Risk Factors for Sporadic Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors (PNETs):
A Single-Center Case Control Study

Ike Onwere, Thomas O’Dorisio, Sue M. O’Dorisio, Barry DeYoung, Menda Yusuf

University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics 200 Hawkins Drive, Iowa City, Iowa 52242
Depts. HBOMT, Endocrine Metabolism and Nuclear Imaging

Background: Previous analyses have demonstrated that the grade of tumor correlates well with OctreoScan positivity, with lower grade tumors more likely to be positive. We hypothesized that tumor location, grade, Chromogranin A and SST2 immunohistochemical staining will correlate with Octreotide positivity.

Methods: We retrospectively analyzed 37 tumor specimens for tumor grade according to the Wick’s grading system of: 1-Well differentiated, 2-moderately differentiated, and 3-poorly differentiated, immunohistochemical staining (IHC) for SST2 receptor, and correlation with OctreoScan imaging. SST2 and Chromogranin A IHC stains were performed and graded 1 +, 2+ or 3+.

Results: There were a total of 40 patients, but only 37 tumor specimens were available for complete analysis by their Wick’s grade 1, 2, 3: 13/37, 11/37 and 13/37 respectively. Wick’s grade 1: 39% (5/13) were negative and 61% (8/13) positive by OctreoScan imaging. Primary tumor status revealed 77% (10/13) samples were of small bowel and colorectal origin with 54% (7/13) being positive by OctreoScan. The remaining tumor primaries were two pulmonary neuroendocrine and one gastric carcinoid, with all being negative by OctreoScan imaging. Specimens with a Wick’s grade 2: 45 % (5/11) were negative and 55% (6/11) positive by OctreoScan imaging. Tumor primaries comprised 36% (4/11) of small bowel and colorectal origin and 18% (2/11) pancreatic neuroendocrine with 50% and 100% respectively being positive by OctreoScan. Those with a Wick’s grade 3: 18% (2/11) were negative and 82% (9/11) positive by OctreoScan imaging with 8/11 being of pancreatic neuroendocrine origin. Of the pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors 7/8 were positive by OctreoScan. Of the tumor specimens with 2-3+ staining for SST2, 36% (9/25) had negative OctreoScan and 64% (16/25) were positive. Of those with SST2 IHC 1+ stain, 22% (2/9) and 78% (7/9) were negative and positive respectively by OctreoScan. Of those with a negative SST2 IHC stain 40 % (2/5) and 60% (3/5) were respectively negative and positive by OctreoScan imaging. All tumor specimens had a positive Chromogranin A IHC stain of 1, +, 2+ or 3+. There were 33 specimens 2-3+ by IHC of which 30% (10/33) and 67% (22/33) were respectively negative and positive by OctreoScan with 1 unavailable for analysis. The 3 samples with a Chromogranin A IHC stain of 1+ were all positive by OctreoScan.

Conclusion: In our retrospective analysis a total of 62% (23/37) of the tumor specimens demonstrated OctreoScan positivity, with 90% of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors being positive. Chromogranin A and SST2 immunohistochemical staining of 2-3+ appeared to correlate with OctreoScan results, but were neither sensitive nor specific. Although published reports have demonstrated a correlation with OctreoScan positivity with lower grade neuroendocrine tumors, our results demonstrate that pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors were most often of a higher grade and consistently OctreoScan positive.