



CT Follow-Up After Lung Cancer Surgery Improves Survival



A Danish study finds improved survival rates in lung cancer patients after surgery if their management includes a follow-up programme based on computer tomography (CT) of the chest. The findings were presented at the ERS International Congress 2015 in Amsterdam.

"Our results show a significant improvement for survival rates for patients post-surgery in a CT follow-up programme currently running in Denmark," said presenting author Niels-Christian Hansen, MD, of the Department of Pulmonology, Odense University Hospital, Denmark.

The study is the first to show improved overall survival after surgery for a CT-based follow-up programme and could change the way patients are currently managed. Previous research has confirmed that after the introduction of the CT-based follow-up, most cases of recurrent lung cancer can be detected before the patient has any symptoms. This allows for earlier diagnosis and leads to an improved chance of having a radical treatment against the relapse.

For the current study, Dr. Hansen and colleagues assessed 391 patients who had surgery following a lung cancer diagnosis between 2008 and 2013. After the introduction of a CT-based follow-up in July 2010, all patients received a scan every third month for two years and then every six months for three years. In May 2015, the researchers recorded whether the patients were alive and free from lung cancer.

According to the results, the number of patients alive four years after surgery increased from 54 percent to an estimated 68 percent. Additionally, for patients experiencing a relapse during the first 24 months after surgery, the chance of being alive four years after the first treatment increased from 2 percent to an estimated 27 percent.

"A key strength of our study is the real-life setting we used, where we were able to demonstrate successful results in a representative sample of lung cancer patients from Denmark," Dr. Hansen explained. "This is very encouraging news and we believe that our results could contribute to the planning of similar treatment programmes in other centres and countries."

The team plans to perform the same kind of analysis for a group of lung cancer patients treated by radiation with the aim to cure, instead of by surgery, to see if the results are also successful for this patient group.

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