

Pancreatic cancer - a rising problem. Surgical, oncological and endoscopic treatment, screening modalities for early detection

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Presentation

Nurses

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Pancreatic cancer remains Europe's deadliest major cancer with rising mortality, requiring earlier diagnosis through screening high-risk populations and development of new biomarkers to improve the current 4.6-month life expectancy at diagnosis.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker reported that pancreatic cancer causes 95,000 deaths annually in the EU, is the third leading cause of cancer death despite being only the seventh most common cancer, and mortality is predicted to rise 40% by 2035.
- Only 20% of patients diagnosed are candidates for surgery, the only curative option, and of those, only 20% benefit from the operation; five-year survival for asymptomatic patients was stated as 25%.
- New onset diabetes can signify early disease and should prompt clinical suspicion, according to the speaker.
- Multidetector CT scan is the most available and quick diagnostic tool, while endoscopic ultrasound is described as the rising star, enabling tissue sampling and therapeutic interventions such as biliary drainage and gastroenterostomy.
- The speaker is participating in the SHIELD project, a European initiative screening high-risk individuals and families; a blood-based diagnostic kit developed with Greek industry was reported to have over 90% sensitivity for pancreatic cancer and over 80-85% for early-stage disease.
- Pancreatic cancer research receives less than 2% of EU cancer research funding, and 64% of affected individuals are unaware of the disease, highlighting the need for increased funding and public awareness.

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