Risk of Colonic Polyps High in Diabetic Patients

BY MICHAEL VLESSIDES

BANFF, ALTA. — Patients with diabetes appear to be at higher risk of developing colon polyps than are nondiabetics, according to the results of a case control study.

In the chart review of 305 people who had received a colonoscopy, those in whom adenomas and/or carcinomas were detected had seven times the odds of being diabetic, compared with patients without those lesions.

On the basis of these findings, Dr. Nitasha Anand recommended that diabetic patients undergo earlier or more frequent colon screening than patients without diabetes. However, she pointed out that the study's several confounders made it difficult to draw definite conclusions.

"Insulin is a growth factor for epithelium in the colon," Dr. Anand said at the Canadian Digestive Diseases Week. "So we were wondering whether people with higher insulin levels in the blood would have more polyps in the colon than the average person." Previous studies have found a slightly increased risk of colon polyps in diabetic patients, with odds ratios from 1.2 to 1.3, said Dr. Anand of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

Of the 305 charts eligible for analysis, 40 were from patients with diabetes. Controls comprised the first 265 consecutive patients without diabetes.

Three diabetic patients had neoplasms, as did three controls. The odds ratio for patients with diabetes having adenomas and/or carcinomas was 7.4, compared with nondiabetic patients.

"There are several of limitations to this study," Dr. Anand said in an interview. "It's retrospective, which comes with its own host of issues. In addition, if it's not charted, we had no way of knowing if a patient was diabetic or not." In addition, the diabetic patients were older than their counterparts in the control group (mean age 64 vs. 58 years, respectively), she said.

CDDW is sponsored by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and the Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver. Dr. Anand had no financial interests to disclose regarding the study. ■

Occult Blood Test Useful in Ca Screening

BANFF, ALTA. — A screening program in Ontario was successful in detecting high-risk adenomas and colorectal cancer in patients referred because of positive fecal occult blood test results or a family history of colorectal cancer.

Dr. William G. Paterson and his colleagues reviewed the charts of 764 patients referred to the program; 122 were referred because of positive fecal occult blood tests (FOBTs). Of those, 14 patients were found to have cancer (11.4% diagnostic yield) and 30 had high-risk adenomas (24.6% diagnostic yield).

The remaining 642 patients screened through the program had a family history of colorectal cancer. Eleven cases of cancer (1.7% diagnostic yield) and 37 high-risk adenomas (5.8% diagnostic yield) were found. The yield for this cohort was not statistically different between patients whose first-degree relative was diagnosed at age 60 years or younger, or at older than 60 years of age.

A separate group of 2,011 patients underwent screening colonoscopy outside the newly developed program; 135 of them were considered to be of average risk, Dr. Paterson reported at the Canadian Digestive Diseases Week.

Among average-risk patients, one was found to have cancer (0.7% diagnostic yield); five others had high-risk adenoma (3.7% diagnostic yield).

"So the yield for those who came with a positive FOBT was significantly higher than all the other routes," said Dr. Paterson, chief of gastroenterology at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Dr. Paterson disclosed that he has no relevant financial interests to disclose regarding this topic. CDDW is sponsored by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and the Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver.

—Michael Vlessides