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Qualitative outcome after surgical treatment of patients with spinal bone metastases a prospective study

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Study Design: This prospective cohort study describes quality of life of a single center cohort of patients who were surgically treated for spinal bone metastases.

Objective: To describe the quality of life preoperatively and at follow-up, assessed with the EQ-5D.

Summary of Background Data: The role of surgery in the treatment of spinal bone metastasis is controversial. Many papers describe neurological outcome and survival after surgical treatment of spinal bone metastases. The quality of life of these patients, however, is rarely investigated.

Methods: Prospective cohort study. Quality of life was assessed using the EQ-5D.

Results: Of 41 patients included, sixteen (53% of survivors) had complete data at their first follow-up (median 2.0 months). Eleven patients (27%) died within 3 months after surgery. The overall median survival was 5.6 months. Patient mobility was improved directly after surgery, 11 patients were no longer confined to a wheelchair or bed-ridden. Karnofsky performance status, the Frankel score, urinary sphincter control and pain intensity did not change significantly compared with the preoperative scores. Fifteen patients completed EQ-5D questionnaires both preoperatively as well as at first follow-up. The mean preoperative EQ-5D score for this subgroup was 0.69 ± 0.08 ; the mean EQ-5D score at follow-up was 0.69 ± 0.07 (p=0.62).

Conclusions: The survival of the majority of our cohort was limited (median 5.6 months), which reflects the prognosis ofthese often terminally-ill patients. In this respect, more emphasis on quality of life in patients withspinal bone metastases is warranted. The EQ-5D scores remained equal comparing pre-operative with follow-up data in those patients with complete follow up. This could either mean that the quality of life did not alter or that EQ-5D is not the best assessment for this patient category.