

## UFT/LV: patient preference for oral therapy

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As a major advantage over intravenous (IV) fluorouracil, oral tegafur-uracil/leucovorin (UFT/LV) offers convenience of administration by reducing hospital visits and use of infusion pumps. Oral delivery represents a convenient and more acceptable treatment modality that patients may choose in order to maintain a more normal lifestyle.

A 71-year old male was diagnosed with rectal carcinoma (T3N+) and received combined radiotherapy (45 Gy) plus infusional fluorouracil followed by conservative surgery. The patient gave consent to participate in the AERO R-98 clinical trial.

This study compared Mayo Clinic 5FU+LV vs LV5FU2(deGramont)+irinotecan in Dukes B2-C rectal cancer. The patient was randomized to adjuvant chemotherapy with fluorouracil/LV plus irinotecan. During follow up examination, there was evidence of three hepatic metastases, but the patient remained asymptomatic and had a performance status of 0. Because of his life-style which involves extensive travelling, he refused a metastasectomy and decided against IV chemotherapy because of side effects encountered with the earlier adjuvant regimen. The patient wanted to live as normally as possible and placed greater emphasis on quality of life over duration. He elected to receive UFT/LV and after 6 months of therapy continued to live normally. The patient experienced grade 1 abdominal

pain and diarrhoea, but no major toxicities. CEA marker levels have fallen from 54 to 8 units. A CT scan showed a minor response in the hepatic lesions and the patient is now requesting hepatic surgery.

In this case study, discussion of prognosis and benefit to risk of treatment, together with patient involvement in the decision-making process, allowed selection of the most appropriate treatment to meet the patient's individual need in the palliative setting.

Assessment of patient preference for oral versus IV anti-cancer treatment in patients who have experience of both routes of administration has been studied in a recent randomized, crossover study in patients with advanced adenocarcinoma of the colon or rectum [1]. The data showed a clear patient preference for oral treatment over IV treatment that was influenced by convenience and toxicity considerations. Overall, 84% of patients preferred oral therapy with UFT/LV over IV fluorouracil/LV. The main reasons for greater preference of oral therapy were the ability to take the medication at home, and less stomatitis and diarrhoea.

## Reference

- 1 Borner MM, Schöffski P, de Wit R, Caponigro F, Cornella G, Sulkes A, et al. Patient preference and pharmacokinetics of oral modulated UFT versus intravenous fluorouracil and leucovorin: a randomised crossover trial in advanced colorectal cancer. *Eur J Cancer* 2002; **38**:349-358.