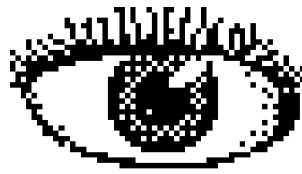


This issue's topics



Focus on breast cancer and screening

Several studies on screening in breast cancer are included in this issue. A few of these are highlighted below.

Effects of screening on incidence and mortality

Botha and colleagues studied the mortality and incidence trends in 16 European countries in women aged 35–74 years. Data were obtained from the EUROpean Cancer Incidence and Mortality (EUROCIM) database. Six of the countries had screening programmes in place. Incidence increased in all of the countries examined. Some screening-related increases were observed. The trends in mortality changed over the time period examined with previously increasing trends decreasing or flattening out in many of the countries. The declines in mortality occurred in the screened countries and screened age groups, but also in those that were not screened. This suggests other factors, in addition to screening—such as improvements in therapy—are also responsible for the observed trends.

Screening attendance is not adversely affected by previous false-positive mammographic results

This is the conclusion of a questionnaire-based study by Lampic and colleagues, who examined the subsequent screening attendance record in 517 women with previous false-positive results over the 2 years following their screening participation. They compared their results with 285 controls with previously normal findings on mammography and found a 95% attendance record for the subjects and 94% record for the controls. This was despite the fact that anxiety levels of the subjects in connection with their next scheduled screening were higher compared with controls. Furthermore, at the 1-year assessment, the subjects also reported a significantly higher frequency of breast self-examination (BSE) than the controls and the authors suggest that a false-positive mammogram may have “a positive impact on BSE”.

Overdiagnosis of non-progressive DCIS is small

In this issue, Yen and colleagues examined the rate of overdiagnosis of non-progressive ductal carcinoma *in situ* (DCIS) in breast cancer screening programmes and found such levels were small. Using a modelling system, they examined data from studies in the UK, Sweden, The Netherlands, Australia and the USA and found 37% of DCIS cases at the prevalence screen were estimated to be non-progressive. In contrast, only 4% of such cases were found at the incidence screen. Moreover, women attending a prevalence screen had a 19 times higher chance of being diagnosed with progressive DCIS or an invasive tumour. They concluded that although “there is an element of overdiagnosis of DCIS in breast cancer screening, the phenomenon is small in both relative and absolute terms”.

Forthcoming papers

Editorial Comment

Rationale for drug combinations
J.F. Smyth

Position Paper

Current research and treatment for epithelial ovarian cancer
F. Balkwill, R.C. Bast Jr, J. Berek, *et al.*

Current Perspective

Small molecules that reactivate mutant p53
V.J.N. Bykov, G. Selivanova, K.G. Wiman

Review

New non-angiogenesis dependent pathways for tumour growth
D. Ribatti, A. Vacca, F. Dammacco

Original papers

Clinical

Phase I and pharmacokinetic study of Yondelis (Ecteinascidin-743; ET-743) administered as an infusion over 1 hour or 3 hours every 21 days in patients with solid tumours

C. Twelves, K. Hoekman, A. Bowerman, *et al.*

Personality and quality of life in HNSCC patients following treatment

H.J. Aarstad, A.K.H. Aarstad, E.J. Birkhaug, *et al.*

Interobserver reproducibility of ulceration assessment in primary cutaneous melanoma

A. Spatz, M.G. Cook, D.E. Elder, *et al.*

Phase II trial of pegylated-liposomal doxorubicin in the treatment of locally advanced unresectable or metastatic transitional cell carcinoma of the urothelial tract

E. Winquist, D.S. Ernst, D. Jonker, *et al.*

Does adjuvant radiation therapy increase loco-regional control after resection for soft-tissue sarcoma of the extremities?

K. Khanfir, L. Alzieu, P. Terrier, *et al.*

The study of p16 and p15 gene methylation in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma and their quantitative evaluation in plasma by real-time PCR
S.T.-S. Wong, M.W.-L. Man, A.K.-Y. Lam, *et al.*
Oncology research overview in the European Union: a five year survey
D. Ugolini, G.S. Gela
Impact of the treating institution on the survival of patients with head and neck cancer treated with concomitant chemotherapy and radiotherapy
M. Benasso, R. Lionetto, Renzo Corvo, *et al.*

Paediatric

Tumour markers are poor predictors for relapse or progression in neuroblastoma
T. Simon, B. Hero, D.H. Hunneman, *et al.*

Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention

Familial relative risk of colorectal cancer: a population-based study
N. Andrieu, G. Launoy, R. Guillois, *et al.*
The influence of dietary patterns on the development of thyroid cancer
I. Markaki, D. Linos, A. Linos

Experimental

The combination of Yondelis and cisplatin is synergistic against human tumour xenographs
M. D'Incalci, T. Colombo, P. Ubezio, *et al.*
Pyrrolopyrimidine c-Src inhibitors reduce prostate cancer cell activity *in vitro*
I. Recchia, N. Rucci, C. Festuccia, *et al.*
Gene expression profiles in human non-small and small cell lung cancer
S. Petersen, Y. Chen, A. Pietas, *et al.*
Vascular endothelial growth factor, matrix metalloproteinases 2 & 9 and tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinases 1 & 2 in plasma of patients with ovarian carcinoma. Relationships with histopathological parameters and clinical outcome
L. Manenti, P. Paganoni, I. Floriani, *et al.*
Differential relationship between changes in tumour size and microcirculatory functions induced by therapy with an antivascular drug and cytotoxic drugs: implications for evaluation of therapeutic efficacy of AC7700 (AVE8062)
K. Hori, S. Saito, Y. Sato, *et al.*