M. Imamura (Ed.)

Superficial Esophageal Neoplasm
Pathology, Diagnosis, and Therapy

With 90 Figures, Including 7 in Color
Foreword

This book, containing the proceedings of the 2000 Kyoto Symposium on Esophageal Cancer, is an important contribution for all types of physicians interested in both squamous and adenocarcinoma of the esophagus. The volume has great legitimacy and relevance. The symposia hosted by Professor Masayuki Imamura brought together the leaders in several disciplines from Japan with other acknowledged authorities from Europe, the United States, Australia, and other parts of Asia. Japan has long been a leader in making advances in understanding the pathology, diagnosis, and treatment of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma, for several decades originally led by Professor Komei Nakayama and his students. It is now clear that Japanese are also beginning to suffer from esophageal adenocarcinoma and Barrett's columnar lined epithelium, thus enabling the Japanese to formulate studies on the pathology, diagnosis, and treatment for the full spectrum of esophageal neoplasms. The authoritativeness of these proceedings is established not only by the long tradition of Japanese leadership in the field but by the contributions of the principal leaders from the Nakayama school participating in the honorary faculty and local scientific committee.

The relevance of this volume and symposium is established by the wise decision to concentrate on the issues concerning superficial esophageal tumors and attempting to achieve an international consensus on the pathological diagnoses as well as approaches to diagnosis, surgical and other types of treatment. Not much has developed in recent years to advance the diagnosis and treatment of more advanced esophageal cancers, but the availability of earlier and more accurate diagnosis for superficial esophageal squamous and adenocarcinoma are changing the approaches to these disorders. This is particularly important because of the rapid increase in the incidence of adenocarcinoma of the esophagus and its relationship to Barrett's epithelium. It is essential to consolidate knowledge about these early tumors to agree on classifications and definitions.

For example, superficial esophageal cancer might be regarded as Stage 1 carcinoma according to the currently employed international staging system. However, Stage 1 classification includes epithelial, mucosal, and submucosal neoplasms which have remarkably different opportunities for therapy affecting the prognosis. Epithelial esophageal cancer, the earliest form of esophageal cancer, has been shown to be curable by local treatments including endoscopic resection and laser-based treat-
ments, whereas Stage 1 cancer also includes tumors penetrating the full thickness of mucosa and even extending to the submucosa. Such cancers have been shown to spread on occasion to regional lymph nodes and may be variable in the thickness of penetration. Clearly local treatment only for these Stage 1 cancers is inappropriate for some patients, and the degree of radicality of the advocated surgery varies widely from center to center. Methods for making certain of the depth of penetration of various Stage 1 cancers become critical to diagnosis and pathological classification. Similarly there is confusion among international centers between epithelial neoplasms described as high-grade or severe dysplasia and those described as carcinoma in situ or mucosal carcinoma. By focusing on these specific aspects for superficial esophageal cancer, the authors of these chapters have made an important contribution to the future of the debate and resolution of controversy.

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Preface

This book is a collection of papers from the Kyoto Symposium on Esophageal Cancer, which was held July 28–29, 2000, in Kyoto, Japan. About 200 doctors, including pathologists, physicians, surgeons, and endoscopists, gathered from all parts of the world for discussions aimed at reaching a consensus on the clinicopathological understanding of the diagnosis and treatment of esophageal cancer.

In recent years the detection of early esophageal cancer has become much easier as a result of technical developments in endoscopic observation, bringing about benefits to patients, with complete cure of the disease possible by esophageal mucosal resection with an endoscope. We know that about 50% of patients with esophageal cancer that has invaded the submucosa have metastatic lymph nodes, and the 5-year survival rate of these patients is almost 50%. Thus, pathological diagnosis of superficial esophageal cancer has become a very important issue not only for pathologists but also for clinicians. Another recent concern internationally in esophageal cancer is the rapid increase of adenocarcinoma. Many problems remain unsolved in the development and treatment of adenocarcinoma, including the diagnosis and treatment of reflux esophagitis.

At the Kyoto Symposium productive discussions of these problems were conducted and near-consensus was reached in the area of diagnostic pathology. Discussions on differences in diagnosis of superficial esophageal cancer and various grades of dysplasia were held by pathologists from Australia, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Thailand, France, the United States, and Japan after examining prepared specimens. Through these discussions of pathology, as will be seen in this book, we learned to our surprise that there already existed a basic agreement on the diagnosis of severe dysplasia and/or superficial cancer.

Subsequent discussions were held by young molecular biologists as they considered the molecular basis of the development, invasion, and metastasis of esophageal cancer. Endoscopists, surgeons, and radiologists discussed treatment of early squamous cell carcinoma as well as early adenocarcinoma based on the results of particular treatment modalities. Thoracoscopic esophagectomy for superficial esophageal cancer was also discussed on the basis of international experience. We were pleased that an international study had started collecting evidence of adenocarcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma to find the key to differentiation of dysplasia from early cancer at the molecular level.
The actual discussions are recorded in this book as they took place. These lectures by prominent scientists will be of interest to all doctors who are concerned with esophageal cancer. We strongly hope that this book thus will be a basis for further efforts to establish an international consensus on the diagnosis and treatment of early esophageal cancer.

We would like to thank Dr. Kan Kondo for his excellent transcription of the discussions. Publication of this book was supported by a 2001 Grant-in Aid (No. 135314) for Publication of Scientific Research Results from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

Masayuki Imamura
Editor
Kyoto
Contents

Foreword ...................................................... V
Preface .................................................................. VII
Contributors ................................................... XIII

Part 1 Current Clinicopathological Topics in Superficial Neoplasm of the Esophagus

Definition of the Stomach and Esophagus
  P. Chandrasoma ............................................. 3

Histopathology of Early Neoplasia in Barrett’s Esophagus
  J.R. Jass ..................................................... 13

Superficial Carcinoma of the Esophagus in Japan: Curable Lesion

Part 2 Barrett’s Esophagus and Adenocarcinoma

Histocytologic Criteria of Adenocarcinoma In Situ of the Esophagus
  C.A. Rubio .................................................... 31

Barrett Carcinoma and Esophagus: Experience in Japan, an Area of Low Incidence
  Y. Kato, H. Tomimatsu, A. Yanagisawa, T. Matsubara,
  and H. Matsushita ............................................. 37

Barrett’s Esophagus and Adenocarcinoma: Surgical Results of Superficial Adenocarcinoma of the Esophagus
  A.H. Holscher, E. Bollscheiwer, F. Myazono, C. Gutschow,
  H. Schäfer, and W. Schröder .................................. 45

Selective Surgical Approach to Superficial Barrett’s-Associated Adenocarcinoma
  J.A. Hagen ..................................................... 54

IX
Clinical Strategies for Adenocarcinoma of the Esophagus at the National Cancer Center, Japan
Y. TACHIMORI ................................................ 66

Part 3 Dysplasia and Superficial Squamous Cell Carcinoma

International Consensus Classification of Gastrointestinal Epithelial Neoplasia: Usefulness for Esophageal Squamous Epithelium
R.J. SCHLEMPER ............................................. 75

Histopathologic Findings Predicting Lymph Node Metastasis and Prognosis of Patients with Superficial Esophageal Carcinoma
Y. NAKANISHI ................................................ 83

Esophageal Superficial Neoplasms: Results of Surgery: Primary Early-Stage Squamous Cell Carcinomas versus Tumors Down-Staged to an Early Stage by Neoadjuvant Chemoradiotherapy
S. MERIGLIANO, A. RUOL, M. CAGOL, S. SCAPPIN, R. ALFIERI, M. EPIFANI, and E. ANCONA ............................................... 95

Strategy for Treatment of Superficial Esophageal Cancer
M. YOSHIDA, K. MOMMA, T. HANASHI, Y. IZUMI, N. SAKAKI, Y. YAMADA, K. OOHASHI, and N. FUNADA .............................................. 101

Surgical Experience of Superficial Squamous Cell Carcinoma in Thailand
A. CHANVITAN ................................................ 108

Histocytologic Criteria for Squamous Cell Carcinoma In Situ of the Esophagus
C.A. RUBIO .................................................. 113

Part 4 Presentation of Patients and Discussion on the Pathological Diagnosis of Superficial Esophageal Neoplasms

Carcinoma In Situ of the Esophagus: Case Report
T. NISHIGAMI, M. OE, T. TAKANASHI, A. OKIMURA, K. NAKASHO, and K. UEMATSU .................................................. 123

Superficial Esophageal Carcinomas Associated with Multiple Lesions that Do Not Stain with Iodine
M. YOSHIKAWA, H. KATO, T. MIYAZAKI, M. NAKAJIMA, Y. KAMIYAMA, Y. FUKAI, K. TAJIMA, N. MASUDA, H. OJIMA, K. TSUKADA, and H. KUWANO .................................................. 126

Case of Superficial Esophageal Adenocarcinoma in Short-Segment Barrett's Esophagus
Superficial Esophageal Cancer Treated by Radical Surgery: Case Study

Patient Presentation and Pathologic Diagnosis of Superficial Carcinoma of the Esophagus: High-Grade Dysplasia and Mucosal Carcinoma from the Japanese Standpoint
K. Takubo, T. Arai, and S. Ishiguro ...................... 141

Part 5 Molecular Biology of Esophageal Neoplasms

Oncogene Amplification and Oncoprotein Overexpression in Superficial Esophageal Cancer
M. Sarbia ................................................... 151

Patterns of TP53 Mutations in Cancers of the Esophagus and Esophagogastric Junction: Correlation with Risk Factors and Functional Implications
P. Tanière, K. Castren, and P. Hainaut ............. 159

Superficial Esophageal Cancer: Adenocarcinoma Related to Barrett’s Metaplasia and Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma
S. Ishaq, R.F. Harrison, and J.A. Jankowski .......... 169

Molecular Biology of Adenocarcinoma Arising in Barrett’s Esophagus
J.D. Mueller .................................................. 181

Altered Expression of FHIT in Esophageal Neoplasm
M. Mori, K. Mimori, H. Inoue, Y. Tanaka, K. Huebner, and C.M. Croce .............................................. 188

Molecular Alterations in Dysplasia and Superficial Cancer of the Esophagus
S. Ozawa, Y. Ikeda, K. Koyanagi, N. Ando, Y. Kitagawa, M. Ueda, and M. Kitajima ............................... 195

Telomerase Activity and p53 Protein Accumulation in Lugol-Stained and Lugol-Unstained Esophageal Squamous Epithelia
Y. Shimada, M. Inai, M. Kano, T. Sakurai, T. Chiba, and M. Imamura .................................................. 201

Part 6 Less-Invasive Treatment of Superficial Esophageal Neoplasms

Laparoscopy- and Thoracoscopy-Assisted Esophagectomy for Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Esophagus
H. Inoue, T. Yoshida, S. Usui, S. Kudo, T. Kawano, and M. Endo .............. 211

Benefits and Limitations of Mediastinal Endodissection During Radical Transhiatal Esophagectomy
R. Bumm and J.R. Siewert ........................................ 216
Contents

Mediastinoscopy-Assisted Transhiatal Esophagectomy: A Safe Technique for Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Esophagus

A. Tangoku, S. Yoshino, T. Abe, K. Morita, T. Ueno, H. Hayashi, and M. Oka .................................................. 225

Subject Index ................................................................. 236
Contributors

Abe, T. 225
Alfieri, R. 95
Ancona, E. 95
Ando, N. 195
Arai, T. 21, 141
Bollschweiler, E. 45
Bumm, R. 216
Cagol, M. 95
Castren, K. 159
Chandrasoma, P. 3
Chanvitan, A. 108
Chiba, T. 201
Chino, O. 136
Croce, C.M. 188
Endo, M. 211
Epifani, M. 95
Fukai, Y. 126
Funada, N. 101
Gutschow, C. 45
Hagen, J.A. 54
Hainaut, P. 159
Hanashi, T. 101
Harrison, R.F. 169
Hashimoto, T. 132
Hayashi, H. 225
Hölscher, A.H. 45
Huebner, K. 188
Iishi, H. 132
Ikeda, Y. 195
Imamura, M. 201
Inai, M. 201
Inoue, Haruhiro 211
Inoue, Hiroshi 188
Ishaq, S. 169
Ishiguro, S. 132, 141
Ishihara, R. 132
Izumi, Y. 101
Jankowski, J.A. 169
Jass, J.R. 13
Kabuto, T. 132
Kamiyama, Y. 126
Kano, M. 201
Kato, H. 126
Kato, Y. 37
Kawano, T. 211
Kenmochi, T. 136
Kise, Y. 136
Kitagawa, Y. 195
Kitajima, M. 195
Koyanagi, K. 195
Kudo, S. 211
Kuwano, H. 126
Mafune, K. 21
Makuuchi, H. 136
Mano, M. 132
Masuda, N. 126
Matsubara, T. 37
Matsushita, H. 37
Merigliano, S. 95
Mimori, K. 188
Miyazaki, T. 126
Momma, K. 101
Mori, M. 188
Morita, K. 225
Mueller, J.D. 181
Myazono, F. 45

Nakajima, M. 126
Nakanishi, Y. 83
Nakashima, K. 123
Narahara, H. 132
Nishigami, T. 123

Oe, M. 123
Ojima, H. 126
Oka, M. 225
Okimura, A. 123
Oohashi, K. 101
Otani, T. 132
Ozawa, S. 195

Rubio, C.A. 31, 113
Ruol, A. 95

Sakaki, N. 101
Sakurai, T. 201
Sarbia, M. 151
Sasajima, K. 21
Sawabe, M. 21

Scappin, S. 95
Schäfer, H. 45
Schlemper, R.J. 75
Schröder, W. 45
Shimada, H. 136
Shimada, Y. 201
Siewert, J.R. 216

Tachimori, Y. 66
Tajima, K. 126
Takanashi, T. 123
Takubo, K. 21, 141
Tanaka, H. 136
Tanaka, Y. 188
Tangoku, A. 225
Tanière, P. 159
Tatsuta, M. 132
Tomimatsu, H. 37
Tsukada, K. 126

Ueda, M. 195
Uedo, N. 132
Uematsu, K. 123
Ueno, T. 225
Usui, S. 211

Yamada, Y. 101
Yanagisawa, A. 37
Yoshida, M. 101
Yoshida, T. 211
Yoshikawa, M. 126
Yoshino, S. 225