Clinical Outcome of Palliative Radiotherapy in Patients with Head and Neck Cancer

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Patient profiles, compliance with palliative radiotherapy and the treatment outcomes were investigated in head and neck cancer patients who received palliative radiotherapy from 2006 to 2012. Clinicians selected patients who received palliative radiotherapy considering the clinical stage and the general body condition. There were no patients with severe acute or late toxicities during treatment and the completion rate of palliative radiotherapy was 79.3%. The palliative irradiation group showed significantly better overall survival rates as compared to the no-treatment group. Palliative irradiation of the primary tumor and lymph node metastases at the dose of over 50 Gy contributed to long-term disease-free survival and improvement of the quality of life (QOL), including reduction of tumorigenic pain and dysphasia. Thus, palliative radiotherapy may be a useful treatment option for patients with advanced head and neck cancer under the careful management.

Keywords : palliative radiotherapy, head and neck cancer, quality of life

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