Comments

In this study, 307 patients affected by papillary thyroid microcarcinoma (PTMC) were retrospectively evaluated. Among them, 293 were eligible for statistical analysis. The end-point of the statistical analysis was clinical recurrence. The authors concluded that cervical node metastases and gender were significant prognostic factors for recurrence in PTMC patients by multivariate analysis. In addition, the authors stated that the present study had some limitations in sample size and follow-up duration.

1) In Table 2, 8 patients had regional (node) recurrence. Which level of regional lymph node was affected in such nodal recurrence? More detailed information about the site of regional node recurrence needs to be described.

2) The authors stated that TSH suppression therapy was administered to all patients. In the previous studies, the use of TSH suppression has been considered to decrease the possibility of recurrent disease. Did the authors observed any consideration on TSH suppression therapy?

3) Page 8, First paragraph, Line 2-3. Extrathyroid extension was found in 38%. This frequency seemed to be high in microcarcinoma patients. How was "extrathyroid extension" defined? In 2002 AJCC/UICC TNM staging, extrathyroid extension was defined as T3 invasion (minimal extension), T4a invasion (apparently involved adjacent neck structure), or T4b invasion (usually unresectable). The degree of extrathyroid extension in this study should be more clearly mentioned.

4) Page 6, Last paragraph, Line 5. serum TgAb was positive. This means serum Tg?

5) Major concern is grouping of pNx and pN0 as same group. Such grouping usually seems to be inappropriate, because pNx have possibility of conversion to pN1a or pN1b after central and/or lateral node dissection. If so, the results in this study may alter according to the pN stage conversion. When the authors want to attempt such grouping, N staging should be based on clinical nodal status (cN). Otherwise, pNx category should be separately evaluated or excluded in the statistical analysis.
**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests