Does Every Patient Need Colonoscopy Follow-up for Diverticulitis?

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Keywords
diverticulitis, colon cancer, colonoscopy, guidelines

Comments
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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.

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.

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.

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