TIME COURSE OF COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY FINDINGS OF PANCREATIC DUCTAL ADENOCARCINOMA UNTIL DIAGNOSIS: A LARGE-SCALE MULTICENTER STUDY

Ryota Nakano

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A multicenter retrospective study of 320 pancreatic cancer patients with prior CT imaging found that focal parenchymal atrophy is the earliest detectable radiographic sign, appearing on average 2.7 years before diagnosis.

KEY POINTS

- Suspicious PDAC findings were detected on prior CT scans in 47.8% of cases, with focal parenchymal atrophy being the most common finding at 26.6%, followed by main pancreatic duct dilatation at 11.3%.
- Focal parenchymal atrophy appeared on average 2.7 years before diagnosis and main pancreatic duct dilatation 1.1 years before diagnosis, with focal atrophy followed by duct dilatation observed in 10 patients but never in reverse order.
- All cases of focal parenchymal atrophy progressed just prior to diagnosis and the atrophic area was occupied by tumor at diagnosis, with atrophy more frequently detected in the pancreatic body and tail.
- In control groups, chronic pancreatitis showed predominantly diffuse atrophy (96.7%) without significant progression of focal atrophy, while autoimmune pancreatitis showed only diffuse atrophy, suggesting morphology and progression distinguish malignant from benign atrophy.
- This study may inform surveillance strategies for early pancreatic cancer detection in patients with focal progressive pancreatic atrophy on imaging.

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