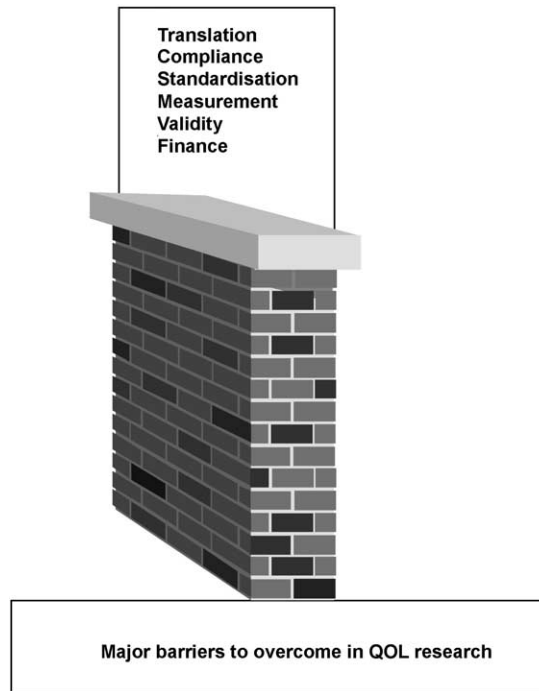


## This issue's topics



### Focus on QOL

In this issue, Bottomley and colleagues outline the key challenges faced, progress that has been made and future strategies in Quality of Life (QOL) studies in a Position paper by the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC). These challenges include validity, translation, compliance, standardisation in design and measurements and financial support. Typically, trials including QOL measurements are phase III randomised trials and it is generally a secondary endpoint. The number of such trials has increased considerably in recent years. Approaches that the EORTC has implemented to overcome some of the aforementioned barriers to QOL research include monitoring, providing feedback, education, training and planning. The authors hope that with ongoing initiatives “all EORTC QOL studies will significantly impact upon the future treatment and care of patients”. Two other articles on QOL by Patrick and colleagues and Conroy and colleagues are also published in this issue.

### Raltitrexed shows activity in malignant pleural mesothelioma

In this issue, Baas and colleagues report that raltitrexed (Tomudex<sup>®</sup>) has an activity exceeding 20% in chemo-naïve malignant pleural mesothelioma (MPH) patients. The incidence of MPH is expected to rise and the disease is associated with a poor survival. For this reason, the EORTC have tested various single agents for activity. In a phase II multicentre EORTC study, Baas and colleagues examined the activity of 3 mg/m<sup>2</sup> of raltitrexed given 3 weekly as an intravenous bolus up to a maximum of eight cycles (to 24 patients). 104 courses were given and five responses (20.8%; 95% Confidence Intervals 7.1–42.2%) were observed. Toxicity was mild. Raltitrexed is a quinazoline folate analogue and an inhibitor of thymidylate synthase. Interestingly, another inhibitor of folate metabolism (pemetrexed) has recently been reported to have activity in this disease. The authors conclude that “further studies are warranted”.

### The Chernobyl disaster-dispelling rumours and fears with facts

This is what Dr Rahu attempts to do in a review published in this issue. He describes the background to the disaster and the rumours and fears resulting from it, but states that only facts can dispel these. A recent review by UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation) attempts to do this. It states that although there is an increase in childhood thyroid cancers, there is no accredited evidence for an increase in leukaemias or for an increase in the overall cancer incidence and mortality associated with radiation exposure. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Dr Rahu, there are weak epidemiological structures in place in the three countries most affected that hamper the “search for the truth”. He concludes that a combination of political will to guarantee more money for research and international multidisciplinary effort will be required to learn more about the long-term effects of this disaster.

# Forthcoming papers

## Editorial Comments

Tumour-associated hypermethylation: silencing E-cadherin expression enhances invasion and metastasis  
L. Di Croce, P. Pelicci

## Position Paper

Quality assurance in radiotherapy  
V.E. Kouloulas

## Current Perspective

Quality assurance in radiotherapy: translating clinical research benefits into standard practice  
P. Dixon, B. O'Sullivan

## Review

The quality assurance programme of the radiotherapy group of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC): a critical appraisal of twenty years of continuous efforts  
V.E. Kouloulas, P.M. Poortmans, J. Bernier *et al.*

## Original Papers

### Clinical

Predictive value of tumour cell proliferation in locally advanced breast cancer treated with neoadjuvant chemotherapy  
T. Aas, S. Geisler, G.E. Eide *et al.*  
A mutant *TP53* gene status is associated with a poor prognosis and anthracycline-resistance in breast cancer patients  
E. Rahko, G. Blanco, Y. Soini, R. Bloigu, A. Jukkola  
Elevated plasma levels of transforming growth factor-B1 (TGF-B1) in patients with advanced breast cancer: association with disease progression  
V. Ivanovic, N. Todorovic-Rakovic, M. Demajo *et al.*  
Pathological features of breast cancer response following neoadjuvant treatment with either letrozole or tamoxifen  
W.R. Miller, J.M. Dixon, L. Macfarlane, D. Cameron, T.J. Anderson  
Mannose-6-phosphate/insulin-like growth-factor-II receptor expression levels during the progression from normal human mammary tissue to invasive breast carcinomas  
M.L. Berthe, M. Esslimani Sahla, P. Roger, M. Gleizes, G.J. Lemamy, J.P. Brouillet, H. Rochefort  
CD103+ intraepithelial lymphocytes—a unique population in microsatellite unstable sporadic colorectal cancer  
E. Quinn, N. Hawkins, Y.L. Yip *et al.*  
Biological markers that predict clinical recurrence in ductal carcinoma *in situ* of the breast  
E. Provenzano, G.G. Giles, G. Marr, J.L. Hopper, D.J. Venter, J.E. Armes  
Brain metastases following interleukin-2 plus interferon-alpha-2A therapy: a follow-up study in 94 stage IV melanoma patients  
A. Schmittl, T. Proebstle, Engenhardt-Cabillic *et al.*  
Cisplatin, doxorubicin, and ifosfamide in carcinosarcoma of the female genital tract. A phase II study of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Gynaecological Cancer Group (EORTC 55923)  
R.E.N. van Rijswijk, J.B. Vermorken, N. Reed *et al.*

### Paediatric

Trends in tobacco smoking across school grades among adolescents in Lyon, France  
A.J. Sasso, R.M. Merrill, V. Benhaim-Luzon *et al.*

### Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention

Family history of cancer and risk of ovarian cancer  
Negri, E., Pelucchi, C., Franceschi, S. *et al.*  
Viral infection, atopy and mycosis fungoides: a European multicentre case-control study  
M.M. Morales Suarez-Varela, J. Olsen, P. Johansen, L. Kaerlev, P. Guenel, P. Arveux, G. Wingren, L. Hardell, W. Ahrens, A. Stang, A. Llopis, F. Merletti, M.A. Villanueva

### Experimental

E-cadherin expression is silenced by DNA methylation in cervical cancer cell lines and tumours  
C.-L. Chen, S.S. Liu, S.-M. Ip *et al.*  
The association of E-cadherin expression and the methylation status of the *E-cadherin* gene in nasopharyngeal carcinoma cells  
S.W. Tsao, Y. Liu, X. Wang *et al.*  
Increased tumour extracellular pH induced by Bafilomycin A1, alters 5-fluorouracil pharmacokinetics and inhibits tumour growth and mitosis *in vivo*  
P.M.J. McSheehy, H. Troy, L.R. Kelland *et al.*  
Significance of dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase activity in renal cell carcinoma  
Y. Mizutani, H. Wada, O. Yoshida *et al.*

### Letter

A comment and update on 'Does the histological subtype of high-grade central osteosarcoma influence the response to treatment with chemotherapy and does it affect overall survival? A study on 570 patients of two consecutive trials of the European Osteosarcoma Intergroup'.  
G. Bacci, S. Ferrari, F. Bertoni *et al.*