

Chemoembolization in hepatocellular carcinoma

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the results of intra arterial chemotherapy followed by embolization to a subset of patients with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma.

Methods: Twelve patients with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma, who did not have decompensated liver disease, underwent selective Intra arterial chemotherapy consisting of 5-Fluorouracil, Adriamycin and Cisplatin followed by embolization of the feeding artery using Poly Vinyl Alcohol particles. Courses of treatment were given every 4 – 6 weeks for a maximum of four courses. Patients were considered for surgery when tumor became resectable. Our aims were, palliation of symptoms, prolongation of survival and improvement of quality of life.

Results: Six patients are still alive and 4 died. Two have

lost follow-up. Nine out of 12 patients had good palliation of symptoms and improved quality of life. Median survival for all patients was 11.5 months. One had surgical resection with no evidence of residual tumor. The tumor became resectable in another patient who refused surgery.

Conclusion: Selective Intra arterial chemotherapy followed by embolization in this pilot study with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma gives a good palliation of symptoms, improves quality of life and may prolong survival.

Keywords: Hepatocellular carcinoma, arteries, chemoembolization.