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Title: Prognostic relevance of histological subtypes in lung cancer – Survival in frequent and rare entities

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Body: Introduction: During the last years molecular alterations as well as targeted therapies have gained the focus of interest in lung cancer care. However, knowledge about rare lung cancer entities remains limited. Aims: This study evaluated the stage-dependent significance of histology on survival in lung cancer patients. Methods: All patients with a primary diagnosis of lung cancer between 01/2000 and 12/2011 were prospectively recorded within our tumour registry and retrospectively evaluated with regard to histology, stage and survival. Results: A total of 7,351 patients were identified: 4,690 men (63.8%) and 2,661 women (36.2%). Mean age was 65.2 yrs. Stage I, II, III, IV, and unknown was present in 16.7%, 8.4%, 32.6%, 39.6%, and 2.7%, respectively. Histological subtyping revealed: adeno 39.3%, squamous 28.1%, adenosquamous 0.4%, large cell with (1.8%) and w/o (2.4%) neuroendocrine diff., sarcomatoid 0.8%, salivary gland 0.1%%, NSCLC NOS 5.1%, SCLC 13.4%, combined SCLC 0.9%, neuroendocrine NOS 1.1%, undiff. carcinoma 6.7%. Stage-dependent overall survival showed a high variance for the different histological subtypes. For example, sarcomatoid carcinoma in stage IV had a poorer OS compared to all other entities (p=0.003).

Conclusion: Stratifying lung cancer by histology demonstrated poorer OS for rare subgroups. Insufficient evidence and absent treatment standards in these entities might contribute to these findings.