

Posttherapeutic follow-up of colorectal cancer patients treated with curative intent

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Background and aim: Based on published data showing that despite a curative intent treatment approximately 50% of colorectal cancer (CRC) patients will present with disease relapse, and on the results of meta-analysis which showed improved survival by using intense posttreatment follow-up programs, we aimed in the present study to evaluate the additional benefit of routine abdominal ultrasound in the follow-up program of CRC patients.

Material and method: We conducted a prospective study, on 107 patients diagnosed with stage III CRC. Patients follow-up included: history and physical examination, CEA determination, and abdomino-pelvic US every 3 months.

Results: Recurrent disease was observed in 36% of cases after a median follow-up interval of 24 months. The liver was the most frequent isolated site of disease recurrence (62%). Serum CEA level increased in most patients (69%) with recurrent disease. Also, a high percentage of relapses was diagnosed by routine abdominal US (62%).

Conclusions: Our study illustrates the benefit of intense follow-up (CEA, abdominal US) after curative treatment of CRC.

Key words: colorectal cancer, recurrence, metastases, carcino-embryonic antigen, abdominal ultrasound

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