

Opening Remarks by William Claxton

Dr. Kvols, Dr. Liau, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman.

Carcinoid and neuroendocrine cancer is a relatively rare disease which is poorly understood and is often misdiagnosed. Gastroenterologists are often the 'first responders', and they are the one who must learn to recognise the symptoms which are similar to Crohn's and IBS, but often combined with facial flushing. A simple 5HIAA urine test or a Chromagranin A blood test can in most cases screen for this disease. CgA testing can now be done here at NCCS, and aside from use in screening, it can benchmark the progress of neuroendocrine disease when measured every 3-6 months.

Once the disease is diagnosed, there are some basic things which must be done, such as to determine the origin and severity of the disease. The severity of neuroendocrine tumors is not measured in size, but in proliferation - meaning how fast the tumor cells are replicating. A pathology test known as Ki-67 is easily performed on any tissue sample (for example, an excised primary tumor or even a biopsy) and measures proliferation. This is a one-shot test that can determine how aggressive the tumors are, and will help physicians plan treatment as well as indicate a patient's long-term prognosis.

The origin or location of the primary tumor can be isolated with an good scan, and the best available scan today is the Gallium PET/CT. This scan is now available at SGH and Radlink here in Singapore. The Gallium PET/CT can isolate pea-sized tumors less than 1 cm in diameter, and localise them within the body. It can also measure tumor receptor uptake values, again useful to benchmark progress of the disease when tested every 6-12 months.

Chromagranin markers and the occasional Gallium PET/CT scan - along with maintenance therapy using Octreotide or Lanreotide - these are the current standards of care. Carcinoid disease is said to be 'cancer in slow motion' but one must be able to localise the tumors and monitor disease progression in order to plan therapy.

In today's talk you will hear Professor Dr. Larry Kvols speak about the evolution of diagnosis and treatment of neuroendocrine tumors. I am sure you will come away from this talk impressed with the progress to date, and hopefully have a better understanding of the state-of-the-art. I thank you all for attending this seminar, and welcome you to stay for the luncheon that follows.

Speaker Introductions by William Claxton

Now I have the pleasure to introduce Dr. Liao Kui Hin, who will deliver the opening remarks. Dr. Liao is Consultant Surgeon and Chief of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Liao.

[Dr. Liao's introduction & Dr. Kvols' presentation]

Thank you Dr. Kvols. I now have a small token of appreciation for you.

[Presentation of gift]

Thank you all ladies and gentlemen. Please join us for a local lunch.