

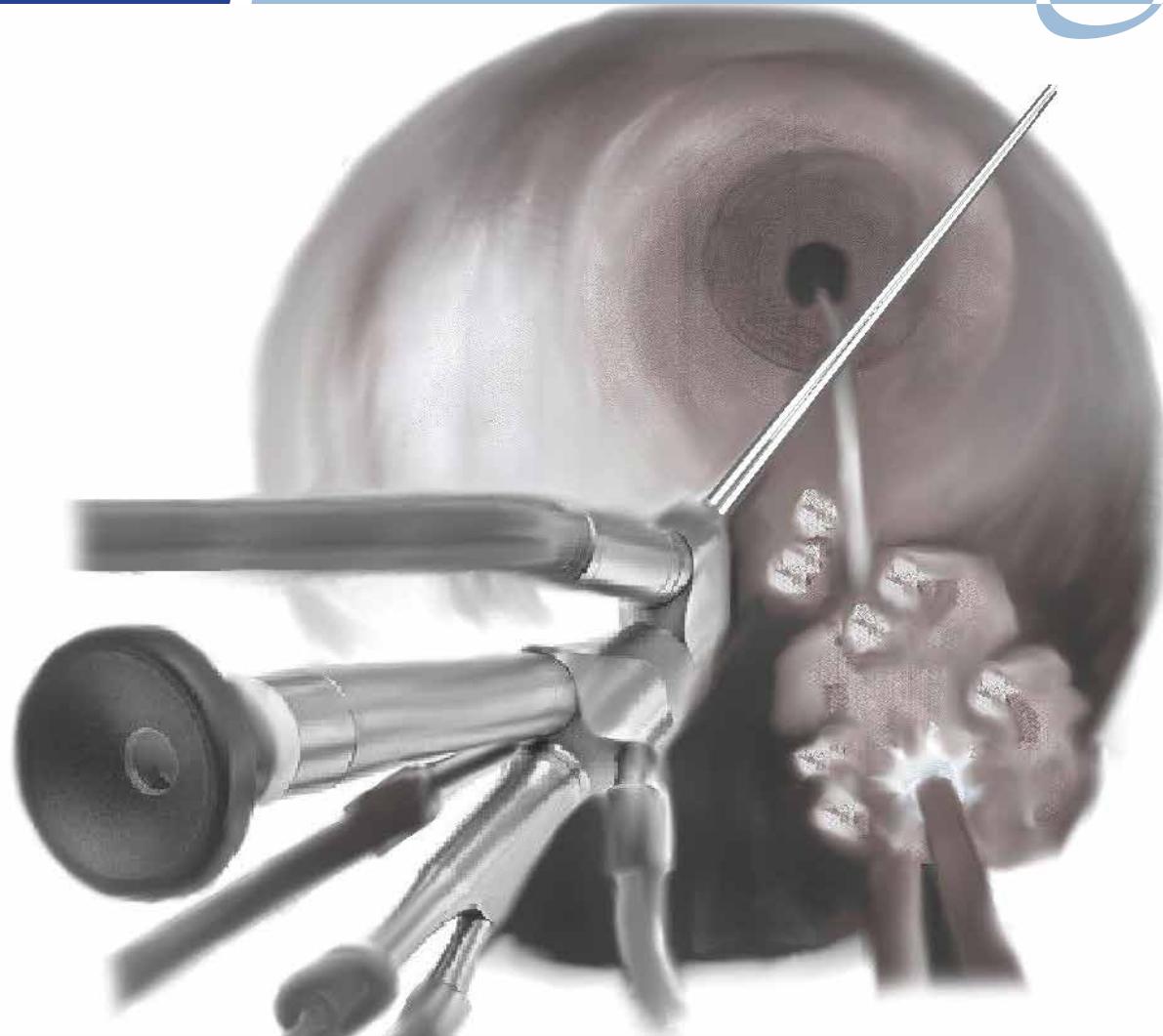
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Hellenic Urology

Quarterly Publication by the Hellenic Urological Association



REVIEWS

- Serenoa Repens in the hands of the modern urologist
- New trends in Prostate Cancer Imaging
- The role of alternative measures and non-microbial pharmacological interventions in the treatment of recurrent episodes of urinary tract infections in women

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

- A novel mathematical simulation modelling method, to predict the probability of finding cancer in prostate biopsy, on an individual basis
- Bowel perforation during percutaneous urological procedures

CASE REPORTS

- Post-traumatic gonadal splenosis. A report of two cases
- Epididymal leiomyoma



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of the Hellenic Urological Association

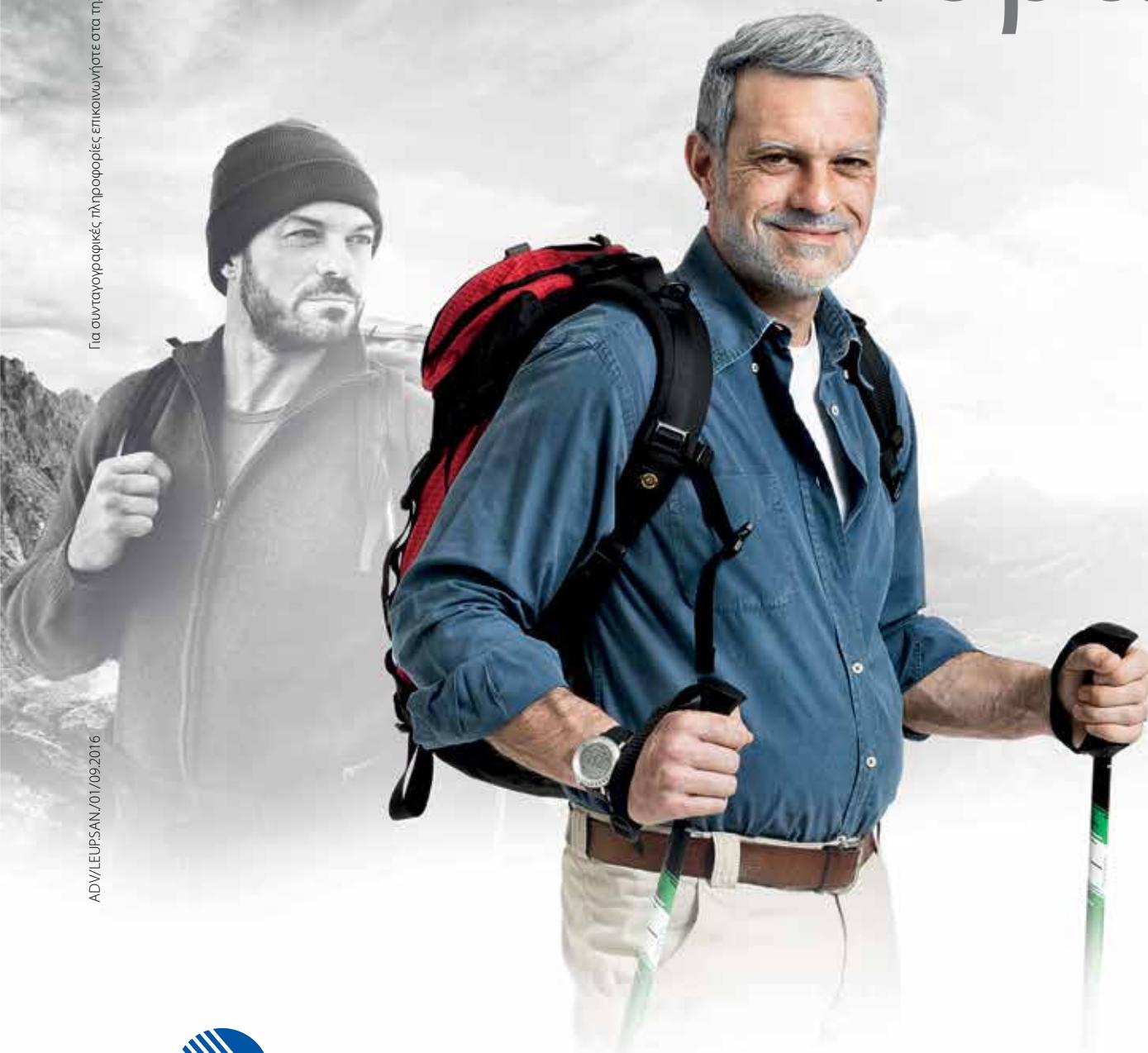


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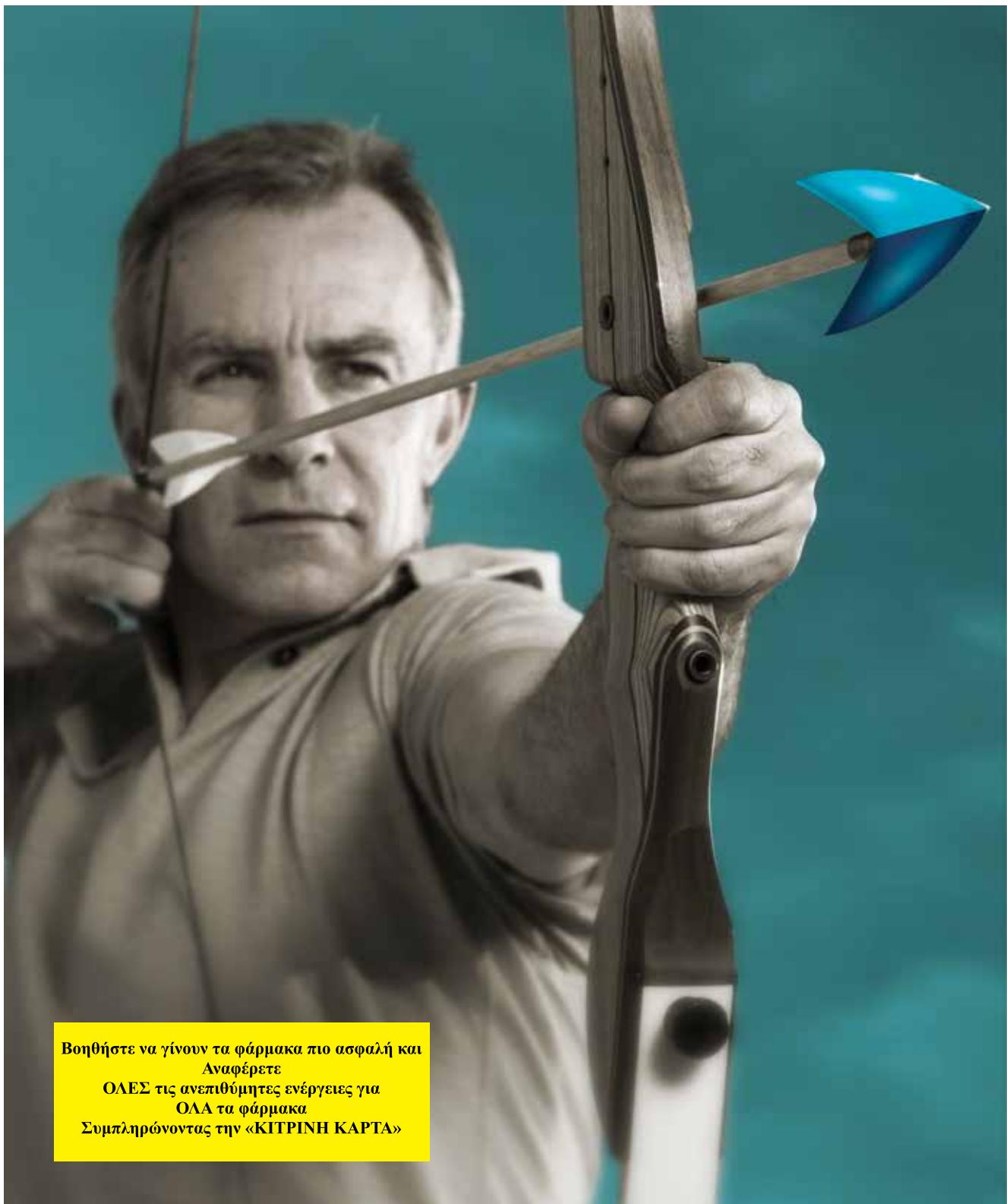


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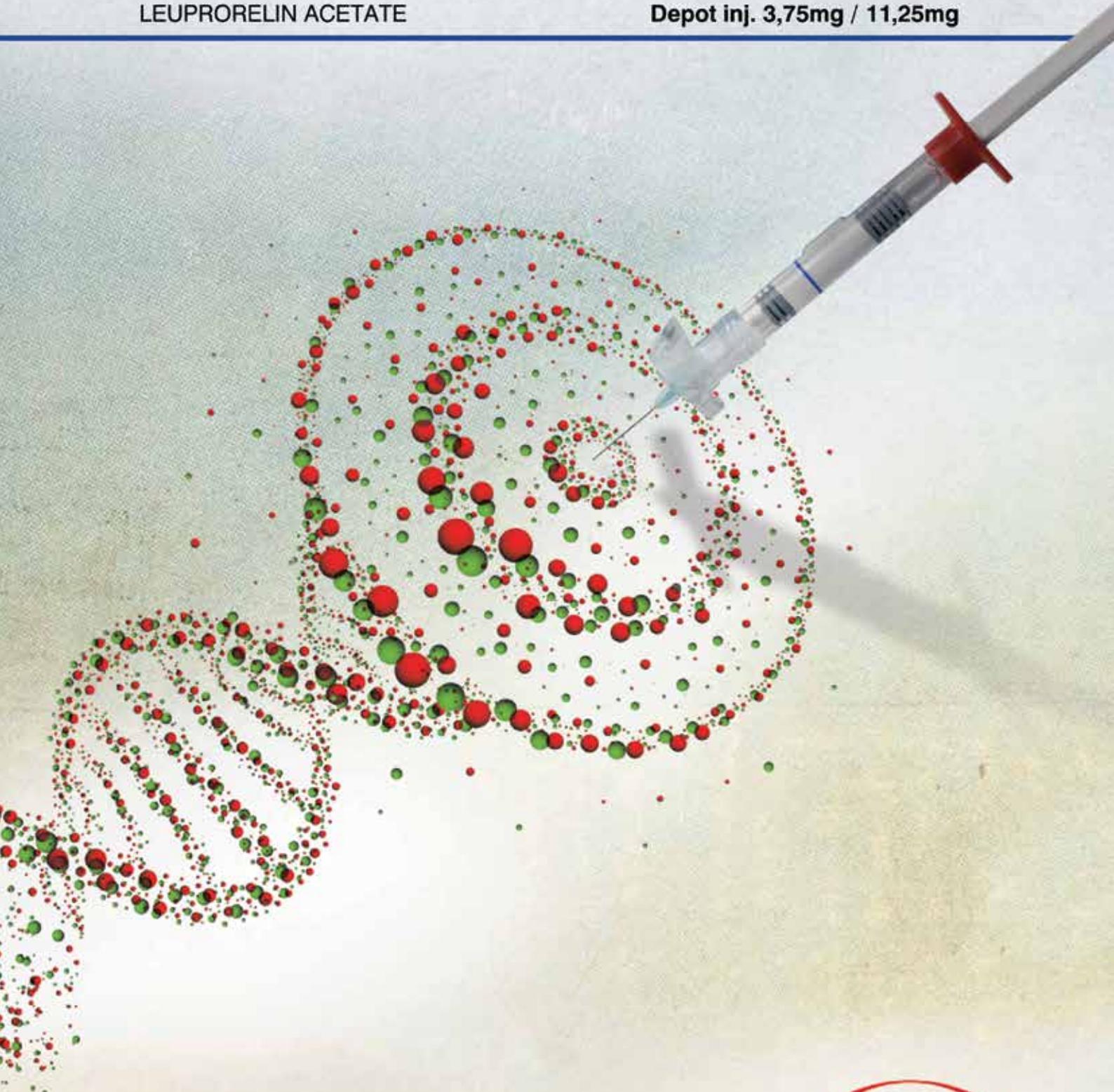


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6. Authorship of the Paper

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study.

All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co - authors while those who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research should be acknowledged or listed as contributors. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co - authors are included on the paper and that all co - authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper.

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Αλλάζοντας το αύριο



Το Όραμα της Astellas είναι να **αλλάξει το αύριο**.

Έχοντας αναλάβει τη δέσμευση να προσφέρουμε στους ασθενείς ελπίδα συνδέοντάς την με ένα καλύτερο μέλλον, σκοπός μας είναι να ηγηθούμε στους θεραπευτικούς τομείς στους οποίους εξειδικευόμαστε, εστιάζοντας ταυτόχρονα εκεί όπου οι ιατρικές ανάγκες εξακολουθούν να παραμένουν ανικανοποίητες.

Η Astellas θα συνεχίσει μέσω της έρευνας και της καινοτομίας να αναπτύσσει νέους τρόπους θεραπείας έτσι ώστε να συνεισφέρει στη βελτίωση της υγείας των ασθενών. Στόχος μας είναι να ανακαλύψουμε τις ιατρικές λύσεις του αύριο, στα προβλήματα υγείας του σήμερα.

Η Astellas δεσμεύεται, σε οτιδήποτε αναλαμβάνει, να επιτύχει αυτόν το σκοπό
ΑΛΛΑΖΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΟ ΑΥΡΙΟ.



REVIEW

Serenoa Repens in the hands of the modern urologist

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Abstract

Background: Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is a non-malignant enlargement of the prostate gland that affects around 50% of men between the ages of 50 and 60 years old. The application of Serenoa Repens in the treatment of the symptoms of stage I & II BPH is a therapeutic option that is present in the urologist's agenda for nearly three decades. The purpose of this work is the complete evaluation of existing literature on Serenoa Repens (in-vitro experiments, clinical trials and institutional monographs), summing up clinical trial references in an appendix and raising the necessary issues as far as raw material quality is concerned, providing a good point of reference to the contemporary urologist.

Methods: A complete review of the available literature on the effect of the lipidosterolic extract of Serenoa Repens in Benign

Prostatic Hyperplasia was conducted. Studies were collected via Pubmed.org, and an analytical appendix was formed, providing the full spectrum of available data.

Results: There are contradictions in the available literature, especially in between the results of 1984 to 2014 clinical trials and the available monographs. Contemporary clinical trial publications don't make any reference to the specifications prescribed by European Pharmacopoeia, which are the only quality markers available.

Conclusion: Future research should focus on and take into account the specifications available in European Pharmacopoeia concerning the content and method of production, providing thorough quantitative analysis of the contents of the extract used in trials.

Introduction

The application of Serenoa Repens (Saw Palmetto) in the treatment of the symptoms of stage I & II Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is a therapeutic option that is present in the urologist's agenda for nearly three decades. The beneficial contribution of the herb in alleviat-

ing Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms and improving patient's quality of life is clearly reflected in the commercial figures of those thirty last years. Serenoa Repens has established its position as one of the most commercial phytotherapeutic ingredients for BPH in Western markets, and especially in the United States and Germany⁶.



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In parallel lines with the commercial consolidation of Serenoa Repens in the markets, extensive research has taken place, focusing on the clinical and biochemical potency of the plant's extract. As a result, a wide range of published *in vitro* and clinical research, focusing on the lipidosterolic extract of Serenoa Repens is available. In our days, over a century after Serenoa Repens was registered as a medicine in United States Pharmacopoeia (1906)⁶, new published work keeps emerging and added for evaluation by the professional practitioner.

The purpose of this work is to evaluate existing literature, (*in vitro* experiments, clinical trials and institutional monographs), sum up clinical trial references in an appendix and raise the necessary issues as far as raw material quality is concerned, providing a good point of reference to the contemporary urologist.

Materials & Methods

The available literature on the lipidosterolic extract of Serenoa Repens is quite extensive, especially when compared to the literature referring to other phytotherapeutic ingredients. Our team contacted a literature search in pubmed.org using "Saw Palmetto""Serenoa Repens""Sabal Serrulata""Benign Prostate Hyperplasia" and "Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms""Clinical Trial" as mesh terms. Further search was conducted on the studies performing *in-vitro* tests on the mechanism of action of Serenoa Repens. pubmed.org was used as a search engine, using "Serenoa Repens", "Saw Palmetto", "Sabal Serrulata", "Prostate", "Bening Prostatic Hyperplasia", "*in vitro*", "anti-inflammatory" as mesh terms. The monographs from certain institutions were collected through accessing the respective web-sites (European Medicines Agency, American Botanic Council, World Health Organization). Finally, information was gathered through our authorized access to the European Pharmacopoeia ver. 8.0

Results

Mechanism of Action

The mechanism of action of Serenoa Repens lipidosterolic extract is not yet clearly defined. However, an important part of the literature evaluates the chemical ingredients included in the extract as inhibitors of the activity of the

enzyme 5-a reductase^{6,9,19,22,35}. The enzyme 5-a reductase is a basic modulator of the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT), an enzyme associated with the overgrowth of the prostate's epithelial cells¹⁰. At the same time, anti-inflammatory activity is achieved through the inhibition of inflammatory mediators^{21,27}, and the apoptotic processes in prostate's cells are modulated^{25,33,38}. Both have been attributed by specific studies to different compounds of the plant's extract. However, the mechanism of action is yet to be thoroughly and fully specified.

Key words
Serenoa Repens;
Saw Palmetto;
Benign Prostatic
Hyperplasia

Safety Profile

The majority of the literature converges on the fact that the treatment with Serenoa Repens is a safe choice for patients. All studies, review papers and monographs claim that Serenoa Repens is safe without any side effects resulting from long term use¹. The safety profile of Serenoa Repens is mentioned in the American Botanic Council's Clinical Guide to Herbs¹ as being better than that of Finasteride⁶. Serenoa Repens is not associated with side-effects such as erectile dysfunction, ejaculation problems and negative effects on libido.

From the urologist's perspective, Serenoa Repens appears to be a safe choice in special patients' cases. For example, it is widely known that the use of medicines acting at a-adrenergic receptors increases the chances for orthostatic hypotension²⁹. Furthermore, older patients already being treated for hypertension and cardiac arrhythmias using b-adrenergic receptor antagonists, are already under greater danger of orthostatic hypotension^{14,23,32,36}. In such cases, preparations with Serenoa Repens have the obvious advantage of avoiding side effects that are dangerous for older people.

Monographs

Official monographs approve the application of Serenoa Repens for the relief of BPH symptoms. The American Botanical Council, an institution that translated the monographs of German Commission E in the early 90's, reports that 17 out of 19 studies evaluated for the «ABC clinical guide to Herbs»⁶ showed positive results. The World Health Organization (p. 288, WHO monographs on selected medicinal plants, vol 2)³⁴ included the treatment of LUTS in people with BPH stage I & II in



its monograph for Serenoa Repens under the section "Uses Supported By Clinical Data". Along similar lines, the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products of the European Union, defines as a therapeutic indication in the respective Herbal Monograph, the "Symptomatic treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia" (well established use) and the "Traditional medicinal product for the relief of lower urinary tract symptoms related to benign prostatic hyperplasia, after serious conditions have been excluded by a doctor" (Traditional Use).

Clinical Trials

The evaluated clinical studies included open label or placebo controlled studies, comparison of Serenoa Repens with pharmaceutical preparations (e.g Tamsulosin, Finasteride), studies on combinations of Serenoa Repens with other herbal material, as well as studies that compare different daily dosage and administration patterns of the plant's extracts.

Inspite of the monographs' positive assessment on Serenoa Repens, there still is no definite verdict that can be deducted from the available clinical literature. From 22 studies, dating from 1984 to 2014, the results are ambiguous and contradictory. In addition, two meta-analyses from 2004⁸ and 2009³⁷ (the last one was updated in 2012²³) that analyze an important part of the aforementioned studies (as well as some studies that were not available in English and were excluded from our search), they draw a non-positive conclusion on the effectiveness of Serenoa Repens in the treatment of BPH. The studies that were gathered are cited in the special appendix at the end of this article. A stand-alone 30 page appendix that collects and compares the results of those trials, is available upon request by e-mail info@synapse.com.gr.

The important question upon the contradictory results and the quality of available studies is being propounded by the European Urological Association. In the institute's directions of 2009, "Guidelines on Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia"¹¹ the contradictory issue is being noted, and the question of the extract's standardization is being officially raised. As far as our literature research work is concerned, we came upon the definite conclusion that little information is given on the chemical composition of the extract or, quite often, the extraction method of the preparation used is not even mentioned.

Discussion

The results of our literature research led us to look further into the quality markers of the extract. The World Health Organization (p. 288 of respective monograph)³⁴ defines the free fatty acids and the respective ethyl-esters as main chemically active constituents. As mentioned before, similar references exist in certain in-vitro studies^{13,22,26}. In complete accordance, the monograph from the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products¹¹, published in 2014, defines the pharmaceutical form by referring to the respective paragraph of European Pharmacopoeia. The specification of the extract's composition according to European Pharmacopoeia (8.0 th edition, 2014, p. 1377¹⁵) is described in the definition of Sabalis Serrulatae extractum. The minimum content per anhydrous extract is the following

Similarly, the American Botanic Council (Commission E's Monograph) defines in the «ABC clinical guide to Herbs» under «Dosage & Administration» the «administration of 320 mg/day of soft native extract containing approximately 85% - 95% fatty acids»². The achievement of a therapeutically beneficial composition can be firmly related with the method of extraction. The European Pharmacopoeia¹⁵ specifies the use of ethanol (min 90 % v/v), supercritical CO₂ or mixture of n-hexane and methylpentanes) as extraction solvents. Similar specifications are found in the Commission E monograph, where the amount suggested as a daily dosage is defined as «320 mg lipophilic ingredients extracted with lipophilic solvents (hexane or ethanol 90 percent v/v)»².

Therefore, taking the previous specifications under consideration, we can safely state that most studies provided generic or inadequate descriptions of the preparations used with regards to the free fatty acid and phytosterol percentage of the extract. Furthermore, no study gave extra information on the pivotal aspect of the preparation's lauric acid content that would show compliance with the European Pharmacopoeia recommendation.

This lack of standardization is an issue that directly affects the commercial side of Serenoa Repens. The lack of correspondence in between the aforementioned specifications and the actual content of commercial products is an issue that has been evaluated by certain publications^{7,16,18,28,31}. Indicatively, in a study published in the Journal of Urology (2002)¹⁶, three out of the six preparations that were analyzed in the study contained less

than 25% of the labelled free fatty acid value, while in a study published in the Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology (2013)⁷, 35% out of the 46 preparations analyzed contained less than 70% in fatty acids. Furthermore, another British study published in Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases in 2004¹⁸, evaluated the concentration in free fatty acids, methyethylesteres and glycerides in 14 preparations with Serenoa Repens. The results of this study clearly show the big fluctuation existing in between the preparations, something that content can be variable in between different batches of the same product and have an effect in the potency/ effectiveness of the preparation¹⁸. The aforementioned study concluded that the samples that were produced with similar methods of extraction were closer closer in terms of composition and couldn't be statistically distinguished.

Conclusion

Serenoa repens has been used for decades as a supplement for the relief of LUTS associated with BPH. The benefit of the use of Serenoa Repens however remains unverified, due to the great limitations of available research. Furthermore, the use of Serenoa Repens is considered to be safe, with very few ADRs reported in the literature.

It is crucial that future research should focus on and take into account the specifications available in European Pharmacopoeia concerning the content and method of production. We clearly suggest that all new published studies should provide thorough quantitative analysis of the contents of the Serenoa Repens preparations used in the trials. Furthermore, we clearly suggest that studies that are actually clinical trials of commercial preparations should strictly use preparations from the same batch, providing the preparation's content of fatty acids, lauric acid and sterols, prioritizing scientific investigation over the commercial aspect of their work.

From the urologists's perspective, the knowledge of the specifications and the continuous update on modern literature is important, and this work lists a great part of available literature. Ultimately, the urologist is the one that has got the absolute priority in evaluating the effectiveness of certain preparations, through his own experience and his accumulated knowledge as a therapist. ■

Conflicts of interest

Both authors are employed at Synapse Hellenic Pharmaceuticals & Services, a company that markets a product containing Serenoa Repens (ως Prostanoa Rx®).

Περίληψη

Η καλοίθης υπερπλασία του προστάτη είναι μια πάθηση που αφορά άμεσα ένα ποσοστό τουλάχιστον 50 % των ανδρών μεταξύ 50 - 60 ετών. Η χρήση του λιπιδοστερολικού εκχυλίσματος του Serenoa Repens στην θεραπεία της καλοίθους υπερπλασίας είναι μια θεραπευτική επιλογή που στέκεται παρούσα στην ατζέντα του ουρολόγου για τουλάχιστον τρεις δεκαετίες. Ο σκοπός αυτού του review άρθρου είναι να δώθει ένα ορθό και συγκεντρωτικό σημείο αναφοράς στον σύγχρονο ουρολόγο. Το άρθρο αξιολογεί την υπάρχουσα βιβλιογραφία κλινικών μελετών πάνω στο φυτό Serenoa Repens, συνοψίζει σε πίνακα τις διαθέσιμες αναφορές πάνω στο συγκεκριμένο φυτοθεραπευτικό σκευάσμα και υπενθυμίζει παράλληλα τις απαραίτητες προδιαγραφές όσον αφορά την ποιότητα της πρώτης ύλης. Οι παραπομπές του παρόντος κειμένου σταχυολογήθηκαν μέσω της διαδικτυακής βάσης δεδομένων Pubmed.org. Στο τέλος αυτού του κειμένου παρατείθεται ένας αναλυτικός πίνακας με όλες τις δι-

Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού
Serenoa Repens,
Saw Palmetto,
καλοίθης υπερπλασία
του προστάτη

αθέσιμες κλινικές μελέτες στο χρονικό διάστημα 1984-2014.

Υπάρχουν αντιφάσεις στα αποτελέσματα της υπάρχουσας βιβλιογραφίας. Η πλεοψηφία των κλινικών μελετών δεν κάνει κά-

ποια αναφορά στην σύσταση του εκχυλίσματος που μελετήθηκε, καθώς και στην συμμόρφωση με τις προδιαγραφές της Ευρωπαϊκής Φαρμακοποιείας, οι οποίες αποτελούν και τους μόνους διαθέσιμους δείκτες αναφοράς ως τώρα. Οι αναφορές των μελετών θα πρέπει να λάβουν υπ' όψην τους βασικούς ορισμούς τη φαρμακευτικής μορφής όπως αυτή προδιαγράφεται από την αντίστοιχη μονογραφή της Ευρωπαϊ-

κής Φαρμακοποιείας.

Οι μελλοντικές μελέτες οφείλουν να παρέχουν αναλυτικές αναφορές πάνω στο επί μέρους περιεχόμενο (μορφές και ποσοστώσεις φυτικών στερολών και λιπαρών οξέων, και εδικότερα του Λορικού Οξέος) του υπό μελέτη εκχύλισματος του φυτού Serenoa Repens.



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Clinical Trial Appendix 1984 - 2014

Year	Clinical Trials
1984	Champault G, Patel JC, Bonnard AM. A double-blind trial of an extract of the plant Serenoa Repens in benign prostatic hyperplasia. <i>British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology</i> 1984; 18: 461-462.
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REVIEW

New trends in Prostate Cancer Imaging

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Abstract

Successful imaging of prostate cancer remains a major goal in everyday clinical practice. The widely adapted imaging techniques are limited by their low specificity and sensitivity especially for identification of lymph node or bone metastasis. A novel imaging technique with better outcomes would pro-

vide a significant aid and possibly increase the overall survival of patients suffering from prostate cancer. We review the literature about this interesting topic in an effort to clarify the value of these methods (if any) and their role in prostate cancer diagnosis.

Introduction

Prostate cancer (PCa) is one of the most common cancers of the male population and its successful imaging remains one of the most difficult to achieve, goal of urology. The words of P.C. Walsh: "*The invention that will have the most impact in urology will be the development of an accurate imaging technique that finds cancer inside the prostate*"¹ inspired many researchers in order to optimize the existing modalities or even invent new ones. The methods we have at our disposal today (digital rectal examination, PSA, and ultrasound guided biopsies) have several limitations since they can diagnose only 20-50% of prostate cancers with large detection rates of clinically insignificant tumors^{2,3}. Similarly detection rates of lymph node metastasis with the use of computed

tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are as low as 30%⁴. The above mentioned data support the need for the development of a novel, more precise imaging method for diagnosis and staging of prostate cancer. In this article we are reviewing the literature for any recently introduced refinements and improvements of existing imaging methods or any novel approaches and test their value in the everyday clinical practice.

Key words

**Prostate Cancer;
Imaging; mpMRI;
PSMA**

Material and Methods

We reviewed the literature for articles concerning imaging modalities for the diagnosis and staging of prostate cancer. The search was limited in articles which had at least an abstract written in English and were indexed in PubMed from 2000-2015.



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TABLE 1 Summary of clinical significance, advantages and disadvantages across imaging modalities for PCa imaging				
Imaging Technique	Clinical significance	Advantages	Disadvantages	Future Prospectives
Ultrasound	Initial diagnosis	Low cost, easy to perform, real time imaging	Low sensitivity for prostate cancer	mpUS may increase sensitivity
mpMRI	First time diagnosis (before second biopsy), recurrence, active surveillance, metastasis identification	Clear images of anatomical site of suspected malignant areas (clinical significant)	Cost, interpretation requires advanced training, lack of real time imaging	Novel real time techniques
MpMRI and ultrasound fusion	First time diagnosis and active surveillance protocol	Increases accuracy of mp-MRI, real time imaging	Cost, requires high tech equipment for fusion, registration errors	Data in favor are increasing but still high rates of fusion errors. Improved technology
Pet Scan	Recurrence, metastasis, staging?	Auxiliary information for staging, prostate specific (PSMA) accurate metastasis identification	Cost, technological and clinical challenges	More specific radionuclides

The keywords that were used in our search were imaging, prostate cancer, mpMRI and PET scan. We studied all the relevant articles and we analyzed the ones with the biggest series.

Ultrasound

Until recently transrectal ultrasound was the most common and effective method for the initial approach of PCa despite its extremely low sensitivity and specificity⁵. In an attempt to increase the diagnostic rates of this easy and relatively inexpensive method some improvements were developed. One of them is three-dimensional ultrasound. This method, that utilizes appropriate software to convert ultrasound images into a three-dimensional environment, yielded satisfactory results in recent studies.

In the diagnosis of PCa reported sensitivity and specificity reach 85% and 41% respectively, but these rates rise significantly to 84% and 96% respectively⁶ when identifying locally advanced disease⁷. Although the number of patients is not large enough to draw safe conclusions, this method can be an easy, low-cost alternative for diagnosing locally advanced disease. Another method based on ultrasound imaging, called Histoscanning, which was firstly reported by Braeckman J et al and Simmons LA et al. utilized computer algorithm analysis of ultrasound images. According to the authors the above mentioned method can identify tumors with volume lesser than 0,5 ml while its negative predictive value is almost 100% with correspondingly high rates of sensitivity^{8,9}. As expected the conclusions of these studies were limited by their retrospective nature and by the low number of patients, however, their results remain promising.

Other attempts reported in the literature such as the

administration of PDE5 inhibitors with concomitant utility of Doppler Mode of the ultrasound¹⁰, and a new prostate elastography (Shear Wave Elastography)¹¹, both yielding controversial results. Regarding the standard method of ultrasound guided prostate biopsies (12 cores), efforts were made to optimize it with fusion of MRI and ultrasound images, in order to identify and target more easily suspicious for malignancy areas. The PCa diagnosis rates with this method reached 72%, improving significantly the ones offered by the standard one^{12,13}.

Multi-Parametric Magnetic Reasonance Imaging (mpMRI)

There is a growing body of literature concerning the role of mpMRI in prostate cancer diagnosis. This modality consists of two or three different magnetic imaging methods, each one providing a score which sums up in the final examination score (PI-RADS score). The techniques used are the high-resolution T2 (T2 weighted images T2WI), the Diffusion weighted Imaging (DWI), the MR spectroscopic imaging (MRSI) and Dynamic MRI (DCE-MRI). Each of them solely has its advantages and disadvantages but their combination increases the sensitivity and specificity of the final result.

The first and most popular method for magnetic imaging of prostate is T2WI MRI. Despite its high sensitivity, when used alone is not sufficient to diagnose PCa due to several drawbacks. Firstly it exhibits low specificity due to the fact that benign prostatic hyperplasia in this sequence can be easily confused with PCa. Another disadvantage is that bleeding of prostate (eg after prostate biopsy) may mimic PCa¹⁴ whereas imaging of the central zone of the prostate can potentially be misleading. Due

to these disadvantages it is recommended to avoid MRI of the prostate with this sequence for 4-6 weeks after the prostate biopsy, or add T1 sequence images in order to preclude hemorrhage¹⁴. The second more popular method of prostate magnetic resonance imaging is the DCE MRI which is superior to T2WI imaging but although it sets more strongly the suspicion of PCa its results are not specific. Even though it can identify a suspicious lesion with volume <0.5 ml, its value increases as the tumor size increases¹⁵. Another important part of multiparametric MRI is DWI MRI. This method uses apparent diffusion coefficient (ADC) maps that give characteristically low values when PCa is present. These values have been associated with tumor aggressiveness and can potentially be of significant value in an active surveillance setting¹⁶. However its major disadvantage is its susceptibility to artifacts that can potentially affect final interpretation of results. Finally adjunctive method in mpMRI is the MRSI which recognizes the citrate and choline levels in tissue examination and therefor can confirm the existence or not of cancer within the prostate. More specifically, the PCa exhibits lower citrate and higher choline levels compared to normal prostate tissue, and recent studies correlate these results with the Gleason Score (GS) and hence tumor aggressiveness¹⁷.

The interpretation of mpMRI results are based on Prostate Imaging Reporting and Data System (PI-RADS) score which was validated from two large studies recently published^{18,19}. According to this score, patients with values 1-2 have very little chance of having clinically significant prostate cancer, score 4-5 means that PCa existence is very likely and score 3 represents the gray zone area. However it is important to note that due to heterogeneity in results reporting, no specific instructions for its interpretation have been published. Attempts have been made to improve the value of the above mentioned score by developing a second version²⁰ but its value is far from being proven. In conclusion mpMRI is earning steadily its place in the diagnosis of PCa even though currently EAU guidelines recommend it before deciding a repeated prostate biopsy with negative prior biopsy, and also for the local staging in high risk patients or patients with locally advanced PCa.²¹

PET Scan

The role of the PET Scan in urology and in prostate cancer is still quite limited. Although staging methods wide-

ly adapted do not offer high sensitivity and specificity, the cost of PET Scan still remain a major drawback for further utilization of this method in the diagnosis of prostate cancer. With the development of new detectors however (more specific for PCa) this situation seems to be changing. A sufficiently studied targeting agent, is the prostate specific membrane antigen (PSMA) based on which the PSMA PET scan was created. PSMA utilizes mainly radioisotope (68) Ga which binds to PSMA and is expressed in more than 90% of PCa²². Main advantages of this imaging method are that PSMA expression is particularly increased in advanced and metastatic PCa²³ and its improved sensitivity in identifying metastatic disease compared to CT, MRI or bone scan.

A recent study which followed patients scheduled for radiotherapy, after first time diagnosis or relapses of PCa and concluded that PSMA PET Scan dramatically changed the therapeutic approach of 50% of them²⁴. Recently a relatively big study of 100 patients concluded that 68 Ga-PSMA-PET has a high clinical impact on staging and radiation therapy in patients with biochemically recurrent PCa even at low serum PSA levels (1 ng/ml)²⁵. The growing body of literature was included in a large meta-analysis of 1,309 patients by Perera et al which demonstrated the excellent rates of detection of cancer spread in late stage prostate cancer. On per patient analysis, the sensitivity and specificity of 68Ga-PSMA PET were both 80% and on per lesion analysis the rates were 80% and 97% respectively²⁶. These encouraging results led Eiber and al to study the results of the combination mpMRI and PSMA Pet scan in detecting lymph node and distant metastasis²⁷. The PSMA PET scan is a promising diagnostic method but until results from large studies are published its use remain experimental²¹. In summary the basic characteristics of available modalities are shown at **Table 1**.

Conclusion

There are enough data in the literature for optimized or novel imaging modalities but only mpMRI seem to probe its value in prostate cancer diagnosis and screening. Nevertheless new data, concerning this important issue, are been continuously published and may alter the way that we diagnose and treat prostate cancer in the near future. 

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.



Περίληψη

Η επιτυχής απεικονιστική διάγνωση του καρκίνου του προστάτη αποτελεί έναν δύσκολο να επιτευχθεί στόχο ακόμα και σήμερα. Οι μέχρι σήμερα ευρέως χρησιμοποιούμενες μέθοδοι χαρακτηρίζονται από χαμηλή ευαισθησία και ειδικότητα ειδικά στην ανεύρεση λεμφαδενικών η οστικών μεταστάσεων. Η ανάγκη για την ανάπτυξη μιας νέας απεικονιστικής μεθόδου η οποία και θα καλύψει το κενό δίνοντας καλύτερα αποτελέσματα είναι μεγάλη και προς αυτήν την κατεύθυνση πολλοί ερευνητές έχουν δημοσιεύσει την εμπειρία τους με καινούριες μεθόδους. Το παρόν άρθρο ανασκοπεί την βιβλιογραφία σε μια προσπάθεια να ξεκαθαριστεί αν υπάρχει κάποια μέθοδος που μπορεί να πλησιάσει στην επίτευξη του παραπάνω στόχου αλλά και αν αυτή μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί στην καθημερινή πράξη.



Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού
καρκίνος του
προστάτη,
απεικονιστικές
μέθοδοι, mpMRI,
Pet Scan

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REVIEW

The role of alternative measures and non-microbial pharmacological interventions in the treatment of recurrent episodes of urinary tract infections in women

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Abstract

Urinary tract infections are common in women and about 20%-30% of them will develop one or more recurrent infections. Recurrent UTIs are a medical problem with particular difficulties in both its diagnostic approach and treatment. A very important part of the treatment is prophylaxis. Due to

the long-term treatment required and the tendency to develop resistance to antibiotic therapy, natural methods of prophylaxis and alternative medicines are becoming more popular. This article introduces and discusses their role in the treatment of recurrent UTIs.

Introduction

Women are much more likely to suffer from urinary tract infections than men because the female urethra is short and the periurethral environment (the adjacent vagina contains bacteria) favours colonisation. It has been estimated that 25-30% of 20-40 year-old women will experience an episode of urinary tract infection, compared to under 5% of men in the same age group. Generally, however, between 50 and 60% of adult women worldwide will suffer from a urinary

tract infection during their lifetime¹. Approximately 20%-30% of these women will experience a recurrent urinary tract infection². Recurrent urinary tract infection means a urinary tract infection that presents at least three episodes over twelve months or at least two episodes over six months³. These episodes may concern true recurrences (caused by the same micro-organism after adequate treatment, usually 1-2 weeks after the end of treatment) or reinfections (caused by a different micro-organism or by the micro-organism



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of the initial infection after a confirmed treatment with a negative urine culture or after a sufficient period of time -e.g. 2 weeks- between episodes)⁴.

Most relapses occur within the first 3 months after the initial infection⁵. Each additional episode multiplies the risk of recurrence. Reinfections are actually more common than true recurrences, and, in fact, when the initial infection is caused by certain pathogens (e.g. *E. coli*), there is a higher risk of reinfection within the first 6 months⁶. In most cases, recurrences or reinfections will stop within 1-2 years if they are properly managed and emphasis is placed on prevention.

The problem of recurrence and reinfection in women is complex. While recurrent urinary tract infections in males almost always occur when there are coexisting conditions or predisposing factors for obstruction, urinary stagnation and bacterial growth (such as prostate hypertrophy, chronic bacterial prostatitis, diabetes mellitus and other causes of neurogenic bladder), this is not the case in women. In women, the same anatomical and pathophysiological reasons that contribute to infection are also the cause of recurrences and reinfections (easy colonisation of the periurethral area, short urethra, sexual activity, changes in vaginal pH, pregnancy). Of course, infectious factors of bacteria (high anchoring capacity to the epithelium with P fibrils, toxin production) and factors related to the initial infection (resistance, choice of antibiotic, duration of treatment) also contribute to this⁷.

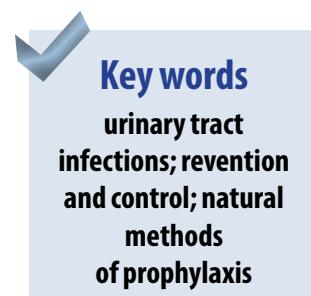
Antimicrobial prophylaxis is the most common method of prevention. This can be given either at a continuous low dose, daily or every other day (3 times a week) for 6 months or more (in specific cases) or after intercourse (in cases where there is a clear association of the urinary tract infection with sexual activity) with a small dose of the antimicrobial agent after sexual intercourse⁸. The long-term treatment required may lead to the development of resistance, increase the likelihood of side effects and further burden the psychological state of patients⁹. For these reasons, in recent years, emphasis is placed on the mechanisms involved in the pathogenesis of relapsing urinary tract infections, in order to identify prophylactic strategies, while natural methods of prophylaxis and alternative medicines are becoming more popular.

The purpose of this systematic review is to evaluate the role of alternative measures in the treatment of recurrent urinary tract infections and to summarise the pharmacological interventions (other than antibiotic prophylaxis) that have been evaluated for the prevention of recurrent episodes of urinary tract infections in women.

Material and methods

A search was performed in MEDLINE, NCBI, Pubmed, Cochrane Library and other electronic libraries using the following terms: "urinary tract infection", "recurrences", "recurrent urinary tract infections", "prophylaxis", "antibiotic prophylaxis", in combination with the keywords: "lactobacillus", "ascorbic acid", "proanthocyanidins", "oestrogens".

The articles selected were checked for the relevancy of their content to the discussed subject. The bibliographic information in the selected articles were checked for relevant publications that had not been included in the original search. Natural defence mechanisms, the methods to boost these, prophylactic methods and alternative medicines are listed in an order dependent on their presumed role in the sequence of mechanisms associated with the infection.



Results Pathophysiology - Predisposing factors

Urinary tract infections are usually ascending and are almost always due to its colonisation by strains of normal intestinal microbial flora, most frequently by *E. coli*, and much more rarely by vaginal or skin bacteria. The vagina, urethra and bladder have natural defence mechanisms against infections.

The vaginal epithelium contains glycogen. It is colonised by lactobacilli that metabolise glycogen and produce hydrogen peroxide and lactic acid, while maintaining an acidic pH (5.0). It is believed that this acidic environment inhibits the growth of microbes, whereas an alkaline environment increases the probability of bacterial growth, which may lead to urinary tract infections.

The most common causes of urinary tract infections are changes to vaginal pH and local infections due to the transfer of microbes from the perineum, leading to colonisation of the area around the urethral mouth.



The most common mechanism is sexual activity, as it combines the above with a temperature increase in the area. In support of the above, it has been shown that after sexual activity, most women have a significant number of bacteria in their urine, which are normally excreted over 24 hours¹⁰. Indeed, previous rectal contact increases the likelihood of urinary tract infections, as the rectum hosts the typical microbes of urinary tract infections (e.g. *E. coli*). Intense, frequent and prolonged sexual intercourse also entails an increased likelihood of urinary tract infections.

Other mechanisms include the introduction of foreign bodies and the poor hygiene of the anogenital area, as well as the intravaginal use of unsuitable hygienic preparations (antibacterial, alkaline pH cleaners and lubricants). The combination of the above, as for example in women using a diaphragm or spermicides for contraception, further favours microbial growth¹¹.

With the exception of the initial section of the urethra, the urinary system is considered microbe-sterile¹². The pathophysiological mechanism that separates the urinary tract mucosa that is colonised by the existing flora (coagulase negative staphylococci, diphtheroids, non-haemolytic streptococci, etc.) from the rest of the aseptic mucosa is not known. It appears that the pathogenic microorganisms that enter the urethra and compete with its normal microbial flora disrupt this and the microbes enter deeper. The exact mechanism in the general population is not known; however, in menopausal women, rapid oestrogen depletion causes a gradual increase in vaginal pH due to the reduction in vaginal lactobacilli. This is followed by the colonisation of both the vagina and the urethra by pathogenic bacteria favoured by an alkaline environment¹³.

It is possible that injuries (especially during sexual activity) or deformations of the urethra (mainly during menopause) contribute to the above mechanism. Given the difference in the frequency and significance of injuries in the female compared to the male urethra, there are no major epidemiological studies of injuries in the female urethra. However, it is clear that due to its close anatomical relationship with the external genitals, the female urethra is exposed to injuries during intercourse, the main complication of which is urinary tract infections¹⁴. Another study showed that women with a history of urinary tract infections are more sexually active than women without a history of uri-

nary tract infections. Additionally, data from this study showed that the occurrence of urinary tract infections is usually preceded by increased sexual activity, and that the position with the woman on top is more often associated with the onset of a urinary tract infection¹⁵.

The lower part of the urethra is sensitive to oestrogens. As menopause is associated with a dramatic decline in oestrogen production, the epithelium undergoes atrophic changes that render the urethra structurally vulnerable. In combination with other deformities that are also associated with menopause (e.g. cystocele, bladder prolapse) this gives bacteria the opportunity to reach the underlying tissue, where they can remain hidden until they are activated to cause a new infection¹⁶.

Generally, in response to the infection, the urethral glands trap microbes in their secretions, stimulate local immunoglobulin production and the activation of cytokines and defensines, while urine flow prevents the infection from moving inwards, drawing out free microbes and detached urethral cells to which microbes have adhered¹⁷. The spread of the infection behind the urethral glands may be due either directly or indirectly to a local or systemic deficiency or impairment of the immune system's function. Although there are indications of immunological abnormalities in women susceptible to recurrent urinary tract infections, in reality, irrespective of the levels of antimicrobial peptides, the massive entry of microbes (as occurs after sexual intercourse) simply exceeds the capacity of the urethral glands¹⁸.

The further development of microbes is favoured by urothelial lesions. One of the mechanisms proposed to explain the susceptibility of certain women and the increased risk of recurrent urinary tract infections is the dysfunction of the mucopolysaccharide (glycosaminoglycans-GAG) layer, which covers the bladder epithelium¹⁹. In fact, as GAGs carry a negative electric charge, they have a strong tendency to attach to positively charged hydrogen atoms and water molecules, thus maintaining a stable water layer as a coating of the bladder epithelium. Apart from its great importance in regulating the permeability of the urinary tract, the mucopolysaccharide layer also prevents the adhesion of bacteria²⁰.

In special populations, such as women with chronic cystitis or menopausal women, the urothelium itself

may also be affected. A discontinuity of the urothelium will allow bacteria to colonise the lumen. If the number of bacteria is not reduced by the production of antimicrobial peptides from epithelial cells, it will have the opportunity to multiply and cause a new infection in the urinary tract. A last mechanism of preventing urinary tract infections is the contractions of the detrusor and the produced urine flow that prevents the further colonisation of the bladder by bacteria. Women who postpone urination when outdoors and women who urinate upright and thus do not relax their pelvic floor muscles and do not have a normal urine flow present an increased likelihood of opportunistic urinary tract infections. Indeed, if the opportunistic urinary tract infection is not treated properly, i.e. with a change in everyday urination habits besides the indicated medication, then recurrences and reinfections are common²¹.

Discussion

According to the international guidelines for women with recurrences of a urinary tract infection within 2 weeks, urine is cultured and a urinary system evaluation is recommended, because a small percentage of women may have an anatomical problem that predisposes them to urinary tract infections.

In any other case of women with recurrent infections, a range of measures and non-antimicrobial medicines can be used empirically (as appropriate) for preventing the recurrence and/or avoiding reinfection.

Hygiene of the urogenital region, hydration and change of other habits

In univariate and multivariate analyses, genital hygiene-related habits such as not washing the genitals before and after coitus and wiping the perineal area following cation from back to front were associated with the appearance of urinary tract infections^{22,23}. It is not known to what extent changing these habits reduces the likelihood of illness, but these measures achieve a reduction of the microbial load and avoid transferring microbes from the anus into the urethra and vagina. In addition, it is recommended that prolonged bathing be avoided, as it allows the perineal bacteria to move towards the urinary bladder. However, showering or bathing have no proven benefit in preventing infections²⁴. Remarkably, the role of gen-

ital hygiene as a predisposing factor for urinary tract infections is called into question, as it is often associated with other habits or functional anomalies such as infrequent urination, poor fluid intake, functional retention of stool, obstruction of urine flow and genital prolapse²⁴.

In addition, excessive cleanliness, using antiseptics and scented hygienic products, alters vaginal acidity and the equilibrium of normal microbial flora, representing a potential predisposing factor for infections²⁵. Similarly, the use of spermicide gels should be avoided as it destroys the normal vaginal flora, resulting in its colonisation by pathogenic bacteria²⁶.

Although menstruation per se is not associated with a higher risk of urinary tract infections, hygiene conditions during this phase have been shown to contribute to the development of urinary tract infections²⁶. It is recommended that sexual contact be avoided during menstruation, as is the use of tampons as they maintain the ureteral area more dry (compared to sanitary towels) thus limiting bacterial overgrowth²⁷. For the same reason, it is recommended that very tight clothes and synthetic underwear also be avoided²⁸.

Taking abundant liquids - eight to ten glasses a day at 2-hour intervals - has been traditionally associated with relieving the symptoms of urinary tract infections. A recent *in vitro* study showed that water in particular offers benefits both in prophylaxis and in the treatment of urinary tract infections, as it dilutes the number of bacteria in urine²⁸. Alternatively, taking baking soda is recommended (one teaspoon of baking soda in half a cup of water once or twice a day). Although this combination is thought to be able to alleviate the symptoms of urinary tract infections, including pain and burning urination, it does not help in preventing infections, since it is an alkaline compound that reduces urine acidity.

In cases with infrequent urination, it is recommended that fluid intake be increased and that the bladder be voided at least every 4 hours during the day, even if there is no immediate need to urinate. The measure has proved effective in reducing the occurrence of bacteriuria in the elderly²⁹.

As regards coitus-related recurrences, it is recommended that a further 1-2 glasses of water be consumed and that urination take place before and after sexual intercourse. In addition, after long and intense



sexual intercourse, which leads to a temperature increase and causes irritation or minor injuries, washing with plenty of cold water and good hydration are recommended. As regards anal sex in specific, washing with soap or a non-iodinated antiseptic is recommended, while some patients are recommended to take either a urinary system antiseptic or an antibiotic after sexual intercourse.

Cranberry

Cranberry is a traditional medicine for the treatment and prevention of urinary tract infections. It is used in the form of juice, dried fruit or even formulations (capsules or pills) containing a concentrated extract. Studies attribute its bacteriostatic action to one of its ingredients, proanthocyanidins³⁰. Compared to the proanthocyanidins of other fruits, those in cranberries are structurally different and appear to inhibit the binding of certain bacteria to uroepithelial cell receptors. This anti-adhesive action may last up to 10 hours³¹. However, its precise mechanism of action has not been fully elucidated. Since 1994, a number of studies have shown a less or more significant reduction in the number of colonies of P-fimbriated *E. coli* in urine cultures^{32,33}, a reduction in the rate of urinary tract infections and the frequency of their recurrences^{34,35}, as well as an increase in disease-free intervals^{36,37}. Differences in the efficiency of the published studies are due to the different forms (juices or pills), the non-standardised chemical composition of the available products and the variety of doses. The daily dose in the original study was 300 ml while higher doses were used in later studies. In addition, juices contain up to 27% of the active ingredients of cranberry, while the rest is water and fructose. On the contrary, packaged cranberry products in capsules contain only the active ingredients³⁸. Finally, when the cranberry extract was compared with low-dose antimicrobial prophylaxis in the prevention of recurrent urinary tract infections, it was found to be less effective but it did not affect the normal flora, as did the antibiotic^{39,40}.

Cimetidine

Cimetidine is an antagonist of histamine H₂-receptors. It antagonises its action and reduces pepsin production in the stomach. In addition to its antisecretory effect, cimetidine has cytoprotective, antiproliferative

and immunoregulatory properties⁴¹. Given the latter, as well as its regenerative action, it could play a role in preventing recurrent urinary tract infections. Its effect has been studied in inflammatory conditions of the urinary bladder, where it appears to offer effective relief from symptoms^{42,43}, but there are no studies in women with recurrent urinary tract infections. Notably, no obvious histological change was found in the cystic mucosa after treatment, so the mechanism of symptom relief remains unclear⁴⁴.

Lactobacilli

Lactobacilli are contained in sour milk, sheep's yoghurt and have recently also been made available in the form of vaginal suppositories. They have been shown to offer protection against urinary tract infections and vaginitis (fungal infections). The exact mechanism of their antibacterial action remains unknown, but is probably based on their ability to adhere to the vaginal epithelium and colonise the vagina. Competing for adhesion sites with uropathogenic bacteria, they inhibit their adhesion, growth, and colonisation⁴⁵. They also maintain vaginal pH acidic and produce antimicrobial compounds (hydrogen peroxide, lactic acid, bacteriosin), which are important for reducing colonisation by pathogenic microorganisms⁴⁶. One study found that the action of lactobacillus inhibits IL-8 production by epithelial cells, thus preserving the homeostasis of the female reproductive system⁴⁷.

In vitro and clinical studies have shown that, in addition to restoring normal urogenital microflora by acidifying their environment, lactobacilli can also displace adhered *Escherichia coli* strains, achieving a significant reduction of recurrent urinary tract infections^{48,49,50}. However, some clinical studies show no benefit in the prevention of urinary tract infections by *Lactobacillus* prophylaxis compared to placebo or no treatment^{39,51,52}. Finally, when lactobacilli were compared to low-dose antimicrobial prophylaxis in the prevention of recurrent urinary tract infections, they were found to be less effective but did not affect the development of antibiotic resistance, as did antimicrobial therapy⁵³.

Glycosaminoglycans

The accumulated experience in the treatment of interstitial cystitis with exogenous glycosaminoglycans such as heparin, chondroitin sulphate (Uracyst), sodi-

um hyaluronate (Cystistat) or semisynthetic pentosan polysulfate (Elmiron) led to the testing of some of the above substances in the treatment of bacterial cystitis recurrences⁵⁴. As a proportion of these recurrences are associated with the loss of the natural layer of glycosaminoglycans as a result of a urinary tract infection, and given that exogenous glycosaminoglycans (especially chondroitin sulphate and heparan sulphate) coat the surface of the urinary bladder with a stable layer, the above study is fully justified⁵⁵.

Heparin is a heteropolysaccharide composed of recurring disaccharide units of uronic acid and glycosamine. The amino group of glucosamine and some hydroxyl groups of glucosamine and uronic acid are esterified with sulphate groups, giving a high negative charge to the molecule. Its natural location, composition and properties justify its use as a means of repairing/preserving the bladder's natural mucopolysaccharide layer. In a 6-week pilot treatment study, a weekly infusion (heparin 40,000 U, 2% lidocaine 8 ml, sodium bicarbonate 4 ml) achieved 78% treatment response (with an over 50% reduction in urinary tract infection recurrences as the response criterion)⁵⁶. So far, there are no other published studies confirming this result.

Hyaluronic acid (Cystistat) is a glycosaminoglycan, a key structural component of the human body. It is produced by fibroblasts and has elastic and adhesive properties. In a clinical study, patients received 4 weekly injections, followed by a monthly booster dose for 4 months. Patients were disease-free during the five-month treatment phase and 70% of them were recurrence-free at the end of one year of follow-up⁵⁷. A study in a more difficult population (irradiated cancer patients with bone metastases and a permanent catheter) showed that patients injected with Cystistat had a 5.7-fold reduction in the prevalence of urinary tract infections during hospitalisation compared to patients in the control group⁵⁸.

In *in vitro* and *in vivo* experimental studies, D-Mannose appears to prevent the adhesion of uropathogenic bacteria (with type 1 and P fibrins) to uroepithelial cells^{59,60}. In a clinical study, the daily intake of 2 grams of D-mannose for six months was compared to antimicrobial prophylactic treatment with nitrofurantoin of a corresponding duration, or with no prophylaxis. The rate of recurrent urinary tract infections was similar for the D-Mannose and nitrofurantoin groups, and

overwhelmingly lower than for the group with no prophylaxis⁶¹. There are no other noteworthy studies and it should be noted that the existence of mannose-resistant fimbriae (MR/P fimbria and P mirabilis fimbria) *Proteus* strains somewhat limits their usefulness⁶².

Immunostimulants

Polimod is a prototype, highly purified synthetic dipeptide with immunostimulatory properties. When administered per os, it can favourably affect the various stages of the immune response: it induces direct activation of phagocytosis of neutrophils and mononuclear cells, stimulates phagocyte chemotaxis and stimulates natural killer (NK) cells⁶³. It is reported to restore the T helper/T suppressor ratio to normal values (>1) and to increase the production of antibodies by B-lymphocytes in the blood (IgG) and secretions (IgA)⁶⁴. Finally, Polimod increases the production of interleukin-2 (IL-2) cytokines and interferon-γ (IFN-γ) by T-lymphocytes⁶⁵. Based on the above properties, it is indicated as an immunostimulant in patients with recurrent urinary tract infections. In multiple studies in recurrent respiratory infections, Polimod as a prevention treatment has been shown to be effective in achieving a statistically significant reduction in the number, frequency and duration of infectious recurrences. A published study in paediatric patients showed faster recovery times with Polimod than placebo and a significant reduction in recurrence risk (69%) after the acute episode⁶⁶. Although it is administered during the infection, it can also be administered preventively as a maintenance treatment over 60 days at a time when the patient is not infected. However, there are no larger multicentre studies or published experience with adult patients.

Other immunostimulants include purified uropathogenic strain vaccines

UroVaxom is an extract of *E. coli* (a preparation of immunoactive components from 18 subtypes of *E. coli*), which is the predominantly responsible microbe for the majority of urinary tract infections. Its mechanism of action is unclear. It is believed to stimulate the immune system and improve natural defence. *In vitro* studies have shown that it stimulates T-lymphocytes, induces the production of endogenous interferon and increases urinary IgA levels. Experimental studies have shown significant changes in IL-6 and IFN-gamma lev-



els after treatment with *E. coli* extract⁶⁷. In addition, a remarkable difference was noted in the degree of inflammation (oedema, bleeding, leukocyte infiltration), with the group receiving *E. coli* extract showing much milder forms of inflammation⁶⁸.

A meta-analysis of the studies conducted over the last decade showed the superiority of the *E. coli* extract in all studies as regards the reduction of symptoms and recurrence rates compared to placebo⁶⁹. Two recent studies (one of which focuses specifically on women with recurrent urinary tract infections) confirm the equivalent effectiveness of the *E. coli* extract with many of the recommended daily antibiotics as chemoprophylaxis, without, indeed, the increased likelihood of development of antibiotic resistance^{70,71}.

SolcoUrovac is a combination of 10 heat-inactivated bacteria (six different serotypes of the uropathogen *E. coli* and one subtype of: *Proteus vulgaris*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Morganella morganii*, and *Enterococcus faecalis*). The vaccine is administered as a vaginal suppository. Its mechanism is not known but it appears to primarily induce immunoglobulins G and A in the urogenital tube, thereby reducing the likelihood of vaginal and bladder colonisation by uropathogens⁷². A preliminary study showed a significant reduction in infections compared to the placebo, while 80% of patients were infection-free for one year⁷³. It is noteworthy that primary immunisation with booster injections ensures a prolonged infection-free interval, compared to primary immunisation alone or to the placebo⁷⁴.

Oestrogens

As mentioned above, clinical data suggest a twofold effect of oestrogen reduction on the pathogenesis of urinary tract infections, as it induces structural and chemical changes in the urogenital tube, such as poor urinary output or changes in vaginal microflora, which facilitate urinary tract infections. Local oestrogen application may at least partially reverse these changes. In addition, oestrogen acts on the epithelium in a manner analogous to glycosaminoglycans, healing gaps between the cells that cover the bladder cavity. This hinders bacteria from nesting and multiplying.

After the initial acceptance of the method, reservations were voiced regarding the safety of their use by postmenopausal women. In fact, only oral oestrogens have been associated with coronary artery dis-

ease, thromboembolism, strokes and breast cancer⁷⁵. Today, at the dosages and for the applications they are used, they are considered a safe therapeutic option for recurrent urinary tract infections⁷⁶.

One study evaluated the lactobacilli content and pH of the vagina in post-menopausal women before and after oestrogen therapy and found a 61% increase in the intervention group and nil in the control group. In the intervention group, vaginal pH decreased from 5.5 to 3.8, while there was no change in the placebo group. The incidence of urinary tract infections was lower in the oestrogen group compared to the placebo group: (0.5 vs 5.9 episodes per patient-year)⁷⁷. In another study, vaginal administration of oestrogens reduced the proportion of women with urinary tract infections by about one-third, in contrast to oral administration, which had almost no effect⁷⁸. Small studies confirm the above conclusions.

Ascorbic acid

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) has been used in isolated cases to prevent the recurrence of urinary tract infections. The rationale behind this choice is that ascorbic acid is a urine acidifier, which hinders the development of uropathogens. In fact, urine has a variable pH, while there is no set dosage or pH-based standardisation for vitamin C intake. This explains the contradictory results in published studies. One of them studied the effect of ascorbic acid on urine pH and the occurrence of urinary tract infections in patients with bone marrow injury. No significant reduction in urine pH or clinical benefit from the use of ascorbic acid were observed⁷⁹. However, the small number of patients that enrolled and remained in the study means that its reliability is questionable. A retrospective study in a larger number of patients with bone marrow injury also showed no benefit⁸⁰.

Another - non-randomised - study in a larger number of pregnant women showed that daily intake of a vitamin formulation with 100 mg of ascorbic acid for three months reduced the incidence of symptomatic urinary tract infections from 29.1% to 12.7%⁸¹. Although the daily dose of vitamin C used was very low, other methodological problems limit the reliability of the study.

Conclusions

In addition to the adoption of habits and measures for

genital hygiene and bladder protection, there are medicines that have been successfully tested for the prevention of recurrent urinary tract infections: the topical application of low-dose oestrogens (if there is no contraindication in the patient's history), taking Cranberry extract and *Lactobacillus* vaginal suppositories appear to lead to fewer urinary tract infections. Although none of these 3 approaches have been studied very well, they do not appear to be associated with serious side effects. In fact, Cranberry and lactobacilli are often

taken by the patients without medical guidance, in the form of a food. There is room for research into the other medicines mentioned as well as in others, as their introduction into daily practice will allow avoiding the long-term administration of antibiotics that leads to the creation of resistant strains and further exacerbates the problem of antibiotic resistance. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Οι ουρολοιμώξεις είναι συχνές στις γυναίκες και περίπου το 20%-30% των γυναικών με ουρολοιμωξη θα εμφανίσει υποτροπή. Αυτές μπορεί να είναι μια ή περισσότερες. Οι επαναλαμβανόμενες ουρολοιμώξεις είναι ένα ιατρικό πρόβλημα με ιδιαίτερες δυσκολίες στη διαγνωστική προσέγγιση και την αντιμετώπισή του. Ένα πολύ σημαντικό κομμάτι της αντιμετώπισης είναι η προφύλαξη. Λόγω της μακροχρόνιας θεραπείας που απαιτείται και της τάσης για ανάπτυξη αντοχής στα αντιβιοτικά, οι φυσικές μέθοδοι προφύλαξης και τα εναλλακτικά φάρμακα γίνονται περισσότερο δημοφιλή. Στο παρόν άρθρο παρουσιάζονται τα παραπάνω και συζητείται ο ρόλος τους στην αντιμετώπιση των επαναλαμβανόμενων ουρολοιμώξεων.

 **Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού**
λοιμώξεις του ουροποιητικού συστήματος,
πρόληψη και
έλεγχος, φυσικές μέθοδοι προφύλαξης



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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A novel mathematical simulation modelling method to predict the probability of finding cancer in prostate biopsy on an individual basis

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Abstract

Purpose: To calculate the probability of finding cancer on prostate biopsy, we developed a prostate cancer (PCa) predictive statistical model (PCP-SMART), deriving a novel PCa-predictor (pcrdindex) and a pca-risk mathematical equation.

Subjects and methods: A total of 371 men were included. Since PCa-risk relates to tPSA, age, prostate volume[PV], fPSA, f/tPSA-ratio, PSAD and tPSA \geq 50ng/ml has 98.5% Positive-Predictive-Value(PPV) for PCa diagnosis, we hypothesized that correlating two variables, each consisting of three ratios/values including patient's-tPSA, PSA50ng/ml, age, prostate volume, f/tPSAratio, could operate as a "PCa-conditions imitating-simulating model". Linear regression derived the coefficient-of-determination(R^2), termed PCRDindex. Statistics included χ^2 -test, multiple logistic regression analysis, test-performance characteristics and AUC/ROC-curve analysis [SPSS-22($p<0.05$)].

Results: Biopsy was PCa(+) in 45.1% and PCa(-) in 44.2%.

PCRDindex signed(+) in 89.82% PCa(+) and negative in 91.46% PCa(-) cases (χ^2 -test: $p<0.001$ -RR: 10.52) [Sensitivity: 89.8, specificity: 91.5%, PPV: 91.5%, Negative-Predictive-Value(NPV): 89.8%, Positive-Likelihood-Ratio[LR(+)]: 10.5, Negative-Likelihood-Ratio[LR(-)]: 0.11 Accuracy: 90.6%]. Multiple logistic regression and AUC/ROC analysis revealed PCRDindex as independent PCa-predictor strongly ($p<0.001$) outperforming other clinically established while, the formulated risk-equation predicted 91% accurately the probability of finding cancer.

Conclusions: PCRDindex effectively predicted prostate biopsy outcome, identifying

correctly 9/10 men who indeed harbored cancer while, correctly ruling out PCa in 9/10 men without disease evidence. It significantly outperformed other established PCa-predictors while, the PCa-risk equation, accurately calculated the individual probability of finding cancer on biopsy.

Key words

prostate cancer; PSA testing; PCP-SMART model; PCRD-Index; prostate cancer risk mathematical equation



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Introduction

In the past few years there has been considerable controversy regarding PSA testing diagnostic performance, based on evidence indicating that currently this biomarker is insufficient for identifying prostate cancer (PCa), mainly due to lack of ideal PSA cut-points that yield both high sensitivity and specificity. Instead, PCa risk varies continuously at all PSA values, with no lower limit existing to safely predict absence of the disease¹⁻¹⁴. Nevertheless, absolute PSA thresholds continue to be a central facet for recommending prostate biopsy (PBx), policy resulting in a high percentage of unnecessary biopsies, avoidance of which is crucial because of the risk of potentially severe complications (pain, infections, bleeding, urinary obstruction, emotional distress) not to mention financial cost^{4,6,8,14-21}. To optimally evaluate patients and prevent men with persistent PSA abnormalities and previous negative biopsies from undergoing a vicious cycle of useless repeat biopsies, it is of great clinical importance to assess PCa risk prior to PBx. To this aim, patient stratification techniques, accurately estimating individual risk of finding PCa at biopsy (risk based strategy), are essential for evidence based decision making and patient counselling^{3,6,14,17,18,19,22,23}.

Aiming to develop a clinical method capable of making individualized predictions regarding PBx outcome as well as, of "measuring /weighing the intensity" of follow-up and further interventions (repeat PBx) needed, in cases with negative initial biopsies and abnormal PSA thereafter, we formulated a "PCa mathematical conditions simulating/mimicking" predictive model (PCP-SMART), deriving a novel PCa predictor (PCRD) and a mathematical risk equation, that allows calculation of a single value for estimating the probability of finding cancer on biopsy in an individual basis. Herein, we introduce this novel model and report the results of a prospective, observational study on its clinical validity and applicability. (For further details refer to: [http://www.clinical-genitourinary-cancer.com/article/S1558-7673\(16\)30179-3/fulltext](http://www.clinical-genitourinary-cancer.com/article/S1558-7673(16)30179-3/fulltext)).

Material and methods

Our main idea for constructing the PCP-SMART model (Prostate Cancer Predictive Simulation Modeling, Assessing the Risk, Technique), was based on key data such as: 1) Apart from total PSA (tPSA), several other

clinical parameters represent established independent predictors (risk factors) of prostate cancer, such as age, age-specific/adjusted PSA, free PSA (fPSA), free/total PSA ratio (f/tPSA), prostate volume and PSA Density (PSAD)^{2,3,9,10, 12,13,14,15,16,17,18,24}, 2) serum tPSA values ≥ 50 ng/ml have a positive predictive value (PPV) of 98.5% (PCa diagnosis considered 98.5% certain) in predicting the presence of prostate cancer on needle biopsy^{4,18}, 3) statistical regression analysis (linear/logistic) is applied to model the probability of prostate cancer more accurately, estimated directly as a function of serum total and free PSA, combined with other key risk factors²⁴. Capitalizing on these observations, we developed a linear-regression model incorporating all the aforementioned predictors, mainly hypothesizing that, if we calculated the "strength" of association between the function of a given set of PCa predictors and another set formed by the same parameters projected to function under "mathematical conditions mimicking/simulating" PCa (as when tPSA=50ng/ml), we would presumably have attained a close estimation/measure of the probability the patient to be diagnosed with the disease. Subsequently, we formulated two variables, [Y- (dependent) / X- (independent)], each consisting of three (3) numerical values (decimal fractions), emerging as follows: 1) Variable (Y): patient tPSA/age, patient tPSA/PV, fPSA/patient tPSA, 2) Variable (X): tPSA50/age, tPSA50/PV, fPSA/tPSA50. Simple linear regression derived the coefficient of determination-R², which we called Prostate Cancer Risk Determinator (PCRDindex), signed (+) / (-) according to the correlation's equation line slope [ascending = positive / descending= negative] (<http://mathbits.com/MathBits/TISection/Statistics2/correlation.html>). All calculations were performed using Windows-Excel (see Appendix) and free online calculators.

After receiving institutional board approval, we performed an observational, prospective evaluation of a cohort of 725 men subjected to transrectal ultrasound-guided needle biopsy/ies at Naval-Veterans Hospital of Athens (Nov2006–Dec 2014), because of abnormal serum tPSA-values (2.5-10 ng/ml) and/or suspicious digital rectal examination (DRE). Cases with abnormal DRE and tPSA 10-20ng/ml or <2.5ng/ml were also included. Exclusion criteria were: 1) insufficient patient follow-up, 2) tPSA>20ng/ml, 3) uri-

TABLE 1

Presentation of the logistic regression coefficient (b), Wald test, statistical significance of individual regression coefficients tested using the Wald Chi-square statistic and odds ratio [Exp(B)], for each of the predictors (variables in the equation) in the full model of the multiple logistic regression analysis

Variables in the Equation

	b	S.E.	Wald test	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Age	0.036	0.029	1.529	1	0.216	1.036
Age-adjusted tPSA	-3.048	6.239	0.239	1	0.625	0.047
Prostate volume	-0.023	0.011	4.530	1	0.033	0.977
PSAD	-3.421	4.184	0.668	1	0.414	0.033
total PSA	0.015	0.194	0.006	1	0.940	1.015
free PSA	0.166	0.607	0.075	1	0.784	1.181
f/tPSA ratio	-3.713	5.130	0.524	1	0.469	0.024
PCRD index	3.198	0.464	47.446	1	0.000	24.489
Constant	0.220	2.012	0.012	1	0.913	1.246

nary tract infection, 4) medical therapy affecting tPSA (5α-reductase inhibitors), 5) previous benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) surgery, recent urethral/prostatic (DRE) manipulations, 6) PCa diagnosis and/or endocrine manipulations. Strictly conforming to criteria, 371 (51.2%) patients were considered eligible for enrollment in the study.

After dividing subjects were into those with confirmed PCa diagnosis and them not harbouring the disease, comparative analysis of the predictive accuracy among input clinical variables as well as PCRDindex was performed. Serum tPSA and f/tPSA ratio were assessed using enzyme immunoassay method, PSAD was calculated dividing tPSA by PV (ng/mL/cc) while, since no significant differences exist between transabdominal / transrectal ultrasound PV measurements, to best approximate prostate volume when given transabdominal ultrasound gland dimensions, the ellipsoid formula [$\pi/6(0.52) \times (\text{height}) \times (\text{width}) \times (\text{length})$] was employed²⁴.

All patients underwent transrectal ultrasound guided PBx (TRUS/PBx) in the left lateral decubitus position, by using 18-gauge core-biopsy needle and grayscale ultrasonography [7.5 MHz endocavity transducer]. A 12-core biopsy protocol was applied and in negative result cases, further biopsies with increasing numbers of cores were performed, based on data showing that in men with suspicion of PCa (abnormal tPSA / High Grade Prostate Intraepithelial Neoplasia (HGPIN) / Atypical Small Acinar Proliferation (ASAP) after initial

negative PBx, more aggressive protocols up to saturation biopsy (≥ 24 cores), obtained the highest cancer detection rates²⁶. Subjects were classified truly PCa negative if had undergone 2-3 extended biopsies (16-24 cores) followed by prostatic adenectomy (transurethral [TURP] or open) or, subjected to ≥ 3 biopsies including saturation schemes (≥ 24 cores). HGPIN/ASAP cases were excluded from analysis.

Univariate analysis between variables and diagnostic groups (men diagnosed with cancer and those not) was performed using chi-square(χ^2)-test (Yates-correction), Relative-Risk (+/-) 95% Confidence Intervals [CIs] were derived and differences were compared using Student's t-test. The predictive efficiency/accuracy of PCRDindex was evaluated by calculating specificity (% cancer cases with positively signed PCRD), sensitivity (% non-cancer controls with negatively signed PCRD), LR(+), LR(-), PPV, NPV and accuracy while, it was quantified by computing the AUC-ROC curves. Multiple logistic regression analysis with binary dependent variable the biopsy result, estimated the influence of each included risk-factor in the PCP-SMART model building set, on the likelihood of PCa positive PBx outcome (identify independent predictors), as well as, derived a logistic regression equation calculating the probability of diagnosing PCa at PBx. Analyses were performed using SPSS-22® (SPSS Inc-Chicago, IL) and INSTAT (GraphPad)® statistical packages. Two-sided hypothesis testing was used, $p < 0.05$ considered statistically significant.

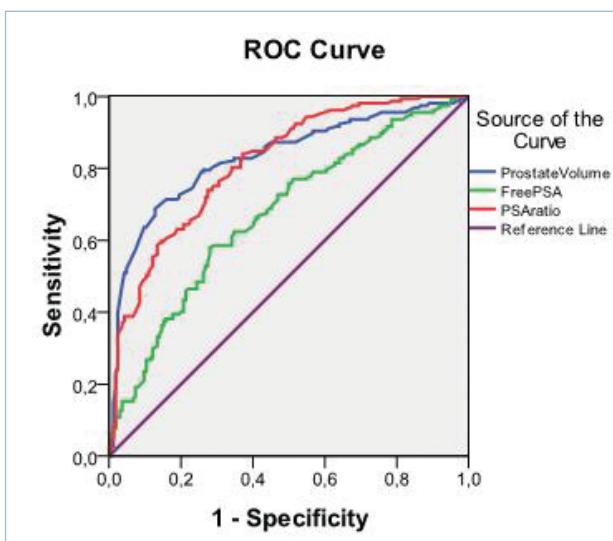


Figure 1. ROC curve analysis: AUC values of variables negatively correlated to prostate biopsy outcome with PCa diagnosis on biopsy (to predict negative biopsy result as their values increase)

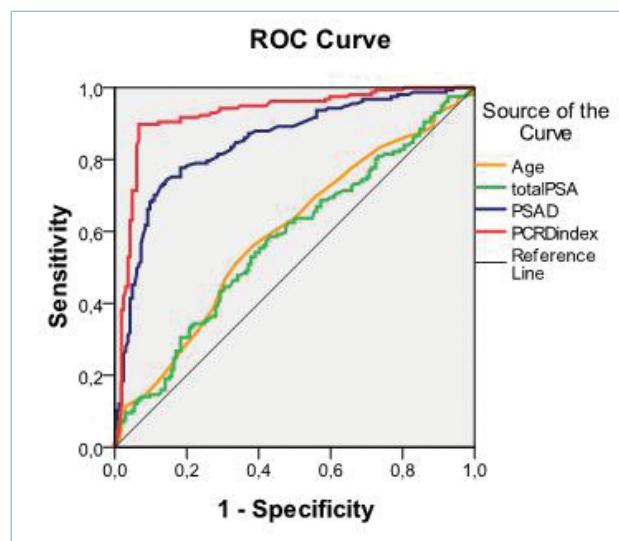


Figure 2. ROC curve analysis: AUC values of variables positively correlated to prostate biopsy outcome with PCa diagnosis on biopsy (to predict positive biopsy result as their values increase)

Results

Among 371 men biopsied, PCa was diagnosed in 167 (45.1%), no evidence of the disease was found in 164 (44.2%) while, HGPIN or/and ASAP lesions were detected in 40 (10.7%). PCa diagnosis was made in 92 (55.1%) patients at initial biopsy, in 52 (31.1%) at second while, 23 (13.8%) at ≥ 3 repeat biopsies. The median number of tissue cores taken at 1st, 2nd and ≥ 3 repeat biopsy was 11.5 (8-14), 16 (13-19) and 21 (17-32) respectively. Among PBx negative cases, 53 (31.7%) underwent 2-3 extended biopsy protocols (>18 -20cores) and prostatectomy (transurethral/open) whereas, 112 (68.3%) were subjected to ≥ 4 biopsy sessions using extended (3 20) or saturation (≥ 24 cores) schemes.

Comparative univariate analysis (median values) showed that, men with PCa vs controls, were significantly more likely to be older (69 vs. 65.5 years - $p=0.051$), have higher tPSA (7.75 vs. 6.69ng/ml - $=0.0065$), lower fPSA (0.92 vs. 1.31ng/ml- $p=0.0052$), lower f/tPSA-ratio (0.12 vs. 0.19 - $p<0.001$), smaller prostates (36 vs. 67cc - $p<0.001$) and higher PSAD (0.20 vs. 0.10 - $p<0.001$). Overall, PCRDindex values were positive (positive linear-regression line slope) in 164 (49.55%) cases and negative (negative-slope) in 167 (50.45%) men. In 150 (89.82%) of the 167 patients diagnosed with PCa, PCRD values were signed positive and in 17 (10.18%) signed negative whereas, in 150 (91.46%)

of the 164 patients with no evidence of the disease, PCRDindex values were negative and in only 14 (8.54%), had positive values. Chi-square test yielded a value of 215.45, two-sided $p<0.0001$, Odds-Ratio 94,5 (44.97-198.7 [95% CI]) and Relative Risk 8.98 (5.7-14,1 [95% CI]). PCRDindex sensitivity for predicting PBx outcome was 89.82% ([95% CI]: 83.95-93.78), specificity 91.46% (85.82-95.08), PPV 91.46% (85.82-95.08), NPV 89.82% (83.95-93.78), LR(+) 10.52 (6.36-17.41), LR(-) 0,11 (0.07-0.17) and overall accuracy 90,63%. A test of the full model against a constant (intercept) only model was statistically significant (-2Log-likelihood = 200,798 vs. 444,848 - Omnibus χ^2 test = 244,049, $p<0.001$), indicating that after excluding age-adjusted PSA ratio (tPSA/age) found to be insignificantly correlated to biopsy outcome (score=1.05- $p=0.305$), all other predictors as a set reliably distinguished between PCa negative/ positive PBx outcome. As such, each independent variable significantly improved the model (scores/significances): age: 7.275 - $p=0.007$, PV: 64,657- $p<0.001$, tPSA: 7.030 - $p=0.008$, fPSA: 25,147- $p<0.001$, f/tPSA ratio: 77,339 - $p<0.001$, PSAD: 75,69 - $p<0.001$, PCRD: 183,519 - $p<0.001$ (overall-score = 198,137). PCRDindex exhibited the highest score test (=measure of how much an independent variable would be significant in the model), significantly outperforming other predictors. The model explained

TABLE 2 *ROC curve analysis : Comparative examination of AUC values of individual variables, denoting their clinical predictive significance in terms of ability to approach the correct diagnosis (predictive accuracy), regarding prostate biopsy outcome*

Independent Variables (predictors)	Area under the curve (AUC)	Std. Error	Sig p-value	95% Confidence Interval		Sig p-value vs. PCRD
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Positively correlated variables (to predict positive biopsy result as their values increase)						
Age	0.595	0.032	0.003	0.532	0.657	<i>p</i> <0.001
total PSA	0.577	0.032	0.017	0.515	0.640	<i>p</i> <0.001
PSAD	0.848	0.022	0.000	0.805	0.891	<i>p</i> =0.0015
PCRD index	0.926	0.016	0.000	0.894	0.957	-
Negatively correlated variables (to predict negative biopsy result as their values increase)						
Prostate volume	0.830	0.024	0.000	0.784	0.876	<i>p</i> <0.001
free PSA	0.672	0.030	0.000	0.614	0.731	<i>p</i> <0.001
free/total PSA ratio	0.814	0.023	0.000	0.769	0.860	<i>p</i> <0.001

71.0% (Nagelkerke's-R²= 0.71) of biopsy result variance and correctly classified 90.7% of cases. **Table 1** presents logistic regression coefficient (b), Wald-test, statistical significance of individual regression-coefficients (Wald-Chi-square) and odds-ratio [Exp(B)] for each predictor. Employing a 0.05/Wald-test criterion, only PCRDindex and PV made a significant contribution to prediction of cancer (key PCa predictors) while, age, tPSA, fPSA, f/tPSA-ratio and PSAD, had insignificant partial effects. The EXP(b) [Odds-ratio] value for PCRDindex was 24.02 (95% CI: 9,812-58,778) suggesting that, increasing PCRD values are associated with highly increased likelihood (x24-times) of diagnosing PCa. To examine which variables were most strongly associated with the outcome, we ranked them by the probability of the Wald/chi-square test (metric=1minus Wald-x²p/value) coded such that, higher values pointing to greater outcome association strength, in the following order: (1) PCRD: 1.0, (2) PV: 0.961, (3) age: 0.847, (4) f/t PSA ratio: 0.559, (5) PSAD: 0.518, (6) fPSA: 0.265, (7) tPSA: 0.232. Employing logistic regression equation formula: $p = e^{(a+b_1x_1+b_2x_2+b_3x_3+...)} / 1 + e^{(a+b_1x_1+b_2x_2+b_3x_3+...)}$ [p =event probability, e = natural logarithms base(≈ 2.72), a =equation constant, b =predictor variables coefficient], we formulated an equation calculating the probability of finding PCa on biopsy in the form: $p = e^{(3,198 \times \text{PCRDindex} - 0.023 \times \text{PV} + 0.22)} / 1 + e^{(3,198 \times \text{PCRDindex} - 0.023 \times \text{PV} + 0.22)}$

PCRDindex exhibited significantly greater AUC-ROC curve [0.926], vs. tPSAD (0.848-*p*=0.0015), PV (0.830-*p*<0.001), f/tPSA-ratio (0.814 -*p*<0.001), fPSA (0.672 -*p*<0.001), age (0.595 -*p*<0.001), tPSA (0.577 -*p*<0.001). (**Table 2, Figure 1, Figure 2**)

Discussion

Main advantage of the PCP-SMART model is that it comprises established and routinely available PCa predictors such as age, PV, fPSA, f/tPSA ratio, PSAD^{3,9,10,12,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,26}. First step of model development was simple linear regression of two variables, comprising the above-mentioned key predictors, which derived the coefficient of determination (R²), a math-factor that provides a measure of how well future outcomes are likely to be predicted by statistical models [<http://mathbits.com/MathBits/TISection/Statistics2/correlation.htm>] and which we re-termed PCRDindex. Main hypothesis was that, by identifying patient-subgroups with high/low risk (positively/negative signed PCRD values respectively), our novel index could become potent measure of the probability of finding cancer at biopsy. Subsequently, we logically modelled this probability and formulated a single-value calculating PCa risk equation that individually measures the probability of finding cancer on PBx. Multiple logistic regression models, quantify the combined contribu-



tion of several risk-factors and provide PBx outcome probability, yielding exact numerical values applying to an individual instead of a risk-group, highly improving predictive accuracy compared to mental physician predictions^{14,18,20,24}. Noteworthy, all calculations are performed on computer-interface basis without need for specific mathematical knowledge and costly statistical packages, by using common PC programs (Windows Excel) or free online calculators²⁶.

We found a very strong association between the sign of PCRDindex values (positive[+] or negative[-]) and PCa outcome (cancer, no-cancer). In 9 out of 10 (9/10) patients diagnosed with PCa, the calculated PCRD values were positively-signed (positive correlation with cancer diagnosis) whereas, 9/10 men with no evidence of the disease, had negatively signed PCRD-test (negative correlation). Accordingly, PCa diagnosis occurs nine (9) times more often in patients with positive relative to those with negatively signed PCRD index values. Hence, PCRDindex correctly identifies the vast majority of men who will prove to have PCa or, in whom this diagnosis will be excluded.

Sensitivity and specificity of PCRD testing yielded very good-to-excellent values of 89.8% and 91.46% respectively suggesting that, positively-signed PCRD-index values are almost 90% likely to predict presence of PCa in men who indeed have the disease (test correctly predicts PCa in 9/10 cases) whereas, PCRD (-) values correctly rule out carcinoma in 9/10 patients who indeed do not have the disease. In other words, only 1 in 10 men (10.5%) among those diagnosed with PCa would have been missed while, less than 1-in-10 (8.5%) without carcinoma would have been subjected to unneeded biopsies. The high PPV (91.5%) and NPV (89.8%) mean that, men with PCRD(+) values are >90% likely to be diagnosed with PCa while, those with PCRD(-) test are ≈90% certain not to harbour the disease. Likewise, the high diagnostic accuracy (90.63%) suggests that pre-biopsy estimations based on PCRD-values, are 91% close to the true outcome. The likelihood ratio for PCRD(+) values was 10.5 while, for PCRD(-) 0.11, meaning that individuals with PCa are about 10.5 times more likely to have positively-signed PCRDindex than those without the disease while, PCa negative cases are about 9-times more likely to have negatively signed PCRD test than do individuals with the disease. To remind, likelihood ratios >10

/ <0.1 provide strong evidence to rule-in/out diagnoses respectively²⁷.

The formulated logistic-regression model correctly predicted 90.7% of biopsy outcomes, diagnosing 90.4% of those who indeed had PCa and correctly excluding 90.9% of men who didn't have the disease, yielding low false-positive (9.7%) and false negative (9.1%) values. To examine which variables in the predictor set most strongly associate with biopsy outcome, we computed Wald-x² according to which, PCRD ranked first followed, in descending predictive ability rank order by PV, age, f/tPSA ratio, PSAD, fPSA and, last, by tPSA. Thus, PCRDindex represents a highly powered univariable PBx outcome predictor, greatly outperforming established risk-factors and highly improving PCa predictive accuracy while avoiding unnecessary biopsies, compared to tPSA^{10,17}. Key product of this model was a logistic regression equation formulated as:

$$p = e^{(3.2 \times \text{PCRDindex} - 0.023 \times \text{PV} + 0.22)} / (1 + e^{(3.2 \times \text{PCRDindex} - 0.023 \times \text{PV} + 0.22)})$$

that calculates a single value determining the probability of finding PCa on biopsy, with accuracy≈91% and may offer advantages over multistep algorithms (i.e nomograms) presently used to estimate the need for biopsy [3,12,19,22,23,26].

PCRDindex yielded an interestingly high AUC-ROC curve value of 0.926, one of the best having been reported for a diagnostic tool for PCa²¹, discriminating well between patients with/without PCa, exhibiting diagnostic accuracy significantly outperforming that of other predictors as it emerged as the most informative risk factor for predicted cancer at PBx, followed by PSAD (0.848), PV(0.830), f/tPSA-ratio (0.814), fPSA (0.672), age (0.595) and tPSA (0.577), the weakest PCa-predictor among all examined. Overall, AUC-values for tPSA are lower than those of commonly employed predictive tests such as, PCa risk-calculators, PCA3-test, Prostate-Health-Index (PHI), which have shown substantially higher AUCs (0.65-0.88) and predictive ability significantly outperforming tPSA (AUC: 0.52-0.69)^{3,7,8,10,19,28,29,30}.

Limitations of our study include:

- 1) possible bias due to employing a single institution's experience,
- 2) intra/inter-observer variability in ultrasound PV measurements, might potentially affect PSAD calculation accuracy^{1,10,19},

- 3) lack of external model validation that mandates further confirmatory studies^{1,17},
- 4) lack of head-to-head comparison between the model and other PCa predictive tools.

Conclusion

The PCP-SMART prostate biopsy outcome predictive mathematical model, exhibited high diagnostic performance, providing significantly improved ability in identifying men at risk for PCa who need biopsy and/or intensive follow-up and equally important, those who may avoid unnecessary interventions. PCRDindex, key derivative of this model, predicted with high accuracy

PBx outcome, identifying correctly 9/10 patients with cancer as well as, 9/10 without the disease, emerging as strong PCa-predictor. A multiple logistic regression mathematical equation, deriving a single value for calculating the probability of finding cancer on prostate biopsy in an individual basis, was formulated. We anticipate that, following external validation, our model and its derivatives, might become useful clinical tools facilitating proper, prostate biopsy related, management decision making. 

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Appendix

To make a XY Scatter Graph with linear regression and equation (Linear Plot) and calculate the coefficient of determination using Microsoft Excel®, complete the following steps:

1. Enter a set of values in column A (X axis values) on the spreadsheet (value-1=tPSA50 / patient's age, value-2=tPSA50 / prostate volume, value-3=patient's free PSA / tPSA 50)
2. Enter a set of values in column B (Y axis values) on the spreadsheet (value-1=patient's tPSA / patient's age , value-2 = patient's tPSA/prostate volume, value-3 = patient's free PSA/ patient's total PSA)
3. Set the data range by selecting all the data on the spreadsheet using the mouse (Click in a corner and drag the mouse until all boxes are selected)
4. Press/click on the chart (wizard) button in the toolbar.
5. In the charts menu, click on "XY scatter" plot type.
6. Select the "scatter with data points connected by smoothed lines" or "scatter with data points connected by smoothed lines without markers" option.
7. Press <Finish>.
8. Right click on the line in the chart and select "Add Trendline" to draw a straight line through the data.
9. Press the "Options" tab and check the "display equation on chart" and "Display R-squared value on chart" boxes and then press "OK", to show the equation ($y=mx+b$) of the line and the R2 value (positive or negative according to the slope [direction: increasing (+) or decreasing (-)] of the equation line).

Περίληψη

Σκοπός: Στο πλαίσιο προσπάθειας βελτίωσης της διαγνωστικής ικανότητας της δοκιμασίας PSA, αναπτύξαμε μέθοδο εκτίμησης της πιθανότητας ύπαρξης προστατικού καρκίνου σε άνδρες με παθολογικές τιμές PSA καθώς και στάθμισης της «έντασης» των απαιτούμενων προσπαθειών για περαιτέρω διερεύνηση (επαναληπτικές βιοψίες), μετά αρνητική/ές αρχική βιοψία/ές προστάτη. Για τον σκοπό αυτό, εκπονήσαμε προοπτική - μακρόχρονη μελέτη και επινοήσαμε το πρωτότυπο στατιστικό μοντέλο προσομοίωσης «μαθηματι-

κών συνθηκών» καρκίνου προστάτη PCP-SMART (Prostate Cancer Predictive - Simulation Modelling, Assessing the Risk, Technique), με κύρια παράγωγα τον δείκτη (index) PCRD (Prostate Cancer Risk Determinator) και την προκύπτουσα μαθηματική εξίσωση λογιστικής παλινδρόμησης, μεσω των οποίων υπολογίζεται εξατομικευμένα η πιθανότητα θετικού για καρκίνο αποτελέσματος, σε ασθενείς που υποβάλλονται σε διορθική βιοψία προστάτη.

Ασθενείς και μέθοδος: Σε 371 άνδρες, εφαρμόσθηκε το

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Bowel perforation during percutaneous urological procedures

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Abstract

Iatrogenic bowel injury during percutaneous urological procedures is a rare complication but if it occurs it increases significantly the morbidity and the mortality of the procedure. The

purpose of this paper is to highlight the technical details and anatomical features that may increase the risk for bowel injury and propose possible management in the case of occurrence.

Introduction

Iatrogenic bowel injury is a rare complication of suprapubic trocar cystostomy or percutaneous kidney surgery. It may seriously affect patient recovery by increasing morbidity and rarely lead to death, especially when the diagnosis is delayed. Herein, we discuss the special anatomic features, the risk factors and the technical details that may predispose to bowel injury. Therapeutic management is also highlighted.

Bowel injury and suprapubic cystostomy

Bowel injury may occur in up to 2.7% of the cases after a blind percutaneous or a transurethral, cystoscopically guided trocar cystostomy^{1,2}. It may happen primarily during the insertion of the suprapubic catheter or secondarily during the change of a catheter through

an established mature tract. Various segments of the intestinal tract can be affected including the caecum and the sigmoid colon³ but the most commonly injured bowel segments is the terminal ileum^{4,5}.

Several anatomical, functional and technical factors may predispose to bowel injury during a suprapubic cystostomy. Anatomy may be altered and the bowel may be interposed through the cystostomy access tract when we treat patients with a sort symphysis pubis-umbilicus distance (<11 cm), obesity and previous abdominal surgery. Decreased bladder capacity secondary to anatomical or neurological diseases may also predispose to bowel injury with the same mechanism. Technical errors include a blind unguided puncture, a puncture of a partially distended bladder, a puncture at the event of ileus or bowel obstruc-



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tion and a puncture through a previous abdominal scar, which is indicative of possible bowel adhesions underneath⁶. Finally, over advancement of the trocar may lead to rectum injury.

Clinical presentation varies depending on the time of diagnosis. Bowel content or foul draining through the suprapubic catheter immediately following the cystostomy confirm or indicate the diagnosis, respectively. When the diagnosis is delayed by several hours or days the patient may develop pyrexia, signs of peritonitis or general deterioration. Ileocutaneous fistulae development may also occur as a result of more delayed diagnosis.

Bowel injury is usually confirmed by a cystography through the suprapubic catheter, computed tomography scan or even laparoscopy.

Preventing measures to avoid bowel injury during suprapubic cystostomy include the high suspicion of the injury, the recognition of the existing predisposing factors and the avoidance of blind puncture. The later is true even if the patient is under spinal or general anesthesia and the procedure is taking place inside the operating room under cystoscopic guidance. Indeed, anesthesia may further decrease the already poor tone of the anterior abdominal wall muscles allowing a sleeve of peritoneum to slip in front of distended bladder and a bowel loop to occupy its space⁷.

Preliminary review of patient's imaging such as ultrasound, computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging prior to insertion of a suprapubic tube may identify those patients who are at risk for bowel injury. Furthermore, there is evidence showing that imaging-guided access by using ultrasound or computed tomography decrease the incidence of bowel injury^{8,9}. Real-time ultrasound during bladder puncture allows for continuous imaging of the needle as it transverses the tissues. This allows an optimal tract to be selected and followed. Their intraluminal gas identifies the loops of colon. They show as a bright echo sometimes changing shape with peristalsis. Small bowel may not contain gas and appears as a compressible circular or linear low echo. Moving the probe along the length of the bowel will aid evaluation. Alternatives to ultrasound guidance are fluoroscopic, computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging guidance. The

later two provide the greatest degree of certainty of bowel position¹⁰. Finally, open suprapubic cystostomy is warranted in elderly/frail patients with poor abdominal/bladder wall tone.

Unexpected deterioration in clinical condition following uneventful insertion of a suprapubic catheter should raise the suspicion of a bowel injury and warrants a low threshold for exploration if deemed safe. Otherwise, such a complication may lead to a high death incidence².

When bowel injury occurs and is immediately recognized repositioning of the tube and close patient monitoring is warranted. In the lieu of peritonitis or delayed diagnosis a laparotomy is indicated to surgically correct the injury⁸.

Bowel injury and percutaneous kidney surgery

Bowel injuries represent a rare complication of PCNL reported in less than 1% of the case¹¹. Both large bowel and small intestine can be injured with the former being more prone to such an injury. Human anatomy, patient position and surgical technique all play a significant role for bowel injuries to occur.

A colon positioned retrorenally and a kidney puncture located lateral to posterior axillary line predispose to large bowel injury. The colon is retrorenal in approximately 0.6% of the general population^{12,13}. Most often is found on the left side. Patient position may also affect bowel injury as the colon is found behind the kidney more often in the prone position (up to 10%) compared to supine position (up to 2%)¹⁴. Other risk factors that may predispose to a retrorenal colonic displacement include chronic constipation in elderly patients, previous major abdominal or renal surgery, neurological impairment, patients with very little retroperitoneal fat, patients with mobile kidneys, patients with kyphoscoliosis, anterior caliceal puncture, horseshoe kidneys and renal fusion or ectopias¹¹.

Small bowel injury is more commonly seen on the right side. The second and the third portions of the duodenum are in danger when the right renal pelvis is perforated during dilation, placement of the working sheath or stone removal. Advancing the needle or an instrument too deeply during the various steps of PCNL is the most common mechanism of this complication¹⁵.

Although colon injury is a rare complication of the



Key words

percutaneous surgery; bowel; injury



PCNL, prevention starts with the surgeon's high suspicion that it may happen. Identification of the risk factors and the use of ultrasonography or CT scan to delineate the anatomy prior to the procedure or the use of this imaging during the puncture reduces the incidence of this complication. Especially, when the window of entry into the collecting system is quite small, CT-guided access should be considered as the safest^{11,16}. Small bowel injury can be avoided with careful fluoroscopic monitoring during access, tract dilation, working sheath placement and proper endoscopic manipulations¹⁶.

The diagnosis of bowel injury should be suspected when mucosa or contents are visualized during endoscopy. End-procedure or post-procedure nephrostomography can reveal the presence of either colonic or duodenal contrast. When the complications is not recognized intraoperatively it should be highly suspected if the patient has diarrhea or hematochezia, signs of peritonitis or passage of gas or feces through the nephrostomy tube or tract^{11,17}.

In the event of major bowel perforation, intraperitoneal fluid effluence with peritonitis and/or sepsis development or patient instability, open surgical repair and proper drainage is necessary. Small bowel resection and re-anastomosis is usually adequate. In the case of colon injury a colostomy may be necessary. However, most of the cases of colonic perforation have been treated conservatively. As the lesions are usually extraperitoneal, proper kidney, bladder

and colon draining are sufficient measures for injury to heal. Kidney should be drained by either a nephrostomy tube, through a different access, or a double JJ stent while a bladder catheter lowers the back-pressure to the collecting system. The initial nephrostomy tube should be withdrawn under fluoroscopic guidance inside the colon lumen. The patient should be given broad-spectrum antibiotics and placed on a low-residue diet^{11,17}.

Selecting a conservative approach a 7 to 10 days period is usually adequate for healing of the colonic injury. Gradual withdrawal of the tubes is necessary during convalescence. The bladder catheter is usually removed at the 5th to 7th postoperative day provided that a retrograde nephrostogram or a colostogram does not show any extravasation or colonic communication with the collecting system. At the same day the colonic tube is positioned outside the colon lumen to work as a temporary drain of colon vicinity for 2-3 days more and finally is removed when there is no evidence of persistent nephrocolic fistula^{11,18}.

Conservative treatment of small bowel injury may be feasible when the lesion is small and the patient remains stable. Similarly to large bowel injuries an intentional fistula formation and waiting for a 10-15 days period under antibiotic therapy and parenteral hyperalimentation is needed^{15,19}. 

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Η ιατρογενής κάκωση του εντέρου κατά τη διάρκεια διαδερμικών ουρολογικών επεμβάσεων είναι μια σπάνια επιπλοκή, αλλά αν συμβεί αυξάνει σημαντικά την νοσηρότητα και την θνησιμότητα της επέμβασης. Ο σκοπός αυτής της εργασίας είναι να αναδείξει τις τεχνικές λεπτομέρειες και τα ανατομικά χαρακτηριστικά που μπορούν να αυξήσουν τον κίνδυνο για τραυματισμό του εντέρου και να προτείνει πιθανούς τρόπους διαχείρισης στην περίπτωση που αυτή η επιπλοκή εμφανιστεί.



Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού

διαδερμικές
επεμβάσεις, έντερο,
κάκωση

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CASE REPORT

Post-traumatic gonadal splenosis. A report of two cases

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Abstract

Splenogonadal fusion is a rare anomaly consisted of abnormal connection between splenic tissue and gonad or derivatives of the mesonephros. It is mainly congenital however in some cases may be acquired. Being asymptomatic it is usually presented as a painless scrotal mass in children, adolescents or men younger than 25 yo. In most of the cases the diagnosis is made at pathologic examination of the removed tissue. The scarceness of reports in the literature underlines the rarity of this entity. Here we report two cases of splenogonadal fusion found in a 19 year and a 58-year-old male both presented with painful scrotum.



Key words

hydrocele; spleen;
splenogonadal fusion;
testicle; torsion



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Introduction

Splenogonadal fusion (SGF) is a rare benign congenital anomaly consisted of abnormal connection between spleen and gonad or derivatives of the mesonephros¹. Splenic tissue is ectopic and can be found either as an accessory spleen, which is a congenital condition or as splenosis, which is an acquired condition occurring after traumatic splenic rupture or splenic surgery were splenic tissue particles are auto-transplanted in ectopic locations. In the first case, since the immature splen-

ic tissue is pulled in a caudal direction with descent of the gonad, the abnormality is expected to be located on the left side where it adheres to the developing testicle, epididymis or vas deferens². In fact, in almost all reported cases the SGF was located in the left side while only a single case was occurred on the right side³.

The incidence of SGF is practically unknown and it is believed that the real incidence is probably underestimated⁴. Although the aetiology of this entity still remains uncertain, it is believed that it is secondary to

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Figure 1. Ultrasound of the scrotum showing a mixed hyper and hypo-enhanced lesion of approximately 1.5 cm, located in the lower pole of the left testicle



Figure 2. Ultrasound of the scrotum showing oviform hypo-enhanced lesions of the left testicle. The centrally located lesion was also characterized by an anechoic central area

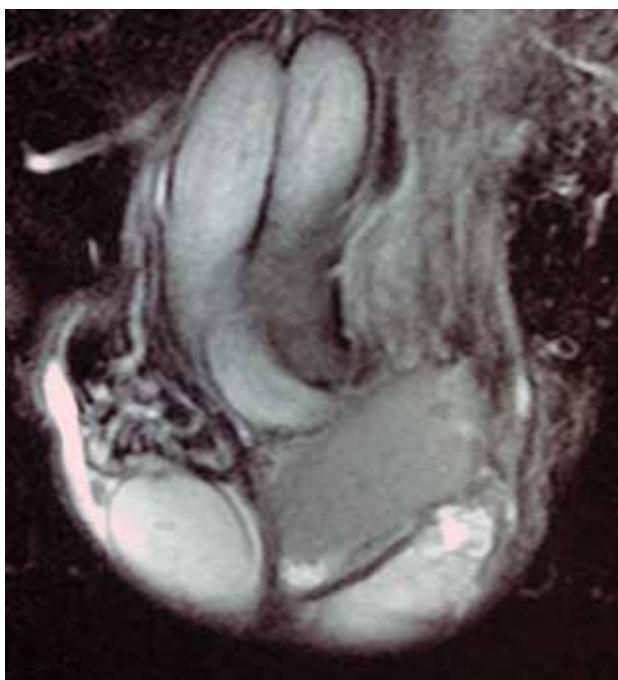


Figure 3. Coronal T2 weighted image of the scrotum demonstrates a well-defined lesion, of intermediate signal intensity above and medial to the left testis

injury of the foetus during intrauterine life. However, based on a disparity in male to female ratio of its incidence (approximately 16:1) some researchers suggested a rare genetic predisposition⁵.

In confirmation to the above, a worth mentioning

percentage of SGF's (almost one-third of the cases) have been linked with other congenital abnormalities including limb and orofacial malformations, Moebius syndrome and intestinal intussusception⁵.

In splenosis, splenic particles seed more frequently the left upper quadrant, but can be found in various intraperitoneal, retroperitoneal or thoracic compartments. However, its incidence is unknown also mainly due to its silent clinical course. In fact, The period of time between splenic rupture and development of splenosis varies from 5 months to 32 years⁶.

Although splenic particles can be found incidentally during other imaging or surgical procedures not related to this condition it is difficult to determine whether the condition is congenital or acquired unless a history of splenic rupture occurs. In such a case, ectopic splenic tissue can be located in the pancreas, stomach, gallbladder, retroperitoneal compartment, pericardium, thorax, as well as in surgical incisions or port sites⁷.

Independently to their nature, the number of the splenic nodules found can be as high as 400 particles, while their size rarely exceeds 3cm due to limited blood supply⁷. Of note, ectopic location of splenic nodules in the sac of the indirect sac is extremely rare.

Herein, we report two cases of splenogonadal fusion found in a 19 year and a 58-year-old male both presented with painful scrotum.

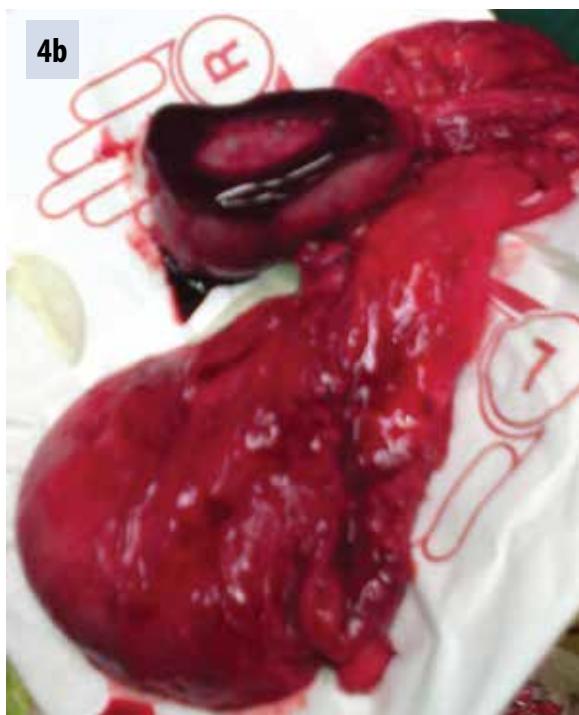


Figure 4a. Cut section of specimen revealed a circumscribed lesion composed of mature splenic tissue

Figure 4b. Cut section of specimen revealed a dark coloured left testicle and a thick sac containing epididymis, vas deferens blood vessels and a fine, dark-red, tubular structure composed of mature splenic tissue

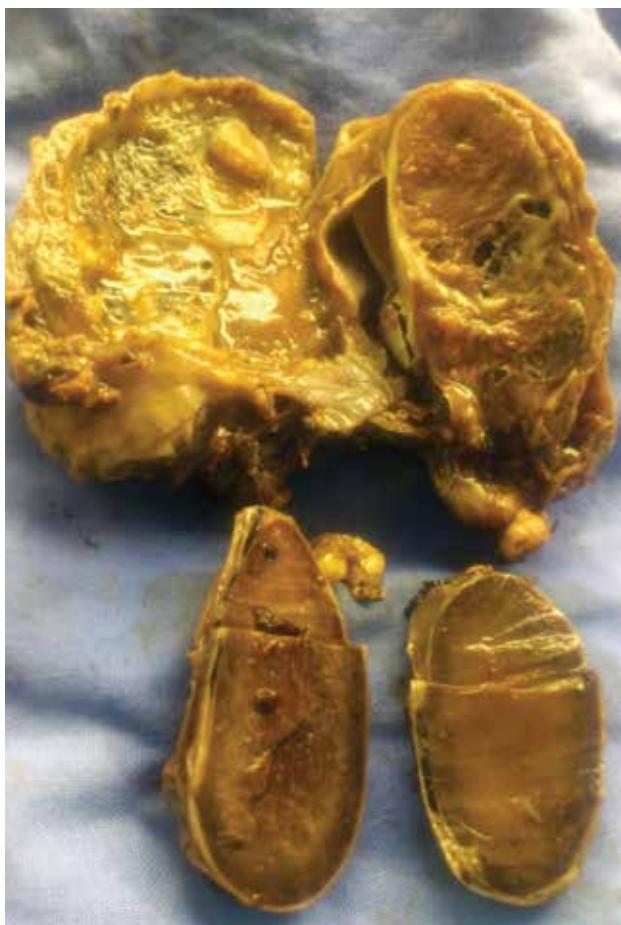


Figure 5. Specimen composed of torsed testis and circumscribed lesion of mature splenic tissue

Case report #1

A 58-year-old male patient with past surgical history of polytrauma (splenic rupture, renal blunt trauma, multiple bone fractures and pneumothorax) which was managed with splenic resection and an associated left inguinal hernia was admitted to the outpatient department complaining of gradual enlargement of his left semi-scrotum with worsening pain during the last month. Physical examination revealed an enlarged left semi-scrotum, giving the impression of a large hydrocele, while epididymis was normal and testis was painless and slightly enlarged. Specific tumor markers such as b- human chorionic gonadotropin (β -hCG) and alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) were within normal ranges. Ultrasound of the scrotum showed a mixed hyper and hypo-enhanced lesion of approximately 1,5 cm, located in the lower pole of the left testicle. In the ultrasound report it was partly diagnosed as hydrocele with prominent flow and partly as normal scrotal wall with smooth outline, regular echogenicity and no calcifications (Fig. 1). The MRI scan showed no abnormality of the left testicle which was displaced by the hernia (Fig. 3). Through a left inguinal incision an indirect inguinal hernia and a dark-red, tubular structure attached to the testis were found (Fig. 4a). Resection of the lesion with repair of the inguinal hernia with a mesh-plug was performed. Cut section of specimen revealed

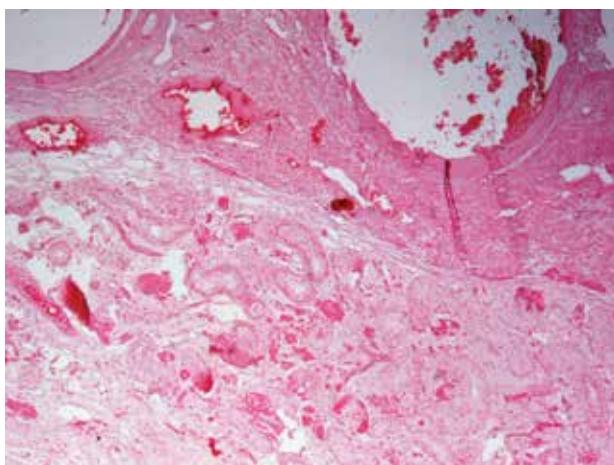


Figure 6. Atrophic testicular parenchyma adjacent to cystic epididymis (H-Ex4)

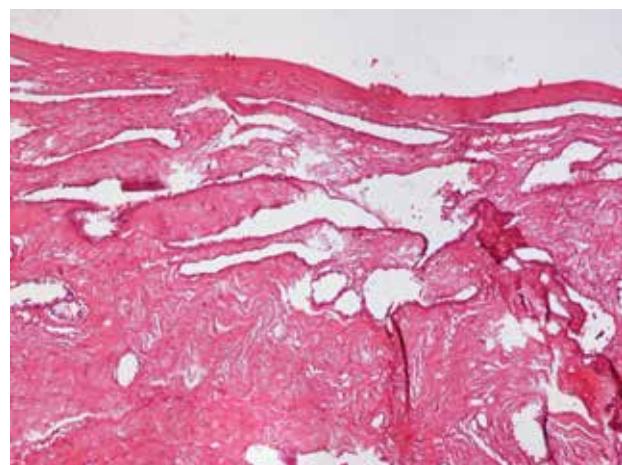


Figure 7. Splenic tissue adjacent to cystic epididymis (H-Ex2)

a circumscribed lesion composed of mature splenic tissue. Histology revealed the tubular structure to consist of splenic tissue with a fibrous capsule (**Fig. 7**).

Case report #2

A 19 year old male patient, with history of long term hospitalisation in intensive care unit due to multiple injuries was admitted to the outpatient department complaining of pain of the left semi scrotum lasting for 3 days. Occasionally he suffered of mild pain in the left inguinal region and he rarely felt severe scrotal pain. In palpation, the affected semi-scrotum was enlarged and contained a large hydrocoele. The epididymis was normal while the testis was hard in palpation. Laboratory examination revealed no pathologic findings except mild leukocytosis. Specific tumor markers (β -hCG and AFP) were within normal ranges. Ultrasound of the scrotum showed two oviform hypo-enhanced lesions of approximately 0.5 cm in diameter located in the middle line of the left testicle. The centrally located lesion was also characterized by an anechoic central area. The hypo-enhanced mass above the upper pole of the testicle was described as hydrocele of the ipsilateral semi-scrotum (**Fig. 2**). There was prominent flow involving mainly hydrocele noted with power Doppler. A standard left inguinal incision was used at surgery and exploration revealed a dark coloured left testicle which had normal shape and was hard in palpation. A thick sack containing epididymis, vas deferens and blood vessels as well as a fine, dark-red, tubular structure was also seen (**Fig. 4b**). Both the testicle and the above mentioned

structure were removed. Cut section of specimen revealed a torsed testis and paratesticular tissue and a circumscribed lesion composed of mature splenic tissue (**Fig. 5**). Histology revealed an atrophic testicular parenchyma adjacent to cystic epididymis. It also revealed the tubular structure to consist of splenic tissue with a fibrous capsule. There was no atypia but simply reactive fibrosis of the tunica vaginalis. These features were consistent with a diagnosis of splenogonadal fusion (**Fig. 6,7**).

Discussion

Most scrotal SFG cases are usually seen before the age of 20 and the 44% are related to cryptorchidism⁸. Therefore, it is possible that SGF may preclude the positioning of the testicle in the scrotum and therefore it could predispose to torsion. A few cases have been diagnosed in advanced age⁸. The above as well as the association of SFG with bilateral cryptorchidism and right intra-abdominal testes may suggest an alternative pathogenic mechanism. For instance, in our case, a migration of fragments of the shattered spleen to the scrotum through the hernia channel might be the pathogenic mechanism in the first case described in this report.

There are no specific symptoms characterising this condition. In fact splenic nodules remain usually clinically silent whether they are located in the scrotum or in various other locations, such as the left upper quadrant, all peritoneal surfaces, omentum, small or large bowel, diaphragm, liver, etc⁹. However, several distinct clinical presentations have been described, such as



hemoptysis, gastrointestinal bleeding, small bowel obstruction, abdominal or pelvic mass lesions, flank pain due to hydronephrosis, spontaneous intra-abdominal hemorrhage or even as recurrence of the hematologic disease for which splenectomy was performed⁷. Similarly, SFGs' rarely cause scrotal pain. In such a case, the onset of pain is in association to the involvement of ectopic splenic tissue by malaria, leukemia, infectious mononucleosis, traumatic rupture and mumps¹. Of acute onset painful scrotal lump originating from the testicle, the most important is secondary to testicular torsion.

Given the high suspicion rate of testicular masses, most SFGs' are incidentally diagnosed as asymptomatic masses while exploring inguinal region and scrotum for some other reasons¹⁰. They usually presented as a painless soft scrotal mass and/or inguinoscrotal swelling and therefore are misdiagnosed as cryptorchidism, hernia, hydrocele epididymitis, orchitis, hemangioma, hematoma or testicular cancer¹⁻³. Differential diagnosis from malignancies is a great concern for abdominal, thoracic subcutaneous and scrotal locations of splenosis. The late can be easily explored by ultrasonography. However, the typical vascularized structure connect-

ing the spleen to the splenogonadal mass is not always present and/or visible¹¹. The use of the colour Doppler examination may enhance diagnostic accuracy¹¹. Regarding abdominal and thoracic splenosis, the diagnostic modality of choice today is noninvasive nuclear scintigraphy using Technitium-99 m heat-damaged erythrocytes or indium-111 labeled platelets. However, recent novel imaging modalities using ferumoxides in magnetic resonance imaging is thought to enhance diagnosis of splenosis¹².

Asymptomatic splenosis is usually not managed, while symptomatic splenosis is treated surgically. In our cases both patients were presented with scrotal pain without demonstrating preoperatively a diagnosis of splenosis.

Conclusions

Splenogonadal fusion is a rare anomaly usually diagnosed upon pathologic examination of the removed tissue. The scarceness of reports in the literature underlines the rarity of this entity. 

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Η σπληνογοναδική σύντηξη είναι μια σπάνια ανωμαλία που συνίσταται σε μια μη φυσιολογική σύνδεση μεταξύ σπληνικού ιστού και των γονάδων ή παραγώγων του μεσόνεφρου. Η κατάσταση αυτή είναι κυρίως συγγενούς αιτιολογίας, ωστόσο σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις μπορεί να είναι επίκτητη. Όντας ασυμπτωματική συνήθως παρουσιάζεται ως μια ανώδυνη οσχέου μάζας σε παιδιά, εφήβους ή άνδρες κάτω των 25 ετών. Στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις, η διάγνωση τίθεται στην παθολογική εξέταση του αφαιρεθέντος ιστού. Ο μικρός αριθμός βιβλιογραφικών αναφορών υπογραμμίζει τη σπανιότητα αυτής της οντότητας. Εδώ αναφέρουμε δύο περιπτώσεις σπληνογοναδική σύντηξης που βρέθηκαν σε έναν 19χρονο και ένα 58 χρονού άνδρα που παρουσιάστηκαν με επώδυνο όσχεο.



**Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού**
**υδροκήλη, σπλήνας,
σπληνογοναδική σύντηξη,
όρχις, συστροφή**

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CASE REPORT

Epididymal leiomyoma

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Abstract

A 68-year-old patient presented at the urology department due to the aggravation of a scrotal enlargement. The clinical examination revealed an induration of the right testis and oedema in its lower pole and in the right epididymal tail. The ultrasonographic imaging of the scrotum showed an oval-shaped, non-homogeneous mass, 3 cm in diameter, with localised necrotic areas. Our patient underwent an excision of the lesion. Visually, the histopathological examination revealed a whitish tumour of about 4 cm in diameter, with a solid elastic composition, while microscopy showed a tumour consisting of smooth muscle fibres (leiomyoma). Leiomyomas are benign neoplasms that can originate from any structure or organ containing smooth muscle fibres. Most urogenital system leiomyomas are identified in the renal capsule, but they have also been reported in the epididymis, the spermatic cord and the fibrous layer. Leiomyomas are a very rare form of neoplasm. It is very difficult to set a precise preoperative diagnosis, so the patient is often subjected to surgery to investigate the tumour.



Key words

scrotal enlargement;
leiomyoma; smooth
muscle fibres; benign
neoplasm



Platanas M, Solinis I, Panaretos G, Stavroulakis E. Epididymal leiomyoma. *Hellenic Urology* 2017, 29 (1):68-71

A 68-year-old patient presented at the urology department due to the aggravation of a scrotal enlargement. He had noticed this enlargement himself approximately two years ago; it was painless, presented gradual growth, and was occasionally accompanied by mild discomfort in the ipsilateral inguinal area. The patient's medical history was clear.

The clinical examination revealed an induration of the right testis and oedema in its lower pole and in the right epididymal tail. The haematological and biochemical laboratory testing showed no abnormal findings. B-chorionic gonadotropin, a-foetoprotein and LDH were negative.

The ultrasonographic imaging of the scrotum showed an oval-shaped, non-homogeneous mass, 3 cm in diameter, with localised necrotic areas in the lower pole of the right testis, a finding consistent with a possible neoplasm in the epididymal tail (**Figure 1**). The ultrasound also revealed the presence of an ipsilateral hydrocele. Our patient underwent an excision of the lesion in the right epididymis.

Visually, the histopathological examination revealed a whitish tumour of about 4 cm in diameter, with a solid elastic composition (**Figure 2**), while microscopy showed a tumour consisting of smooth muscle fibres (leiomyoma).

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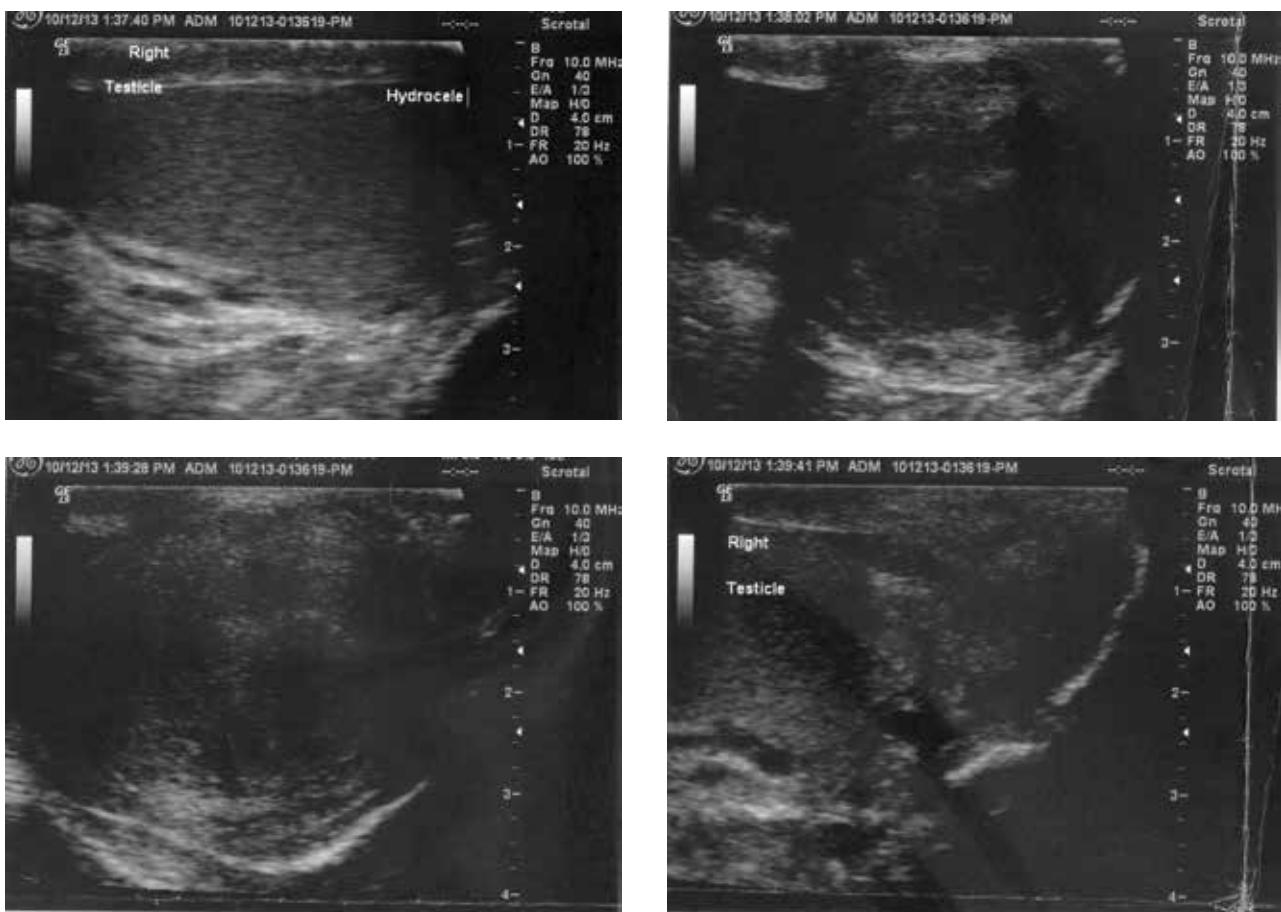


Figure 1: Ultrasonographic findings; in the lower pole of the right testis and in mass with this, we observe an oval-shaped, non-homogeneous mass, 3 cm in diameter, with localised necrotic areas. Presence of an ipsilateral hydrocele



Figure 2: Surgical preparation after removal of the scrotal mass

In a review of American and European literature , leiomyomas were the second most common neoplasm of the epididymis, accounting for 6% of its primary tumours.

Epididymal neoplasms are distinguished into benign and malignant, are very rare and - among them - benign

neoplasms are more frequently diagnosed. Leiomyomas are benign neoplasms that can originate from any structure or organ containing smooth muscle fibres. Most urogenital system leiomyomas are identified in the renal capsule, but they have also been reported in the epididymis,



the spermatic cord and the fibrous layer. Ultrasounds are the imaging test of choice for the evaluation of scrotal pathology, but the ultrasonographic emergence of leiomyomas from the fibrous layer is rarely reported.

Albert and Mininberg reported the first case of a testicular leiomyoma in 1972. The literature contains 17 past case reports. The most common age of presentation of leiomyomas is the 5th decade of life. These tumours have a particularly slow progression.

Conclusion

Leiomyomas are a very rare form of neoplasm. It is very difficult to set a precise preoperative diagnosis, so the patient is often subjected to surgery to investigate the tumour. Only a histological examination can lead to a certain diagnosis. 

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Ασθενής 68 ετών προσήλθε λόγω επιδείνωσης διόγκωσης οσχέου. Στην κλινική εξέταση διαπιστώθηκε σκληρία του δεξιού όρχεως και οίδημα στον κάτω πόλο αυτού κατά την ουρά της δεξιάς επιδιδυμίδας. Ο υπερηχογραφικός έλεγχος έδειξε ωοειδούς σχήματος και ανομοιογενούς σύστασης μόρφωμα διαμέτρου 3 εκ με κατά τόπους νεκρωτικές περιοχές. Ο ασθενής μας υποβλήθηκε σε εκτομή της βλάβης. Η ιστοπαθολογική εξέταση έδειξε μακροσκοπικά όγκο διαμέτρου περίπου 4 εκ. συμπαγούς ελαστικής σύστασης, λευκωπής χροιάς ενώ μικροσκοπικά όγκο αποτελούμενο από λείες μυικές ίνες (λειομύωμα). Τα λειομύωματα είναι καλοήθη νεοπλάσματα που μπορεί να προκύψουν από οποιαδήποτε δομή ή όργανο περιέχει λείες μυικές ίνες. Η πλειοψηφία των λειομυωμάτων έχει βρεθεί στην νεφρική κάψα, αλλά έχει επίσης αναφερθεί στην επιδιδυμίδα, στη σπερματική χορδή και στον ινώδη χιτώνα. Το λειομύωμα είναι ένα πολύ σπάνιο νεόπλασμα. Είναι πολύ δύσκολο να τεθεί ακριβής προεγχειρητική διάγνωση γι' αυτό και ο ασθενής οδηγείται συχνά σε χειρουργική επέμβαση προς διερεύνηση της μάζας.



**Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού**
διόγκωση οσχέου,
λειομύωμα, λείες μυικές
ίνες, καλόηθες νεόπλασμα

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και φαρμακολογικές
μελέτες.¹⁰

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΤΩΝ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ (S.P.C.) 1. ΕΜΠΟΡΙΚΗ ΟΝΟΜΑΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΟΥ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ LIBEPROSTA 80mg 2. ΠΟΙΟΤΙΚΗ & ΠΟΣΟΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΗ σε δραστικά συστατικά Κάθε επικαλυμμένο δόσιμο (434,9 mg) περιέχει: Serenoa repens lipidosterolic extract (1)¹ 80 mg (1). Έλαιο προερχόμενο από τους καρπούς της Serenoa repens (διεργασία με εξάνιο). 3. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΤΕΧΝΙΚΗ ΜΟΡΦΗ Επικαλυμμένα δισκία 4. ΚΛΙΝΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ 4.1. Θεραπευτικές ενδείξεις *Για τη συμπτωματική αντιμετώπιση δύσουσιοικών ενοχλήσεων επί καλογήθους υπερπλασίας του προστάτη* 4.2. Δοσολογία και τρόπος χορήγησης 4 δισκία την ημέρα: δύο φορές την ημέρα από δύο δισκία, την ώρα των γευμάτων, για 4-8 εβδομάδες 4.3. Αντενδείξεις Δεν υπάρχουν 4.4. Ιδιάρτερες προειδοποιήσεις και ιδιαίτερες προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση Το φάρμακο δεν μπορεί να υποκαταστήσει την προστατευτική και κατά τη διάρκεια της λήψής του ο ασθενής πρέπει να βρισκεται υπό συνεχή ιατρικό έλεγχο. 4.5. Αλληλεπιδράσεις με άλλα φάρμακα ή άλλες μορφές αλληλεπιδράσης Δεν έχει παρατηθεί καμία αλληλεπιδράση με τις θεραπευτικές κλάσεις που συνήθως αυχνηρηγούνται για αυτή την πάθηση (αντιβιοτικά, ουρικά αντιστηπτικά, αντιφλεγμονώδη). 4.6. Κύνηση και γαλούχια Δεν εφαρμοζεται 4.7. Επίδραση στην ικανότητα οδήγησης και χειρισμού μηχανημάτων Δεν υπάρχει 4.8. Ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες Η χρήση του φαρμάκου αρχικά μπορεί να προκαλέσει ναυτία. 4.9. Υπερδοσολογία Δεν έχουν ποτέ αναφερθεί περιστατικά. Μελέτες σε πειραματόζωα δεν έδειξαν ότι το ιδιοκεύασμα παρουσιάζει τοξικότητα. 6. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ 6.1. Κατάλογος με έκδοχα ΕΚΔΟΧΑ Magnesium carbonate, silicon dioxide colloidal, kaolin, wheat starch, methylated casein, polyvidone excipient, magnesium stearate, purified water* ΣΥΝΘΕΣΗ ΕΠΙΚΑΛΥΨΗΣ Hypromellose, hydroxypropylcellulose, polyethylene glycol 400, quinoline yellow lacquer E104, indigotine lacquer E132, titanium oxide, purified water*. * Διαλύτης που εξαραντίζεται κατά τη διάρκεια της παρασκευής 6.2. Ασυμβατότητες Δεν αναφέρονται 6.3. Διάρκεια ζωής 36 μήνες για το έτοιμο προϊόν 6.4. Ιδιάρτερες προφυλάξεις κατά τη φύλαξη του προϊόντος Φύλασσετε σε θερμοκρασία μικρότερη των 30°C. 6.5. Φύση και συστατικά του περιέκτη Κούτι που περιέχει 60 επικαλυμμένα δισκία σε 5 blisters των 12 δισκών 6.6. Οδηγίες χρήσης/χειρισμού Δεν αναφέρονται 6.7. Κάτοχος της άδειας κυκλοφορίας Δικαιούχος σήματος PIERRE FABRE MEDICAMENT, FRANCE Υπεύθυνος άδειας κυκλοφορίας PIERRE FABRE FARMAKA A.E. Λεωφ. Μεσογείου 350 153 41 Αγ. Παρασκευή - Απτική Τηλ.: 210 7234582 7. ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΆΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ 8554/6-2-2007 8. ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ ΆΔΕΙΑΣ: 1-7-1986 ΑΝΑΝΕΩΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΆΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ: 6-2-2007 9. ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ ΑΝΑΘΕΩΡΗΣΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΥ: 04/2010 Αιανή τηγάνι: LIBEPROSTA C.TAB 80MG/TAB BTx60: 7,75 €.

Χρηγεται με ιατρική συνταγή

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Βοηθήστε να γίνουν τα φάρμακα πιο ισοφαλή και
Αναφέρετε
ΟΛΕΣ τις ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες για
ΟΛΑ τα φάρμακα
Συμπληρώνοντας την «ΚΤΠΡΗΝΗ ΚΑΡΤΑ»

