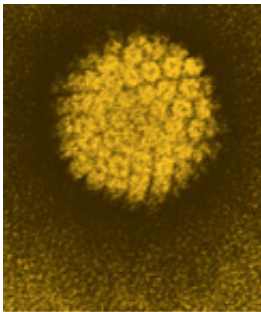


HPV-16 tied to improved survival in advanced esophageal cancer

March 4 2015



Electron micrograph of HPV. Photo courtesy: U.S. National Institutes of Health.

(HealthDay)—For patients with advanced-stage esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC), human papillomavirus (HPV)-16 infection is associated with improved survival and treatment response, according to a study published online Feb. 24 in the *Journal of Digestive Diseases*.

Wen-Lun Wang, M.D., from the E-Da Hospital/I-Shou University in Taiwan, China, and colleagues examined the impact of HPV infection on the prognosis and [treatment response](#) of ESCC in a cohort of 150 patients. The presence and subtype of HPV-DNA in tumor specimens was assessed by [polymerase chain reaction](#) and sequencing.

Eighteen percent of ESCC tumor samples were HPV-positive, of which

81.5 percent were positive for HPV-16 infection. The researchers observed no difference between HPV-positive and HPV-negative groups in terms of the prevalence of developing multiple ESCC (29.6 and 28.5 percent, respectively; $P = 0.90$). Survival was significantly better for patients with HPV-16 positive advanced-stage ESCC compared with HPV-negative disease (three-year survival, 55 versus 21 percent; log-rank $P = 0.03$), in subgroup analysis. The presence of HPV-16 correlated with a significant decrease in the mortality rate (hazard ratio, 0.41). Chemoradiation response was better for patients with versus those without HPV-16 infection ($P = 0.026$).

"In patients with advanced stage ESCC, HPV-16 positive patients had a significantly favorable survival, especially for those who receiving chemoradiation therapy," the authors write.

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Citation: HPV-16 tied to improved survival in advanced esophageal cancer (2015, March 4)
retrieved 6 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-hpv-tied-survival-advanced-esophageal.html>

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