

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2012

Abstract Number: 3744

Publication Number: P4192

Abstract Group: 11.1. Lung Cancer

Keyword 1: Lung cancer / Oncology **Keyword 2:** No keyword **Keyword 3:** No keyword

Title: A proposal in small cell lung cancer staging according to TNM system

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Body: Background: Many pts with limited disease [LD] behave similarly to those with extensive disease [ED] from the prognostic point of view. On the other hand, a proportion of pts with ED SCLC behave similarly to those with LD. Moreover, the 7th (IASLC) TNM classification has not been evaluated with recent, large scale studies in SCLC. Patients and Methods: In this retrospective analysis 764 pts with proven SCLC were included managed with the same therapeutic protocols based on platinum analogues. Of these pts, 278 (36.4%) had LD, while 486 (63.6%) had ED. This classification was based on the following investigations: chest radiography, computed tomography of chest, abdomen and brain, fiberoptic bronchoscopy, isotope bone scan, sputum cytology and haematological and biochemical profile. We also grouped the pts according to new TNM classification (seventh edition). Results: A statistically significant difference was found in survival among the LD SCLC pts with (IA + IB), (IIA + IIB + IIIA) and IIIB stage ($p < 0.001$). Similarly, we found a statistically significant difference in survival in ED SCLC pts with (IIA + IIB + IIIA), IIIB and IV stage ($p < 0.001$).

Disease Stage	Number of patients	Median survival (days)	95% CI
Stage IA+ IB	40	512	419.029 – 604.971
Stage IIA + IIB + IIIA	211	348	296.630 – 399.370
Stage IIIB	136	277	214.959 – 339.041
Stage IV	377	236	220.387 – 251.613
Total	764	286	270.474 – 301.526

Survival according to the stage of the disease

Conclusions: A new classification of SCLC can be proposed which includes four stages based on TNM

classification of NSCLC. [(Stage IA+IB), (Stage IIA+IIB+IIIA), (Stage IIIB) and (Stage IV)].