. The aim of this study was to review the diagnosis and management of LMDTC. Between 1995 and 2011, 14 patients with a mean age of 59.7 years (+/-10.2) were treated for LMDTC. Data were retrospectively reviewed and analyzed. Seven patients had distant metastases at diagnosis, including 2 with synchronous liver lesions. The average time of onset of LMDTC from initial diagnosis was 52.2 months (+/49.5). All LMDTC were discovered during routine radiologic monitoring. Histologic analysis confirmed LMDTC in 5 patients. Eight patients received tyrosine kinase inhibitors, 1 patient underwent resection of their LMDTC after chemotherapy. Six patients (disseminated metastases, significant comorbidities) did not receive any specific treatment. The median survival after diagnosis of LMDTC was 17.4 months (+/-3.3): 23.6 months (+/-2.9) for patients who underwent chemotherapy versus 3.9 months (+/-0.9) for patients who did not receive any specific treatment (P < 0.001).

Developing DTC liver metastasis is a very poor prognostic sign. Chemotherapy by TKIs, especially, hold promise in the cure of LMDTC for selected patients.
Titre abrégé Differentiated Thyroid Cancer With Liver Metastases
Autre titre Int Surg
Identifiant (ID) PubMed 25785333 [15]

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[14] http://dx.doi.org/10.9738/INTSURG-D-14-00026.1

Publié sur Okina (http://okina.univ-angers.fr)