Surgical Treatment of Small Cell Lung Cancer

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860 small cell lung cancers among total 5800 lung cancers (1962-1984) are critically analysed. Our positive experience of a 5-year-survival after resection in patients with small cell lung cancer, without exact preoperative diagnosis, especially coin lesions, and such of stage I/II as well as the failure of other therapeutical methods have given a new current to surgery.

From 1962 to 1984, 176 (20%) patients out of 860 with small cell lung cancer (15% of all lung cancers) underwent a thoracotomy, 155 (18%) a resection.

The 3-year-survival without any relapse in the group of the resected patients was among 21%; in stage I 34%, in stage II 21%, and in stage III 11%. 1962-1975 all the resected patients got an uncontrolled mono-chemotherapy whereas between 1976 and 1984—in cooperation with the Westgerman Tumorcenter Essen—resection has been followed by an adjuvant poly-chemotherapy (ACO). But such a therapy seems to be doubtfull effective in stage I-patients. In recent years we have considered the selective surgery of small cell lung cancer as an integral part of a therapeutical concept.