

A Review of the Literature on PET-assessed Metabolic Tumor Volume in a Range of Solid-organ Malignancies

Hirata Zaizen*

Department of Internal Medicine, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, OH 44195, USA

Introduction

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) has revolutionized the way cancer is diagnosed, staged and treated. This imaging modality allows for the non-invasive visualization of metabolic activity within tumors, providing crucial insights into the biology of cancer. One of the key parameters assessed in PET imaging is Metabolic Tumor Volume (MTV), a measure of the tumor's metabolic activity, often quantified using Fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG), a radiolabeled glucose analogue. MTV represents the volume of the tumor that shows significant uptake of FDG, which is indicative of active metabolic processes. The assessment of MTV in a range of solid-organ malignancies, including lung, breast, colorectal and head and neck cancers, has gained significant attention in recent years due to its potential in providing important prognostic and therapeutic information. This review synthesizes the current literature on PET-assessed metabolic tumor volume across various solid tumors and highlights its clinical significance, challenges and future directions [1,2].

Description

The concept of metabolic tumor volume emerged from the growing realization that the traditional assessment of tumor size alone, using imaging techniques like Computed Tomography (CT), does not provide a full picture of the tumor's biological activity. Solid tumors are often heterogeneous and while some regions may have a low metabolic rate, others can be highly active and aggressive. This metabolic heterogeneity is important for assessing prognosis and predicting treatment outcomes. PET imaging, particularly with FDG, provides a functional image of the tumor's metabolic activity, which can reflect its aggressiveness and ability to respond to therapy. The measurement of MTV using PET allows for a more accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the tumor than simple anatomical measures, such as tumor size.

Colorectal Cancer (CRC) is another malignancy where PET-assessed MTV has shown promise. CRC is the third most common cancer globally and its prognosis is largely determined by the stage at diagnosis and the presence of metastasis. Numerous studies have demonstrated the prognostic significance of MTV in CRC, with larger MTV values correlating with more advanced disease, including the presence of lymph node involvement and distant metastasis. A study by Liu et al. (2016) found that higher MTV was associated with poorer OS and PFS in patients with CRC. Furthermore, PET-assessed MTV has also been explored as a potential tool for assessing the response to therapy in CRC. In patients undergoing chemotherapy or targeted therapy, a reduction in MTV after treatment has been shown to correlate with favorable outcomes, making it a useful biomarker for monitoring treatment

***Address for Correspondence:** Hirata Zaizen, Department of Internal Medicine, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, OH 44195, USA; E-mail: hiratazaizen90@gmail.com

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Received: 02 November, 2024, Manuscript No. hps-25-160270; **Editor Assigned:** 04 November, 2024, PreQC No. P-160270; **Reviewed:** 18 November, 2024, QC No. Q-160270; **Revised:** 23 November, 2024, Manuscript No. R-160270; **Published:** 30 November, 2024, DOI: 10.37421/2573-4563.2024.8.313

efficacy.

Conclusion

PET-assessed metabolic tumor volume has become an important parameter in the evaluation of a range of solid-organ malignancies, including lung cancer, breast cancer, colorectal cancer and head and neck squamous cell carcinoma. By providing a functional assessment of the tumor's metabolic activity, PET allows for a more comprehensive understanding of tumor biology, which can improve prognostic accuracy and guide treatment decisions. Despite challenges such as the lack of standardization in measurement and the need for further research, PET-based MTV holds significant promise for improving cancer management and outcomes in a variety of malignancies. As the field continues to evolve, PET-assessed MTV will likely play an increasingly important role in the clinical management of solid tumors, helping clinicians to tailor treatment strategies and improve patient outcomes.

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How to cite this article: Zaizen, Hirata. "A Review of the Literature on PET-assessed Metabolic Tumor Volume in a Range of Solid-organ Malignancies." *J Hepato Pancreat Sci* 8 (2024): 313.