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Endoscopic range of Austrian surgical units – data of an anonymized survey among the 115 Austrian surgical units

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Introduction: The synergy of endoscopy and surgery becomes more and more important due to multimodal therapeutic approaches and the knowledge about the absolute necessity of a stage dependent tumor treatment. On the other hand, it becomes increasingly difficult to offer both endoscopy and surgery in one single department because of lacking personal and temporal resources.

Methods: A single-sided questionnaire is sent to all Austrian surgical units (n=115). In total seven questions must be answered. Four issues deal particularly with endosonography. After delivery an electronically mailed reminder asks for participation in the survey. The completed questionnaires are sent back to our study group by a prepaid envelope.

Results: The rate of return added up to 63.5% (n=73) and splitted in 67% standard hospitals, 25% specialized hospitals and 8% central hospitals. 94.5% of the Austrian surgical units offer gastroscopies and colonoscopies, but only 8.2% surgical departments (n=6) perform endosonographical examinations of the upper GI-tract. Furthermore, the survey showed that 89% (n=65) respectively 52% (n=38) of the Austrian surgical units do gastric and pancreatic oncological resections.

Conclusion: The results of our survey make clear that a rather high proportion of Austrian surgical departments run endoscopic units. On the other hand, specialized endoscopic techniques like endosonography are very uncommon in the surgical range of services. Because of multiple intersections between endoscopy and surgery as well in diagnostics as in treatment we support an intensified involvement of the Austrian Surgical Society concerning the implementation of specialized endoscopic procedures. The divergence of operative range and endosonographic possibilities is striking. For ensuring a tumor treatment adequate to its stage endosonography is obligatory and must be strongly demanded in the pretherapeutic diagnostic setting.

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