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Original article: General thoracic

Thymoma and Myasthenia Gravis: A Clinical Study of 1,089 Patients From Japan

Kazuya Kondo, MD, PhD*, Yasumasa Monden, MD, PhD

Department of Oncological and Regenerative Surgery, Institute of Health Biosciences, University of Tokushima Graduate School, Tokushima, Japan

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* Address reprint requests to Dr Kondo, Department of Oncological and Regenerative Surgery, Institute of Health Biosciences, University of Tokushima Graduate School, Kuramoto-cho, Tokushima 770-8503, Japan (E-mail: kondo@clin.med.tokushima-u.ac.jp).

BACKGROUND: The thymus or **thymoma** plays a role in the pathogenesis of myasthenia gravis (MG). Although previous studies have reported that the presence of MG in **thymoma** patients is an indicator of poor prognosis, recent reports have shown that the presence of MG no longer influences the prognosis or indicates a more favorable prognosis in **thymoma** patients.

METHODS: To clarify the difference in tumor behavior between **thymoma** with MG and that without MG, we compiled 1,089 **thymomas** treated between 1990 and 1994 from 115 institutes in Japan and analyzed the clinical characteristics of **thymoma** with MG compared with **thymoma** without MG.

RESULTS: MG was associated with 270 cases (24.8%) of **thymoma**. The total resection cases comprised 94.6% and 91.4%, and the recurrent cases comprised 6.4% and 8.3% in the groups with and without MG, respectively. The 5-year survival rates for **thymoma** with and without MG in stage III were 85.7% and 89.3%, respectively; and those in stage IV were 85.1% and 63.9%, respectively. The prognosis of **thymoma** with MG in stage IV tended to be better than that of **thymoma** without MG ($p = 0.0523$). The **thymoma** with MG group had fewer stage IVb **thymomas** than did the **thymoma** without MG group (15% vs 34%). The resectability rate in the **thymoma** with MG group was higher than that in the **thymoma** without MG group (60% vs 38%).

CONCLUSIONS: **Thymoma** with MG is equally or less malignant than that without MG. The infrequency of stage IVb **thymomas** and the high respectability rate had an influence on the favorable prognosis of stage IV **thymoma** with MG.

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