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<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>泌尿器科紀要 (2004), 50(7): 457-462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date</td>
<td>2004-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2433/113413">http://hdl.handle.net/2433/113413</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Departmental Bulletin Paper</td>
</tr>
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<td>Textversion</td>
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Kyoto University
CLINICAL COURSE IN PATIENTS WITH PERCUTANEOUS NEPHROSTOMY FOR HYDRONEPHROSIS ASSOCIATED WITH ADVANCED CANCER

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We investigated the clinical courses of 33 patients with advanced malignancies who has undergone percutaneous nephrostomy (PNS) to clarify the efficacy and validity of PNS and evaluated the results according to the type of catheter. The pigtail, Malecot and balloon catheters were used. All the catheters were exchanged every 4 weeks, if necessary for larger ones. The site of the primary disease, preoperative performance status, duration of time spent at home after PNS construction, number of times the catheter was changed, type and size of the catheter and complications associated with PNS were compiled.

The median overall survival was 3.0 months. Twenty-three patients (69.7%) were never discharged from hospital. Thirty patients died of their primary diseases. The median overall survival of patients with cancers of the upper gastrointestinal system, large bowel, urological organs and gynecologic organs were 1.5, 5.5, 3.0 and 3.0 months, respectively (p=0.0116). Eighteen patients (54.5%) experienced complications such as pyelonephritis, obstruction, dislodgement and so on.

PNS is an appropriate urinary diversion for patients with hydronephrosis with advanced cancer and unilateral construction is effective for treating end-stage obstructive renal failure. However, PNS rarely improves the patient's quality of life and the risk of complications is unavoidable regardless of the type of catheter used.

Key words: Percutaneous nephrostomy, Malignant disease, Ureteral obstruction, Hydronephrosis, Renal failure

INTRODUCTION

Urologists are often consulted concerning patients with ureteral obstruction secondary to advanced malignant diseases. Such patients tend to have poor prognoses owing to the primary diseases\(^1\); therefore palliative procedures for urinary drainage are performed to relieve symptoms and to avoid lethal status caused by hydronephrosis. Percutaneous nephrostomy (PNS) is commonly performed for these patients when the transurethral procedure of indwelling ureteral stents is not successful. While PNS is a safe and effective procedure\(^2\), the efficacy for these patients is still unclear. Patients with PNS often suffer from complications related to catheters that can affect their quality of life. Seventy percent of patients with PNS placed for more than one month experienced complications\(^3\); therefore it is questionable whether PNS is appropriate for permanent urinary diversion. In addition various types of catheters such as the pigtail, Malecot and nephrostomy balloon are commonly used for PNS. However, it is unclear which type is the best for such patients. We investigated the clinical courses of patients with advanced malignancies who underwent PNS to clarify the efficacy and validity of this management. We also evaluated the effects of the type and size of catheter.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Thirty-three patients with advanced malignant diseases underwent percutaneous nephrostomy as a permanent urinary diversion for hydronephrosis which occurred due to metastasis or invasion of the primary disease from January 1991 to May 2003 at our institution. The procedure was performed to prevent the progression to lethal renal failure in 15 patients (45.5%), to cure uremia in 8 (24.2%), to relieve symptoms such as fever and back pain in 4 (12.1%), to perform chemotherapy with nephrotoxic agents in 4 (12.1%) and to examine the cause of hydronephrosis in 2 (6.1%). Nephrostomy was placed bilaterally only in patients whose serum creatinin did not sufficiently decrease or whose symptoms were not relieved after unilateral placement. Catheters were placed by ultrasound-guided percutaneous puncture using an 18 or 22-gauge needle followed by insertion of a guide wire and dilation of the tracts. Polyurethane pigtail catheters (Cook Urological, Spencer, USA) were used (8.3 Fr in 16 cases and 10 Fr in 1 case) for initial placement and 12 Fr all silicone malecot catheters (Create Medic,
Yokohama, Japan) were used in 16 cases. Some of
them were changed to all silicone nephrostomy
balloon catheters (Create Medic, Yokohama, Japan)
2 to 4 weeks later. In principle, all the catheters were
changed every 4 weeks, if necessary to larger ones.
The site of the primary disease, preoperative perfor-
ance status, pre- and postoperative serum creatin-
in, duration of time spent at home after PNS
construction, number of times the catheter was
changed, type and size of catheter and complications
associated with PNS were compiled. Performance
status was evaluated using Koyama-Saito criteria.
Survival rate was analyzed by the Kaplan-Meier
method and compared with the log-rank test
according to the site of the primary disease. The
difference between pre- and postoperative serum
creatin in was evaluated using the Wilcoxon signed-
ranks test. Differences with a p<0.05 were consid-
ered statistically significant.

RESULTS
Characteristics of the patients are shown in Table 1.
Median overall survival duration after construction of
the PNS was 3.0 months. The gastrointestinal
system was the most frequent site of primary disease.
In 2 cases of unidentified primary disease with
peritonitis carcinomatosis, the origin was considered
to be gynecological cancer from the clinical features.
The mean serum creatinin level before PNS
construction was 3.60 mg/dl. Of 30 patients with
bilateral hydronephrosis 25 underwent nephrostomy
unilaterally and 5 bilaterally. Of 3 patients with a
solitary kidney, one had a contralateral contracted
kidney and 2 previously underwent nephroure-
terectomy for urothelial cancer of the upper urinary
tract. Twenty-three patients (69.7%) could not be
discharged from hospital after placement of the
nephrostomy. Thirty patients (90.9%) died during
the follow-up period. Of them only one died of
complications associated with the nephrostomy,
sepsis due to pyelonephritis related to the indwelling
catheter.

Fig. 1 shows the Kaplan-Meier overall survival.
The median overall survival of patients with cancer of
the upper gastrointestinal system including gastric,
 bile duct and pancreas, large bowel, urological and
gynecologic organ cancers were 1.5, 5.5, 3.0 and 3.0
months, respectively. The survival duration of the
patient with lung cancer was 2.5 months. Patients
with cancer of the upper gastrointestinal system had a
significantly shorter survival duration than patients
with other primary diseases (p=0.0116).
The serum creatinin level was significantly
improved after the construction of PNS (p<0.001, Fig. 2). In 4 patients who presented with fever or
back pain preoperatively, all the symptoms were
improved postoperatively. All 4 patients could
receive chemotherapy as planned preoperatively.

Table 2 shows the number of times catheters were
changed, types of catheters that were used, and
complications associated with nephrostomy. A 14
Fr nephrostomy balloon catheter was used most
frequently. Overall 18 patients (54.5%) experienced
complications. Pyelonephritis and catheter obstruc-
tion were representative complications, of which 13
and 11 episodes were observed, respectively.

DISCUSSION
Patients with hydronephrosis associated with
advanced cancer tend to have a poor general status
and other metastatic lesions. Therefore palliative
procedures of urinary diversion are commonly
performed. Most urologists try intraureteral
stenting as the first choice, which is likely to fail for
patients with extrinsic ureteral obstruction. Stenting also results in a high rate of urinary tract
The median survival of patients with PNS for advanced cancer has been reported to be 13 weeks\(^5\) and 112 days\(^6\), both similar to our result. None of the patients died of obstructive renal failure. Although some patients have a relatively long survival, the survival period is difficult to predict. We believe that aggressive procedures of urinary diversion are not necessary in most cases as described by Lev-Chelouche et al.\(^6\) Unilateral PNS is effective for treating life-threatening obstructive renal failure. Bilateral drainage can improve renal function more\(^6\), and may be necessary when the patient is to receive anti-cancer chemotherapy with nephrotoxic agents.

In this study, although none of the patients died of renal failure, survival could be prolonged for only a few weeks for most patients. In terms of survival prolongation, construction of a PNS may not be beneficial for all patients. On the other hand, all 4 patients could receive the planned anti-cancer chemotherapy and symptoms associated with hydronephrosis were relieved owing to construction of the PNS; therefore, PNS can be beneficial in such cases.

In previous studies there was no difference in survival duration according to the primary disease\(^7\). On the other hand, patients with carcinomatosis had a particularly poor prognosis\(^5\). In patients with intrapelvic malignancies, local invasion or lymph node metastasis may cause hydronephrosis, while hydronephrosis with upper gastrointestinal tract cancer is probably associated with peritoneal dissemination. That is why the patients with upper gastrointestinal tract cancer had a shorter survival in this study.

In this study about 70% of the patients were never discharged from the hospital which was a much higher level than in previous studies (15–37\%)\(^5,7,8\). The indication for hospitalization usually depends on the physician treating the primary disease. Shekarriz et al. reported that only 15% in their series never left hospital; while 52% of overall survival duration was spent in the hospital\(^1\). These results suggest that PNS rarely contributes to improving the patients' quality of life. Urologists and interventional radiologists should sufficiently consider this point before construction.

Over 50% of the patients experienced complications, and one patient had a lethal complication. Watanabe et al. reported that the complication rate in patients with PNS placement for more than one month was 69\%\(^2\). Complications are actually unavoidable and they often cause suffering; therefore the patient needs to be well-informed about these complications.

Although a 14 Fr nephrostomy balloon catheter was used most frequently, this type had a trend to have a lower rate of complications. Fallon et al. reported that the pigtail catheter was less likely to be obstructed and pulled out\(^8\); however, obstructions were often observed in this study. Dislodgement of the Malecot catheter and nephrostomy balloon catheter sometimes occurred. The Malecot catheter has a tendency to be pulled out, probably due to its rigidity. Dislodgment that occurs immediately after
Table 2. Types of catheter, the number of times catheters were changed and complications

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Size (Fr)</th>
<th>No. used (times)</th>
<th>Complication (times)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pigtail</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (3), obstruction (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malecot</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (3), dislodgement (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloon</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (3), obstruction (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (2), obstruction (5), dislodgement (5), removal by Pt (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis (1), dislodgement (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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construction is a troublesome complication that occasionally necessitates reconstruction. We should be careful about dislodgment of Malecot catheters and obstruction of pigtail catheters, especially at the time of construction.

CONCLUSION

PNS is appropriate urinary diversion for patients with hydronephrosis with advanced cancer and unilateral construction is effective enough to treat lethal obstructive renal failure. However, PNS rarely improves the patient's QOL and the risk of complications is unavoidable regardless of the type of catheter used.

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(Received on December 4, 2003)
(Commentary)
経皮的腎瘍を造設した水腫症合併進行癌症例の検討

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[目的] 水腫症を合併した進行癌患者に対しては経皮的腎瘍（PNS）を行うことが多いが、その有用性、必要性について十分な検討はされていない。また、使用すべきカテーテルの種類についても一致した見解は得られていない。水腫症を合併した進行癌患者に対する PNS の有用性、必要性を明らかとするため臨床経験に基づき検討した。また、カテーテルの種類と合併症との関係についても併せて検討した。

[方法] PNS を造設した水腫症合併進行癌症例33例につき検討した。カテーテルは pigtail カテーテル、Malecot カテーテル、腎盂バールーンカテーテルが用いられた。カテーテルは原則として 1 週ごとに交換することとし、必要に応じ大きい径のものを使用することとした。原発巣の種類、PNS 造設前の performance status (PS)、PNS 造設後の在宅期間、カテーテル交換回数、カテーテルの種類、合併症につき調べた。

[結果] 生存期間中央値は3.0カ月であった。全症例の69.7％は退院が不可能であった。30例は原発巣により死亡していた。原発巣別の生存期間中央値は上部消化管癌、大腸癌、泌尿器科癌、婦人科癌でそれぞれ 1.5、5.5、3.0、3.0カ月であった（p=0.0116）。18例（54.5％）で腎盂腎炎、カテーテル閉塞、カテーテル抜去などの合併症を経験していた。カテーテルの種類と合併症頻度に関連は見られなかった。

[結論] PNS は水腫症合併進行癌症例に対し適した尿路変形術であり、一側の造設により致命的な腎後性腎不全を回避できる。しかし必ずしも患者の QOL 改善は期待できず、いかなるカテーテルを用いても合併症のリスクは不可避であると考えられた。

（泌尿器科 50: 457-462, 2004）