Reviewer's report

Title: Lung cancer symptoms and pulse oximetry in the prognostic assessment of patients with lung cancer

Version: 4  Date: 17 March 2005

Reviewer: victor chang

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The authors have done their best to answer the issues raised. A summary of the kinds of treatments received by the patients eg % of patients who received chemotherapy, radiation, combination, would be very helpful.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Does lung cancer comprise both small cell and non-small cell lung cancer patients?
Arterial saturation of oxygen is often written SaO2
I am not clear on how COPD can affect the measurement of SaO2

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I have made numerous English suggestions below. The authors should review these and then review the manuscript with someone at their institution who specializes in medical English.

Background

We examined whether the Lung Cancer Symptom Scale and pulse oximetry contribute to the evaluation of ambulatory lung cancer patients who received standard medical therapy.

Method

Forty one consecutive patients with newly diagnosed advanced lung cancer were treated with platinum based regimens and followed for survival. We developed a survival model with the variables age, gender, histology, clinical stage, Karnofsky performance status, wasting, LCSS symptom scores, and arterial oxygen saturation.

Results

Patient and observer-rated scores with the LCSS were correlated, except for the fatigue subscale. The median SaO2 was 95% (86-98), was unrelated to symptom scores, and was weakly correlated with observer cough scores. In a multivariate survival model, SaO2 > 90% and patient rated scores on the LCSS appetite and fatigue subscales were independent predictors of survival.

Conclusion
LCSS fatigue and appetite ratings, and SaO2 should be studied further as prognostic factors in lung cancer patients.

Key words LCSS, symptoms, lung neoplasms, oximetry, prognosis

Background

The symptoms of lung cancer are a burden to patients, and a major detriment to their quality of life (QOL) and ability to function. Several instruments have been developed to assess QOL …. But barriers to their use remain. Medical oncologists continue to use performance status as a proxy for QOL measures, as completion of QOL instruments is perceived as time consuming, may measure aspects of QOL not affected by cancer therapy, and interpretation may be unclear. Whether….

..and normative data in patients with non small cell lung cancer has been published. Pulse…arterial saturation of oxygen (SaO2) could lead to early detection of hypoxemia and prevent the development of clinical manifestations, such as agitation, confusion, hypotension, and tachycardia

In this study, we evaluated the prognostic value…. In a cohort of ambulatory lung cancer patients receiving standard medical therapy.

Method

Design

Newly diagnosed (?) patients admitted …..were eligible if they presented with …. histological diagnosis of non small cell lung cancer, and locally advanced or metastatic disease extent. Exclusion criteria included past infection, fever, and potential causes of interference with signal capture by the . Patients gave written signed informed consent before participating.

Results

LCSS scores - correlated with

Discussion

Performance status scales, such as the KPS which was introduced in 1949, are widely….patients. Several recent studies suggest that….can provide more detailed…prognostic information. This has been demonstrated for … QLQ-C30… As shown here,

To our knowledge,,, in the assessment of newly diagnosed lung cancer patients.

Last sentence – delete “Moreover”

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.