axis. In the statistical analysis the Mann-Whitney test and the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis were applied.

Results: Mean age and Karnofsky-index were not significantly different between cancer pts with depression and cancer pts without depression. There was a significant difference in median plasma concentration of IL-6 between the cancer pts with depression and without depression (18.7 vs. 2.7 pg/ml; p < 0.001). Plasma cortisol concentrations (8AM and 8PM) were significant higher in depression. The relative cortisol VAR (11.7 vs. 60.6% respectively; p < 0.001) was significantly decreased in the cancer pts with depression compared the in the cancer patients without depression, indicating a reduced diurnal amplitude in cortisol concentration demonstrating a disturbed circadian function of the HPA axis. IL-6 concentrations yielded as a predictor for the presence of depression at a cutoff value of 10.6 pg/ml a sensitivity of 79% and a specificity of 87% (AUC = 0.86; 95% CI 0.78−0.94), whereas cortisol VAR showed a sensitivity of 81% and a specificity of 88% (AUC = 0.85; 95% CI 0.74−0.97) at a cutoff value of 33.5%.

Conclusions: Depression is associated with increased plasma IL-6 concentrations in pts with cancer. These pts show a dysfunction of the HPA-axis, characterized by increased cortisol levels and a decreased diurnal variation of cortisol. The high sensitivity and specificity of these parameters for the presence of depression at the respective cutoff values make IL-6 and cortisol VAR helpful tools in the diagnosis of depression in pts with cancer.

1279 POSTER

Age does not influence acute toxicity during radiotherapy dose escalation for prostate cancer

A. Dhadda, D. Lakshmanan, M. Sokal, S. Sundar. *Nottingham City Hospital, Clinical Oncology, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

Background: Following the Publication onlyn of numerous studies, we have escalated our standard dose for the radical treatment of localised prostate cancer from 64 Gy to 74 Gy. With the disease being predominant in elderly men, we prospectively assessed whether the elderly have a higher incidence of acute toxicity.

Materials and methods: Random sample of 59 patients treated with radical conformal prostate radiotherapy over a 12-month period at a single institution. All patients had histologically proven prostate cancer and weare staged with a body coil MRI scan. Patients were positioned supine with knee supports using no rectal immobilisation and keeping the bladder comfortably full. Radiotherapy was planned using Helax TMS 6.1 B software and dedicated CT planning scans. All patients had 3D conformal radiotherapy with four field plans (Ant, Post, R. Lat, L. Lat beams). Patients were treated with an Elekta linear accelerator using 10 MV photons. Most (86%) were treated with a two-phase treatment plan. Patients were regularly reviewed at weekly intervals during radiotherapy and acute toxicity data (graded using CTC criteria) was collected prospectively using a standardised template. Statistical calculations were performed with chi-square or Mann Whitney U test as appropriate using SPSS for windows version 11.0.0 (SPSS Inc. Chicago, Illinois, USA).

Results: The median age of our sample was 67 years (range 53−81). The median Gleason score was 7 (range 6−10). The median PSA was 15.6 (range 1−95.4). The T stage of the tumours was T1 (34%), T2 (44%), T3 (15%), T4 (7%). The median radiotherapy dose was 72 Gy (range 64−74 Gy). The median number of fractions was 36 (range 31−38) with fraction size being 1.8−2 Gy. Neoadjuvant hormone therapy for 3 months prior to radiotherapy was given to 80% of patients. Overall, the acute GI/GU toxicity following radiotherapy dose escalation was found to be acceptable. No patients experienced grade 4 toxicity. Neither age, radiotherapy dose, use of neoadjuvant hormones, anterior field size area or pre-treatment tumour characteristics were found to significantly influence acute toxicity (table 1).

Table 1

CTC toxicity criteria	Age under 70 years			Age over 70 years			P value
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	
Bladder Frequency	28%	28%	15%	25%	35%	20%	0.40
Dysuria	39%	15%	5%	20%	10%	0%	0.40
Rectal bleed	21%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0.96
Diarrhoea	26%	5%	0%	15%	0%	5%	0.42

Conclusion: Elderly men with localised prostate cancer tolerate radiotherapy dose escalation without a considerable increase in acute toxicity and should not be denied dose escalation, on the basis of potential acute toxicity, if it is felt to be clinically appropriate.

1280 POSTER

Exercise during cytostatic treatment: correlates of cancer patients' self-reported anxiety and depression

J. Midtgaard[1], M. Rørth[2], R. Stelter[3], A. Tveterås[1], C. Andersen[2], M. Quist[1], T. Møller[4], L. Adamsen[1]. [1]*Copenhagen University Hospital, Centre for Nursing and Care Research, Copenhagen, Denmark;* [2]*Copenhagen University Hospital, Department of Oncology, Copenhagen, Denmark;* [3]*University of Copenhagen, Institute of Exercise and Sport Sciences, Copenhagen, Denmark;* [4]*Copenhagen University Hospital, Department of Hematology, Copenhagen, Denmark*

Background: Little is known about the role of exercise in improving cancer patients' mood while undergoing chemotherapy. The primary aim of the current study was to examine the effects of a six-week, supervised exercise program on self-reported psychological distress. Firstly, it was hypothesized that the exercise intervention would have beneficial outcomes on both anxiety and depression, and secondly, that this positive outcome would be associated with improvement in aerobic capacity. Material and

Methods: A heterogeneous sample of 91 patients undergoing chemotherapy was included. Eighty percent of the sample was oncology patients of whom 40% were women with breast cancer. 54% of the patients showed evidence of disease indicating residual or progressive disease, while 46% showed no evidence of residual disease and were treated with adjuvant therapy. The reported level of physical activity at baseline showed that 37% of the population had sedentary lifestyles. Patients completed a Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale Questionnaire (HADS) (response rate 91%), Aerobic capacity (VO$_2$max) was indirectly estimated by use of a stepwise work capacity test on an exercise bicycle.

Results: Adherence to the programme was 78%. Anxiety (p < 0.001) and depression (p = 0.042) was significantly reduced. The mean ± SD of the change was −1.14±2.91 for anxiety and −0.44±2.77 for depression. VO$_2$max significantly increased, t(83) = 7.10, p < 0.001. On average there was an increase of 0.272 l/min. equal to 12%. Improvements in fitness were correlated with improvements in depression, χ^2(1) = 3.966, p = 0.046, but not with improvements in anxiety, χ^2(1) = 0.540, p = 0.462. The study furthermore indicates that distress may be associated with gender, F(1,89) = 6.96, p = 0.009, disease status, F(1,89) = 4.56, p = 0.035, and pre-intervention levels of physical activity, F(1,89) = 4.40, p = 0.038.

Conclusion: The research suggests that exercise intervention may have a beneficial impact on psychological distress for cancer patients receiving chemotherapy with low to moderate levels of baseline psychomorbidity. The study is followed-up by an ongoing randomized clinical controlled trial including 250 patients to evaluate potential causal effects of exercise intervention on psychological distress and fitness in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

1281 POSTER

Effect of patient age on the prevalence and treatment of anemia as defined by the European Cancer Anaemia Survey (ECAS)

S. Van Belle[1]. For the ECAS Investigators. [1]*University Hospital Ghent, Medical Oncology, Ghent, Belgium*

Background: Cancer-associated anemia occurs as a result of the treatment and the malignancy. Data from ECAS (Ludwig et al, *Eur J Cancer* 2004;40:2293−2306) were analyzed to evaluate any differences in the prevalence and treatment of anemia (hemoglobin [Hb] < 12.0 g/dL) according to patient age at diagnosis, and effect of anemia on quality of life (QOL).

Material and methods: Data were used from the analysis population (patients with data at and after enrollment; n = 13,628). Data included treatment status (none, chemotherapy [CT], radiotherapy [RT], concomitant CT/RT); Hb levels; and QOL as measured by WHO performance score; all tumor types were included. Age groups were defined as (years)18−49, 50−59, 60−69, and ⩾ 70; approximately the same percentage of patients was in each age group at enrollment: 25%, 26%, 29%, and 20%, respectively.

Results: No differences in treatment status at enrollment were noted among the age groups. Slightly over half the patients were receiving no treatment (range among age groups: 52% to 55%), about 40% (range: 38% to 40%) were receiving CT, and some (range: 4% to 5%) were receiving RT. At 1 month post-enrollment, CT and RT were administered to more patients (62% to 70%, and 11% to 16%, respectively); patients ⩾ 70 received less CT and more RT compared with the other age groups. Hb level at enrollment did not differ significantly among age groups although anemia was noted in greater percentages of older patients (60−69 years: 40%; ⩾ 70 years: 44%) compared to younger patients (18−49 years: 38%; 50−59 years, 36%). About 30% of patients across age groups had Hb levels between 10.0 and 11.9 g/dL; slightly more patients in the older age groups had Hb levels < 10.0 g/dL (60−69 years: 12%; ⩾ 70 years: 13%)