CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM: EDITORIAL

Imaging: The cornerstone of pancreatic tumor management

This special issue of Diagnostic & Interventional Imaging contains articles focusing on pancreatic tumors. The French Society of Abdominal Imaging (Société d'imagerie abdominale [SIADJ]) has selected this specific topic because this condition has dramatically changed in terms of management and understanding in recent years.

During recent years, pancreatic adenocarcinoma has been subjected to an increased incidence. This tumor, which still has a very poor prognosis, is now increasing in incidence by approximately 1% annually, although there are no clear explanations for this rise. As such it is predicted that by 2030, pancreatic cancer will be the first or second cause of cancer deaths in France, if no effective treatment is found between now and then. This is therefore a public health issue, which radiologists should understand.

The first article from the Nantes group reviews current knowledge of pancreatic adenocarcinoma. It is focused on diagnostic imaging methods with the important details that need to be included in the radiology report in order to give the best available treatment to patients on the basis of the decision made during multidisciplinary meetings [1].

Assessing response to therapy using imaging is a critical issue and the Bordeaux group [2] describes the recent advances that have been made in this field and how to write radiology reports providing pertinent information. This assessment is a major problem as chemoradiotherapy achieves a visible treatment response in 20% of cases. It is essential to be able to evaluate response to therapy in order to reconsider the possibility of surgery.

Thirdly, the Clichy group describes the latest advances on the risk factors and lesions preceding pancreatic adenocarcinoma [3]. Recent advances have been made in terms of physiopathology of this malignancy and the role of radiology, although still modest, is beginning to become better understood. This is therefore an extremely important article, considering that some features can suggest an early pancreatic tumor.

Other far rare tumors are also described in the pancreas. The Gustave-Roussy Institute group offers a review article describing the imaging presentation of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors, which are the second most common solid pancreatic tumors [4]. Imaging has a major role to play in both diagnosis and treatment strategy, and radiologists must be familiar with the imaging appearances of these rare tumors. Other rare tumor types have also been described. A review article written by the Lariboisière group gives an overview of these rare tumors, which are obviously less straightforward to diagnose but need to be considered [5].

Cystic lesions represent another category of pancreatic tumors. A specific article is dedicated to this category of pancreatic tumor as they are occasionally difficult to diagnose [6]. There have been major advances in this subject in recent years, in particular regarding their classification with the introduction in the 1990s and after of the intraductal papillary mucinous pancreatic neoplasm (IPMN), the Frantz tumors or rarer lesions such as cystic acinar transformation.

Another article focuses on endoscopic ultrasound [7], an investigation which has dramatically changed the management of pancreatic lesions as it allows depicting tiny details due to the immediate vicinity of the gland which may sometimes be difficult to see on imaging because of their deep location. Radiologists need to fully understand the role of endoscopic ultrasound. Although it is an invasive test, it needs to be performed as a second line investigation in the diagnosis and assessment of some tumors or lesions, which cannot be formally defined by cross-sectional imaging modalities.

Finally, this issue ends up with an article about pancreatic electroporation [8]. Electroporation is a new technique for the treatment of pancreatic tumors, and although its role in the management of pancreatic cancer has not been completely established, this article reviews current knowledge and the hopes this technique may bring.

This issue therefore represents the most exhaustive possible review of the most recent knowledge available about pancreatic tumors. The SIAD, which has brought together this issue, hopes that these articles will be useful to the readers in their everyday practice. The radiologist and

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imaging in general, now play a key role both in the diagnosis and the assessment of treatment of pancreatic tumors. I sincerely thank all of the authors for their great contribution to this outstanding piece of work.

Disclosure of interest

The author declares that he has no competing interest.

References


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