

Is routine histological examination of gall bladder specimens justifiable?

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ABSTRACT

Objective To assess the safety of confining histological examination to gall bladders with radiological and/or macroscopic features suggestive of cancer.

Design Retrospective study

Setting Department of Histopathology National Hospital of Sri Lanka

Method Analysis of all cholecystectomies performed at a tertiary care hospital during a one year period. Computerised histopathological reports and case notes were studied in detail.

Results Four hundred and seventy seven patients had undergone cholecystectomy for symptomatic gall stones. Four of these patients were found to have gall bladder cancer(GBC). In two of them the diagnosis had been suspected on pre-operative ultrasound scan. In the other two patients GBC was suspected at the time of surgery. GBC was found in 0.8% of specimens and it was suspected perioperatively in all these patients.

Interpretation A more selective approach to gall bladder histology is likely to result in a saving of processing time and processing costs without adversely affecting patient safety.