

Japanese Guidelines for Gastric Cancer Treatment -its benefits and problems-

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Gastric Cancer treatment guidelines for doctor's version were issued in March, 2001 and those for patient's version were published in December, 2001 by Japanese Gastric Cancer Association. The goal for the guidelines is to improve "clinical effectiveness and quality of treatment in gastric cancer". Unlike the US and Europe, the guidelines primarily do not aim to reduce the medical expense, but the cost will reduce as a result of proper treatment under the guidelines.

It is of practical significance to have introduced recent methods as standard treatment or options to the guidelines.

The guidelines do not deal with the technical aspect, but cancer treatment result is strongly influenced by technical skills, especially in surgery, EMR and cancer chemotherapy.

Regarding to adjuvant chemotherapy, the guidelines indicate there is no evidence on the efficacy of adjuvant chemotherapy for gastric cancer.

The guidelines for patient's version are presented by easily understandable words and many well-described pictures with cartoons.

The guidelines are saying patients are able to use guidelines like a map for mount climbing.

Recently, we have presented this guideline to patients undergoing surgery for gastric cancer before or after informed consent and surveyed patients' opinions. All of the patients said the guidelines were useful for understanding their diseases and every body mentioned the illustrations were very well. On the other hand, there were a few patients worrying about metastases after reading the guidelines.

Positive effects of guidelines are: (1) Implementation of evidence based Medicine (2) Promotion of mutual understanding between doctors and patients (3) Promotion of clinical investigation and (4) Reduction of medical expense.

On the contrary, probable negative effects are: (1) Increasing a lawsuit, (2) cutting back on medical expense (3) Performing simplified treatment, and (4) Limitation of treatment modalities.