10th International Conference on

Otolarngology: ENT Surgery

May 15, 2023 | Webinar

Received Date: 25-3-2023 | Accepted Date: 30-3-2023 | Publication Date: 30-05-2023

Association of ultrasonographic characteristics with the malignancy in cold nodules of the Thyroid

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Methods: This was an observational study, conducted in the Department of ENT, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center, Karachi. The study duration was six months, ie. from 15th April to 15th October 2019. Patients with a diagnosis of the palpable thyroid gland on physical examination were enrolled. Detailed histories and physical examinations were recorded. All patients underwent ^{99m}Tc-pertechnetate scintigraphy and patients with cold nodules were eligible for study after fulfilling inclusion/exclusion criteria. Thyroid ultrasonography was performed and findings such as size, shape, calcifications, and hypoechogenicity of nodules were recorded. FNA biopsy was performed under ultrasound guidance. The final diagnosis of malignancy was based on histopathologic examination. Data were analyzed by SPSS and the association was established between ultrasonographic characteristics and frequency of malignancy in cold nodules of the thyroid gland.

Results: Out of the total of 188 patients with cold nodules, 17 were positive for malignancy. On analysis of the association of various factors with malignancy, 04 patients of age less than 40 years while 13 of age 40 and above had malignancy (P= 0.235). Ten males and 7 females had malignancy (P= 0.514). Seven patients with tumor size > 20 cm, while 10 patients with tumor size > 20 cm had malignancy (P=000). Fourteen patients with abnormal shapes while 03 patients without abnormal shapes had malignancy (p=.036). Seven patients with calcification while 10 patients without calcification had malignancy (P=0.209). Seven patients with hypoechogenicity while 10 patients without hypo echogenicity had malignancy (P=0.533).

Conclusions: The majority of patients with malignancy are males of above 40 years of age. Tumor size above 20 cm and abnormal shape on ultrasound of the thyroid gland is strongly associated with increased chances of malignancy in cold nodules of the thyroid.

Keywords: thyroid malignancy, cold nodule, ultrasonography, FNA biopsy, tumor histopathology.

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