Evidence-Based Series 17-3 IN REVIEW

A Quality Initiative of the Program in Evidence-based Care (PEBC), Cancer Care Ontario (CCO)

Guideline for Optimization of Surgical and Pathological Quality Performance for Radical Prostatectomy in Prostate Cancer Management


Report Date: September 11, 2008

An assessment conducted in November 2014 placed Evidence-based Series (EBS) 17-3 IN REVIEW. This means that it is undergoing assessment for currency and relevance. The Surgical Oncology Group has determined that it is still appropriate for this document to continue to be available while this updating process unfolds. The PEBC has a formal and standardize process to ensure the currency of each document (PEBC Assessment & Review Protocol)

EBS 17-3 is comprised of 3 sections and is available on the CCO Website on the PEBC Surgery page.

Section 1: Surgical and Pathological Guidelines
Section 2: Evidentiary Base
Section 3: EBS Development Methods and External Review Process

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Evidence-Based Series #17-3: Section 1

Guideline for Optimization of Surgical and Pathological Quality Performance for Radical Prostatectomy in Prostate Cancer Management: Surgical and Pathological Guidelines


A Quality Initiative of the Surgical Oncology Program, Cancer Care Ontario and the Program in Evidence-based Care, Cancer Care Ontario
A Special Project of the Expert Panel on Prostate Cancer Surgery and Pathology

Report Date: September 11, 2008

QUESTIONS

Surgical Questions
What are the recommended surgical procedures and outcomes for radical prostatectomy (RP), specifically:
1. What is the recommended extent of resection, and what is an acceptable positive margin rate?
2. What are the reported rates for surgical complications, specifically incontinence, erectile dysfunction, rectal injury, and blood transfusion, and does surgical technique (e.g., nerve sparing, bladder neck preservation) affect complication rates?
3. Under what circumstances should nerve-sparing techniques be used?
4. Which patients should receive pelvic lymph node dissection (PLND), and what is the recommended extent of PLND?

Pathological Questions
1. What are the recommended procedures for handling the RP specimen in the operating room and for handling and processing the RP specimen (with or without lymph nodes) in the pathology lab?
2. What diagnostic and prognostic elements should be included in the pathology report, what format should be used, and what reporting elements should be included?
Target Population
The target population is adult males with potentially curable prostate cancer for whom RP is the preferred treatment option.

- Risk Categories: Patients may be considered “low”, “intermediate”, or “high” risk for treatment failure (e.g., local recurrence, biochemical failure with prostate-specific antigen [PSA] relapse, emergence of metastatic disease) based on disease characteristics using the definitions proposed by D’Amico et al (1).

  Patient Risk:
  - Low Risk: PSA <10, Gleason ≤ 6, and clinical stage T1 or T2
  - Intermediate Risk: PSA 10-20, and/or Gleason 7
  - High Risk: PSA >20, Gleason ≥ 8, or clinical stage ≥T3

RECOMMENDATIONS
The following recommendations are based on the expert opinion consensus of members of the Prostate Cancer Surgery and Pathology Expert Panel (For membership, please see Section 2: Appendix 5.) and informed by evidence from case series studies located through a systematic review of the available clinical evidence. The pathological questions are largely addressed by the protocol for invasive carcinomas of the prostate gland developed by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) with an effective date of April 2007 (endorsed by Cancer Care Ontario [CCO] and the Expert Panel on Prostate Cancer Surgery and Pathology). The full protocol and checklist for RP are included in Section 2: Appendix 1 and can be found at: http://www.cap.org/apps/docs/cancer_protocols/2006/prostate06_pw.pdf.

Surgical Recommendations
The main goals of RP are (a) complete eradication of the cancer-containing organ with negative surgical margins, (b) preservation of urinary function, and (c) preservation of erectile function, where appropriate, but, in some cases, it is not possible to achieve all three. Positive surgical margins are associated with higher rates of cancer recurrence, but techniques for the preservation of urinary and erectile function may result in positive margins.

The consensus opinion of the expert panel is that the following techniques and objectives form the basis for good surgical management during RP. In Ontario currently, most RPs are performed via the open retropubic route, but other methods are acceptable.

Radical Prostatectomy
- RP should be offered to low-risk and intermediate-risk patients for whom surgery is the preferred option after full discussion with patient and taking into account patient preferences.
- The decision to offer surgery to high-risk patients should be made with careful consideration. High-risk patients should be offered a referral for radiation consultation or review at a Multidisciplinary Cancer Conference (MCC). The intent of the MCC is to ensure that all appropriate diagnostic tests, all suitable treatment options, and the most appropriate treatment recommendations are generated for each cancer patient and discussed prospectively with a multidisciplinary team with the knowledge and tools to provide a full array of surgical interventions, systemic and radiation treatments, and supportive and palliative care. The incidence of positive margins in this patient group is expected to be higher than in that for pT2 disease.
Sparing of the neurovascular bundles should be considered the “standard approach” except for high-risk patients.

In patients with otherwise low or intermediate risk, where there is an increased likelihood of positive margins, based on clinical evidence, or the likelihood of extracapsular tumour extension and risk categorization, wide excision of the neurovascular bundles would be warranted in order to avoid compromising cancer control.

The panel consensus was that attaining a positive margin rate of <25% for pT2 disease should be an achievable goal.

The panel consensus was that the goals are to achieve rates of <1% mortality, <1% for rectal injury and <10% for blood transfusion in non-anemic patients.

Pelvic Lymph Node Dissection

Standard PLND should be mandatory in high-risk patients and is recommended for the intermediate group. PLND is optional for low-risk patients. (Standard PLND should include all lymphatic tissue along the external iliac vein from the lymph node of Cloquet distally to the bifurcation of the common iliac vein proximally and includes all lymphatic tissue in the obturator fossa.)

Evidence and opinions on the role of extended PLND in high-risk patients are divided. (An extended PLND entails the removal of lymph nodes medial and lateral to the internal iliac vessels up to and around the bifurcation of the common iliac artery, with the genitofemoral nerve as the lateral limit.)

Technical Considerations for Radical Prostatectomy

For additional specific details concerning technical considerations for RP refer to Section 2: Appendix 4.a) of this document.

PATHOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Handling of the Radical Prostatectomy Specimen in the Operating Room

Frozen section analysis of the radical prostatectomy specimen (RPS) for margin status is not recommended.

For routine handling, the RPS should be fixed in 10% neutral buffered formalin or other appropriate fixative. The specimen should be put in an appropriately sized container with a minimum formalin/tissue ratio of 10:1 (i.e., 500 cc formalin for a 50 cc prostate).

Pathology Requisition Information

The surgical specimen should be accompanied by an appropriate pathology requisition that includes demographic and other identifying information, relevant clinical data (e.g., serum PSA, DRE findings [T1c versus T2], Gleason score on biopsy), and the history of neoadjuvant therapy (e.g., hormones).

Pathology Report

The surgical pathology report should include the relevant diagnostic and prognostic information as outlined in the CAP Cancer Protocol for Carcinomas of the Prostate Gland (2). CCO has recommended as a minimum standard that all mandatory elements on the CAP checklist (Section 2: Appendix 2) be included in the RPS pathology report.

It is recommended that the diagnostic and prognostic factors be presented as a synopsis as opposed to a narrative or paragraph form. Data from CCO indicates that synopses are more likely to be complete.
Technical Considerations for Handling and Processing the Radical Prostatectomy Specimen in the Pathology Laboratory

- For additional specific details concerning technical considerations for handling and processing, refer to Section 2: Appendix 4.b) of this document.
- In the Pathology Laboratory, the RPS (with or without lymph nodes) is accessioned in the usual fashion.
- The RPS should be fixed in neutral buffered formalin (minimum 10:1 ratio) for a minimum of 18-24 hours prior to sectioning. A microwave-assisted technique may be used to reduce fixation time.
- The prostate gland should be weighed and measured in three dimensions; seminal vesicles should be measured; accompanying lymph node specimens should also be measured and a record made of the number and size of grossly identified nodes.
- The outer aspects of the RPS should be carefully inked to identify the surgical margins, prior to tissue banking.
- After appropriate fixation and inking, the distal apical segment is transected and then serially sectioned, perpendicular to the inked surface. An en face (shave) technique is to be discouraged at the apex, as this approach can result in false-positive margin interpretation.
- The basal (bladder neck) aspect is commonly doughnut shaped and irregular. It is transected from the main specimen and should also be submitted in a perpendicular fashion to minimize the possibility of a false-positive margin at this location.
- The intervening transverse sections can be either totally or subtotally submitted using regular-sized blocks. The submission protocol should be documented with an appropriate diagramatic or written block legend.
- For subtotal submissions, a systematic approach to include the posterolateral peripheral zone should be used.
- All lymph nodes accompanying the RPS should be submitted for histological analysis. It is not necessary to submit all perinodal fat, although it is often difficult to distinguish between adipose tissue and fatty lymph nodes.
- The full CAP checklist and protocol for RP are available at http://www.cap.org/apps/docs/cancer_protocols/2006/prostate06_pw.pdf and are included in Section 2: Appendix 1 of this EBS report

RELATED GUIDELINES

For a current listing of the following relevant guideline documents, please visit the Program in Evidenced-Based Care (PEBC) at http://www.cancercare.on.ca:

- Multidisciplinary Case Conference Standards, June 2006
- Evidence Summary 3-10: The Use of Brachytherapy in T1 or T2 Prostate Cancer, May 2001 Update
- Practice Guideline 3-11: The Use of Conformal Radiotherapy and the Selection of Radiation Dose in T1 or T2 Prostate Cancer, October 2002
- Evidence-Based Series 3-15: Non-hormonal Systemic Therapy in Men with Metastatic Hormone-refractory Prostate Cancer, November 2005
- Evidence-Based Series 3-17: Adjuvant Radiotherapy Following Radical Prostatectomy for Pathologic T3 or Margin-Positive Prostate Cancer, February 2008.
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REFERENCES
