

GASTRIC CANCER IN KARACHI - SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Pages with reference to book, From 219 To 220

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INTRODUCTION

Differences in the incidence of gastric cancer in the developing and developed world may be due to differences in the frequency of various risk factors.¹⁻⁶ This study reports some preliminary observations in patients with gastric malignancy seen at this Centre.

PATIENTS, METHODS AND RESULTS

The medical records of 110 cases of gastric cancer seen over a period of 9 years (1979-87) were reviewed. Detailed clinical and endoscopic data was analysed. Those with incomplete record and negative biopsy were excluded leaving 53 histologically confirmed cases of adenocarcinoma for further analysis.

The age ranged from 19-85 years (mean 48.4) and the male to female ratio was 23:1.

Sixtythree percent of patients were migrants from India and 37% were born in Pakistan. Of those born in Pakistan 65% had their origin in North West Frontier Province (69.2%) and Baluchistan (30.8%).

The lesions of Pyloroantrum accounted for 56.7% followed by body of the stomach (28.3%) and cardia (15%). Ulcerated lesions were seen in 35.8%, fungating in 30.1%, diffuse in 13.2% and polypoid in 11.3% of patients. In the remaining 9.6% appearance was not described.

COMMENTS

Mean age (48.4 years) of the patients was less but male to female ratio (2.3:1) and preponderance of ulcerated and pyloroantral lesions is similar to other reported series.^{2,7,8}

Of those born in Pakistan 65% patients has their origin in NWFP or Baluchistan indicating a greater exposure or increased susceptibility to gastric carcinogens.

Nitrate rich well water is used for drinking and irrigation in mountainous country. Nitrosamines from nitrate rich preserved meat^{4,9,12} and high benzpyrene content of the smoked meat^{4,6,9} consumed in the northern areas are potent carcinogens. Pickles contain nitrosamine and secondary amine contents are high in cereals and tea.⁹ Potatoes¹³ and root vegetables¹⁴ an important source of carbohydrate are also known to be associated with gastric cancer. Dietary habits in high incidence areas indicate increased consumption of potential carcinogens. In order to confirm these observations, a detailed study is needed on the frequency of gastric cancer and its association with local dietary habits in various regions of Pakistan.

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