Clinico-epidemiological profile of colorectal cancer in Algerian patients age 40 and under: Alarming Increase in Incidence

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Introduction: Colorectal cancer (CRC) is rare before age 40, the average age at diagnosis is generally > 50. In our department of medical oncology in Blida (north of Algeria) we have observed an increased number of young patients with colorectal cancer. The aim of this study is to determine epidemiologic and clinical characteristics of this cancer in young patients ≤ 40.

Methods: This is a retrospective study of patients diagnosed with CRC aged 40 and under, treated in department of medical oncology in Blida between January 2012 and December 2014. We were interested to clinico-epidemiological characteristics of this population.

Results: During this period, 62 patients with CRC age 40 and under were seen, which is about 17.3% of all CRC patients (total: 368 patients). 25 were male (40.4%) and 37 female (59.6%), median age at diagnosis 32 years, range 15 to 40. Body mass index (BMI) was higher in 25 in 16 patients (25.8%), diet high in meat and fat was observed in 23 patients (37%), presence of polyps at colonoscopy was noted in 6 cases, family history of CRC was seen in 7 patients and family history of other cancer was seen in 10 patients. The most common symptoms were pain and rectal bleeding, diagnosis delay was > 3 months in 62% of cases, the rectosigmoid was the most frequent seat, histological type was adenocarcinoma in 90.2% and mucous colloid carcinoma in 9.8%, locally advanced (III) and metastatic stages (IV) were respectively 41% and 33% of cases.

Conclusion: Alarming increase of CRC in young people (in our series). The main risk factors in young people are: diet rich in meat and fat, low in vegetables and fruits, physical inactivity, excess weight and unknown behavioral factors. Eating habits and how to live our young population must be analysed carefully. Oncogenetic consultations are necessary for people with a family history of cancer.