



Advancements and Safety of Endoscopic Pancreatic Stenting in Pancreatic Cancer

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DESCRIPTION

Pancreatic cancer arises when malignant cells form in the tissues of the pancreas, an organ responsible for producing enzymes essential for digestion and hormones that regulate blood sugar levels. The disease often presents late, resulting in limited treatment options and a bleak prognosis. Surgical resection is considered the only curative approach, but it is feasible in only a small percentage of patients. Other treatment modalities, such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy, are primarily palliative and focus on symptom management and disease control.

Pancreatic stenting with endoscopy

Endoscopic pancreatic stenting is a minimally invasive procedure that aims to relieve symptoms and improve outcomes for patients with pancreatic cancer. It involves the placement of a stent—a small, hollow tube—within the pancreatic or biliary ducts to alleviate obstructions caused by the tumor. This technique can be performed during Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) or Endoscopic Ultra-Sound (EUS) procedures.

Benefits and applications of endoscopic pancreatic stenting

The endoscopic pancreatic stenting benefits and applications are as mentioned below:

Symptom relief and quality of life enhancement: Endoscopic pancreatic stenting provides effective relief from symptoms associated with pancreatic cancer, such as jaundice, abdominal pain, and digestive disturbances. By improving bile and pancreatic duct drainage, stenting reduces the obstruction-induced symptoms and enhances patients' quality of life.

Facilitation of chemotherapy and radiotherapy: Stenting plays a significant role in overcoming biliary obstruction and allowing effective delivery of chemotherapy or radiotherapy. By relieving jaundice, it improves liver function and optimizes the tolerability and efficacy of systemic treatments, thus enhancing therapeutic outcomes.

Bridge to surgery: In cases where curative surgery is feasible, endoscopic pancreatic stenting can serve as a bridge to surgical resection. By alleviating biliary obstruction, stenting can improve patients' general condition and liver function, making them more suitable candidates for surgery.

Procedural considerations and complications

While endoscopic pancreatic stenting is generally safe, it is important to consider potential complications. These may include stent migration, infection, pancreatitis, bleeding, and perforation. However, with the advancement of endoscopic techniques and the expertise of skilled endoscopists, the rate of complications has significantly decreased, making the procedure relatively safe.

Current research and future perspectives

Current research efforts focus on refining endoscopic pancreatic stenting techniques, evaluating the long-term outcomes, and identifying patient selection criteria for optimal outcomes. Additionally, ongoing studies explore the use of drug-eluting stents, which can release chemotherapeutic agents directly into the tumor site, providing localized therapy. The integration of endoscopic techniques with other emerging treatments, such as immunotherapy, holds promise for further improving outcomes in pancreatic cancer.

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