Gastric cancer

Ratha-korn Vilaichone

Gastroenterology unit, Department of Medicine, Thammasat University Hospital, Pathumthani, Thailand

Gastric cancer is the second most common cancer related death in the world. Every year gastric cancer affects 850,000 people, of which approximately 522,000 men and 328,000 women died from this important cancer. Many Asian countries; for example, Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan have very high rate of gastric cancer. Despite advanced medical technology, gastric cancer remains a difficult disease to cure in most patients presenting with advanced disease.

Worldwide, more than 1 billion people are estimated to be infected with H. pylori. The bacterium is classified by WHO as a class I carcinogen for gastric. Better understanding of the relation of H. pylori infection and gastric carcinogenesis will lead to the improvement quality of care and can reduce the high mortality of this cancer. Most ASEAN countries have high prevalence of H. pylori, leading to gastric disorders which cause burden to health care and socioeconomic status. Gastric cancer linked to H. pylori infection is a global issue that affects over 60/100,000 population in Japan. The prevalence of H. pylori infection is high about 40-70% in the ASEAN population. Nonetheless, the prevalence of gastric cancer in ASEAN is low. Gastric cancer in these countries is associated with high mortality since patients mostly present in advanced stages with poor 5-year survival. Gastric cancer screening in ASEAN is mainly recommended only to the selected high risk individuals (1-6).

H. pylori eradication is the most common bacterial infection worldwide with variable eradication rate from current regimens. Newer and safer treatment regimens are required to eliminate the diseases and risk of gastric cancer development. Patients at risks of gastric cancer need to be identified for both bacterial factors, such as East Asian strain and host factors including family members of gastric cancer, patients with precancerous lesions and susceptible IL-1 polymorphism. Detection of early pathological changes using new endoscopic techniques such as NBI technique, magnification endoscope and serum biomarkers like serum pepsinogen and cytokines level might be useful to identify population at risks for further prevention of this cancer (5-12).

Key words: Gastric cancer, H. pylori, ASEAN

References