

GASTRIC MALIGNANCIES IN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS: PATHOLOGY AND OUTCOMES

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Background: The number of breast cancer survivors is increasing, likely due to the high prevalence of breast cancer accompanied by improved survival from the disease. As a result, the appearance of second malignancies and unusual metastatic patterns is likely also increasing. Our group, as well as recent reports, have noted gastric malignancies among breast cancer survivors.

Methods: We reviewed our cancer institute tumor database of 1,854 analytic breast cancer cases to determine the number, types and outcomes of subsequent gastric malignancies. Factors recorded included features of the original breast cancer, histology and stage of the gastric lesion, treatments given, and patient survival.

Results: Fourteen patients developed subsequent gastric malignancies, representing 0.75% of all breast cancer survivors in our database. All patients had gastric symptoms and underwent at least a diagnostic biopsy. Overall survival for the entire cohort was 43%.

Six patients had gastric primaries (adenocarcinoma, linitis plastica, or lymphoma) and four of these patients died of their second cancers. Four patients had symptomatic gastric metastases; all had evidence of metastatic disease elsewhere. Three of these patients had lobular histology in both their primary tumors and metastatic lesions - one is currently alive with stable disease two years out from the diagnosis of the gastric lesion. Four patients had gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs); all were treated for cure and three are currently alive.

Conclusion: Gastric symptoms in breast cancer survivors may represent malignant lesions: long term survival for these patients is possible, especially for patients with GIST. Most gastric metastases in our series were of lobular histology.