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SPECIAL TOPIC PREPARED BY: Ch. DERVENIS
Pancreatic Cancer: An update

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Present position:

Head – 1st Department of Surgery – Konstantopoulion "Aghia Olga", General Hospital Athens Greece.

Education:

University of Athens, Medical School.

Surgical Training:

1st Surgical Department – University of Athens 1982-1986.

Post-surgical training

- 1986-1987: Biliary and Pancreatic Surgery St James Hospital London
- 1990: Surgical Endoscopy University of Hamburg Germany
- 1995: Pancreatic Surgery University of Bern Switzerland

Medical Thesis from University of Athens – Greece

The role of phospholipase A2 in staging of acute pancreatitis

Visiting Professor in Surgery

- Mayo Clinic – USA, Medical College of Georgia – USA, Universities of Bern – Seitzerland, Bergen – Norway, Lung – Sweden YALE University School of Medicine and Verona – Italy
- Member in several medical societies. Member of the council of International Association of Pancretology, European Digestive Surgery and International Hepato-Pancreatic-Biliary Association (Scientific Committee).
- Member of the editorial board in various national and international journals including British Journal of Surgery, International Journal of Pancreatology, Nutrition, Digestive Surgery, Annals of Gastroenterology, International Journal for Surgical Sciences
- Member of international clinical research groups (European study Group for Pancreatic Cancer – European Quality of Life in Pancreatic Cancer Study Group).

Publications

- Numerous full publications in peer-reviewed International and Greek Journals
- 13 book chapters
- 5 Greek monographs
- 2 Books
  - Advances in Pancreatic Disease (Thieme Verlag Germany 1998)
  - Pancreatic Tumors: Achievements and Prospective (Thieme Verlag Germany 2000)
- 30 scientific lectures in international meetings and in Universities as invited speaker

Main Scientific Interest

- Pancreatic Diseases, GI Surgical Oncology, Nutrition

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INTRODUCTION

Pancreatic cancer is the one of the most aggressive tumor in humans. It represents the forth-common cause of cancer-related deaths and the second most common cause of death due to gastrointestinal malignancies. There is an increasing incidence of the disease affecting 8-12 per 100000 population per year. There is no convincing data if this is real or a result of better diagnosis that reflects advances in imaging during the last decade.

Despite all efforts prognosis remains dismal and the actual 5-year survival is almost zero. The overall survival reported from different centers is around 10% to 14%. Oncological studies have shown that radiotherapy is ineffective and chemotherapy has no role as a definitive treatment of this cancer. Surgery remains the only chance for cure in pancreas cancer. The failure of surgery to improve substantially survival is due to the fact that only 10% of the patients presented with the disease are candidates for resection. Despite that improvements in surgical technique have led to a dramatically decrease of mortality (<3-5%) and morbidity (<20-40%). Because of this there is an increasing trend for centralization of pancreatic cancer surgery in centers of expertise worldwide. In a recent multicenter European study (ESPAC-1) a promising role of adjuvant chemotherapy after curative resection has reported. So, after all that pessimistic realities, what is the future. The increasing collaboration between basic scientists and clinicians have revealed that pancreatic cancer harbor a variety of genetic alterations, such as alterations of the tumor suppressor genes p16, p53 and DPC4 as well as the K-ras oncogene and the metastatic gene KAI1. All this information can help us to redefine our therapeutic strategies and to improve survival, in the years to come. In this special section of the journal, basic scientists and clinicians review the current knowledge in different aspects of the disease and give ideas for the future perspective. I believe that this will by valuable to the readers.

Christos Dervenis, MD
Guest Editor