The dark side of the moon: impact of moon phases on long-term survival, mortality and morbidity of surgery for lung cancer.

OBJECTIVE: Superstition is common and causes discomfiture or fear, especially in patients who have to undergo surgery for cancer. One superstition is, that moon phases influence surgical outcome. This study was performed to analyse lunar impact on the outcome following lung cancer surgery. METHODS: 2411 patients underwent pulmonary resection for lung cancer in the past 30 years at our institution. Intra- and postoperative complications as well as long-term follow-up data were entered in our lung-cancer database. Factors influencing mortality, morbidity and survival were analyzed. RESULTS: Rate of intra-operative complications as well as rate of post-operative morbidity and mortality was not significantly affected by moon phases. Furthermore, there was no significant impact of the lunar cycle on long-term survival. CONCLUSION: In this study there was no evidence that outcome of surgery for lung cancer is affected by the moon. These results may help the physician to quiet the mind of patients who are somewhat afraid of wrong timing of surgery with respect to the moon phases. However, patients who strongly believe in the impact of moon phase should be taken seriously and correct timing of operations should be conceded to them as long as key-date scheduling doesn’t constrict evidence based treatment regimens.

Zeitschriftentitel / Abkürzung: