

## This issue's topics



### **'SAS macro'- the key to using period analyses?**

#### **A new computer program to estimate long-term survival of recently diagnosed patients with cancer**

Period analysis is a new method of survival analysis. It reflects the survival of patients within a recent calendar period, using the survival experience of patients diagnosed previously. It can therefore be more up to date, taking into consideration recent changes in treatment. However, its application has been hindered due to a lack of computer programs to facilitate carrying out such analyses. Brenner and colleagues have therefore designed a program which they designate 'SAS macro' that can be used to produce period analyses of both absolute and relative survival rates using data that are commonly available in population-based cancer registries. They used data from the nationwide Finnish cancer registry to examine its applicability and present their results, as well as the design of the program, in this issue. Thus, their program could provide 'the key' to the more widespread use of period analyses.

#### **Update on the molecular mechanisms involved in paediatric embryonic brain tumours**

Dr Gilbertson's review in this issue (as part of our Paediatric Update series I) of the molecular pathways of childhood tumours is timely because chemotherapy has less of an impact on the course of intracranial tumours as on the extracranial solid tumours and the acute leukaemias. The rapidly increasing knowledge about chromosomal analyses raises the possibility of deriving targeted molecular therapies that could help in the diagnosis of patients or become available for therapeutic trials. Dr Gilbertson concludes that "these goals will only be met by close collaboration between the clinic and laboratory" and "that consistent cure of these terrible childhood diseases with minimal long-term side-effects is the final objective".

#### **Launch of a series of reviews from data presented at ECCO11!**

A series of reviews were commissioned based on the teaching lectures given by renowned experts at the ECCO11 conference in Lisbon this year. The first of these reviews by Dr Schlumberger is included in this issue and describes epidemiological, clinical and experimental aspects of thyroid cancer after radiation exposure. He discusses the modification of risk associated with age at exposure, gender and individual susceptibility and provides an update on the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Dr Schlumberger summarises that exposure to children should be avoided, as well as exposure through the treatment of benign lesions or through diagnostic techniques and that children should receive immediate prophylaxis treatment with potassium iodide following accidental exposure.

## Forthcoming papers

### **Editorial**

Comment on "The implementation of guidelines and computerised forms improves the completeness of cancer pathology reporting. The Crops Project: a randomised controlled trial in pathology" by Branstetter and colleagues  
S. Daugaard

### **Current Perspective**

Decision-making in early breast cancer: guidelines and decision tools  
M. Baum, P.M. Ravdin

### **Reviews**

Angiogenesis and anti-angiogenesis in neuroblastoma  
D. Ribatti, A. Vacca, B. Nico, *et al.*  
Cytokeratins 20 and 7 as biomarkers: usefulness in discriminating primary from metastatic adenocarcinoma  
T. Tot

### **Original Papers**

#### **Clinical**

The implementation of guidelines and computerised forms improves the completeness of cancer pathology reporting. The Crops Project: a randomised controlled trial in pathology  
L.K. Branstetter, S. Greening, R.G. Newcombe, *et al.*  
An EORTC-NCIC phase I study of gemcitabine and continuous infusion 5-fluorouracil in patients with metastatic breast cancer resistant to anthracyclines or pre-treated with both anthracyclines and taxanes  
A. Awada, L. Biganzoli, T. Cufer, *et al.*  
A phase II EORTC study of temozolomide in patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma  
J.P. van Meerbeeck, P. Baas, C. Debruyne, *et al.*  
The role of dynamic imaging in sentinel lymph node biopsy in breast cancer  
A.C. Lee, M.R.S. Keshtgar, W.A. Waddington, P.J. Ell  
Symptomatology of cancer patients in palliative care: content validation of self-assessment questionnaires against medical records  
A population-based study of intensive multi-agent chemotherapy with or without autotransplant for the highest risk Hodgkin's disease patients identified by the Scotland and Newcastle Lymphoma Group (SNLG) prognostic index  
Clinical phase II study and pharmacological evaluation of rubitecan in non-pretreated patients with metastatic colorectal cancer—significant effect of food intake on the bioavailability of the oral camptothecin analogue  
P. Schoffski, A. Herr, J.B. Vermoken, *et al.*

**Paediatric**

Carboplatin before and during radiation therapy for the treatment of malignant brain stem tumours

F. Doz, S. Nuenschwander, E. Bouffet, *et al.*

**Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention**

Sun exposure and sun protection in young European children: an EORTC multicentre study

G. Severi, M.S. Cattaruzza, L. Baglietto, *et al.*

Women who participate in spontaneous screening are not at higher risk for cervical cancer than women who attend programme screening

A.B. Bos, M. van Ballegooijen, G.J. van Oortmarssen, J.D.F. Habbema

**Experimental**

Alterations in p53 and pRb pathways and their prognostic significance on oesophageal cancer

R. Mathew, S. Arora, R. Khanna, *et al.*

The importance of drug scheduling and recovery phases in determining drug activity: Improving etoposide efficacy in BCR-ABL positive CML cells

W.M. Liu, A.J. Lawrence, S.P. Joel

**Letters**

Comment on "Extended-term effects of head and neck irradiation in a rodent model", R.M. Nagler, *Eur. J. Cancer* 2001, **37**, 1938–1945

A.W.T. Konings, A. Vissink, R.P. Coppes

Author's reply

R.M. Nagler