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Short Communication

The Islet Cell Carcinoma of the Pancreas

Carolina Hill*

Department of Endocrine Oncology, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands

DESCRIPTION

Neuroendocrine neoplasms that develop from cells of the endocrine (hormonal) and neural systems within the pancreas are known as Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumours (PanNETs, PETs or PNETs), sometimes known as islet cell tumours or pancreatic endocrine tumours. About one-third of Gastroenteropancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumours (GEP-NETs) are panNETs, a subtype of neuroendocrine tumour. While some PanNETs are cancerous, most are benign. Traditionally, islet cell carcinoma has been used to describe PanNET tumours. The common type of pancreatic cancer, called adenocarcinomas, which develops in the exocrine pancreas, is quite different from panNETs. PanNETs make up about 1%-2% of clinically relevant pancreatic neoplasms [1].

Types of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors

Tumor grade: The tumour grade of pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumours (NETs) indicates how quickly the cancer is likely to advance and spread. Grade 1 neuroendocrine tumours, also known as low-grade or well-differentiated tumours, have cells that resemble normal cells more and do not grow rapidly. Tumours classified as grade 2 (also known as intermediate-grade or moderately differentiated) contain characteristics that fall between those of low- and high-grade tumours. Cells in grade 3 neuroendocrine tumours, also known as high-grade or poorly differentiated tumours, have a very aberrant appearance and are growing more quickly [2,3]. Pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours are cancers that are grade 1 or 2. These cancers can spread to different places of the body but typically progress slowly. Neuroendocrine Carcinomas (NECs) of the pancreas are grade 3 cancers. These malignancies can spread to other body areas and have a tendency to grow and spread swiftly.

Tumor function: Additionally, pancreatic NETs are classified as functioning or non-functioning based on whether they produce hormones that induce symptoms. Half of the pancreatic NETs that are functional produce hormones that are released into the blood and result in symptoms. These are referred to as operating NETs. Each one contains the name of the hormone that the tumour cells produce [4].

- Insulin-producing cells are the source of insulinomas.
- Cells that produce glucagon are the source of glucagonomas.
- Gastrinomas are produced by gastrin-producing cells.
- Somatostatin-producing cells are the source of somatostatinomas.
- IPomas are produced by the cells that produce Vasoactive Intestinal Peptide (VIP).
- Adrenocorticotropic Hormone (ACTH)-producing cells are the source of tumours that secrete ACTH.
- Insulinomas make for up to 70% of all functional NETs. The remaining kinds are considerably less typical.

NETs that are not functioning: These tumours do not produce enough extra hormone to manifest symptoms. They frequently develop into fairly enormous sizes before they are discovered since they don't produce excess hormones that result in symptoms. Abdominal (belly) pain, a lack of appetite, and weight loss are signs that they are getting too big [5,6].

Carcinoid tumours: Although they seldom ever begin in the pancreas, these NETs are far more common in other regions of the digestive system. These tumours produce serotonin often [7].

Signs and symptoms

The effects of a larger PanNET tumour may manifest locally or at a metastasis, resulting in symptoms including diarrhoea, indigestion, or yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, as well as abdomen or back pain or pressure. About 40% of PanNETS are classified as "functional" because they exhibit symptoms caused by oversecretion of hormones or active polypeptides; the symptoms depend on the kind of hormone produced, as will be covered below. Up to 60% of PanNETs are nonsecretory or nonfunctional, meaning that no secretion occurs or that only a small amount or a specific type of product—for example, Pancreatic Polypeptide (PPoma), chromogranin A, or neurotensin—is produced, even though blood levels may be increased [8,9].

Correspondence to: Dr. Carolina Hill, Department of Endocrine Oncology, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands, E-mail: cill@ol.nl

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Treatment

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a number of targeted therapy drugs for PanNETs due to enhanced PFS.

Everolimus (Afinitor) is approved for the treatment of individuals with incurable, locally progressed, or metastatic pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours. Everolimus's efficacy and safety in treating carcinoid tumours are unknown.

Sunitinib (Sutent) is approved to treat patients with locally advanced or metastatic illness who have progressing, well-differentiated pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours. The European Commission has also given Sutent authorisation to treat well-differentiated, metastatic, unresectable pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours in adults with disease progression [10]. Sunitinib treatment improved progression-free survival (11.4 months *vs.* 5.5 months), overall survival (9.3% *vs.* 0.0%), and the objective response rate (9.3% *vs.* 0.0%) when compared to placebo in a phase III study of well differentiated pNET patients who had worsened within the previous 12 months (either advanced or metastatic disease).

CONCLUSION

PanNETs are neuroendocrine neoplasms that develop from cells of the endocrine and neural systems within the pancreas, making up 1%–2% of clinically relevant pancreatic neoplasms. The FDA has approved targeted therapy drugs for PanNETs due to improved PFS. Everolimus and Sunitinib are approved for the treatment of individuals with incurable, locally progressed, or metastatic pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours. Pancreas neuroendocrine tumors represent a complex field in oncology, necessitating a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. With advances in diagnostic techniques, personalized treatment strategies, people can strive to improve the outcomes and provide better care for patients affected by this challenging condition.

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