

• 临床研究 •

优化淋巴结比率预测淋巴结转移阳性胃癌患者预后研究

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[摘要] 目的: 将淋巴结比率(lymph node ratio, LNR)与中心淋巴结(central lymph node, CnLN)转移结合, 构建优化淋巴结比率(modified lymph node ratio, mLNR), 并探究该指标对胃癌患者预后的影响。方法: 卡方检验分析对比CnLN有无转移两组胃癌患者组间差异, Cox回归分析影响胃癌患者生存的因素, 构建受试者工作特征(receiver operating characteristic, ROC)曲线以确定LNR高低分类截断值, 绘制Kaplan-Meier曲线可视化分析胃癌患者生存情况, 构建列线图以预测胃癌患者生存预后。结果: 胃切除方式($P=0.042$)、肿瘤大小($P=0.043$)、分化程度($P=0.001$)、脉管侵犯($P < 0.001$)、神经侵犯($P < 0.001$)、T分期($P=0.001$)、N分期($P < 0.001$)、癌胚抗原(carcinoembryonic antigen, CEA) ($P=0.002$)及糖类抗原199(carbohydrate antigen199, CA199) ($P=0.026$)在CnLN有无转移两组间差异有统计学意义; LNR及CnLN均能很好区分胃癌患者生存情况, 但LNR的区分效力显著强于CnLN。此外mLNR能够很好地预测胃癌患者生存, 是影响胃癌患者生存的独立危险因素。结论: 利用CnLN构建的mLNR是影响胃癌患者生存的独立危险因素, 有望作为胃癌患者预后判别的新指标。

[关键词] 胃癌; 淋巴结比率; 中心淋巴结; 列线图

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Prediction of prognosis in patients with node-positive gastric cancer by modified lymph node ratio

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[Abstract] **Objective:** To construct a modified lymph node ratio (mLNR) by combining the lymph node ratio (LNR) with central lymph node (CnLN) metastasis, and to investigate the impact of this indicator on the prognosis of gastric cancer patients. **Methods:** Chi-square analysis was performed to compare the differences between groups of gastric cancer patients with and without CnLN metastasis. Cox regression analysis was performed to identify factors affecting the survival of gastric cancer patients, receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve was constructed to determine the cut-off value of LNR classification. Kaplan-Meier curve was drawn to visualize the survival of gastric cancer patients, and a nomogram was constructed to predict the survival prognosis of gastric cancer patients. **Results:** Type of gastrectomy ($P=0.042$), tumor size ($P=0.043$), degree of differentiation ($P=0.001$), vascular invasion ($P < 0.001$), neural invasion ($P < 0.001$), T stage ($P=0.001$), N stage ($P < 0.001$), carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) ($P=0.002$), and carbohydrate antigen 199 (CA199) ($P=0.026$) were significantly different between the two groups. Both LNR and CnLNs were able to distinguish the survival of gastric cancer patients, but the distinguishing power of LNR was significantly stronger than that of CnLN. In addition, mLNR could effectively predict the survival of patients with gastric cancer and was identified as an independent risk factor affecting their survival. **Conclusion:** mLNR, constructed using CnLN, is an independent risk factor affecting the survival of gastric cancer patients and has the potential to serve as a new indicator for prognosis discrimination in gastric cancer patients.

[Key words] gastric cancer; lymph node ratio; central lymph node; nomogram

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胃癌是世界范围内发病率及死亡率较高的癌症,适当的手术方式及充分的淋巴结清扫一直被强调^[1]。然而,传统美国癌症联合委员会(American Joint Committee on Cancer, AJCC)胃癌N分期会随淋巴结检出数目而改变,即不充分的淋巴结清扫会导致分期判断不准确^[2],具有局限性。因此,近年来学者提出淋巴结比率(lymph node ratio, LNR),即阳性淋巴结与检出淋巴结总数的比值作为生存预测的指标^[3],但LNR仅注重淋巴结的数目。Ikoma等^[4]研究提出中心淋巴结(central lymph node, CnLN)的概念,将肝总动脉、腹腔干、脾动脉近端淋巴结(第8、9、11p组淋巴结)定义为“中心淋巴结”,认为其转移对患者生存有不良影响,并在随后的另一项报道中被证实^[5]。这表明淋巴结转移位置对胃癌患者预后同样重要。因此,本研究将LNR结合CnLN,纳入淋巴结转移数目及转移位置对胃癌患者预后的影响,构建优化淋巴结比率(modified lymph node ratio, mLNR),并探究此指标对患者预后判断的可行性。

1 对象和方法

1.1 对象

纳入2016—2018年南京医科大学第一附属医院胃肿瘤中心行胃癌手术患者,经筛选后最终分析其中淋巴结转移阳性患者,共计655例。纳入标准:有明确病理诊断且接受D2淋巴结清扫胃切除术的胃癌患者;排除标准:①已接受术前治疗;②姑息手术及切缘阳性;③非腺癌;④有远处转移;⑤残胃切除术及多病灶;⑥术后生存时间<1个月;⑦淋巴结检出数<16个[中国临床肿瘤学会(Chinese Society of Clinical Oncology, CSCO)推荐淋巴结检出数≥16个以获得更准确的分期]^[6];⑧数据不足;⑨淋巴结转移阴性。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 资料收集

收集患者信息包括性别、年龄、是否接受术前治疗、手术方式、肿瘤位置、大小、组织学类型、分化、脉管侵犯、神经侵犯、是否远处转移、送检淋巴结数、转移淋巴结数、淋巴结分组、T分期、N分期、癌胚抗原(carcinoembryonic antigen, CEA)、甲胎蛋白(alpha-fetoprotein, AFP)及糖类抗原199(carbohydrate antigen 199, CA199)水平。病理分期依据AJCC提出的TNM分期标准。组织学类型及分化程度依据世界卫生组织分类标准。CEA≤5 ng/mL为正常,反之升高;AFP≤7 ng/mL为正常,否则为升高;CA199≤

30 U/mL为正常,否则为升高。

1.2.2 分组方式

患者采取3种分类方式分组:①根据CnLN转移状况将患者分为中心淋巴结转移阳性(CnLN+)组及中心淋巴结转移阴性(CnLN-)组。②根据LNR截断值将患者分为高LNR组及低LNR组。③将LNR高低及CnLN转移状况结合将患者分为4组:低LNR无CnLN转移组(L LNR CnLN-),低LNR有CnLN转移组(L LNR CnLN+),高LNR无CnLN转移组(H LNR CnLN-),高LNR有CnLN转移组(H LNR CnLN+)。

1.2.3 患者随访

随访方式主要通过门诊及电话进行,其中53例失访,随访率为91.9%,末次随访日期为2023年3月,中位生存时间为51个月。

1.3 统计学方法

使用SPSS软件(Version 26.0)、R软件(Version 4.4.2)进行统计分析。组间比较采用卡方检验;采用受试者工作特征(receiver operating characteristic, ROC)曲线分析LNR截断值,通过约登指数得出最佳分类阈值;Kaplan-Meier曲线用于比较患者组间生存差异;将单因素分析有统计学意义的指标纳入多因素Cox回归模型;并用R软件根据多因素Cox回归结果构建列线图。通过ROC曲线计算曲线下面积(area under curve, AUC),绘制校正曲线验证列线图的预测效果。 $P < 0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 患者基本信息

首先探究CnLN+组与CnLN-组患者的组间差异。655例患者中,CnLN+组285例,CnLN-组370例。通过卡方分析发现胃切除方式($P=0.042$)、肿瘤大小($P=0.043$)、分化程度($P=0.001$)、脉管侵犯($P < 0.001$)、神经侵犯($P < 0.001$)、T分期($P=0.001$)、N分期($P < 0.001$)、CEA($P=0.002$)及CA199($P=0.026$)在两组间差异有统计学意义(表1)。

2.2 LNR高低分类及LNR结合CnLN区分淋巴结转移阳性胃癌患者预后

通过绘制ROC曲线,计算约登指数得出LNR高低分组截断值为0.302, AUC=0.695,灵敏度45.3%,特异度83.1%(图1A)。依据此数值将LNR分为高LNR组及低LNR组。两组患者生存差异有统计学意义($P < 0.001$,图1B)。与此同时,对于CnLN+组及CnLN-组,两组患者间生存差异同样有统计学意

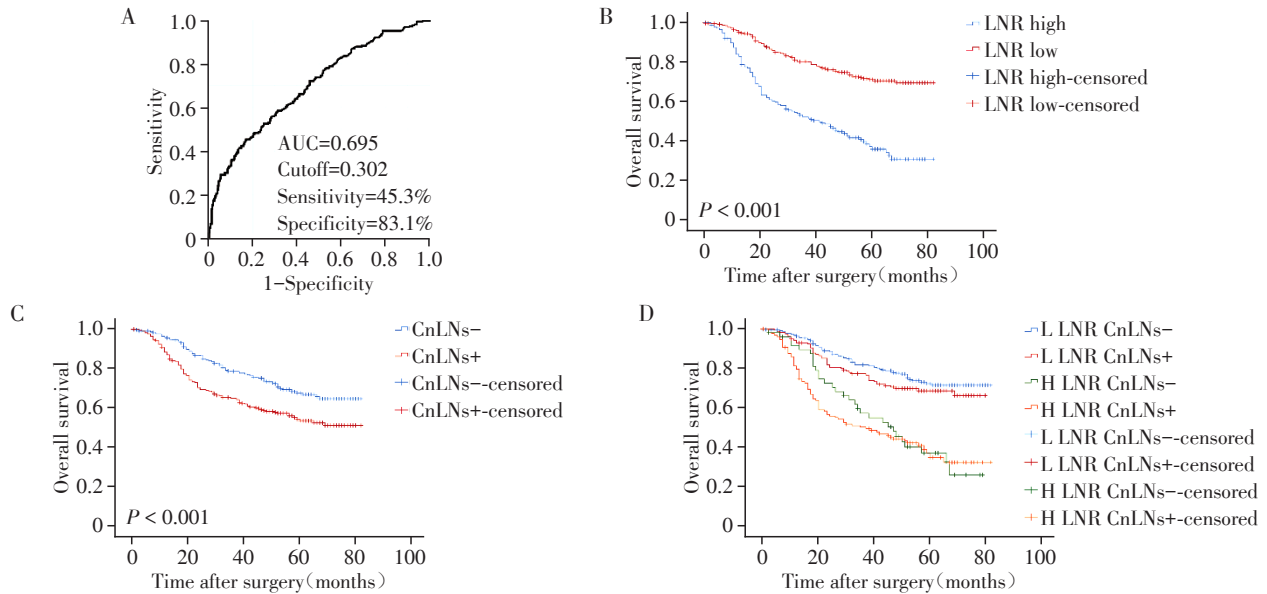
表1 CnLN转移与未转移组患者的基本资料比较

Table 1 Comparison of basic characteristics between patients with and without CnLN metastasis [n(%)]

Characteristic	CnLN+	CnLN-	χ^2	<i>P</i>
Age			2.806	0.094
<65 years	143(50.18)	210(56.76)		
≥65 years	142(49.82)	160(43.24)		
Sex			0.472	0.492
Female	74(25.96)	105(28.38)		
Male	211(74.04)	265(71.62)		
Gastrectomy			6.353	0.042
Total	167(58.60)	181(48.92)		
Proximal	1(0.35)	3(0.81)		
Distal	117(41.05)	186(50.27)		
Tumor site			0.756	0.685
U	105(36.84)	127(34.32)		
M	48(16.84)	59(15.95)		
L	132(46.32)	184(49.73)		
Tumor size			4.101	0.043
<4 cm	98(34.39)	156(42.16)		
≥4 cm	187(65.61)	214(57.84)		
Differentiation			10.852	0.001
Moderate	12(4.21)	42(11.35)		
Poor	273(95.79)	328(88.65)		
Vascular invasion			32.346	<0.001
Absent	77(27.02)	181(48.92)		
Present	208(72.98)	189(51.08)		
Neural invasion			20.373	<0.001
Absent	102(35.79)	198(53.51)		
Present	183(64.21)	172(46.49)		
T stage			15.880	0.001
T1	16(5.61)	53(14.33)		
T2	23(8.07)	41(11.08)		
T3	135(47.37)	153(41.35)		
T4	111(38.95)	123(33.24)		
N stage			152.732	<0.001
N1	14(4.91)	140(37.84)		
N2	59(20.70)	121(32.70)		
N3a	109(38.25)	69(18.65)		
N3b	103(36.14)	40(10.81)		
CEA			9.179	0.002
Normal	205(71.93)	303(81.89)		
Elevated	80(28.07)	67(18.11)		
AFP			1.256	0.262
Normal	271(95.09)	344(92.97)		
Elevated	14(4.91)	26(7.03)		
CA199			4.990	0.026
Normal	212(74.39)	302(81.62)		
Elevated	73(25.61)	68(18.38)		

义($P < 0.001$, 图1C)。接下来,将LNR高低及中心淋巴结转移状况结合将患者分为4组:L LNR CnLN-、L LNR CnLN+、H LNR CnLN-、H LNR CnLN+, 4组患者间除L LNR CnLN-与L LNR CnLN+, H LNR CnLN-

与H LNR CnLN+生存无显著差异外,其余分组间生存差异显著(图1D)。以上结果表明,LNR与CnLN均有较好地区分胃癌患者生存的能力;但将两者结合后,CnLN的区分效果不如LNR。



A: ROC curve for LNR. B: Kaplan-Meier curve for LNR high and LNR low group. C: Kaplan-Meier curve for CnLN- and CnLN+ group. D: Kaplan-Meier curve for L LNR CnLN-, L LNR CnLN+, H LNR CnLN- and H LNR CnLN+ group.

图1 LNR截断值ROC曲线及LNR、CnLN、LNR联合CnLN分组下Kaplan-Meier曲线

Figure 1 ROC curve of LNR cutoff value and Kaplan-Meier curve under LNR, CnLN, and LNR combined with CnLN grouping

2.3 影响淋巴结转移阳性胃癌患者的生存因素分析

虽然在LNR结合CnLN分类中,CnLN对胃癌患者生存区分能力弱于LNR,但考虑到LNR仅纳入了淋巴结转移数量,CnLN可对淋巴结转移位置进行补充,将LNR结合CnLN构建指标mLNR。mLNR1: L LNR CnLN-; mLNR2: L LNR CnLN+; mLNR3: H LNR CnLN-; mLNR4: H LNR CnLN+。并将此指标纳入胃癌淋巴结转移阳性患者Cox回归单因素及多因素分析。根据多因素分析结果显示,年龄($P < 0.001$)、T分期($P < 0.001$)、CEA($P=0.018$)及mLNR($P < 0.001$)4个指标为影响胃癌淋巴结转移阳性患者生存的独立危险因素(表2)。

2.4 列线图建立及模型验证

将多因素回归分析得到的4个独立危险因素,即年龄、T分期、CEA及mLNR纳入生存预测模型构建列线图,可视化分析患者预后情况(图2)。最后,为了评估模型的预测效能,建立校正曲线及ROC曲线,结果显示模型预测效果良好(1、3、5年AUC分别为0.782、0.740、0.771,图3)。

3 讨论

近年来,为了更清晰地定位淋巴结,出现了使用如吲哚青绿指示剂(indocyanine green tracer, ICG)、碳纳米颗粒悬浮注射液(carbon nanoparticle suspension injection, CNSI)等方法指示淋巴结的转移状况,以期获得更多的淋巴结检出率^[7-8]。然而,淋巴结检出数目常常受限于术者的技术、指示材料难以获得等客观因素,因此淋巴结分期方式的探索至关重要。目前淋巴结分期方式主要有LNR^[9]、阳性淋巴结对数比(log odds of positive lymph nodes, LODDS)等^[10]。随着研究进一步深入,学者发现第8p组^[11]、12a组^[12]淋巴结转移提示胃癌患者预后不良,这强调了淋巴结转移位置的重要性。目前尚缺少将淋巴结数目与淋巴结转移位置结合的指标,因此本研究提出mLNR,将淋巴结数目及位置纳入考虑,以期成为衡量患者预后的新方式。

LNR作为热点预后指标一直被广泛关注。研究显示,对于远端胃切除患者,更多的淋巴结检出数可检出更多的转移淋巴结,而LNR则与检出淋巴结

表2 影响淋巴结转移阳性胃癌患者生存单因素及多因素分析

Table 2 Univariate and multivariate analysis of factors affecting survival in gastric cancer patients with positive lymph node metastasis

Characteristic	Univariate analysis			Multivariate analysis		
	HR	95%CI	P	HR	95%CI	P
Age						
<65 years	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
≥65 years	1.868	1.442-2.419	<0.001	1.759	1.353-2.289	<0.001
Sex						
Female	Reference	-	-	-	-	-
Male	1.006	0.754-1.342	0.967	-	-	-
Gastrectomy						
Total	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
Others	0.650	0.501-0.845	0.001	0.905	0.689-1.189	0.473
Tumor site						
U	Reference	-	-	-	-	-
M	0.859	0.586-1.260	0.437	-	-	-
L	0.847	0.641-1.120	0.244	-	-	-
Tumor size						
<4 cm	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
≥4 cm	1.755	1.327-2.321	<0.001	1.142	0.852-1.532	0.373
Differentiation						
Moderate	Reference	-	-	-	-	-
Poor	1.502	0.890-2.535	0.127	-	-	-
Vascular invasion						
Absent	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
Present	1.526	1.161-2.006	0.002	1.077	0.806-1.438	0.618
Neural invasion						
Absent	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
Present	1.976	1.508-2.590	<0.001	1.216	0.906-1.631	0.193
T stage						
T1	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
T2	2.042	0.755-5.521	0.160	1.375	0.504-3.747	0.534
T3	4.850	2.128-11.056	<0.001	2.481	1.047-5.876	0.039
T4	8.426	3.707-19.149	<0.001	3.960	1.660-9.448	0.002
CEA						
Normal	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
Elevated	1.707	1.291-2.257	<0.001	1.415	1.062-1.885	0.018
AFP						
Normal	Reference	-	-	-	-	-
Elevated	1.341	0.807-2.228	0.258	-	-	-
CA199						
Normal	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
Elevated	1.762	1.329-2.336	<0.001	1.283	0.960-1.715	0.093
mLNR						
mLNR1	Reference	-	-	Reference	-	-
mLNR2	1.264	0.885-1.807	0.198	1.057	0.733-1.523	0.766
mLNR3	3.016	1.983-4.588	<0.001	2.378	1.538-3.676	<0.001
mLNR4	3.378	2.470-4.618	<0.001	2.484	1.792-3.443	<0.001

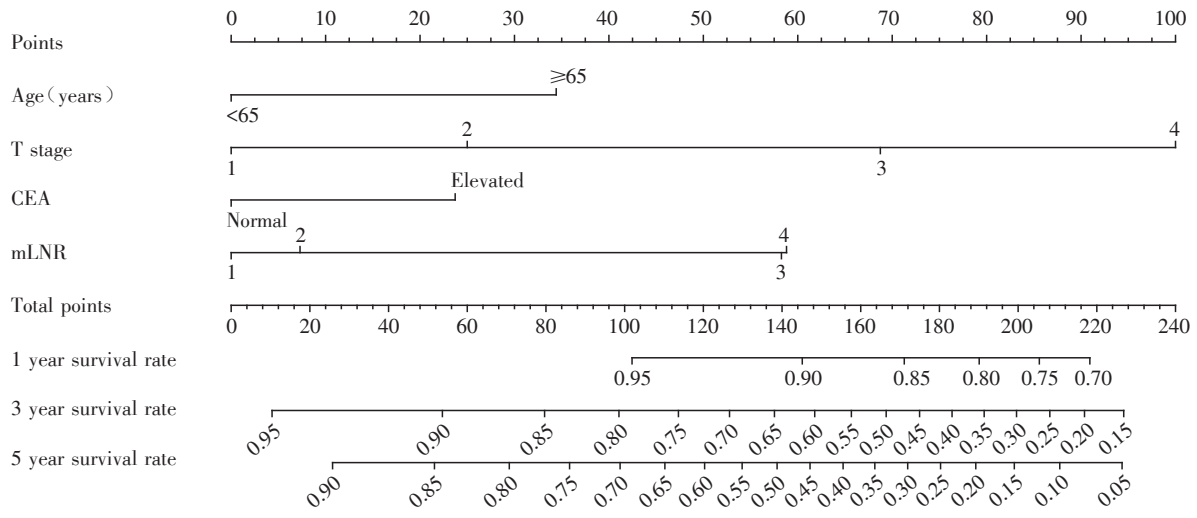


图2 淋巴结转移阳性胃癌患者预后预测列线图

Figure 2 Nomogram for survival prediction of gastric cancer patients with positive lymph node metastasis

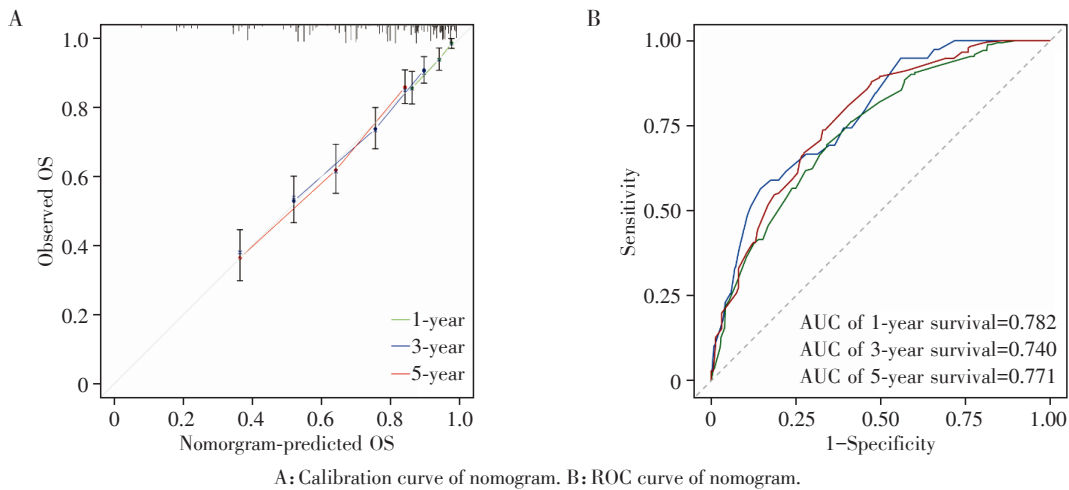


图3 列线图校正曲线及ROC曲线

Figure 3 Calibration curve and ROC curve of nomogram

数无关;并且还发现当LNR增长10%,胃癌患者5年生存率下降8.14%,即LNR与胃癌患者生存相关^[13]。另一项研究报道LNR能够很好地评估胃癌患者预后。在此项研究中,LNR的截断值为0.32,与本研究截断值0.302相近^[14],而本研究纳入更多患者,结论更具说服力。此外,Kano等^[15]发现对于病理II/III期胃癌患者,高LNR提示更差的预后。这说明,对于胃癌术后患者仍需进一步分层探究LNR的实际应用。

Ikoma等^[4]研究表明对于接受术前治疗的胃癌患者,CnLN转移能够提示预后情况。然而,该研究中CnLN转移阳性患者相对总患者比例少。与此不同,本研究结果显示CnLN转移阳性并非鲜有状况。另外,本研究表明CnLN转移状况能够很好地预测患者生存,CnLN转移阴性与阳性患者组间肿

瘤大小($P=0.043$)、分化程度($P=0.001$)、脉管侵犯($P < 0.001$)、T分期($P=0.001$)、N分期($P < 0.001$)均有显著差异,此发现与Lu等^[5]报道相似。

列线图因其能够可视化各因素对患者生存的影响,成为近年来胃癌患者预后模型的研究热点。已有相关研究报道列线图可用于预测早发胃癌预后^[16]、胃癌淋巴结转移^[17]、胃癌患者生存状况等^[18]。在肺癌^[19]、乳腺癌中也有应用^[20]。本研究根据多因素分析结果,利用年龄($P < 0.001$)、T分期($P < 0.001$)、CEA($P=0.018$)及mLNR($P < 0.001$)4个指标构建列线图,校正曲线及ROC曲线结果显示,模型具有很好的预测效力,表明mLNR有望作为预测胃癌淋巴结转移阳性患者的可靠指标。

然而,无论是LNR还是CnLN,其研究对象仅针

对淋巴结数量或位置。为了更好地评估胃癌患者预后,本研究创新性地将二者结合,将CnLN转移情况作为对LNR的补充,构建mLNR分期,并且证明mLNR为影响胃癌淋巴结转移阳性患者生存的独立危险因素,可作为预测预后的可靠指标。本研究存在局限性如下:①本研究为单中心研究,仍需纳入多中心样本验证;②样本量需要扩大,体现结论的普适性;③未进一步分层分析各组患者间的差异。

综上所述,LNR及CnLN均能评估胃癌淋巴结转移阳性患者生存情况;mLNR是影响患者生存的独立危险因素,且是预测患者预后的可靠指标;研究所构建的列线图模型具有可靠的预测效果。因此,mLNR有望成为改善原有N分期的新指标。

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Author's Contributions:

ZHANG Jianan participated in data collection, processing and manuscript writing; LI Fengyuan and LI Qingya contributed to data collection and article polishing; WANG Linjun, ZHANG Diancai, WANG Guoliang, YANG Li, XU Zekuan, and XU Hao performed the gastric cancer surgeries; XU Zekuan and XU Hao contributed to conceptualization and development of these ideas presented in this article.

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