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The relationship between the expression of hepatocyte growth factor receptor (c-Met) and budding in pT3 colon adenocarcinoma

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Introduction Hepatocyte growth factor receptor (c-met) is suggested to play an important role in the progression and metastasis of colorectal cancer. In this study, we investigated the relationship between the expression of c-met and budding in pT3 colon adenocarcinoma. **Patients and Methods** Curatively resected specimens of 88 pT3 well or moderately differentiated colon adenocarcinoma were studied. The median postoperative follow-up was 70.2 months. We made serial sections from formalin-fixed and paraffin embedded blocks, and performed H-E staining and immunohistochemical staining for c-met. We classified the expression of c-met were evaluated as positive (+) or negative (-). The finding of budding at the invasive front of tumor was recorded according to Morodomi's criteria. **Results** The expression of c-met was 37 lesions and was significantly correlated with lymphatic invasion, lymphnode metastasis, budding, and overall recurrence

($p = 0.0006$, $p < 0.0001$, $p = 0.0013$, and $p = 0.0019$, respectively). Postoperative survival was significantly shorter in patients with c-MET-positive lesions than in patients with c-MET-negative lesions ($p = 0.0028$, logrank test). Similarly, budding was a significantly prognostic factor ($p = 0.0136$, logrank test). Multivariate proportional hazard model revealed that the expression of c-met was the only significant co-factor of postoperative survival in pT3 colon adenocarcinoma. **Conclusion** HGF/c-MET signal may affect the formation of budding at the invasive front of tumor. Moreover, c-MET is an useful marker suggesting poor survival in patients with pT3 colon carcinoma.

Key Words : colon carcinoma, c-MET, budding, prognostic factor