Initial impact of a systematic multidisciplinary approach on the management of patients with gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine tumor

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INTRODUCTION
A multidisciplinary approach to gastroenteropancreatic (GEP) neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) is currently advised for the optimal care of patients with GEP NET. We decided to assess the initial impact of a systematic multidisciplinary approach on the management of the GEP NET patients under care at our Institution.

PATIENTS and METHODS
A systematic multidisciplinary approach to GEP NETs, including regular bimonthly multidisciplinary team meetings, has been established at our Institution from 1st May 2007. We have collected and compared the biochemistry (chromogranin A, hormonal markers), radiology (including endoscopy), and pathology data (Ki-67 and/or mitotic index) as well as the therapeutic strategies in the patients with GEP NET diagnosed, treated, and/or followed-up in our Institution since January 1993 to April 2007 (91 patients in 172 months) with those from patients that came to us after the multidisciplinary approach starting (42 patients from May 2007 to October 2008, 18 months). Fisher’s exact test has been used for the statistical analysis of the data.

RESULTS
Before the establishment of the multidisciplinary approach, a lack of consistency in the laboratory, imaging/endoscopy, and pathology findings before the treatment (or the consideration for treatment) as well as in the follow-up of the patients was identified. These features have been at least partially reversed by the systematic multidisciplinary approach itself (Table 1). The impact of the multidisciplinary approach has been significant on almost all parameters considered. Also the therapeutic management of the pre-multidisciplinary approach patients was not consistent and has been altered by the multidisciplinary approach, achieving a significant impact in regard to the increased use of somatostatin analogs (Table 2).

CONCLUSION
Despite the overall improvement of the management of GEP NET patients, a further improvement needs to be achieved. This study suggests that a systematic multidisciplinary approach can significantly impact on GEP NET patient care and should be established in all centers dealing with these tumors.