

Pericardial Mesothelioma: Diagnostic and Therapeutic Management, a Population-Based Study in Italy

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Background

Pericardial mesothelioma (PM) is an extremely rare cancer with a poor prognosis and no consensus on diagnostic and therapeutic management. We conducted a registry-based study on PM cases in Italy diagnosed between 1993 and 2021.

Methods

Based on data from the Italian National Mesothelioma Registry (ReNaM), we performed a descriptive analysis of PM cases including clinical presentation, diagnostic work-up, asbestos exposure, and therapeutic management. Overall survival was calculated. Hazard ratios (HRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for selected variables were estimated with univariate and multivariate Cox models.

Results

We identified 72 cases (46 men and 26 women). Median age was 66 years (range 22-89). The most frequent histological subtypes were epithelioid and unspecified mesothelioma. Almost two-thirds of cases had been exposed to asbestos. The most common clinical presentation was pericardial effusion. Overall median survival was 2.8 months (95% CI 1.2-6.6) and older age at diagnosis was a negative prognostic factor. Clinical and treatment data were available for 47 patients (65%). Approximately one out of two patients underwent surgery (palliative, in one-third of cases). Adjuvant therapy was administered to seven patients (15%). In cases with treatment information, sarcomatoid subtype (HR 2.74, 95% CI: 1.06-7.06) was a negative prognostic factor; adjuvant therapy was associated with better survival (HR 0.38, 95% CI 0.14-1.02), but confounding by indication cannot be excluded.

Conclusions

We confirmed the very poor prognosis of PM. An international network collecting PM cases with treatment information is needed to improve patient quality of life and survival.

Keywords: asbestos; cancer registry; pericardial mesothelioma; survival; treatment.

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