



Thyroid Cancer: Understanding, Diagnosis, and Treatment Options

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INTRODUCTION

Thyroid cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the thyroid, a small butterfly shaped gland located at the base of the neck. While thyroid cancer is relatively rare compared to other types of cancer, its incidence has been rising in recent years. Thyroid cancer occurs when cells in the thyroid gland grow uncontrollably and form a tumor. It is categorized into several different types based on the appearance of the cells under a microscope and how they behave. The most common types of thyroid cancer.

DESCRIPTION

Thyroid cancer often spreads to nearby lymph nodes but is highly treatable. It tends to affect older adults and is more challenging to treat due to its rapid progression and resistance to conventional therapies. While the exact cause of thyroid cancer is not always clear, several factors can increase the risk of developing the disease. This includes radiation treatments for head and neck cancers or nuclear accidents. Thyroid cancer is more common in women, which suggests that hormonal factors may play a role in the development of the disease. A lack of iodine in the diet has been linked to an increased risk of thyroid cancer particularly in areas where iodine deficiency is common. However iodine deficiency is rare in developed countries due to the addition of iodine to salt. Thyroid cancer may not cause noticeable symptoms particularly in the early stages. If the tumor affects the nerve that controls the vocal cords a person may experience hoarseness or other changes in their voice. If thyroid cancer spreads to nearby lymph nodes these may become enlarged and palpable. They will also assess the lymph nodes for signs of swelling. An ultrasound of the thyroid is often used to examine the size and characteristics of any thyroid nodules. During this procedure, a thin needle is inserted into the nodule to collect a small sample of tissue. The sample is then examined under a microscope to determine if cancer cells are present. Blood tests can help assess thyroid function. While blood tests alone cannot diagnose thyroid

cancer, they can help rule out other thyroid conditions. After surgery a radioactive iodine scan can help detect any remaining thyroid tissue or cancerous cells. Thyroid cancer cells absorb iodine, and radioactive iodine can help destroy any remaining cancer cells that were not removed during surgery. This treatment is particularly effective for cancers that are not visible by imaging or those that may have spread to other parts of the body. External beam radiation therapy may be used if thyroid cancer recurs after surgery or if it is anaplastic thyroid cancer, which is more aggressive and harder to treat with surgery or radioactive iodine [1-4].

CONCLUSION

Chemotherapy is rarely used for thyroid cancer but may be considered for anaplastic thyroid cancer or in cases where other treatments are not effective. Targeted therapies, such as tyrosine kinase inhibitors are sometimes used for advanced or metastatic thyroid cancer that cannot be treated with surgery or radioactive iodine. This often involves periodic physical exams, blood tests to measure thyroid function and thyroglobulin levels a protein produced by thyroid cells and imaging studies. Thyroid cancer is a relatively rare cancer with a generally favorable prognosis when diagnosed and treated early.

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None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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