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# Oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer no more aggressive than classical variant

Carr AA, et al. *Thyroid*. 2018;doi:10.1089/thy.2017.0603.

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Oncocytic variant papillary thyroid cancer was not shown to confer a higher risk for recurrence when compared with classical papillary thyroid cancer in a retrospective medical record review published in *Thyroid*.



Azadeh A. Carr

“Oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer is a rare variant of papillary thyroid cancer that has previously been reported to be more aggressive than classical papillary thyroid cancer,” **Azadeh A. Carr, MD, FACS**, a former assistant professor of surgery at Medical College of Wisconsin who currently practices in Los Angeles, told *Endocrine Today*. “Based on our analysis there does not seem [to be] an increased risk of recurrence within the first 4 years.”

In their review, Carr and colleagues examined medical records of 519 adults diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer between 2009 and 2015 who underwent total thyroidectomy. Using the WHO definition of oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer, the researchers identified 21 occurrences in the cohort. Those 21 were compared on a 1:1 basis with patients with classical variant papillary thyroid cancer, matched for age, sex and TNM stage.

Once analysis was complete, the researchers found no histopathologic characteristic differences between the two forms of papillary thyroid cancer, and the occurrence of central neck disease was similar in patients with oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer (38%) compared with those with the classical disease (24%).

Disease recurrence was also part of the analysis. All patients returned for follow-up examinations every 3 to 12 months to measure serum thyroglobulin, and 18 patients were given radioactive iodine ablation treatment. Patients were considered to have persistent disease if their postoperative elevated nonstimulated thyroglobulin level was more than 2 ng/mL or if their stimulated thyroglobulin level was more than 10 ng/mL, according to the study.

Recurrence occurred in one patient in the oncocytic group. Operational recurrence was not present in the classical group, but there were indications of early recurrence among two patients based on thyroglobulin levels, the researchers wrote.

“This research is important as it may aid physicians treating oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer who have limited experience with it,” Carr said. “For patients with oncocytic papillary thyroid cancer, more aggressive treatment or follow-up is not necessary. Patients may be managed based on extent of disease and use of the American Thyroid Association risk stratification system as in classical papillary thyroid cancer.” –  
*by Phil Neuffer*

**Disclosures:** The authors report no relevant financial disclosures.



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