Can Vessel Invasion Change the TNM Stage in Non-small Cell Lung Cancer? A Reply

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TO THE EDITORS:

We greatly appreciate the comments from Dr. Zhang and colleagues (<http://www.surgonc.org/news-publications/annals-of-surgical-oncology/letters-to-the-editor/can-vessel-invasion-change-the-tnm-stage-in-nsccl->) regarding our article.¹ In our study, lymphatic vessel invasion (LVI) is an independent poor prognostic factor in patients with pathologic stage IA adenocarcinoma; therefore, we believe that both T1a and T1b patients with LVI might benefit from adjuvant chemotherapy. The possibility that not only T1bN0M0 adenocarcinoma but also T1a with LVI will have a beneficial effect from adjuvant therapy was thus suggested. We agree with Dr. Zhang that these patients must be subjected to adjuvant chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy after surgery.

Nonetheless, we do not believe it is correct that any T stage with vessel invasion should be upstaged to T3 regardless of tumor size, as suggested by Dr. Zhang and colleagues. In our study,¹ the 5-year overall survival rate of

the LVI-positive group was 70.9%. This survival rate is the same as T1b tumors in the 7th edition of the TNM classification, but different from T3 tumors.² Therefore, the challenge is that there are no data on the large-scale equality of prognosis for any T stage with vessel invasion and T3 tumor.²

We believe a prospective study evaluating the survival benefit of adjuvant chemotherapy against LVI-positive T1a and T1b tumors is necessary.

REFERENCES

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