

Risks and Benefits of Radiation Therapy for Lung Cancer in Elderly Patients

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Introduction

An essential part of the multidisciplinary strategy for managing lung cancer is radiation therapy. It entails targeting and eliminating cancer cells with high-energy X-rays or other types of radiation. Radiation therapy can be used palliatively, to reduce symptoms and enhance the patient's quality of life, or curatively, to eradicate the cancer. Radiation therapy is frequently used to treat a variety of issues in older individuals with lung cancer, such as symptom management, local tumor control, and possible cure. Globally, lung cancer is a major public health issue, and its effects are most noticeable in the elderly. Even though cancer treatment has advanced significantly, managing lung cancer in elderly persons presents particular difficulties. Radiation treatment, a cornerstone of lung cancer treatment, gives many older people hope, but it also necessitates a careful balancing act between the risks and potential benefits. The prevalence of lung cancer among elderly individuals is increasing as the world's population ages. Lung cancer is a disease that is predominantly linked to aging. Compared to their younger counterparts, elderly individuals frequently have distinct presentation features, such as a greater frequency of comorbidities and diminished functional reserves. These elements make the decision about therapy more difficult, so it is crucial to modify lung cancer treatments to fit the unique requirements of senior citizens. Although radiation therapy has several advantages in the treatment of lung cancer, there are drawbacks as well [1].

Description

Radiation therapy can successfully reduce or eliminate tumors, alleviating symptoms associated with cancer and enhancing overall survival. For older patients, the possibility of local tumor management can greatly improve their quality of life. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and heart disease are among the main health conditions that elderly persons frequently have. Some of these comorbidities may worsen as a result of radiation therapy, which could result in problems. Elderly people frequently experience a reduction in their functional level and decreased mobility. Radiation therapy might affect a patient's capacity to do everyday tasks by causing physical deterioration and weariness. Radiation therapy adverse effects may be more likely to affect elderly patients. This population may have more severe cases of radiation pneumonitis, esophagitis, and radiodermatitis [2].

It is crucial to evaluate the patient's general health and functional state. Plans for treatment should be customized based on the patient's tolerance for therapy and any possible adverse effects. The potential benefit of radiation therapy should be assessed based on the tumor's size, location, and stage. To comprehend the possible effects of radiation therapy on various comorbidities, a comprehensive assessment of current medical conditions is required. It's critical to comprehend the patient's values, objectives, and preferences. For some older people, quality of life is more important than vigorous treatment. A multidisciplinary team comprising geriatric experts, pulmonologists, radiation

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oncologists, and oncologists can give a more thorough evaluation of the patient's needs and direct the course of treatment [3].

Radiation therapy is a useful treatment for lung cancer in older patients, but it needs to be used carefully and individually. Making educated treatment selections requires weighing the advantages and disadvantages. For older people dealing with this difficult diagnosis, the objective is not only to prolong life but also to enhance their quality of life. By means of collaborative decision-making and meticulous evaluation of each patient's distinct attributes, we can endeavor to attain optimal results for older lung cancer patients while preserving their health and self-respect. The supportive care requirements of older lung cancer patients should be taken into account in addition to the advantages and disadvantages of radiation therapy. Palliative care, which aims to reduce symptoms and enhance the general [4].

Pain associated with tumor invasion or metastasis is experienced by elderly patients with lung cancer in July. Palliative radiation therapy can help patients feel more comfortable and reduce pain. Lung cancer frequently manifests as shortness of breath, especially in older people. To improve breathing and lessen symptoms, radiation therapy can be used to target and shrink airway cancers. For patients with lung cancer, a persistent cough can be upsetting. Palliative radiation therapy can improve a patient's quality of life by lessening the intensity and frequency of their cough. Talking about hospice care and end-of-life care is crucial for patients with advanced lung cancer who have a short life expectancy. These discussions ought to be sensitive and considerate of the patient's beliefs and desires [5].

Conclusion

Geriatric assessment techniques can be useful in helping older lung cancer patients make better treatment decisions. These tests analyze a number of areas, such as social support, cognitive performance, psychological well-being, comorbidities, and functional status. They assist in locating any weak points and adjusting treatment regimens appropriately. A more thorough picture of the patient's general health and functioning can be obtained by including a geriatric assessment into the decision-making process. This will ultimately help to guide treatment decisions that are more in accordance with the needs and preferences of the individual. Radiation therapy for lung cancer in older people necessitates a well-rounded strategy that carefully balances the risks and potential rewards. Since every patient is different, treatment choices should be customized, taking into consideration factors including tumor characteristics, comorbidities, patient preferences, and performance status.

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest by author.

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