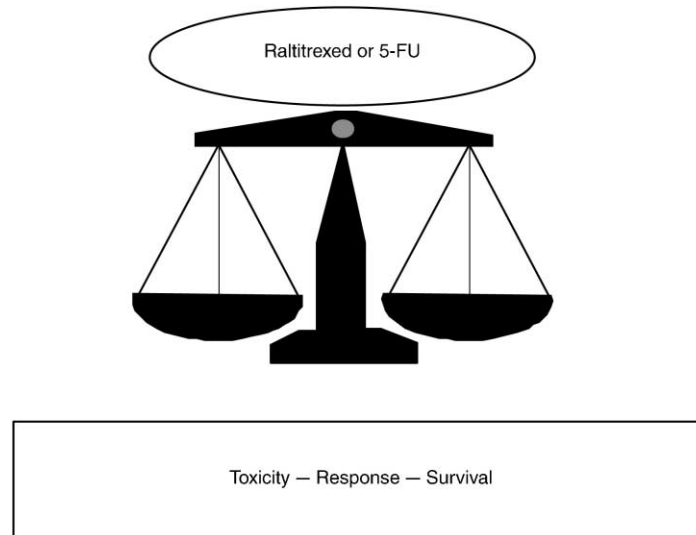


## This issue's topics



### **Raltitrexed or 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer**

Raltitrexed and 5-FU are both inhibitors of thymidylate synthase. However, they have differing mechanisms, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. Cunningham and colleagues review data from phase II and III trials of these two cytotoxics for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer patients. For most of the studies, both survival and response rates were similar. Raltitrexed treatment did result in some increased toxicity and the authors suggest guidelines to minimise the incidence of serious side-effects. These included monitoring the renal function of the patient, as approximately 50% of raltitrexed is excreted unchanged in the urine, as well as the prompt treatment of symptoms, particularly diarrhoea and neutropenia.

### **A current perspective of muscle invasive bladder cancer**

Five-year survival for patients with muscle invasive bladder cancer is approximately 50% and can be as low as 25–35% for those considered high risk (pT3–pT4, pN+ M0). Dr Sternberg therefore discusses in her Current Perspective the many challenges to be faced in this field. She outlines the importance of taking a multimodal approach with collaboration between the many disciplines involved. From the evidence in the literature, she states that it is not yet clear whether neoadjuvant or adjuvant chemotherapy should be given, although neoadjuvant chemotherapy may be useful in preserving the bladder and thereby maintaining a better quality of life. She concludes, “the international adjuvant chemotherapy trial co-ordinated by the EORTC will hopefully clarify some of these unanswered questions”.

### **Increased matrilysin expression following preoperative radiotherapy treatment of rectal cancer patients**

The overexpression of matrilysin (MMP-7), a matrix metalloproteinase, in colorectal cancer patients is thought to be associated with an increased metastatic potential and Dukes' stage. Kumar and colleagues studied in this issue the effects of preoperative radiotherapy (25 Gy, 5 fractions, 5 days) that is increasingly being given to patients with resectable rectal cancer as an adjuvant treatment on *MMP-7* gene expression. Using a quantitative reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) technique, applied to 30 tumour samples derived from 15 patients, they showed that preoperative radiotherapy led to a 6–7-fold increase in *MMP-7* expression in the tumour tissue. No change was observed in the control tissues ( $n = 12$ ). The authors suggest that therapies aimed at inhibiting MMP-7 expression may be useful.

## Forthcoming papers

### **Position Paper**

EUSOMA—guidelines on endocrine therapy of breast cancer  
R.W. Blamey *et al.*

### **Editorial**

Non-randomised phase II trials of drug combinations: often meaningless, sometimes misleading. Are there alternative strategies?  
M. Van Glabbeke, W. Steward, J.P. Armand

### **Reviews**

Update on pharmacogenetics in cancer chemotherapy  
F. Innocenti, M.J. Ratain

Thyroid cancer after radiation exposure  
C. Rubino, A.F. Cailleux, F. De Vathaire, M. Schlumberger

### **Original Papers**

#### **Clinical**

Results of a randomised phase II study of cisplatin plus 5-fluorouracil versus cisplatin plus 5-fluorouracil with alpha-interferon in metastatic pancreatic cancer: an EORTC Gastrointestinal Tract Cancer Group trial  
D.J. Th. Wagener, J.A. Wils, T.C. Kok *et al.*

Gemcitabine, vinorelbine and cisplatin combination chemotherapy in advanced non-small cell lung cancer: a phase II trial  
E. Laack, T. Mende, H. Dürk *et al.*

Optimisation of fluorouracil(5-FU)/cisplatin combination chemotherapy with a new schedule of hydroxyurea, leucovorin, 5-FU and cisplatin (HLFP regimen) for metastatic oesophageal cancer  
J. Taïeb, P. Artu, B. Baujat *et al.*

Concomitant cisplatin and radiotherapy in a conventional and modified fractionation schedule in locally advanced head and neck cancer  
H. Bartelink, W. Van den Bogaert, J-C. Horiot *et al.*

**On a related theme, please see the *EJC* Special Issue on Chemoradiotherapy (Vol. 38, Issue 2)**

#### **Paediatric**

Paediatric embryonic brain tumours: biological and clinical relevance of molecular genetic abnormalities  
R. Gilbertson

Troponin T in the first 24 hours after the administration of chemotherapy and the detection of myocardial damage in children  
L.C.M. Kremer, B.A.J. Bastiaansen, M. Offringa *et al.*

#### **Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention**

A computer program for period analysis of cancer patient survival  
H. Brenner, O. Gefeller, T. Hakulinen

Contacts with animals and humans as risk factors for adult brain tumours  
F. Menegoz, J. Little, M. Colonna *et al.*

Transition in cancer patterns among Turks residing in Germany  
H. Zeeb, O. Razum, M. Blettner, C. Stegmaier

#### **Experimental**

Overexpression of pyrimidine nucleoside phosphorylase enhances the sensitivity to 5'-deoxy-5-fluorouridine in tumour cells *in vitro* and *in vivo*  
T. Nagata, H. Tanimura, M. Iwahashi *et al.*

Radiobiological characteristics of solid tumours depending on the p53 status of the tumour cells, with emphasis on the response of intratumour quiescent cells  
S. Masunaga, K. Ono, T. Ohnishi *et al.*

High frequency of LOH, MSI and abnormal expression of FHIT in gastric cancer  
C. Huiping, S. Kristjansdottir, J.T. Bergthorsson *et al.*