

Additional file 2: Follow-up scheme for patients

Patients were referred to the follow-up clinic every three months during the first two years after surgery, then every six months from the third to the fifth year, and every 12 months after five years from the date of surgery. For each visit, patients undertook physical examination, blood cell test, tumor biomarkers including CEA levels. Computed tomography (CT) of the chest and CT or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the abdominal and pelvic region were employed to identify any possible recurrences every six months within the first two years and every 12 months from then on. Colonoscopies were also performed every two years after the surgery for each participant.