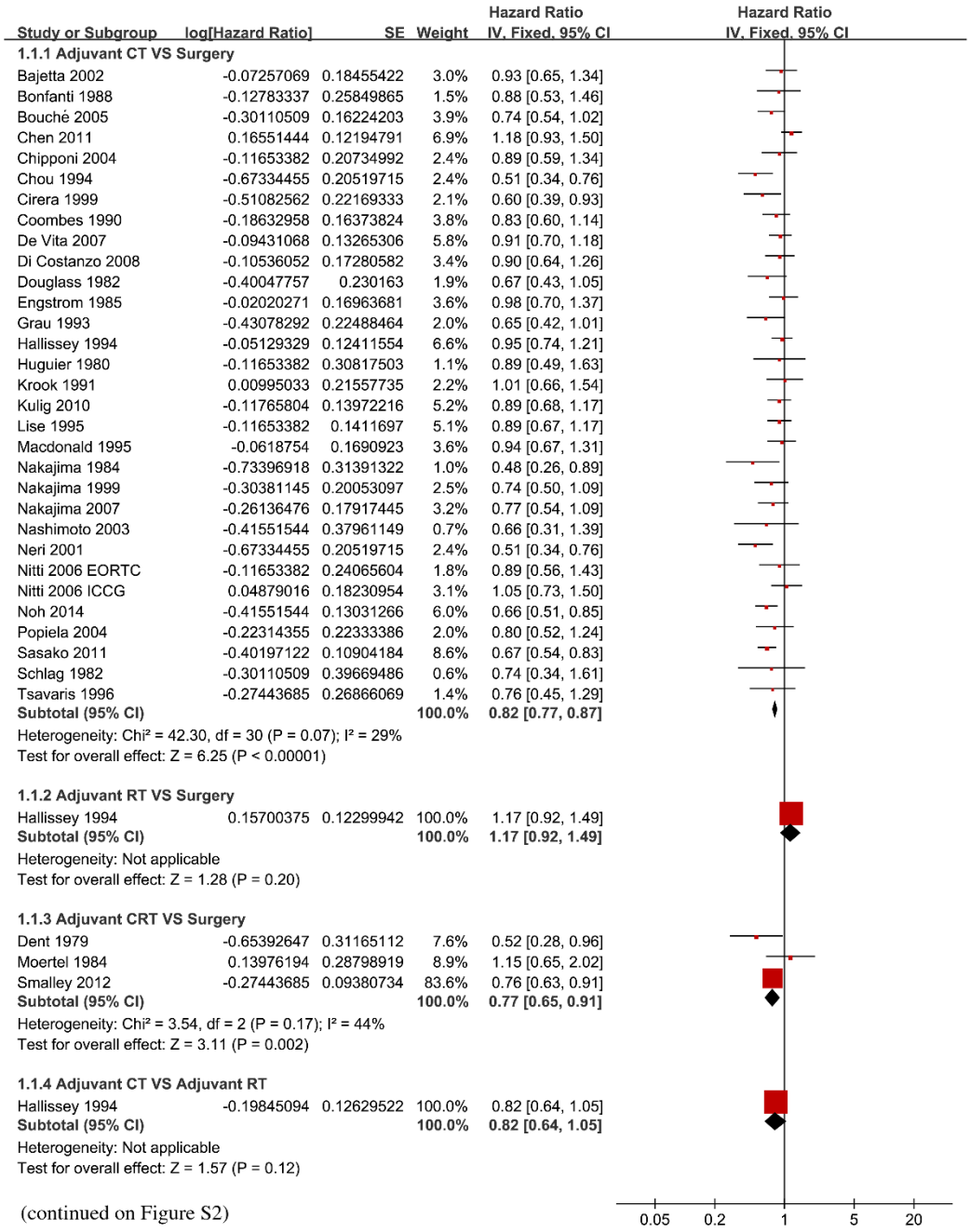
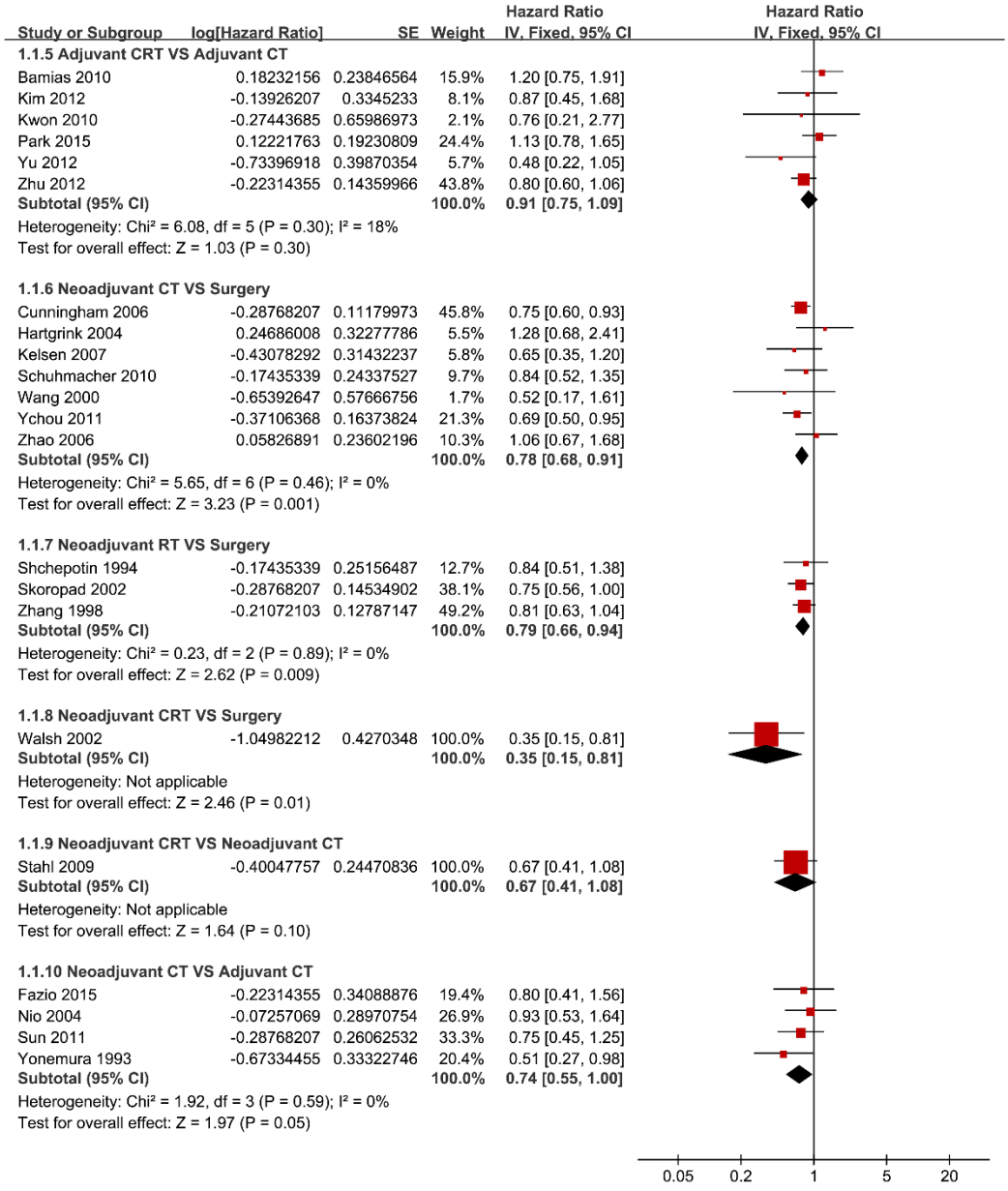
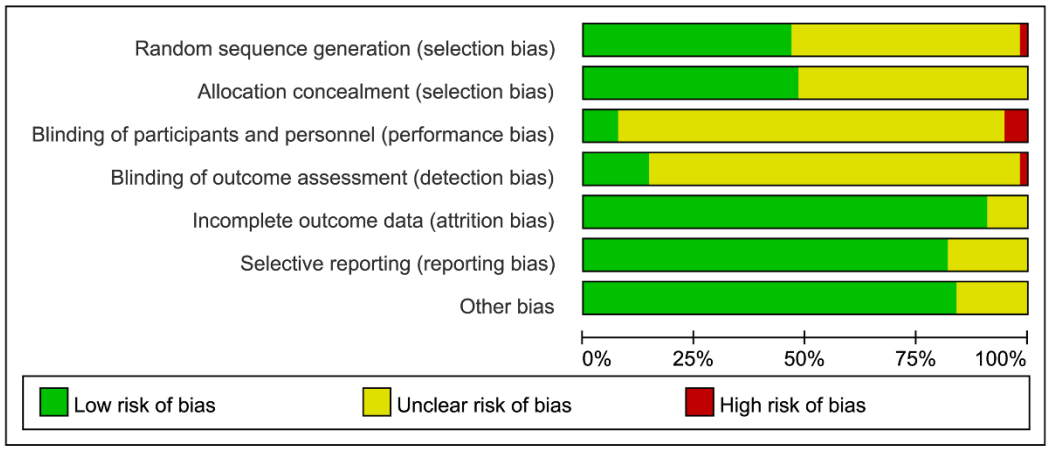
Supplementary figures and figure legends:



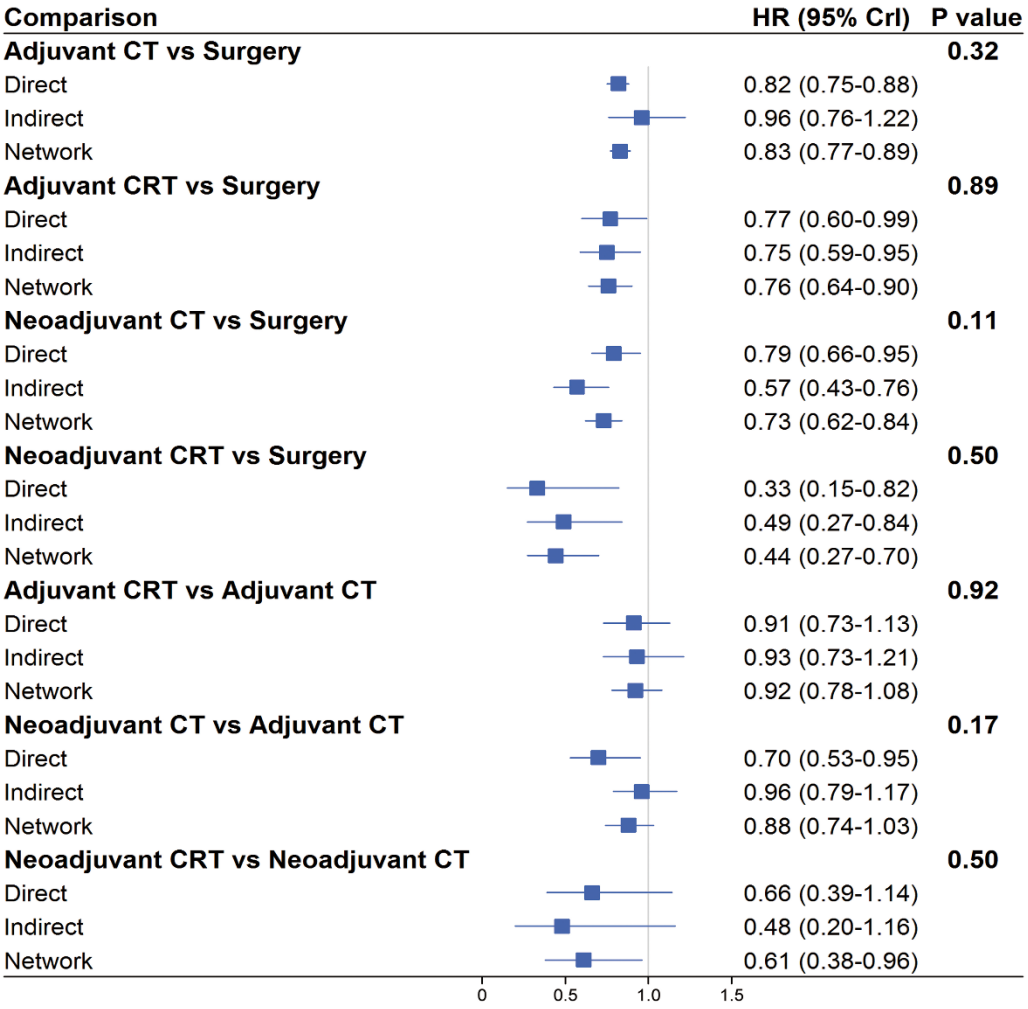
Supplementary Fig. S1 Pair-wise meta-analysis for overall survival.



Supplementary Fig. S2 Pair-wise meta-analysis for overall survival (continued).



Supplementary Fig. S3 Risk of bias graph for all studies included.



Supplementary Fig. S4 Consistency between direct and indirect comparisons with node-split models.

Supplementary Table S1. Characteristics of the included studies

Study	Year	Region	Chemotherapy	Radiotherapy	Concurrent Sequential	Lymph node resection	Intervention Group Size	Control Group Size	Median follow–up (Range), m
Adjuvant CT versus Surgery									
Noh et al. [1]	2014	International	Capecitabine, oxaliplatin	N/A	N/A	D2	520	515	62.4 (54–70)
Sasako et al. [2]	2011	Japan	S–1	N/A	N/A	D2	529	530	36
Chen et al. [3]	2011	China	FAM group: fluorouracil, doxorubicin, mitomycin; FOLFOX group: oxaliplatin, leucovorin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	D2	115	153	87 (25–216)
Kulig et al. [4]	2010	Poland	Doxorubicin, cisplatin, etoposide	N/A	N/A	D1–D3	141	154	37 (31–51)
Di Costanzo et al. [5]	2008	Italy	Cisplatin, epirubicin, leucovorin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	D1–D4	130	128	73 (46.8–81.6)
Nakajima et al. [6]	2007	Japan	Uracil–tegafur	N/A	N/A	D2	95	95	74.4

De Vita et al. [7]	2007	Italy	Epirubicin, leucovorin, fluorouracil, etoposide	N/A	N/A	D1 at least	112	113	60
Nitti et al. (EORTC) [8]	2006	Italy	Methotrexate, fluorouracil, leucovorin, adriamycin	N/A	N/A	D2	103	103	79.2
Nitti et al. (ICCG) [8]	2006	Italy	Fluorouracil, methotrexate, leucovorin, epirubicin	N/A	N/A	N/A	91	100	76.8
Bouche et al. [9]	2005	France	Fluorouracil, cisplatin	N/A	N/A	D0–D2	127	133	97.8
Chipponi et al. [10]	2004	France	Leucovorin, fluorouracil, cisplatin	N/A	N/A	D1, D2	101	104	101 (43–140)
Nashimoto et al. [11]	2003	Japan	Mitomycin, fluorouracil, cytarabine	N/A	N/A	D2 mostly	127	123	69
Bajetta et al. [12]	2002	Italy	Etoposide, adriamycin, cisplatin, leucovorin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	D2	137	137	66 (2–83)
Neri et al. [13]	2001	Italy	Epidoxorubicin, leucovorin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	69	68	31 (7–60)
Cirera et al. [14]	1999	Spain	Mitomycin, tegafur	N/A	N/A	N/A	76	72	37

									(3–122)
Nakajima et al. [15]	1999	Japan	Mitomycin, fluorouracil, uracil plus tegafur	N/A	N/A	N/A	288	285	72
Macdonald et al. [16]	1995	USA	Fluorouracil, doxorubicin, mitomycin	N/A	N/A	N/A	93	100	114
Lise et al. [17]	1995	International	Fluorouracil, doxorubicin, mitomycin	N/A	N/A	N/A	155	159	78
Chou et al. [18]	1994	Taiwan	Ftorafur	N/A	N/A	N/A	59	56	27 (8–57)
Grau et al. [19]	1993	Japan	Mitomycin	N/A	N/A	N/A	68	66	105
Krook et al. [20]	1991	USA	Fluorouracil, doxorubicin	N/A	N/A	N/A	61	64	84
Tsavaris et al. [21]	1996	Greece	Fluorouracil, epirubicin, mitomycin	N/A	N/A	N/A	42	42	60
Bonfanti et al. [22]	1988	Italy	Semustine, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	75	69	81
Douglass et al. [23]	1982	USA	Semustine, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	71	71	N/A
Engstrom et al. [24]	1985	International	Fluorouracil, semustine	N/A	N/A	N/A	91	89	64
Popiela et al. [25]	2004	Poland	Fluorouracil, adriamycin,	N/A	N/A	D2	53	52	N/A

			mitomycin						
Huguier et al. [26]	1980	France	Fluorouracil, vinblastine, cyclophosphamide	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	26	60
Coombes et al. [27]	1990	International	Fluorouracil, adriamycin, mitomycin	N/A	N/A	N/A	133	148	68
Nakajima et al. [28]	1984	Japan	Mitomycin, fluorouracil, cytosine arabinoside	N/A	N/A	N/A	149	74	N/A
Schlag et al. [29]	1982	Germany	Fluorouracil, carmustine	N/A	N/A	N/A	49	54	N/A
Hallissey et al. [30]	1994	UK	Mitomycin, doxorubicin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	138	145	60
Adjuvant CRT versus Surgery									
Smalley et al. [31]	2012	USA	Fluorouracil, leucovorin	45 Gy in 25 fractions for 5 weeks	Concurrent	D0–D2	282	277	123.6
Moertel et al. [32]	1984	USA	Fluorouracil	37.5 Gy delivered over 4 to 5 weeks	Concurrent	N/A	39	23	N/A
Dent et al. [33]	1979	South Africa	Fluorouracil	20 Gy in 8 fractions over 10 days	Concurrent	N/A	35	31	N/A

Adjuvant RT versus Surgery									
Hallissey et al. [30]	1994	UK	N/A	45 Gy in 25 fractions over 35 days	N/A	N/A	153	145	60
Adjuvant CRT versus Adjuvant CT									
Park et al. [34]	2015	South Korea	Capecitabine, cisplatin	45 Gy in 25 fractions over 5 weeks	Concurrent	D2	230	228	84
Zhu et al. [35]	2012	China	Fluorouracil, leucovorin	45 Gy in 25 fractions for 5 weeks	Concurrent	D2	186	165	42.5
Kim et al. [36]	2012	South Korea	Fluorouracil, leucovorin	45 Gy in 25 fractions for 5 weeks	Concurrent	D2	46	44	86.7 (60.3–116.5)
Yu et al. [37]	2012	China	Fluorouracil, leucovorin	45 Gy in 25 fractions for 5 weeks	Concurrent	D1, D2	34	34	36
Kwon et al. [38]	2010	South Korea	Fluorouracil, cisplatin	45 Gy in 25 fractions over 5 weeks	Concurrent	D2	31	30	77.2 (24–92.8)
Bamias et al. [39]	2010	Greece	Docetaxel, cisplatin	45 Gy in 25 fractions for 5 weeks	Sequential	D0–D2	72	71	53.7 (1–77.8)

Neoadjuvant RT versus Surgery									
Skoropad et al. [40]	2002	Russia	N/A	20 Gy in 5 fractions for 5 days	N/A	N/A	51	51	N/A
Zhang et al. [41]	1998	China	N/A	40 Gy in 20 fractions for 4 weeks	N/A	N/A	153	158	128 (89–192)
Shchepotin et al. [42]	1994	Ukrain	N/A	20 Gy in 4 fractions for 4 days	N/A	N/A	98	100	N/A
Neoadjuvant CRT versus Surgery									
Walsh et al. [43]	2002	Ireland	Fluorouracil, cisplatin	40 Gy in 15 fractions over 2 weeks	Concurrent	N/A	16	23	60
Neoadjuvant CRT versus Neoadjuvant CT									
Stahl et al. [44]	2009	Germany	Fluorouracil, leucovorin, cisplatin	30 Gy in 15 fractions for 3 weeks	Concurrent	D2	60	59	46
Neoadjuvant CT versus Surgery									
Ychou et al. [45]	2011	France	Fluorouracil, cisplatin	N/A	N/A	D2	113	111	25
Cunningham et al. [46]	2006	UK	Epirubicin, cisplatin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	D1, D2	250	253	49

Schuhmacher et al. [47]	2010	International	Cisplatin, folinic acid, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	D2 mostly	72	72	52.8
Hartgrink et al. [48]	2004	Netherlands	Methotrexate, leucovorin, doxorubicin	N/A	N/A	D1	29	30	83 (51–102)
Wang et al. [49]	2000	China	FPLC, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	30	60
Zhao et al. [50]	2006	China	Group 1: 5'–DFUR Group 2: fluorouracil, calcium folinate	N/A	N/A	N/A	34	20	N/A
Kelsen et al. [51]	2007	International	Cisplatin, fluorouracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	47	46	(93.6–156)
Neoadjuvant CT versus Adjuvant CT									
Yonemura et al. [52]	1993	Japan	Cisplatin, mitomycin, etoposide, uracil	N/A	N/A	N/A	23	23	24 (6–42)
Nio et al. [53]	2004	Japan	Uracil	N/A	N/A	D0–D3	102	193	83 (37–140)
Sun et al. [54]	2011	China	Docetaxel, fluorouracil, leucovorin	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	26	N/A
Fazio et al. [55]	2015	International	Docetaxel, cisplatin,	N/A	N/A	D2	34	35	N/A

			fluorouracil						

CT chemotherapy, *RT* radiotherapy, *CRT* chemoradiotherapy, *N/A* not available

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Supplementary Table S2. Main clinicopathologic characteristics of the enrolled patients in the included studies

Study	Mean age (years)	Sex		Tumor stage				Nodal status				UICC/AJCC stage
		Male	Female	T1	T2	T3	T4	N0	N1	N2	N3	
Noh et al. [1]	56	731	304	11	564	456	4	103	621	311	0	IB-IV
Sasako et al. [2]	63	736	323	1	575	457	26	115	577	367	0	IB-IV
Chen et al. [3]	56	183	85	0	80	198	0	198	80	0	0	IIA
Kulig et al. [4]	61	211	84	6	67	140	82	91	80	85	39	IB-IV
Di Costanzo et al. [5]	59	157	101	NA	NA	124	14	42	213			I-IV
Nakajima et al. [6]	63	143	45	0	188	0	0	0	141	47	0	II
De Vita et al. [7]	63	131	94	8	37	142	38	62	77	86	0	IB-IIIB
Nitti et al. (EORTC) [8]	56	127	79	17	68	114	7	39	83	84	0	IB-IIIB

Nitti et al. (ICCG) [8]	54	125	66	6	61	107	17	34	82	75	0	IB-IV
Bouche et al. [9]	61	186	74	59		288	10	43	138	48	21	II-IV
Chipponi et al. [10]	61	129	67	NA	NA	NA	NA	33	163			NA
Nashimoto et al. [11]	58	169	81	74	155	21	0	139	80	31	NA	I-III
Bajetta et al. [12]	57	174	97	128		143		27	244			I-III
Neri et al. [13]	69	98	39	3	15	64	65	0	65	72	0	NA
Cirera et al. [14]	61	94	54	3	11	39	95	20	57	71	0	III
Nakajima et al. [15]	NA	363	210	188	323	62	0	237	286	46	4	NA
Macdonald et al. [16]	59	123	70	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	I-III
Lise et al. [17]	NA	202	112	12	126	144	29	NA	NA	NA	NA	II-III
Chou et al. [18]	NA	67	48	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	II-III
Grau et al. [19]	56	88	46	4	21	109	0	51	54	29	0	NA
Krook et al. [20]	63	98	27	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tsavaris et al. [21]	53	57	27	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	III
Bonfanti et al. [22]	NA	138	75	40	70	103		89	124			NA
Douglass et al. [23]	NA	100	42	NA	NA	NA	NA	54	88			NA
Engstrom et al. [24]	NA	120	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Popiela et al. [25]	58	74	31	0	80		25	0	62	43	0	III-IV
Huguier et al. [26]	60	38	15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Coombes et al. [27]	NA	NA	NA	13	97	124	45	89	119	62	8	II-III
Nakajima et al. [28]	NA	141	82	NA	NA	NA	NA	91	108	86	15	I-IV
Schlag et al. [29]	59	63	40	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	II-III
Hallissey et al. [30]	64	303	133	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	II-III
Smalley et al. [31]	60	397	159	172		342	42	83	231	242	0	IB-IV
Moertel et al. [32]	58	46	16	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dent et al. [33]	NA	NA	NA	4	8	46	0	22	9	27	0	NA
Park et al. [34]	56	296	162	NA	NA	NA	NA	62	253	101	42	IB-IV
Zhu et al. [35]	56	261	90	0	0	351		50	104	123	74	IB-IV
Kim et al. [36]	NA	59	31	0	33	51	6	2	25	43	20	III-IV
Yu et al. [37]	56	43	25	0	7	42	19	0	40	28	0	II-III
Kwon et al. [38]	56	44	17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	III-IV
Bamias et al. [39]	NA	100	43	4	26	107	6	17	74	40	11	IB-IV
Skoropad et al. [40]	55	74	28	11	27	58	6	48	37	15	2	I-IV
Zhang et al. [41]	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	I-IV

Shchepotin et al. [42]	55	NA	NA	0	6	127	65	71	121		0	NA
Walsh et al. [43]	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Stahl et al. [44]	60	108	11	0	0	109	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ychou et al. [45]	63	187	37	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cunningham et al. [46]	62	396	107	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Schuhmacher et al. [47]	57	100	44	0	0	135	9	10	92	11	2	III-IV
Hartgrink et al. [48]	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	II-III
Wang et al. [49]	54	50	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Zhao et al. [50]	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kelsen et al. [51]	62	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Yonemura et al. [52]	64	41	14	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	IV
Nio et al. [53]	64	211	84	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	I-IV
Sun et al. [54]	52	37	18	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fazio et al. [55]	57	47	22	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	IB-IV

NA, not available