

## ASCO Clinical Practice Guidelines on Tumour Markers in Breast and Colorectal Cancer

The American Society of Clinical Oncology have published their guidelines for the use of tumour markers in breast and colorectal cancer prevention, screening, treatment and surveillance [1]. This document will be updated annually.

The Expert Panel write, "These guidelines describe the use of tumour markers in routine clinical practice. These guidelines should not be applied in the context of clinical trials, in which the use of tumour markers may be prospectively dictated or may even be the subject of the investigation."

### Colorectal cancer

For colorectal cancer, the Panel recommend that carcino-embryonic antigen (CEA) levels be measured before operation if this would change surgical management. If resection of liver metastasis would be clinically indicated, CEA levels should be monitored every 2 to 3 months for  $\geq 2$  years.

The Panel conclude that data are insufficient to recommend the routine use of lipid-associated sialic acid, CA 19-9, DNA index, DNA flow cytometric proliferation analysis, *TP53* tumour suppressor gene, and *ras* oncogene.

### Breast cancer

For breast cancer, the Panel recommend that oestrogen receptor and progesterone receptor are measured on every primary specimen, but on subsequent specimens only if it would lead to a change in management.

Again, there is not enough data to recommend the routine use of DNA index, DNA flow cytometric proliferation analysis, CA 15-3, CEA, c-erbB-2, p53 or cathepsin-D. In the absence of readily measurable disease, CA 15-3 and CEA levels can be used to document treatment failure.

1. American Society of Clinical Oncology. Clinical practice guidelines for the use of tumor markers in breast and colorectal cancer. *J Clin Oncol* 1996, 14, 2843-2828.

## From Europe

### MAJOR NEW BREAST CANCER EVENT

The Breast Cancer Cooperative Group of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC-BCCG), the European Society of Mastology (EUSOMA) and Europa Donna (the European Breast Cancer Coalition) are to unite for the first time in 1998 to create a new European forum—the 1st European Breast Cancer Conference—where issues relating to the common focus of the three organisations—translation, dissemination and implications of recent cancer research—will be brought to the attention of the entire spectrum of scientific and lay opinion.

The 1st European Breast Cancer Conference will be held in Florence from 29 September to 3 October 1998.

This exciting new event will replace the well established EORTC Breast Cancer Working Conference, International EUSOMA Conference and Europa Donna International Conference to become the European platform for all major communications on breast cancer.

The clearly identified goals of these organisations, their unique background and expertise, will contribute to the development of a new type of conference providing basic research scientists, clinical oncologists of all disciplines, national cancer leagues and breast cancer support groups with the latest information on epidemiology, prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and care of individuals with breast cancer.

Florence—that most eminent of Italian Renaissance cities, birthplace of so much that has contributed to the best of the European heritage—offers the ideal setting for this important new example of European collaboration in the field of breast cancer.

• *EORTC Breast Cancer Cooperative Group* is a multidisciplinary group of clinical researchers involved in the stimulation, development and conduct of prospective multicentre clinical trials in the field of breast cancer carried out in Europe.

• *EUSOMA's* main role is to unify and publicise the results of scientific research and increase contacts between basic scientists and clinicians in order to facilitate the passage of information from the experimental stage to stage-of-the-art treatments.

• *Europa Donna* is a coalition of organisations and individuals whose primary aim is to mobilise the support of European women in pressing for improved breast cancer education, appropriate screening, optimal treatment and care and increased funding for research.

For further information about the conference, please contact the FECS Conference Unit, Avenue E. Mounier 83, B-1200 Brussels, Belgium.  
Tel: +32 (2) 7750206;  
Fax: +32 (2) 7750200.

U. Veronesi  
Honorary Chairman  
President Eusoma

M. Piccart  
Chairman  
EORTC-BCCG

G. Pignatelli  
President  
Europa Donna

J. Gosselin  
Chairman  
FECS

## EORTC Guidelines Show in which Patients Erythropoietin Works

The EORTC is bringing out guidelines on the use of erythropoietin which will help oncologists determine which patients will benefit from long term use.

Professor Heinz Zwierzina of the University of Innsbruck, Clinic of Medicine, Innsbruck, Austria, and one

of the authors of the guidelines, said that it was now possible to answer the question about how long to use erythropoietin. "You can foresee after a short period of erythropoietin treatment whether the patient is going to respond to treatment or not," he says.