



A remark on: do all the European surgeons perform the same D2? The need for D2 audit in Europe

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We read the article by Bencivenga et al. entitled ‘Do all the European surgeons perform the same D2? The need of D2 audit in Europe’ [1] with interest. We congratulate the authors on their novel way of comparing the different D2 dissections in association with the number of retrieved lymph nodes.

Nevertheless, we are concerned with certain aspects of the methodology and the conclusions that they draw from the results.

The authors concluded different approaches to D2 lymphadenectomy by European surgeons which may be responsible for the different outcomes observed in patients with gastric cancer across Europe. However, this review did not contain any short- or long-term results of patients with gastric cancer from the mentioned studies. Thus we find it essential to respond and supplement their statement.

Principally, we have to declare that it is difficult to find an association between excised nodes and survival based on different studies with different series characteristics. Due to these different characteristics, the rate of T1 cases varied from 7.5% [2] to 29.1% [3]. Similarly, the rate of N0 cases varied from 14.4% [4] to 49.1% [5].

However, having evaluated the most important outcome with the available survival data, we found the 5-year overall survival (OS) rate to be 64.2% in the Italian study with D2 dissection, where the number of retrieved lymph nodes (LN) was 37 [3]. Sakcak et al. dissected 23.5 LNs with a 50% 5-year OS rate in node-negative patients, 31.9% in N1 and 2.7% in N2 patients, respectively [2]. In the Turkish study, Bilici found a 41.1% 3-year OS rate with a median of 27 harvested LNs [4] while Diaz de Liano proved a 52.3% 5-year OS rate with 32.5 examined LNs [6]. Overall survival

at 5 years was 61.2% with 25.9 evaluated LNs in Muratore’s study [5]. With 37 harvested LNs, Alakus demonstrated a 60% 5-year OS rate in patients without any LN metastasis and 39% in node-positive patients, but 13% in pN+ patients with extracapsular involvement [7]. The Hungarian study’s overall 5-year survival rate was 55.5% with 19.9 examined LNs [8].

Analyzing these data, no obvious connection was found between the overall survival and the number of retrieved LNs. Therefore, we suggest that the readers should keep these findings in mind.

On the other hand, we absolutely agree with the statement about the need to standardize the practice of D2 gastrectomy in Europe. Moreover, routine application of immediate dissection and collection of lymph nodes by separate stations on the fresh specimen after D2 dissection would improve the node retrieval by pathologists.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Research involving human participants and/or animals The research does not involve human participants and/or animals.

Informed consent There was no need to get informed consent.

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