

# Commentary on “Data on the Characteristics and the Survival of Korean Patients With Colorectal Cancer From the Korea Central Cancer Registry”

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To the editor

In the July 2013 issue of *Annals of Coloproctology*, I read with great interest the article entitled “Data on the Characteristics and the Survival of Korean Patients with Colorectal Cancer from the Korea Central Cancer Registry” by Park et al. [1]. That study is one of the largest reports on colorectal cancer published in the literature. It provides valuable information regarding the characteristics and oncologic outcomes of Korean patients with colorectal cancer. However, in the discussion section, there was a paucity of comparisons of the characteristics and the survival of Korean patients suffering from colorectal cancer with those of European and American colorectal cancer patients. In Korean patients, the rectum accounts for a higher proportion of colorectal-cancer primary sites compared to European and American patients [1, 2]. A similar distribution is also seen in the Iranian population [3]. Table 1 illustrates the distributions of primary tumor sites of colorectal cancer in Korea, Europe, and the United States (US). Moreover, the Korean patients showed a lower proportion for localized disease and a higher proportion for regional stage compared to Euro-

pean and American patients [1, 4] (Table 1). We also found a similar finding among Iranian patients with colorectal cancer [3, 5]. In the study by Park et al. [1], the 5-year survival of Korean patients with colorectal cancer was 72.1%, which is significantly higher than the 5-year survival rates in European countries (43%) and the US (62%) [1, 2, 6, 7]. Therefore, a discrepancy is seen to exist between this higher 5-year survival rate and the higher proportion of stage III cancers in Korea compared to the West.

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**Table 1.** Clinicopathological features and overall survivals of Korean, European, and American patients with colorectal cancer [1, 4]

Region	No. of patients	Primary site (%)			No. of patients	Stage (%)			
		Rt. colon	Lt. colon	Rectum		Localized	Regional	Metastatic	Unstaged
Europe	134,575	29	27	44	2,492	48	21	21	10
USA	70,180	54	23	23	11,191	54	23	18	5
Korea	208,924	22	26	52	113,881	34	40	14	12

Rt., right; Lt., left.

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