



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Lung cancer in Northern Portugal: A hospital-based study[☆]



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KEYWORDS

Lung cancer trends;
Patterns occurrence;
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Abstract

Introduction: Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer worldwide. In Portugal, the disease remains the main cause of cancer death in males.

Aim: This study aims to evaluate the demographic and clinical characteristics of lung cancer patients diagnosed and treated in northern Portugal hospitals from 2000 to 2010.

Patients and methods: Twelve hospitals in the north of Portugal contributed to this study. The demographic and clinic characteristics of the patients registered in each hospital from 2000 to 2010 and the patterns of their occurrence were analyzed.

Results: During an 11-year period (2000–2010), 9767 lung cancer patients were registered in the participating hospitals. Comparing the number of the patients registered in the year 2000 to those registered during 2010, there was a significant increase in lung cancer cases. Females represent only 20% of the total registered lung cancer cases; however, during the study period, the number of female patients increased by 30%. A significant number of the patients, 3117 (48.6%), had poor performance status at presentation. The adenocarcinoma histology became more preponderant over the study period. Most of the patients were diagnosed as stages IIIB or IV: 7206 of 9267 (77.8%). Chemotherapy was the treatment of choice for 3529 (40.4%) patients, whereas surgical treatment was achieved in 1301 (14.9%) cases.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Cancro do pulmão;
Padrões de
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Conclusion: A significant number of lung cancer patients have been diagnosed and treated in hospitals in northern Portugal, and the incidence of the disease among females has been increasing. The overwhelming majority of the tumors were diagnosed in advanced stage; nevertheless, surgical treatment was possible in 14.9% of the patients.

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Cancro do pulmão no norte de Portugal: um estudo de base hospitalar**Resumo**

Introdução: O cancro do pulmão é o cancro que mais mortalidade determina em todo mundo. Em Portugal a doença mantém-se a principal causa de morte por cancro no sexo masculino.

Objetivo: Neste estudo pretendeu-se avaliar as características demográficas e clínicas dos doentes com cancro do pulmão diagnosticados e tratados nos hospitais do norte de Portugal entre os anos 2000-2010.

Doentes e métodos: Doze hospitais contribuíram para este estudo. Foram analisadas as características demográficas e clínicas dos doentes com cancro do pulmão registados em cada hospital, entre os anos 2000-2010, nos hospitais do norte de Portugal, bem como os padrões de ocorrência da doença.

Resultados: Ao longo de um período de 11 anos (2000-2010), 9.767 doentes com cancro do pulmão foram registados nos hospitais participantes. Identificamos um importante aumento no número de doentes registados em relação aos registados em 2000. No sexo feminino observou-se uma elevação da ocorrência atingindo os 30%, o que é significativo, apesar do cancro do pulmão nas mulheres, em Portugal, ser muito menos frequente que nos homens e nesta série representar apenas 20% dos casos. Um número elevado de doentes, 3.117 (48,6%), tinha mau estado geral na altura que recorreram aos cuidados de saúde. O adenocarcinoma foi-se tornando a histologia mais preponderante ao longo do período de estudo. A maior parte dos doentes, 7.206 (77,8%), foi diagnosticada em estádios avançados (IIIB, IV) da doença. A quimioterapia foi o tratamento escolhido para 3.529 (40,4%) dos doentes, por outro lado, a cirurgia foi possível em 1.301 (14,9%) dos casos.

Conclusão: Um elevado número de doentes com cancro do pulmão é diagnosticado e tratado nos hospitais do norte de Portugal. A incidência no sexo feminino tem vindo a aumentar. A esmagadora maioria dos tumores foi diagnosticada em estágio avançado, tendo sido possível, apesar disso, tratar cirurgicamente 14,9% dos doentes.

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Introduction

Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer worldwide.¹ In 2008, 1.61 million new cases were diagnosed and 1.38 million of deaths occurred,¹ illustrating the aggressiveness of the disease.

In Portugal, lung cancer remains the main cause of cancer death in males.¹ Over the past 50 years until the 1990s, lung cancer mortality had increased sharply; in recent years, however, it has slowed down among males.² Female lung cancer patients represent only 20% of the total number of cases in Portugal, but a growing trend has been observed in the last few years.^{2,3}

The importance of obtaining knowledge about lung cancer trends in the northern part of Portugal and the need to harmonize diagnostic and therapeutic strategies has always been recognized. These were the goals of a group of lung specialists in northern Portugal when they started a discussion forum specifically to deal with these matters. These chest physicians voluntarily worked together for more than

a decade, discussing clinical cases with problematical or unusual features. Afterwards, they expanded their interests to recent technological and scientific developments and to the study of the epidemiology of the disease in the region where they work.

Aim

The study aims to investigate the demographic and clinical characteristics of lung cancer patients diagnosed from 2000 to 2010 in hospitals in northern Portugal, as well as to identify and describe the patterns of lung cancer occurrence and the strategies for treatment during the same interval.

Patients and methods

Twelve hospitals contributed to this study (Centro Hospitalar Vila Nova de Gaia, Centro Hospitalar S. João, Instituto Português Oncologia-Porto, Centro Hospitalar Vila Real e Trás

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