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Elizaveta Ragulin Coyne

University of Massachusetts Medical School, elizaveta.ragulincoyne@umassmemorial.org

Jillian K. Smith

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Jillian.Smith2@umassmemorial.org

Elan R. Witkowski

University of Massachusetts Medical School, elan.witkowski@umassmed.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Presenter Information

Elizaveta Ragulin Coyne, Jillian K. Smith, Elan R. Witkowski, Sing Chau Ng, Theodore P. McDade, Shimul A. Shah, and Jennifer F. Tseng

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IS PANCREATIC CANCER PALLIATABLE? A NATIONAL STUDY

Elizaveta Ragulin Coyne¹ MD MHS, Jillian Smith K¹ MD MPH, Elan R. Witkowski¹ MD, Sing-Chau Ng¹ MS, Theodore McDade¹ MD, Shimul A. Shah¹ MD, Jennifer F Tseng² MD.

¹University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Surgery, Surgical Outcomes Analysis & Research (SOAR), Worcester, MA; ²Department of Surgery, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

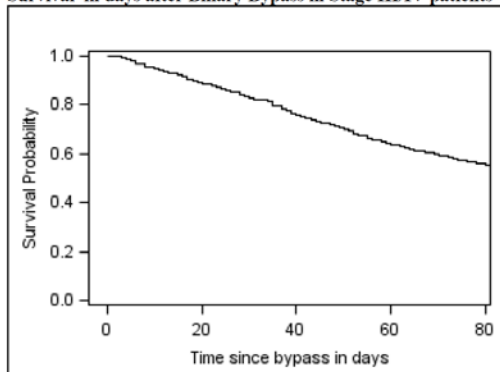
Contact: RagulinE@umassmemorial.org

Background: Pancreatic cancer is frequently diagnosed at advanced stages where potentially curative resection is no longer possible. Palliative procedures can be performed; however, results on a national level are unknown. This study examines pancreatic cancer patients who underwent potentially palliative procedures including gastric bypass, biliary bypass surgery, celiac block, biliary stent, gastrostomy or jejunostomy, and examines post-intervention complications and 30-day mortality.

Methods: SEER-Medicare 1991-2005 was used to identify patients with Stage 3-4 pancreatic cancer. Complication rates were calculated including post-op infection, myocardial infarction, aspiration pneumonia, DVT/PE, pulmonary compromise, gastric bleed, acute renal failure, and reoperation. Kaplan-Meier survival analysis was performed. Finally, Cox proportional hazards modeling was used to control for the effects of age, sex, race, stage, and resection.

Results: Of 22,314 pancreatic cancer patients, 858 (3.9%) patients were Stage 3, and 11,149 (50.0%) stage 4. Post-procedure median survival for all patients is approximately two months, with longest survival for biliary bypass patients (3.2mo, 95% CI(2.9-3.7)), and lowest survival for jejunostomy 1.3 mo

Survival in days after Biliary Bypass in Stage III/IV patients



(1.2-1.5) and gastrostomy 1.5 mo (1.4-1.8). Post-procedure 30-day mortality was highest for gastrostomy patients at 41.5%; followed by jejunostomy (39.1%), celiac plexus block (30.0%), gastric bypass (23.8%), biliary bypass (17.8%), and biliary stent (21.2%). The rate of complications averaged 40%, with highest rate for gastrostomy (47.4%) and gastric bypass (45.3%) and lowest for celiac plexus block (29.3%). Stage 4 disease was an

independent predictor of death for patients undergoing five out of six procedures.

Conclusion: We found that morbidity and mortality of palliative procedures in unresectable pancreatic cancer is high, especially in stage 4 patients. Further studies need to be conducted to identify patients who will have sufficient expected post-procedure survival to benefit from these palliative interventions.