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Papillary Cystic Tumor of the Pancreas in Children – A Condition Relatively Common in Asians

Alex Ky, MD, Ted Gerstle, MD, Ricardo Superina, MD, HSC Department of Surgery

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Abstract

Papillary cystic tumor (PCT) of the pancreas is a rare condition accounting for 0.2 per cent to 2.7 per cent of all pancreatic cancers. It is most commonly found in young women and has a relatively low malignancy potential. Approximately one-third of the reported cases have been in children but there have been no previous studies focusing exclusively on pediatric cases.

A retrospective review identified nine patients with PCT who were treated at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto between 1986 and 1996 was performed. Seven patients were girls and two were boys. The average age in the series was 12 years old. Four of the seven patients were of East Asian descent.

The patients presented with nonspecific abdominal pain or an asymptomatic mass found incidentally after trauma. The tumor size ranged from 6.5 cm to 14 cm. Surgical excision of the mass was performed in all cases. In one case there was local invasion and in another there was metastasis to local lymph nodes. Adjunctive therapy was utilized only in the latter case. All patients were alive at an average of 7 years Post surgery (range, 3 months - 15 years). One patient is presently being treated for local recurrence five-months after surgery.

A review of the literature indicates that a majority of patients with PCT are non-Caucasian. In the present study, 57 per cent of the patients were of East Asian descent. Although PCT is a rare condition, it should be considered in children presenting with an abdominal mass and particularly in those of East Asian ancestry. With surgical management, the prognosis for patients with PCT is generally good.