



Esophageal Cancer: Overcome the Hurdles and Reach for the Cure

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Esophageal cancer ranks as the sixth most common cause of cancer-related death worldwide. Its incidence is increasing, with 2,499 cases and 1,524 deaths in Korea in 2016. Although early detection is becoming more common, partly due to the widespread use of upper gastrointestinal endoscopic screening in Korea, the prognosis of esophageal cancer remains poor since patients are mostly diagnosed at the advanced stage. Intrinsicly, the close proximity of the esophagus to surrounding vital structures, the loose connective tissue of the adventitial layer with no serosa, and the abundant venous and lymphatic network throughout the submucosal layer contribute to local invasion and distant metastasis of esophageal cancer even in earlier phases.

Since more efforts are needed to improve the treatment outcomes of this disease with a poor prognosis, sharing individual knowledge, experience, and expertise among clinicians is crucial. In an effort to better understand esophageal cancer and to improve its prognosis, Samsung Medical Center has hosted Esophageal Cancer Symposia on a regular basis since 2005. These symposia are made particularly special by the fact that specialists in various related fields with substantial experience provide participants, who are eager to learn, with continuing education and up-to-date information on the field. This special issue was designed to amplify the impact of this knowledge by sharing it with the readers of this journal who did not attend the 2019 symposium. Furthermore, by publishing these highly useful lectures presented at the symposium in this special issue, the frontline physicians and clinicians who are combatting esophageal cancer will be able to apply these

insights on a daily basis regardless of whether they participated in the symposium.

This issue includes valuable lectures presented by well-experienced thoracic surgeons, gastroenterologists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, and interventional radiologists and comprehensively covers related topics, including innovative techniques (e.g., minimally invasive esophagectomy and modern technology of radiation therapy) and multimodal therapeutic approaches (e.g., neoadjuvant concurrent chemoradiotherapy and adjuvant chemotherapy). Knowledge and experience on how to overcome challenging surgical cases, improve difficult aspects of postoperative care, and enhance quality of life after esophagectomy are also provided. Hence, we hope that this issue will contribute to advances in esophageal cancer treatment in Korea and ultimately will give hope to patients suffering from esophageal cancer. Primarily, we would like to thank all of the contributing authors for sharing their expertise and contributions to this issue.

Conflict of interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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