



Transurethral resection for botryoid bladder rhabdomyosarcoma



Mitsuyuki Nakata^{a,*}, Tomoro Hishiki^b, Hideyuki Sakurai^c, Takeshi Saito^a, Keita Terui^a, Tetsuya Mitsunaga^d, Shugo Komatsu^a, Hidemasa Ochiai^e, Moeko Hino^f, Kumiko Ando^e, Koji Chikaraishi^f, Takahiro Aoki^f, Tomoko Okunushi^f, Sumie Honma^g, Kazunori Fugo^h, Hideo Yoshida^a

^a Department of Pediatric Surgery, Chiba University, Graduate School of Medicine, 1-8-1, Inohana, Chuo-ku, Chiba-shi, Chiba, 260-8670, Japan

^b Division of Surgical Oncology, National Center for Child Health and Development, 2-10-1 Okura, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, 157-8535, Japan

^c Proton Medical Research Center, University of Tsukuba, 1-1-1, Tennodai, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, 305-8575, Japan

^d Department of Pediatric Surgery, Chiba Children's Hospital, 579-1 Heta-cho, Midori-ku, Chiba, 266-0077, Japan

^e Department of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology, Chiba Children's Hospital, 579-1 Heta-cho, Midori-ku, Chiba, 266-0077, Japan

^f Department of Pediatrics, Chiba University, Graduate School of Medicine, 1-8-1, Inohana, Chuo-ku, Chiba-shi, Chiba, 260-8670, Japan

^g Department of Urology, Chiba Children's Hospital, 579-1 Heta-cho, Midori-ku, Chiba, 266-0077, Japan

^h Department of Pathology, Chiba University Hospital, 1-8-1, Inohana, Chuo-ku, Chiba-shi, Chiba, 260-8677, Japan

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ABSTRACT

The outcome of multimodal therapy for localized bladder rhabdomyosarcoma is quite good in terms of morbidity, and conservative surgery is generally recommended. However, in cases originating in the bladder neck, tumorectomy or partial cystectomy has adverse effects on bladder function. A 2-year-old girl underwent transurethral resection of a bladder tumor (TUR-BT), chemotherapy consisting of vincristine, actinomycin-D, and cyclophosphamide, and radiotherapy. She was in remission for 3 years when frequent urination became evident. Her bladder capacity and compliance were low; however, her urinary symptom was controlled using anticholinergic medication. Accordingly, TUR-BT could be an optional approach for bladder rhabdomyosarcoma.

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1. Introduction

Rhabdomyosarcoma is the most common pediatric soft tissue sarcoma. Approximately 10–15% of all rhabdomyosarcoma cases arise from the pelvic organs [1]. The tumor is often large and involves adjacent organs and vessels. Histologically, bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma is typically either embryonal or botryoid.

After chemotherapy, radical surgery is required; this is usually urinary reconstruction or diversion, except for tumors arising at the top of the bladder [2]. Recently, multimodal treatment with chemoradiotherapy and surgery has led to a good prognosis. Therefore, conservative surgery (subtotal/partial resection) is generally recommended [2]. Laparotomy is often used for bladder/prostate

rhabdomyosarcoma; however, transurethral resection of a bladder tumor (TUR-BT) can be applied to preserve the organ when the tumor is growing into the bladder, provided that the residual disease can be treated with chemoradiotherapy. Herein, we describe a patient with bladder rhabdomyosarcoma that was resected using TUR-BT.

2. Case report

A 23-month-old girl presented with macroscopic hematuria and a vulval mass. At admission, enhanced computed tomography (CT) indicated a solid mass measuring 32 × 30 × 26 mm that occupied the bladder (Fig. 1A and B) without metastasis. A biopsy was performed using cystoscopy and showed increased numbers of rhabdomyoblasts and polygonal-shaped cells with eosinophilic cytoplasm (Fig. 1G and H). She was diagnosed with botryoid embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma, group III, stage 2, and vincristine, actinomycin-D, and cyclophosphamide (VAC) therapy was administered [3]. The tumor shrank (Fig. 1C and D), and TUR-BT was performed after 8 weeks. The tumor was localized in the bladder

Abbreviations: TUR-BT, Transurethral resection of a bladder tumor; CT, Computed tomography; IRS, Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study; SIOP, International Society of Pediatric Oncology; MMT, Malignant Mesenchymal Tumors.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mitchinakachi@gmail.com (M. Nakata).

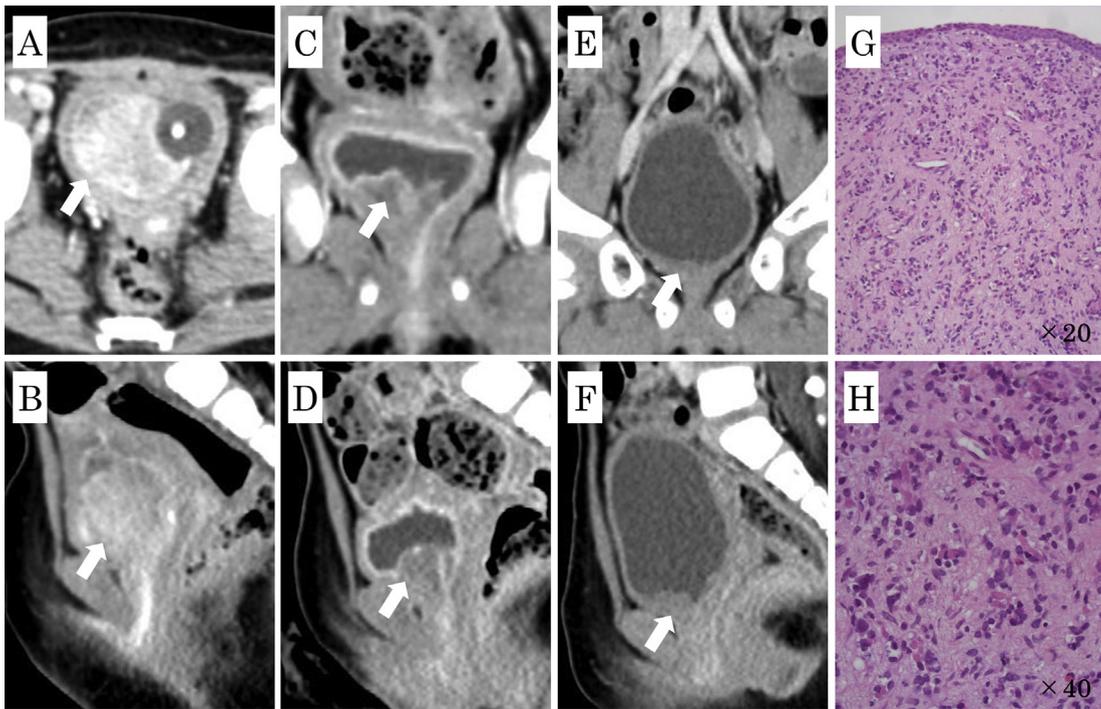


Fig. 1. Computed tomography and histopathological findings. A, B: An enhanced solid mass measuring $32 \times 30 \times 26$ mm occupying the bladder (white arrow). C, D: An enhanced mass remained in the bladder neck (white arrow). E, F: Wall thickening of the bladder neck after chemoradiotherapy (white arrow). G, H: Rhabdomyoblasts and polygonal-shaped cells with eosinophilic cytoplasm increased pathologically.

neck and was resected while checking with echo, except for the muscle layer of the bladder neck. After surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy was administered. The proton beam was used to irradiate the residual tumor site at 50.4 Gy (RBE: relative biological effectiveness) and the entire bladder was irradiated with 30.6 Gy (RBE). At the end of therapy, enhanced CT indicated that the bladder neck wall was still thickened (Fig. 1E and F). Therefore, an additional biopsy was transurethrally performed, which showed that this thickened lesion consisted of fibrotic tissue that did not contain viable cells. There has been no relapse of the tumor 3 years after the end of treatment.

After discharge, the patient developed persistent increased urinary frequency and transient urinary hemorrhage. Two years after therapy, voiding cystography indicated that the bladder capacity was 84 mL (56%) at 4 years of age (normal level 150 mL) (Fig. 2A) [4] and the bladder neck wall was irregular. A urodynamics study indicated an intravesical pressure of 16 cmH₂O at the maximum bladder volume of 83 mL (Fig. 2B). This resulted in a poorly compliant bladder. However, the symptom was controlled using anticholinergic medication and restriction of fluid intake.

3. Discussion

The appropriate treatment strategy for bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma is combined modality treatment with chemoradiotherapy and surgery. The prognosis of localized embryonal bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma is good [5], and conservative therapy improves patients' quality of life, as demonstrated by clinical trials [6]. However, organ preservation in the surgical process remains controversial. Conservative surgery includes tumor resection, partial prostatectomy, partial cystectomy, or both partial prostatectomy and cystectomy, in which the posterior urethra is spared. Radical surgery is typically performed with margin-free tumor resection with concordant removal of the bladder and the

posterior urethra, and is associated with lymph node dissection [7]. Filipas et al. stated that conservative surgery carries high risks of positive margins and tumor relapse, and that radical surgery and current techniques of continent urinary diversion are beneficial [2]. However, Alexander et al. showed no difference between conservative and radical surgery in terms of the 5-year overall and event-free survival of patients with bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcomas [8]. In the Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study (IRS) IV study, the overall survival rate of patients with nonmetastatic bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma was 82% (72/88). Fifteen of 88 patients needed urinary diversion [6]. In the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP) study, the overall 5-year survival rate of patients with nonmetastatic bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma was 73% [7]. In both studies, organ preservation surgery was used.

Cystoscopy for bladder rhabdomyosarcoma is usually performed only for biopsy or exploration, and not for definitive surgery, because the rhabdomyosarcoma arises from the muscle layer of the bladder. TUR-BT was performed for transitional cell carcinoma in children, as well as in adults [9,10]. Complications of this procedure include postoperative bleeding and perforation of the bladder wall. In particular, surgeons must be careful of excessive resection of tumors arising from the bladder wall. Although potentially carrying the risk of residual disease, TUR-BT may be sufficient for local control of bladder rhabdomyosarcoma, when patients are properly treated with postoperative radiotherapy.

It is speculated that the cause of incontinence after conservative surgical therapy for bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma is the origin of a tumor or tissue damage due to radiotherapy. For conservative surgery, radiotherapy with consideration of both curability and tissue damage mitigation is an important factor. Proton beams and brachytherapy have been reported to be useful methods for reducing tissue damage by radiation therapy. For bladder/prostate primary tumors, when there is a residual tumor, 50.4 Gy (RBE) of external irradiation is required; however,

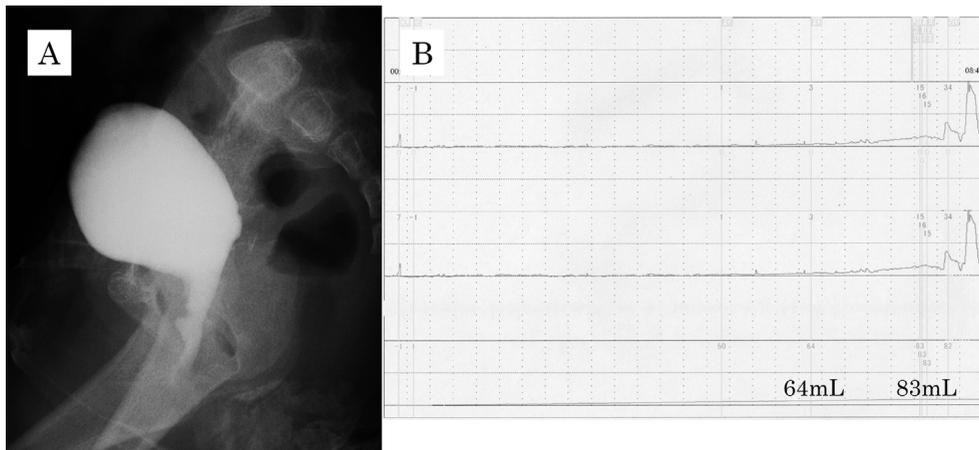


Fig. 2. Voiding cystography and urodynamics study. A: Voiding cystography indicated the bladder capacity was 84 mL (56%) (normal level 150 mL) and the bladder neck wall was irregular. B: A urodynamics study indicated intravesical pressure measured 16 cmH₂O at the maximum bladder volume of 83 mL.

compared with the X-ray irradiation in the external irradiation, the proton beam has the potential to reduce the exit dose to areas other than the target area. Cotter et al. compared the radiation doses in the pelvic tissues in proton beam therapy and Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy at the time of planning with consideration of radiation to bladder/prostate rhabdomyosarcoma cases; they showed the superiority of proton beams. In addition, 7 patients received treatment based on the IRS and survived [11].

Brachytherapy was also a method to reduce radiation complications. With this method, a high dose can be used at a short distance. Martelli et al. showed the result of brachytherapy to prostate and/or bladder neck rhabdomyosarcoma in combination with the MMT 89, 95, 98, RMS 2005 protocol. The survival rate was as high as 92% (24/26). However, the authors decided that brachytherapy was not suitable for tumors invading beyond the bladder triangle. Eighteen patients over the age of 4 years were normally continent [12]. Urinary function after treatment was also good; however, the indication for brachytherapy was limited and brachytherapy was not considered suitable for our case. Chargari et al. showed the result of brachytherapy to 100 patients with bladder neck and/or prostate rhabdomyosarcoma in combination with the IRS protocol. The 5-year disease-free and overall survival rates were 84%. Most survivors presented with only mild to moderate genitourinary sequelae and normal diurnal urinary continence [13].

The long-term prognosis of conservative therapy requires consideration of clinical symptoms and objective evaluation of urinary function.

In the IRS IV study, only 49.3% of patients who underwent bladder/prostate preservation had normal urinary function [6]. Urinary disorders included dribbling, enuresis, and incontinence. Factors affecting urinary disorders were tumor origin, radiation, cystitis, hemorrhagic cystitis, intraoperative nerve injury, and bladder atrophy. Organ-preserving surgery was structurally achieved. However, the bladder function was appropriately examined and voiding cystography and urodynamics studies are required in future studies.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we encountered a case of a bladder neck rhabdomyosarcoma that was successfully treated with TUR-BT. TUR-BT may be a conservative surgical option for bladder neck rhabdomyosarcomas that are growing intraluminally. Patients receiving organ-preserving surgery should undergo objective examinations

for urinary function, such as urodynamic studies and voiding cystography, and long-term follow-up is required. A large-scale study is necessary to obtain evidence of the safety and effectiveness of TUR-BT.

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