

The Use of Combined Radiation Therapy for Malignant Tumors has led to Better Survival Rates for Cancer Patients, Making Radiation Therapy More Significant

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Abstract

Radiation combination therapy for malignant tumours has increased cancer survival in recent years, increasing the relevance of radiation therapy. Thomas originally described radiation-induced arterial injury (RIAI) in 1959 as a condition in which stenosis and occlusion of blood arteries develop inside the irradiated area following radiation therapy; there have been multiple later studies on this. Although RIAI has been investigated and published, there have been few instances of RIAI in the arteries of the upper limbs, and the clinical characteristics and therapy of this illness have not been completely investigated and established. Irradiation for breast cancer, in particular, can cause stenosis and obstruction in the area extending from the subclavian artery to the axillary artery; however, the associated symptoms resemble those of lymphedema and neuropathy following breast cancer surgery, and it is assumed that diagnosis is difficult, and many patients are missed. As a result, in the case of such patients, a thorough evaluation should be undertaken with RIAI in mind. Because irradiation can cause arteriosclerosis, it is critical that RIAI become widely known; more studies with a bigger sample size should also be done.

Keywords: Radiation therapy; Tumors, Cancer, Atherosclerosis; Carotid artery; Vascular stenosis

Introduction

Radiation therapy has been widely used to treat malignant tumours in recent years, and it is a very essential treatment in breast cancer. To far, research on RIAI as a consequence of radiation therapy have been done; nevertheless, there have been few instances of such damage to the arteries of the upper limbs, and the clinical aspects of this syndrome are not entirely known. As a result, we want to look at and discuss the clinical characteristics, effective diagnostic tools, and successful treatment strategies for RIAI in the upper limbs. Thomas [1] described RIAI as a disorder in which radiation treatment produces stenosis and blockage of the major arteries. Radiation-induced sub clavian artery stenosis: incidence and prevalence. Until date, it has been assumed that RIAI is uncommon following radiation therapy. Yet, as imaging technology has evolved and doctors have become more aware of the notion of RIAI, reports of RIAI have grown. Lam [2] studied newly diagnosed patients with nasopharyngeal cancer patients before and after they had radiation therapy and found that artery stenosis was more prevalent in the irradiated area of the post-radiation group (56/71 vs. 11/51). Additionally, 50% or greater artery stenosis was exclusively detected after radiation treatment. Moreover, Elerding [3] estimates that the risk of carotid stenosis of 70% or higher following radiation therapy is 6.3%, whereas Cheng estimates it to be 11.7%-16%. It has also been noted that the symptom of vascular stenosis develops in 14.6% of instances [4]. The carotid artery is the focus of the majority of RIAI reports [5-11]. Nevertheless, there have been few cases of RIAI in the upper limb arteries, such as the axillary and sub clavian arteries. From 1974 to 2015, there were 13 reports of 21 RIAI in the upper limbs, including axillary artery and sub clavian artery instances, according to our review of the literature [12-22]. Breast cancer is the most frequent non-dermatological cancer in women in the United States, accounting for an estimated 60,290 noninvasive (in situ) tumours, 231,840 newly diagnosed invasive tumours, and 40,290 fatal cases in 2015. Furthermore, in 1997, the results of two randomised controlled trials from Denmark and Canada suggested that post-mastectomy radiation therapy (PMRT) combined with

systemic chemotherapy for breast cancer not only reduced the rate of localised recurrence but also improved survival in the high-risk group. A comprehensive evaluation published in 2005 by the Early Breast Cancer Trialists' Collaborative Group indicated that in the high-risk group with lymph node metastases, PMRT not only improved the rate of local control but also enhanced survival. Additionally, post-operative irradiation enhanced rates of local control and survival following breast preservation surgery, regardless of axillary lymph node metastases. As a result, the significance of radiation therapy for breast cancer has grown in recent years. According to the "Japanese Structure Survey of Radiation Oncology in 2009 (first report)" by the Japanese Society for Radiation Oncology (JASTRO) database committee, breast cancer was the most common cancer type (23.3%) based on the primary lesion in new patients who underwent radiation therapy. The mechanisms of onset of RIAI in the carotid artery and RIAI in the sub clavian to axillary arteries must be the same. As a result, given the amount of case reports, we believe that many people go undiagnosed, and we suggest that practitioners should be better aware of this issue. The overall mechanism of action is separated into three parts. To begin, it is thought that irradiation produces endothelium dysfunction. Endothelial cell injury causes vascular permeability to increase, and serum mucopolysaccharide deposits on the endothelium, resulting in intimal hyperplasia. Moreover, radiation exposure has been linked to the activation of nuclear factor-kappa B, as well as inflammation caused by oxidative stress. It has been observed that inflammatory

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markers can rise quickly after radiation exposure and may be helpful predictors of angiostenosis induced by RIAI; however, more research is needed to confirm this discovery. Second, vasa vasorum injury results in localised necrosis of the media, which leads to fibrosis, adventitial chronic inflammation, and other complications. These alterations eventually promote arteriosclerosis, resulting in stenosis and blockage. RIAI has the following clinical characteristics: The irradiation and lesion sites overlap, lesions can develop with relatively low radiation doses of 40-80 Gy, several years may pass between irradiation and the emergence of symptoms, and the lesions pathologically seem to be the same as arteriosclerotic lesions. The duration between irradiation and the emergence of symptoms has been reported to range from 3 to 24 years, with a mean of 14.7 years. Furthermore, angiographic findings reveal poor collateral circulation development, which is attributed to the possible impact of dissecting tissue in the area extending from the subclavian to axillary arteries, such as the pectoral muscle and axillary blood vessels, during breast cancer surgery. Moreover, peripheral ischemia symptoms might be more severe than those associated with typical arteriosclerosis, which should be addressed. Fatigability of the arms, numbness, and coldness are common symptoms of artery stenosis. The reason for the scarcity of reports on RIAI in the arteries of the upper limbs is that the symptoms of stenosis, such as weariness and numbness of the upper limb, are similar to the symptoms of lymphedema and nerve diseases that typically arise after mastectomy. Hence, we believe, may impede detection of RIAI in the upper limbs. RIAI is frequently difficult to distinguish from atherosclerosis. RIAI, on the other hand, essentially fits the lesion exposed radiation. As a result, it is critical to determine whether the patient has previously had radiation therapy. The presence of numbness, coldness, and fatigability of the upper limbs, as well as an absent or weak pulse, confirms the diagnosis. The bilateral difference in upper limb blood pressure is measured. Ultrasonography and contrast-enhanced computed tomography or angiography are beneficial in the event of a bilateral disparity in blood pressure. The ankle-brachial index is another non-invasive technique that may be used. Bypass surgery is the most often described revascularization procedure. Mellièr studied the results of bypass surgery for sub clavian or axillary artery stenosis caused by RIAI in four individuals and found that the procedure was effective in all four patients. All of the papers we reviewed had similar satisfactory surgical results. Only one patient was allegedly able to make significant progress with solely medical treatment and exercise. Nevertheless, it has not been established if medical therapy from an early stage is useful in preventing the advancement of RIAI. As a result, we should think about medical therapy for RIAI in the future.

On the other hand, there are limited accounts of revascularization utilising PTA rather than bypass surgery, and our literature search yielded just five instances. We described a case in which the calcification of the lesion was significant, appropriate dilatation with plain old balloon angioplasty (POBA) was challenging, and adequate dilatation could not be obtained. Interestingly, one of the four successful bypass surgery instances described by Mellièr was initially failed by PTA. Hans stated that symptoms resurfaced 3 years and 9 months after POBA and that recovery from bypass surgery was satisfactory. As a result, in RIAI-induced arteriosclerosis, significant calcification can make PTA revascularization exceedingly challenging, and favourable mid- to long-term results are unlikely. As a result, bypass surgery, which has been many successful examples, should definitely be considered first. Successful treatment strategies should be investigated further in a bigger sample size.

Conclusion

Although radiation therapy is a popular cancer treatment, there is little question that it increases the risk of arteriosclerosis. Radiation combination therapy has increased cancer survival in recent years, enhancing the value of radiation therapy. We feel that it is critical that the RIAI be widely acknowledged. Further research with a bigger sample size is needed. Radiation therapy, particularly for breast cancer, induces occlusion in the sub clavian artery, with symptoms similar to lymphedema and neuropathy after breast cancer surgery, and requires careful investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

Author declares no conflict of interest.

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