

Patient-reported outcomes in palliative gastrointestinal stenting: a Norwegian multicenter study

Presented by: Nader Azer (FM2)

Authors: Lene Larssen, Asle W. Medhus, Marianne J. Hjermstad, Hartwig Körner, Tom Glomsaker, Taran Sjøberg, Dagfinn Gleditsch, Øistein Hovde, Arild Nesbakken, Jan K. Tholfsen, Knut Skreden, and Truls Hauge. *Surg Endosc* (2011) 25:3162-3196

Abstract:

Background: Mainly physicians have evaluated the clinical effect of stent treatment. Only a limited number of prospective studies have used patient-reported outcomes for this purpose. The aim of this work was to study the clinical effect of self-expanding metal stents in treatment of malignant gastrointestinal obstructions, as evaluated by patient-reported outcomes, and compare the rating of the treatment effect by patients and physicians.

Methods: Between November 2006 and April 2008, 273 patients treated with SEMS for malignant GI and biliary obstructions were recruited from nine Norwegian hospitals. Patients and physicians assessed symptoms independently at the time of treatment and after 2 weeks using the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) QLQ-C30 questionnaire supplemented with specific questions related to obstruction. **Results:** A total of 162 patients (99 males; median age = 72 years) completed both assessments and were included in the study. A significant improvement in the mean global health score was observed after 2 weeks (from 9 to 18 on a 0–100 scale, $P < 0.03$) for all stent locations. Both patients and physicians reported a significant reduction in all obstruction-related symptoms (>20 on the 0–100 scale, $P < 0.006$) after SEMS treatment. The physicians reported a larger mean improvement in symptoms than did the patients, mainly because they reported more severe symptoms before treatment. **Conclusion:** SEMS treatment is effective in relieving symptoms of malignant GI and biliary obstruction, as reported by patients and physicians. The physicians, however, reported a larger reduction in obstructive symptoms than did the patients. A prospective assessment of patient-reported outcomes is important in evaluating SEMS treatment.

Strengths:

Informative in a relevant area, the paper used patient-reported outcomes to evaluate the effects of SEMS on quality of life. Also, the study compared patient- and physician-reported evaluations of the treatment's effects. The study used a well-recognized questionnaire (EORTC QLQ-C30, version 3.0).

Weaknesses:

The study protocol did not include a scheduled follow-up after stent treatment. Also, it did not identify subgroups of patients that didn't benefit from SEMS treatment, and received alternative palliative treatment. (identified by Author).

Relevance to Palliative Care:

SEMS treatment is effective in relieving symptoms of malignant GI and biliary obstruction. It is regarded as a safe and highly effective procedure for relieve of symptoms caused by malignant obstruction of the GIT.