

TITLE: Retrospective analysis of symptom duration in soft tissue sarcoma:
Does a delay in diagnosis affect outcome?

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ABSTRACT:

Aim: To determine whether symptom duration holds prognostic value in patients with soft tissue sarcomas.

Method: Duration of symptoms to time of diagnosis was collected prospectively in 1508 patients diagnosed with STS.

Results: Mean duration of symptoms was 70.1 weeks. Grade, depth and histological subtype were the only factors associated with significant difference in symptom duration. Patients with a very long duration of symptoms had better outcome. When tumour aggressiveness or growth rate (approximated by size/symptom duration ratio) was accounted for in multivariate analysis we were able to demonstrate significant survival advantage in reducing diagnostic delay for high grade tumours.

Discussion: Reducing diagnostic delay is important in high grade soft tissue sarcoma. The size/symptom duration ratio reflects the rate of growth and is an important prognosticator.