Thyroid cancer arises in 5% of patients referred from primary care to a high-resolution thyroid clinic

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Background and Objectives

- The finding of a thyroid nodule is a very common occurrence in clinical practice.
- Although most of thyroid nodules are benign, thyroid cancer occurs in 5–15% of thyroid nodules, depending on age, sex, radiation exposure history, family history, and other factors.
- A high-resolution thyroid nodule clinic may ease the management of thyroid nodules and improve thyroid cancer detection.
- In this study we aimed to evaluate the prevalence of thyroid cancer in patients with suspected thyroid nodule referred from primary care to a high-resolution thyroid clinic.

Material and methods

- Retrospective cohort study which included patients with suspected thyroid nodule referred from primary care to a high-resolution thyroid nodule clinic.
- Demographic and clinical characteristics were collected, all patients underwent thyroid ultrasound and subsequently, a fine needle aspiration (FNA) was performed if thyroid nodules were >1cm of diameter of if there was evidence of risk factors for thyroid carcinoma (in accordance with American Thyroid Association guidelines).

Baseline characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>n=785</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>50.1 ± 8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Females (%)</td>
<td>84.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thyroid function (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hypothyroidism</td>
<td>17.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Euthyroidism</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hyperthyroidism</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean nodule diameter (cm)</td>
<td>2 ± 1.15</td>
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</tbody>
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585 FNAs (74.5% out of all nodules) were performed

Nodules characteristics

- 91 Benign
- 44 malignant

135 nodules (23.2%) were referred to surgery (mainly because of nodule size or suspected malignancy)

5.6% malignancy in whole nodule cohort

Conclusion

- The prevalence of thyroid cancer in this cohort of patients from primary care is 5.6%.
- Thus, approximately 1 out of 20 thyroid nodules referred from primary care to a high-resolution thyroid clinic is proven to be malignant.