HealthCare
The Power of Advanced Medicine

PANCREATIC NEUROENDOCRINE CANCER

Pancreatic neuroendocrine cancer is a type of cancer that starts in the hormone-making endocrine cells of the pancreas and can result in pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors. This cancer differs from pancreatic cancer, which is when malignant cells are found in the tissues of the pancreas.

What are pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors?

Pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors (PNETs) are rare tumors – some of which can lead to cancer, while others are benign. PNETs can spread to the liver, bones and lymph nodes if not diagnosed.

There are two types of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors.

Functional tumors can cause varying symptoms due to hormones, such as insulin, that may be produced in excess. These symptoms may include acid reflux, and high or low blood sugar.

While *Non-functional* tumors are usually detected at later stages because they are not producing extra hormones that would cause symptoms. When they do appear, symptoms include jaundice, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

How do doctors test for PNETs?

Doctors can use imaging and blood tests to detect PNETS. Tests such as ultrasound, bone scan, CAT scan, MRI and endoscopy may be used to help reach a diagnosis.

A biopsy may be necessary to confirm the diagnosis and to confirm the severity of the tumors. This can also help doctors decide on treatments.

How are PNETs treated?

A multidisciplinary approach is recommended for treating PNETs.

If possible, surgery is the preferred option during the early stage of the disease.

Patients who have a more advanced stage of the disease can have it managed through monthly injections, targeted therapy, chemotherapy and peptide receptor radiotherapy (PRRT).

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