552 POSTER

INTRA-ARTERIAL CHEMOTHERAPY FOR LOCALLY ADVANCED CARCINOMA OF THE PANCREAS (LAPC)

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Background: the very limited efficacy of current chemotherapeutic strategies in LAPC, the pattern of metastatic spread largely confined to the upper abdominal organs within the arterial supply of celiac axis induced us to design this phase II study of locoregional intra-arterial chemotherapy. *Purpose:* the aim of the present study was to evaluate the feasibility, the toxicity, the response rate and the real impact on survival of a new combination of drugs administered intra-arterially in the treatment of LAPC. *Patients and methods:* from January 1994 to March 1995, twenty-five consecutive patients with LAPC were given 2 intra-arterial cycles of chemotherapy through a catheter in celiac axis introduced via the femoral artery, on days 1 and 22. The schedule was FLEC: 5 fluoruracil (5FU) 1000 mg/sqm; leucoverin (LV) 100 mg/sqm, epirubicin (EPI) 60 mg/sqm and carboplatin (CP) 300 mg/sqm: each drug was infused over a period of 10 minutes and only one day of hospitalization was necessary for each cycle. After 2 cycles when we obtain a partial response (PR) or a stable disease (SD), other 2 cycles were planned. *Results:* a total of 74 courses of chemotherapy were administered with a mean of 2.9 for each patient (1–5). 23 patients are evaluable for response: 10/23 patients had a PR (43%) evaluated by ct-scan, 14/23 had a decrease of Ca 19-9 (61%), 14/23 had an improvement in quality of life (61%). Grade 3/4 hematological toxicity was observed in 5/23 (22%); grade 2/3 gastrointestinal toxicity in 2/23 (9%); alopecia in 2/23 (9%). One sudden death was observed in a patient on day 23 after the third cycle. No complications related to angiographic procedure was noted. At a median follow up of 4 months (1–13), the median survival is 5.6 months and 1-year survival rate is 51% and 9% for responders and non responders respectively. *Conclusions:* this study showed that the FLBC combination given through a celiac axis infusion is well tolerated and active and may become an important strategy both in a palliative and in a preoperative setting in patients with pancreatic carcinoma.

553 POSTER

HYDROXYUREA, FOLINIC ACID, 5FU BOLUS AND INFUSION (HLFP REGIMEN) IN ADVANCED ESOPHAGEAL CANCER

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HLFP regimen is active in advanced gastric cancer. We tested this combination in a phase II study for patients with advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the esophagus. Regimen consisted in hydroxyurea 1.5 to 2 g orally days 0, 1 and 2, folinic acid 200 mg/m^2 in 2-h infusion, followed by 5FU 400 mg/m^2 bolus and 600 mg/m^2 22-h infusion days 1 & 2 every 14 days. Cisplatin was administered at 80 mg/m^2 day 3 every 2 courses. HLFP regimen was given until progression. 32 patients were included, this preliminary report concerns the first 26 (22 males, 4 females) analysed pts (6 too early). Mean age was 62.7 yrs ± 8.8 (44–74). 9 presented an advanced locoregional disease, and 17 a metastatic disease (distant lymph nodes: 17; liver: 6; lung: 3). Initial performance status (WHO) was 0 (11 pts), 1 (11) or 2 (4). 118 courses were administered. Toxicity (> WHO grade 2) was leucopenia (3 pts), thrombopenia (2 pts), vomiting (1 pt), diarrhea (2 pts). Overall, maximal toxicity per pt was gr 0 (1 pt), gr 1 (10), 2 (9), 3 (4) and 4 (2), giving a gr 3–4 rate of toxicity of 23%. Response rate was 69.2%, with 4 CR and 14 PR. 4 pts underwent surgery after chemotherapy, and 8 radiotherapy. 53.8% of pts had a weight gain during treatment, dysphagia disappeared in 67% of pts. Median follow-up is 11 months. At 11 months, 79% of pts are alive, 56% without evidence of progression. This combination is active in advanced esophageal cancer. The study is ongoing.

554 POSTER

DEMONSTRATED EFFICIENCY OF 5FLUOROURACIL (5FU) CONTINUOUS INFUSION (CI) AND CISPLATIN (P) IN PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED BILIARY TRACT CARCINOMA

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Little is known about the efficiency of chemotherapy in advanced biliary tract carcinoma. Accordingly, we conducted a phase II study of combined 5FU CI and P in this disease. 28 patients (pts) (13 M/15 F) were included. Median age: 57 years. ECOG performance status: grade (g) 0–1: 79%, g 2: 18%, g 3: 3%. More than 10% weight loss: 36% Primary tumor: gallbladder: 11, Vater ampulla: 5, cholangiocarcinoma: 5, bile ducts: 7. 25 patients had metastases, 2 had local recurrences of their tumor and 1 a nodulary intrahepatic non resectable form. Sites of the metastases: liver: 12 pts, abdominal lymph nodes: 6 pts, lung: 6 pts, peritoneum: 6 pts, mediastinal lymph nodes: 1 pt. *Treatment schedule:* 5FU CI: 1 g/m^2 × 5 days, P: 100 mg/m^2 day 2 repeated every 4 weeks. *Results:* Median number of cycles: 4. 25 pts are evaluable for the tumor response (1 too early, 2 non evaluable), no complete response, partial response (PR): 8, objective response rate = 29% (CI: 12–46%). Minor response: 2, stabilisation: 10, progressive disease: 6. Toxicity was tolerable: g 3 vomiting: 21% of the pts, g 3 mucositis: 4%. Some pts experienced haematological toxicity: g 3 granulocytopenia: 18%, g 4: 4%; no g 3–4 thrombocytopenia. Other toxicities: g 1–2 renal: 3 pts; g 1 neuropathy: 1 pt. No toxic death. Median survival was 10 months and 1-year actuarial survival 33%.

We conclude that this regimen is tolerable and active in patients with advanced biliary tract cancer.

555 POSTER

PALLIATIVE CHEMOTHERAPY IMPROVES SURVIVAL AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN ADVANCED PANCREATIC AND BILIARY CANCER

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In order to estimate any gain in the quantity and quality of life by chemotherapy, 91 patients with pancreatic or biliary cancer were between Jan 1991 and Febr 1995 randomized to either primary chemotherapy in addition to best supportive care or to best supportive care, where chemotherapy was allowed if the supportive measures did not accomplish palliation. Chemotherapy was 5-FU/leucovorin (FLv) or FLy combined with etoposide. The EORTC QLQ C-30 instrument was used to evaluate quality of life.

In the primary chemotherapy group, 16/39 (41%) had improved/prolonged high quality of life for at least 4 months compared to 4/39 (10%), $P < 0.01$) in patients evaluable in March 1995. Overall survival was longer in the primary chemotherapy group (median 6 vs 3 months, $P < 0.01$). Also the quality adjusted survival time was longer (median 5 vs 2 months, $P < 0.05$). In conclusion, this study shows that chemotherapy can add both quantity and quality of life in advanced pancreatic and biliary cancer.

556 POSTER

POSTOPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS AFTER NEOADJUVANT CHEMOTHERAPY FOR GASTRIC ADENOCARCINOMA

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Multimodality treatment may improve the dismal prognosis of far advanced gastric carcinoma. However, toxicity of the chemotherapy itself as well as increased postoperative morbidity may be significant disadvantages. We analyzed our experience with neoadjuvant chemotherapy in terms of postoperative morbidity and mortality.

Between 1986 and 1993 a total of 61 patients underwent preoperative chemotherapy for advanced, irresectable gastric carcinoma. Chemotherapy consisted of EAP (Etoposid, Adriamycin, Cisplatin) in 56 and ELF (Etoposid, Leucovorin, 5-FU) in 5 patients. Overall remission rate was more than 60%, and 46 patients underwent second-look surgery. In 31 cases, extended total gastrectomy was performed (resectability: 67.4%), while in 15 patients explorative laparotomy, combined with multiple