Prognostic value of pretreatment lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio in patients with urologic tumors
A PRISMA-compliant meta-analysis
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Abstract

Background: The prognostic value of pretreatment lymphocyte to monocyte ratio (LMR) in patients with urologic tumors remains controversial. Therefore, we herein conducted a meta-analysis to systematically assess the prognostic value of LMR in patients with urologic tumors.

Methods: We comprehensively searched PubMed, EMBASE and Web of Science to identify eligible studies. Hazard ratios (HRs) and their 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were used to assess the prognostic value of LMR in patients with urologic tumors. This meta-analysis was registered in PROSPERO (CRD42018108959).

Results: A total of 20 studies were included in this meta-analysis. Our synthesized analysis showed that low LMR was significantly correlated with poor overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS) in patients with upper tract urothelial cancer (UTUC). We also found that renal cell cancer (RCC) patients with low LMR had poor OS, PFS and cancer-specific survival (CSS). Besides, it was observed that low LMR predicted poor OS, PFS and CSS in patients with bladder cancer (BC).

Conclusion: This meta-analysis demonstrated that pretreatment LMR is associated with survival, and may be a useful prognostic parameter in urologic tumors. Nevertheless, more prospective and heterogeneous studies with large samples are required to further confirm our findings before it is applied for daily clinical decision making.

Abbreviations: ACT = adjuvant chemotherapy, BC = bladder cancer, CI = confidence interval, CSS = cancer-specific survival, DFS = disease-free survival, HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, NOS = Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, NR = not reported, OS = overall survival, PFS = progression-free survival, RCC = renal cell cancer, RFS = recurrence-free survival, SR = surgical resection, UTUC = upper tract urothelial cancer.

Keywords: LMR, meta-analysis, prognosis, urologic cancer

1. Introduction

Cancer remains one of the major causes of mortality and a huge economic burden worldwide.\(^1\) Urologic tumor, including upper tract urothelial cancer (UTUC), renal cell cancer (RCC), bladder cancer (BC) and prostate cancer, is a common type of malignancy. Although the comprehensively therapeutic strategy integrating surgery, immunotherapy, and molecular-targeted therapy has been improved largely in recent years, a subset of patients with urologic tumors still have unfavorable prognosis due to ineffective drug response, local relapse, and distant metastasis.\(^1\)–\(^3\) A lack of effectively prognostic biomarkers might partly account for the poor prognosis in patients with urologic tumors. Hence, effective and reliable biomarkers that could provide additional prognostic information are imminently needed.\(^4\)

Numerous studies have shown that systemic inflammatory response plays key roles in tumor initiation and progression.\(^1\)\(^5\)\(^,\)\(^6\) Several systemic inflammatory biomarkers such as platelet-to-lymphocyte ratio, albumin-to-globulin ratio, neutrophil-to-lymphocyte ratio and C-reactive protein-to-albumin ratio, have been reported to have potential as prognostic biomarkers in a wide variety of tumors.\(^7\)\(^,\)\(^8\) Recently, many studies indicated that a lower peripheral lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio (LMR) was closely associated with worse prognosis in patients with various cancers and might be an easily available and reliable prognostic biomarker.\(^9\)\(^,\)\(^10\)\(^,\)\(^11\) In addition, because of the limitation of small sample from individual studies and the presence of conflicting conclusions, several meta-analyses have been performed to further validate the prognostic value of LMR in patients with various tumors.\(^12\)\(^,\)\(^13\) Nevertheless, to date there were no meta-analyses that specifically focus on investigating the association between LMR and patients with urologic tumors. Therefore, it is very imperative to perform a meta-analysis to thoroughly assess the prognostic value of LMR in patients with urologic tumors.
2. Methods
This meta-analysis was undertaken according to preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses statement[21] and it was registered in PROSPERO (CRD42018108959). All analyses were based on previously published studies; thus, no patient consent and ethical approval are required.

2.1. Search strategy
A comprehensive search was performed in PubMed, EMBASE, and Web of Science for eligible studies that explored the prognostic role of LMR in patients with urologic tumors from inception to November, 2018. The search terms included: “lymphocyte and “monocyte or leukomonocyte” and ratio” and “upper tract urothelial carcinoma or UTUC or renal or kidney or bladder or prostate or urinary or urologic or urothelial or transitional”, and “tumor or cancer or carcinoma or adenocarcinoma or malignancy or malignant or neoplasm or neoplastic”. The detailed search strategy in PubMed database was presented in supplement, http://links.lww.com/MD/C751.

2.2. Selection criteria
Study that met the following issues were included:
1. Cohort study or observational study;
2. Patients with urologic tumors were histopathologically confirmed
3. Hazard ratios (HR) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals (CIs) that assessed association between LMR and prognosis of patients with urologic tumor, including overall survival (OS), cancer-specific survival (CSS), recurrence-free survival (RFS), disease-free survival (DFS), and progression-free survival (PFS), could be extracted;
4. Full text should be accessible for extracting relevant data.

OS was defined as the interval from the date of surgery on the primary tumor to death. CSS was defined as the interval from the date of surgery on the primary tumor to death for urologic tumors. DFS was defined as the interval from the date of surgery on the primary tumor to local, regional, or distant recurrence or death from any cause. RFS was defined as the interval from the date of surgery on the primary tumor to local, regional, or distant recurrence. PFS was defined as the interval from the date of surgery on the primary tumor until disease progression (including local recurrence or distant metastasis) or death.

Exclusion criteria excluded:
1) The studies were editorials, letters, review articles, meeting abstracts or case reports;
2) The studies included overlapped patients;
3) The studies focused on investigating the relationship between LMR and non-urological tumors.

Only studies in English were considered in this meta-analysis.

2.3. Data extraction and quality evaluation
Two investigators extracted relevant data from the included studies independently (Jialin Li and Yusheng Cheng) and divergences in data extraction were resolved by the corresponding author. The extracted information included: first author, publication year, country, tumor type, tumor stage, case number, primary therapy, neoadjuvant therapy, sexual ratio, median age, median follow-up, cut off value for a low LMR, analysis type, and HRs (95% CIs) assessing the association between LMR and prognosis, including OS, DFS, RFS, PFS, and CSS. If the data form both univariable and multivariable analysis were available in the articles, the data from multivariable analysis was extracted for pooling analysis. If the survival data was reported as Kaplan-Meier curves, we used the Engauge Digitizer (version 4.1) and the Tierney methods to extract the HR and its 95% CIs.[22] The quality of the included studies was assessed according to the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS),[23] and studies with 6 or more were considered as high-quality ones.

2.4. Statistical analysis
Statistical analysis was performed using STATA version 12.0 (Stata Corporation, College Station, TX). HRs with 95% CIs were used to assess the association between LMR and prognosis. The concurrence of with the 95% CI not crossing 1, and HR > 1 indicates that patients with low LMR had a worse prognosis compared to a high LMR. In addition, the link between LMR and clinicopathological features of urologic tumors was assessed using ORs (odds ratios) with 95% CIs. Chi-square-based Q and I² tests were conducted to assess the heterogeneity among the included studies. Random effects model was applied to combine data if there was significant heterogeneity among the included studies (P < .01 or I² > 50%), otherwise fixed effects model was used. Sensitivity analysis was performed to further explore the potential sources of heterogeneity and meanwhile test the robustness of our pooled results by sequentially omitting individual studies step by step. Begg test and the Egger test were used to test the publication bias.[24,25] Duval nonparametric trim-and-fill method was used to evaluate the potential effect of publication bias.[26]

3. Results
3.1. Study search
A of total 163 studies were identified through literature search with 42 from PubMed, 74 from EMBASE, and 47 from Web of Science. After excluding 82 duplicated records, 81 studies were left for title and abstract screening and then 30 studies were excluded for irrelevant topics. The remaining 51 studies were further screened by full text, in which 31 studies were excluded for reviews, conference abstracts, lack of relevant data and overlapped patients. Finally, a total of 20 studies were included in our meta-analysis.[10,13,27–44] The flow diagram of identifying eligible studies was presented in Figure 1.

3.2. Characteristics of the included studies
A total of 20 studies were included in this meta-analysis. These studies were published between 2014 and 2018, 11 of which from China,[10,13,28,29,31,35,37,39,41–43] 4 from Austria,[30,32–34] 2 from Japan,[36,40] 1 of each study from Turkey,[27] Lebanon,[38] and Poland.[44] A total of 5 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with UTUC were included in this meta-analysis.[27,32,37,42,43] Among these studies, 3 studies with 706 patients referred to OS.[32,41,43] Three studies involving 353 patients reported about DFS.[27,37,42] Four studies with 677 patients referred to PFS.[27,37,43] A total of 8 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with RCC were included in this meta-analysis.[10,13,28,29,31,33,34,39] Among these studies, 2 studies with 3608 patients referred to OS.[13,25,29,30,32,37,41] Two studies involving 1505 patients reported about PFS.[10,13] Two studies with 1094 patients referred to CSS.[29,33] A total of 7 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with BC were...
 Included in this meta-analysis. Among these studies, 6 studies with 4969 patients referred to OS. Two studies involving 4479 patients referred to CSS. Two studies with 4542 patients reported about RFS. Across all included studies, the ratio of female patients ranged from 11.8% to 40.3%; The cut-off values for a low LMR were inconsistent, ranging from 2 to 4.44. More information about the main characteristics were summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The scores of quality of all the included studies ranged from 6 to 8, suggesting that all the included studies were eligible for synthesized analysis in this meta-analysis (Table 3).

### Table 1

**The main characteristics of the included studies.**

| Study                  | Country | Tumor type | TNM stage (%) | No. of patients | Female (%) | Median age (years) | Primary therapy | Neoadjuvant therapy | Cut-off value of low LMR | Median follow-up (months) |
|------------------------|---------|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Altan et al 2017[27]   | Turkey  | UTUC       | T3-T4 (42.5%)  | 113             | 23.9       | > 60               | SR             | No                   | < 2.9                     | 34.0                     |
| Hutterer et al 2015[32]| Austria | UTUC       | NR (37.1%)     | 140             | 38.5       | 67.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.6                     | NR                       |
| Jan et al 2018[28]    | China   | UTUC       | NR (32.1%)     | 103             | 31.1       | 56.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.33                    | 68.2                     |
| Song et al 2016[36]   | China   | RCC        | 100 (23.7%)    | 430             | 27.7       | 56.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.25                    | 68.0                     |
| Zhang et al 2018[40]  | China   | RCC        | 41.4 (7.7%)    | 416             | 37.8       | 58.3               | SR             | No                   | < 3.33                    | 68.2                     |
| Chang et al 2018[33]  | China   | RCC        | 41.4 (32.1%)   | 103             | 31.1       | 56.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.33                    | 68.2                     |
| Gu et al 2018[31]     | China   | RCC        | 41.4 (41.4%)   | 145             | 18.8       | 56.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.0                     | 24.50                    |
| Gu et al 2018[35]     | China   | RCC        | 41.4 (41.4%)   | 433             | 20.7       | 67.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.5                     | 42.4                     |
| Hutterer et al 2018[29]| Austria | RCC        | 28.1 (28.1%)   | 678             | 40.3       | 65.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.0                     | 44.0                     |
| Lucca et al 2019[30]  | Austria | RCC        | 38.1 (38.1%)   | 430             | 40.2       | 65.5               | SR             | No                   | < 2.5                     | 40.0                     |
| Peng et al 2019[34]   | China   | RCC        | 17.0 (17.0%)   | 1360            | 30.9       | 55.0               | SR             | No                   | < 4.25                    | 67.0                     |
| Xia et al 2019[38]    | China   | RCC        | 42.6 (42.6%)   | 476             | 33.6       | NR                 | SR             | No                   | < 3.0                     | 58.0                     |
| D’Andrea et al 2019[37]| Austria | BC         | 44.1 (44.1%)   | 433             | 20.7       | 67.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.5                     | 42.4                     |
| Yao et al 2019[39]    | China   | BC         | 0 (0)          | 207             | 18.0       | 66.0               | SR             | No                   | < 4.3                     | 21.0                     |
| Miyake et al 2019[38] | Japan   | BC         | 46 (46)        | 117             | 22.0       | 72.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.0                     | 22.0                     |
| Rajoka et al 2019[40] | Poland  | BC         | NR (37.8)      | 144             | NR         | NR                 | SR             | No                   | < 2.45                    | 14.0                     |
| Temraz et al 2019[41] | Lebanon | BC         | NR (37.8)      | 68              | NR         | 65.0               | SR             | No                   | < 2.81                    | 24.0                     |
| Yoshida et al 2019[42]| Japan   | BC         | NR (37.8)      | 181             | 18.8       | 72.0               | SR             | No                   | < 3.5                     | 72.0                     |
| Zhang et al 2019[43]  | China   | BC         | 47.5 (47.5)    | 124             | 19.3       | 65.0               | SR             | No                   | < 4.0                     | NR                       |

ACT = adjuvant chemotherapy, BC = bladder cancer, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, NR = not report, RCC = renal cell cancer, SR = surgical resection, UTUC = upper tract urothelial cancer.
Table 2

| Study            | OS            | PFS          | DFS          | RFS          | CSS          |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Altan et al 2017 | NR            | 2.172 (1.048–4.502) | 1.223 (0.729–2.051) | NR           | NR           |
| Chang et al 2016 | 2.976 (1.712–5.515) | NR           | NR           | 2.155 (1.307–3.546) | NR           |
| Chen et al 2017  | 3.406 (1.670–6.946) | NR           | NR           | NR           | 2.961 (1.416–6.190) |
| D’Andrea et al 2017 | 1.2 (1–1.3)   | NR           | NR           | NR           | 1.4 (1.2–1.5) |
| Gu et al 2015    | 1.176 (0.653–2.119) | NR           | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Gu et al 2017    | 2.193 (1.379–4.367) | 2.469 (1.567–3.891) | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Hutterer et al 2014 | 1.373 (0.929–2.031) | NR           | NR           | NR           | 2.332 (1.100–4.942) |
| Hutterer et al 2015 | 1.534 (1.093–2.889) | NR           | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Jan et al 2018   | 2.192 (1.227–3.917) | 1.392 (0.847–2.287) | NR           | NR           | 1.847 (0.913–3.735) |
| Lucca et al 2015 | NR            | NR           | 2.44 (1.27–4.67) | NR           | NR           |
| Mao et al 2017   | NR            | 0.837 (0.325–2.155) | NR           | 1.230 (0.639–2.370) | NR           |
| Miyake et al 2017 | 1.8 (0.8–3.8) | U            | 1.6 (0.7–4.1) | U            | NR           |
| Peng et al 2017  | 1.377 (1.129–2.901) | K            | 1.150 (1.128–3.671) | K            | NR           |
| Rajwa et al 2018 | 1.274 (1.098–1.477) | NR           | NR           | NR           | 1.330 (1.130–1.563) |
| Song et al 2016  | NR            | 4.909 (1.804–13.358) | 6.307 (3.938–20.530) | NR           | NR           |
| Temraz et al 2014 | 2.933 (1.820–3.194) | K            | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Xia et al 2016   | 2.21 (1.03–4.74) | NR           | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Yoshida et al 2015 | 3.77 (2.19–6.48) | NR           | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Zhang et al 2015 | 1.484 (1.124–2.427) | NR           | NR           | NR           | NR           |
| Zhang et al 2018 | 2.092 (1.082–4.032) | NR           | 1.027 (0.902–1.232) | K            | NR           |

C = confidence interval, CSS = cancer-specific survival, DFS = disease-free survival, HR = hazard ratio, K = Kaplan-Meier analysis, M = multivariable analysis, NR = not report, OS = overall survival, PFS = progression-free survival, RFS = recurrence-free survival, U = univariable analysis.

3.3. The prognostic value of pretreatment LMR in patients with UTUC

A total of 5 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with UTUC were included in this meta-analysis. Among these studies, 3 studies with 706 patients referred to OS. Three studies involving 353 patients reported about DFS. Three studies with 677 patients referred to PFS. The synthesized analyses showed that low LMR was significantly correlated with poor OS (fix-effect model, HR: 1.85, 95% CI: 1.34–2.56, P < .05) (Fig. 2A) and PFS (fix-effect model, HR: 2.20, 95% CI: 1.13–4.26, P < .05) (Fig. 2B), but not with DFS (random-effect model, HR: 1.53, 95% CI: 0.80–2.94, P > .05) (Fig. 2C) in patients with UTUC. Considering that the number of eligible studies was only limited, we did not perform sensitivity analysis and publication bias assessment for the pooling results about the prognostic value of LMR in patients with UTUC.

3.4. The prognostic value of pretreatment LMR in patients with RCC

A total of 8 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with RCC were included in this meta-analysis. Among these studies, 7 studies with 3608 patients referred to OS. Two

Table 3

The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) quality assessment of the included studies.

| Study ID          | Representativeness of the exposed cohort | Selection of the non-exposed cohort | Ascertainment of exposure | Demonstration that outcome of interest was not present at start of study | Comparability of cohorts on the basis of the design or analysis | Assessment of outcome | Was follow-up long enough for outcomes to occur | Adequacy of follow up of cohorts | Total |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Altan et al 2017  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Hutterer et al 2015 | *                                    | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Jan et al 2016    | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 7     |
| Song et al 2016   | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Zhang et al 2018  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Chang et al 2016  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Chen, et al 2017  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Gu et al 2015     | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Gu et al 2017     | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Hutterer et al 2014 | *                                    | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Lucca et al 2015  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Peng et al 2017   | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 7     |
| Xia et al 2016    | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| D’Andrea et al 2017 | *                                    | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Mao et al 2017    | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Miyake et al 2017 | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 8     |
| Rajwa et al 2018  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Temraz et al 2014 | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |
| Yoshida et al 2015 | *                                    | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 7     |
| Zhang et al 2015  | *                                      | *                                  | *                        | *                                                                      | *                                                             | *                    | *                                          | *                               | 6     |

* represents one score for corresponding item; ** represents no scores for corresponding item; NOS: Newcastle-Ottawa Scale.
studies involving 1505 patients reported about PFS. Two studies with 1094 patients referred to CSS. The synthesized analyses showed that RCC patients low LMR had poorer OS (fix-effect model, HR: 1.81, 95% CI: 1.37–2.40, P < .05) (Fig. 3A) and CSS (fix-effect model, HR: 2.63, 95% CI: 1.56–4.46, P < .05) (Fig. 3B), but equal PFS (random-effect model, HR: 1.75, 95% CI: 0.97–3.17, P < .05) (Fig. 3C). Additionally, we performed sensitivity analysis by sequentially omitting single study and publication bias assessment to further explore the stability and reliability of the pooled result about OS. From
the results, we found that the pooled HR about OS was not significantly altered in sensitivity analysis (Fig. 4A), the funnel plot of assessing publication bias was symmetric (Fig. 4B) and the P values of Begg and Egger tests were more than .05, all of which suggested that our pooled result about OS were robust and dependable.

3.5. The prognostic value of pretreatment LMR in patients with BC
A total of 7 studies exploring the prognostic value of LMR in patients with BC were included in this meta-analysis. Among these studies, 6 studies with 4969 patients referred to OS. Two studies involving 324 patients reported about PFS. Two studies

![Figure 3](image_url). The synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS (A), CSS (B) and PFS (C) and in renal cell cancer. CSS = cancer-specific survival, HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival, PFS = progression-free survival.
with 4479 patients referred to CSS. Two studies with 4542 patients reported about RFS. The synthesized analyses showed that low LMR was related to poor OS (random-effect model, HR: 1.58, 95% CI: 1.24–2.03, \(P < .05\)) (Fig. 5), RFS (fix-effect model, HR: 1.39, 95% CI: 1.25–1.56, \(P < .05\)) (Fig. 6A) and CSS (fix-effect model, HR: 1.31, 95% CI: 1.19–1.44, \(P < .05\)) (Fig. 6B), but not to PFS (fix-effect model, HR: 1.18, 95% CI: 0.62–2.26, \(P > .05\)) (Fig. 6C) in patients with BC. Additionally, we performed sensitivity analysis by sequentially omitting single study and publication bias assessment to further explore the stability and reliability of the pooled result about OS of BC patients. From the results, we found that the pooled HR about OS was not significantly altered in sensitivity analysis (Fig. 7). The funnel plot of assessing publication bias was asymmetric (Fig. 8A) and the \(P\) values of Begg and Egger tests was less than .05, which indicated that there was significant publication bias for the pooled result about OS of BC patients. Thus, we performed trim-and-fill analysis determine whether the publication bias significantly affected the reliability of the pooled result about OS of BC patients. The result of trim-and-fill analysis showed that the adjusted HR for OS was still more than 1 (random -effect model, HR: 1.25, 95% CI: 1.14–1.36, \(P < .05\)), and the adjusted funnel plot of publication bias assessment became symmetric (Fig. 8B), suggesting that the publication bias did not significantly affect the reliability of the pooled result about OS of BC patients.

**Figure 4.** The sensitivity analysis of the synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in renal cell cancer (A). The funnel plot of Begg test for the publication bias assessment of the synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in renal cell cancer (B). HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival.

**Figure 5.** The synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in bladder cancer. LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival.
4. Discussion

To date there were no meta-analyses that specifically focus on investigating the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR in patients with urologic tumors. Therefore, we herein conducted a meta-analysis to systematically assess the prognostic value of LMR in patients with urologic tumors. Our synthesized analysis showed that low LMR was significantly correlated with poor OS and PFS in patients with UTUC. We also found that RCC patients with low LMR had poor OS, PFS, and CSS. Besides, it was observed that low LMR predicted poor OS, RFS, and CSS in patients with BC. Thus, pretreatment LMR may serve as a

Figure 6. The synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for RFS (A), CSS (B) and PFS (C) in bladder cancer. CSS = cancer-specific survival, HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival, PFS = progression-free survival, RFS = recurrence-free survival.
promising parameter for predicting the prognosis of patients with urologic tumors.

The inflammatory cell’s response resulted from tumors could cause the production and release of various cytokines and inflammatory mediators, ultimately promoting tumor invasion, migration, metastasis and progression. Monocytes take up about 5% of the circulating leukocytes and play an essential role in innate immunity. Several studies reported that absolute monocyte count was related to survival in patients with colorectal cancer and the infiltrated monocytes in tumor tissue could promote tumor invasion and cell growth in large B-cell lymphoma. However, the exact mechanisms underlying the role of monocytes in tumor progression have not yet been well elucidated. One of mechanisms is the link between monocytes and tumor-associated macrophages (TAMs). That is, macrophages derives from monocytes circulating in peripheral blood, thereby which suggest that the circulating level of monocytes may mirror a surrogate for formation or presence of TAMs. TAMs are sensitive to the chemotactic effect of the tumor microenvironment-secreted cytokines and chemokines, such as monocyte chemoattractant protein-1, tumor necrosis factor-α and others. Furthermore, the interaction between TAMs and cancer cell were capable of promoting tumor angiogenesis, migration, invasion, and depressing antitumor immunity, ultimately leading to tumor progression and poor prognosis of tumor patients. Additionally, there is another hypothesis that may also explain the role of monocytes in tumor progression. The infiltrative monocytes in tumor could release many soluble factors, such as interleukin (IL)-1, IL-6, IL-10 and tumor growth factor-α, and it has been well studied that these factors play an important role in promoting neo-angiogenesis, invasion and migration, and correlate with unfavorable prognosis in various malignant tumors.

Figure 7. The sensitivity analysis of the synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in bladder cancer. HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival.

Figure 8. The funnel plot of Begg test for the publication bias assessment of the synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in bladder cancer (A). The adjusted funnel plot of Begg test for the publication bias assessment of the synthesized HR assessing the prognostic value of pretreatment LMR for OS in bladder cancer (B). HR = hazard ratio, LMR = lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, OS = overall survival.
and heterogeneous studies with large samples are required to further confirm our findings before it is applied for daily clinical decision making.

**Author contributions**

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