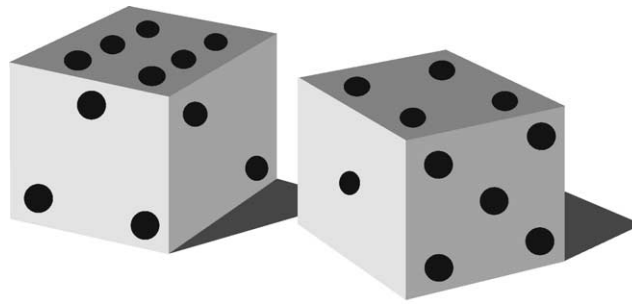


This issue's topics



Reducing the odds of cardiotoxicity

Novel taxane and doxorubicin combination shows promise in breast cancer patients

The novel taxane, BMS-184476, and doxorubicin given as combined treatment for previously untreated or minimally treated breast cancer patients shows promising anti-tumour activity, Sessa and colleagues report in this issue. Furthermore, the combination does not result in the pharmacokinetic (PK) and biochemical interactions involved in the cardiotoxicity observed following treatment with paclitaxel/doxorubicin combinations. The authors conducted a phase IB and PK study of 2 different schedules of BMS-184476 (given, in combination with a fixed dose of 50 mg/m² doxorubicin, either once every 3 weeks or on days (d) 1 and 8 every 3 weeks). The maximum tolerated dose of the taxane was 30 mg/m² in the 3-weekly schedule and 35 mg/m²/week in the d1 and 8 schedule. Neutropenia was the most frequent toxicity observed with both schedules. For women with previously untreated or minimally treated breast cancer, none responded on the 3-weekly schedule. By contrast, 9 of 17 women responded on the d1 and 8 schedule. Some patients who were not responsive to the combination did respond to subsequent paclitaxel and doxorubicin treatment. "The combination of doxorubicin given on d1 and BMS-184476 on d1 and 8, every 3 weeks, appears to be worth testing in future studies", they said.

Differing views on complementary and alternate medicines

Only a few oncologists have positive views towards alternative medicines, a study reports in this issue. Risberg and colleagues conducted a multi-centre survey of 828 Norwegian oncologists, nurses, clerks and therapeutic radiographers. Oncologists were less positive than the other groups about alternative medicines (4% had positive views compared with 33%, 55% and 32%, respectively). Females were also more positive (33% versus 14% males). By contrast, the participants were more positive about complementary methods.

Patients' preferences in quality of life measures

Patients with carcinoma of an unknown primary did not show a preference between 2 quality of life (QOL) questionnaires, authors report in this issue. Rodary and colleagues asked patients to state which of two commonly used QOL questionnaires (the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Core 30 (EORTC QLQ-C30) and Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy (FACIT)) they preferred. The same proportion of patients (19%; 13/68) stated a preference for one of the questionnaires, whereas 54% (37/68) felt both were acceptable. This suggests the patients see the questionnaires as complementary, they said. As the EORTC QLQ-C30 had fewer unanswered questions, was perceived as less intrusive and had fewer items that were considered inadequately worded, the authors propose that this measurement should be preferentially chosen. Alternatively, if these measures are complementary, could they be combined, they asked?

Forthcoming papers

Editorial Comments

Evaluation of clinical care by population-based cancer registries

R. Sankila, J.W.W. Coebergh, D.M. Parkin

Review

Cumulative incidence and risk factors of mitoxantrone-induced cardiotoxicity in children: a systematic review

E.C. van Dalen, H.J.H. van der Pal, P.J.M. Bakker *et al.*

Original papers

Clinical

Adverse impact of bone marrow transplantation on quality of life in acute myeloid leukaemia patients: analysis of the UK Medical Research Council AML 10 trial

M. Watson, G. Harrison, K. Wheatley *et al.*

Overexpression of the HER-2 oncogene does not play a role in high-grade osteosarcomas

J.K. Anninga, M.J. van de Vijver, A.M. Cleton-Jansen *et al.*

Glufosamide administered by 1-hour infusion as a second-line treatment for advanced non-small cell lung cancer. A Phase II trial of the EORTC - New Drug Development Group

G. Giaccone, E.F. Smit, M. de Jonge *et al.*

Endoscopic ultrasound guided fine-needle aspiration in patients with mediastinal abnormalities and previous extrathoracic malignancy
H. Kramer, G.H. Koeter, D.T. Sleijfer *et al.*
Age specific limitations of quality of life in breast cancer patients one year after diagnosis
V. Arndt, H. Merx, T. Sturmer *et al.*

Paediatric

Prevention of oral mucositis in pediatric patients treated with chemotherapy: a randomized crossover trial comparing two protocols of oral care
K.K.F. Cheng, A.M. Chang, M.P. Yuen
Predicting Cisplatin Ototoxicity in Children: The Influence of Age and Cumulative dose
U. Li, R.B. Womer, J.H. Silber
Reduction from seven to five cycles of intensive induction chemotherapy in children with high-risk neuroblastoma
B.H. Kushner, K. Kramer, M.P. LaQuaglia *et al.*
Pathology review for pediatric non-Hodgkin lymphoma in Japan: a report from the Japan Association of Childhood Leukemia Study (JACLS)
Atsuko Nakagawa, Shigeo Nakamura, Hirokazu Nakamine *et al.*

Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention

Colorectal cancer survival trends in Norway 1958 to 1997
E. Angell-Andersen, S. Tretli, M.P. Coleman *et al.*
Improvement in survival for women with breast cancer in Scotland between 1987 and 1993: impact of earlier diagnosis and changes in treatment
C.S. Thomson, D.H. Brewster, J.A. Dewar, C.J. Twelves

Experimental

Differential expression of retinoic acid receptor -beta (RARb) and AP-1 transcription factor in normal premalignant and malignant human laryngeal tissues
M.V. Karamouzis, G. Sotriopoulou-Bonikou, G. Vadoros *et al.*