Does Every Patient Need Colonoscopy Follow-up for Diverticulitis?

Rachel Ackerman
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

*Et al.*

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Methods

• The electronic medical record was searched for patients with colonoscopy performed for diverticulitis in the past five years.
• 521 charts were screened, 136 with CT-proven diverticulitis and sufficient documentation were included.
• History, imaging, colonoscopy findings, and pathology were reviewed.
• A descriptive analysis was performed and patient subgroups were compared using Fisher’s exact test.

Background

• The American College of Gastroenterology recommends colonoscopy as follow-up after an episode of diverticulitis.
• Diverticulitis has been associated with the diagnosis of colon cancer.
• There is limited data on the yield of colonoscopy in this setting.
• Studies suggest that colonoscopy may only be warranted after episodes of complicated diverticulitis, which are associated with a higher likelihood of the presence of occult colon cancer.

Project Goals

• The objective is to retrospectively examine the results of colonoscopy for follow-up of diverticulitis at our center.
• We are specifically looking for newly diagnosed carcinoma of the colon.
• This may help to develop future guidelines for follow-up.

Results

• Two adenocarcinomas of the sigmoid colon were diagnosed after follow-up colonoscopy in 136 diverticulitis patients (1.5%).
• Both were diagnosed after uncomplicated diverticulitis, and neither had previous colonoscopies.
• Both localized to the same area as the diverticulitis.
• There was no significant difference between rates of carcinoma diagnosed among subgroups examined.

Conclusions

• We believe colonoscopy should still be pursued after any episode of diverticulitis to rule out occult colon cancer.
• More evidence is needed before recommending changes to the current guidelines.
• We are looking back further in the electronic medical record to increase our sample size.

Acknowledgments

Rachel Ackerman, BA1, Justin Yamin, MD2, Anne Foley, EdM2, Louise Maranda, PhD3, Benjamin Hyatt, MD2
1University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA
2Department of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Worcester, MA
3Department of Quantitative Health Sciences, UMMS, Worcester, MA