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REVIEW ARTICLE

The Roles of Ultrasonography and Ultrasonography-guided Fine-needle Aspiration Cytology in the Planning of Management of Thyroid Cancers



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Because of the widespread use of thyroid ultrasonography, many thyroid lesions, even thyroid cancers, can be detected early. For these small lesions, planning of the management of thyroid cancers, especially papillary thyroid cancers, is different from previous guidelines. By contrast, for the quality of life of these patients with early detected thyroid lesions, the management should be different. In addition, there are some lesions which are undetermined by fine-needle aspiration cytology, and the planning should be different from those with a definite preoperative diagnosis. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how thyroid ultrasonography and ultrasonography-guided fine-needle aspiration cytology could help the planning of the extent of thyroidectomy and further management. The convenient method of ultrasonography-guided fine-needle aspiration cytology we used is introduced in detail. Three examples with completely different management after ultrasonography and ultrasonography-guided fine-needle aspiration cytology are also demonstrated.

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Introduction

Because of the widespread use of thyroid ultrasonography, many thyroid lesions, even thyroid cancers, can be

detected early [1]. For these small lesions, planning of the management of thyroid cancers, especially papillary thyroid cancers, is different from previous guidelines [2]. By contrast, for the quality of life of these patients with early

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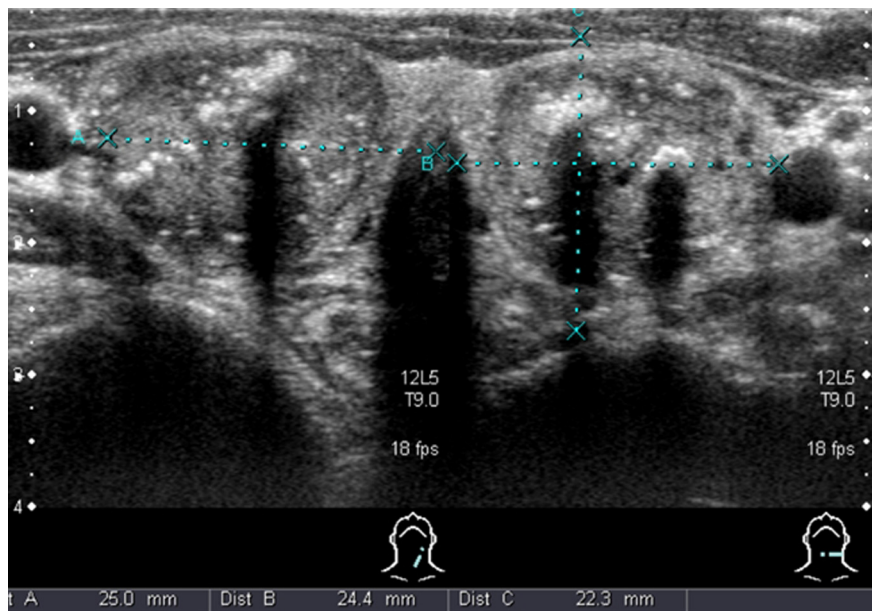


Fig. 1 Microcalcifications in the thyroid tumor of a patient with medullary thyroid cancer.

detected thyroid lesions, the management should be different, and sometimes more conservative. In addition, there are some lesions which are undetermined by fine-needle aspiration cytology [3,4], and the planning should be different from those with a definite preoperative diagnosis. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how thyroid ultrasonography and ultrasonography-guided fine-needle aspiration cytology could help the planning of the extent of thyroidectomy and further management.

Changes in the management of differentiated thyroid cancers in recent years

Because of the early detection of differentiated thyroid cancers, especially papillary thyroid cancers, the planning of management of these patients has changed. According to the American Thyroid Association staging system for predicting the risk of disease recurrence/persistence in patients with differentiated thyroid cancer [5], patients are

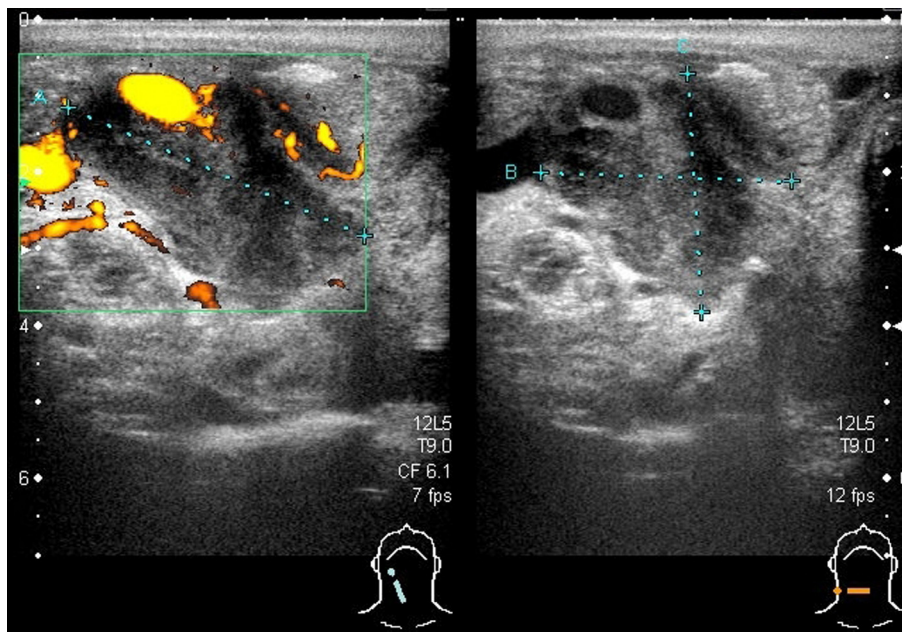


Fig. 2 Hypoechoogenicity, irregular margin, and extrathyroidal involvement of surrounding neck structures in a patient with anaplastic thyroid cancer.

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