

This issue's topics



Expression 'signatures' predicting outcome and response

'Portraits' of breast cancer predicting outcome or treatment response

Breast cancers can be divided into subtypes with different clinical outcomes using expression patterns ('portraits') of the tumours, according to a Norwegian researcher reporting in this issue. Dr. Sorlie (Department of Genetics, The Norwegian Radium Hospital, Oslo) used pairs of tumour samples – for example, taken before and after chemotherapy – from the same patients and found that these could be classified based on their unique expression 'signatures' or 'portraits'. Five distinct subgroups were defined based on these 'portraits'. Differences in overall survival and/or time to the development of metastases were noted for the different subgroups in independent data-sets – suggesting this research may have clinical relevance. "The strength of this method lies in its ability to identify clusters of genes that in a unique combination will distinguish subgroups of disease and predict outcome or treatment response. This multi-gene approach will undoubtedly be superior to the standard clinical markers currently in use".

Marine anti-tumour drugs

Marine anti-cancer research is sustained by the collaborative efforts of many countries according to US researchers in this issue. Mayer and Gustafson review the literature during 2001 and 2002 on 97 novel anti-tumour agents. They found that many of them belong to diverse structural classes, including polyketides, terpenes, steroids and peptides. The research was sustained by efforts from about 25 countries. Issues of supply, formulation and manufacturing remain important for the successful development of these agents, they said. "Research efforts aimed at the discovery of novel and clinically useful anti-tumour agents derived from marine organisms continue to be both sustained and global in nature".

Contraception in young adults with cancer

Avoidance of undesired pregnancies in young adults or teenagers with cancer, during and after treatment, requires a careful review of the contraceptive needs of this group. Laurence and colleagues review in this issue the different methods available and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. They recommend the use of the male condom, to prevent viral and bacterial infections, together with another method with better contraceptive effects. These issues need to be highlighted in this group of patients and this demands the awareness and education of the oncology teams and collaboration with family planning units, they conclude.

Forthcoming papers

Editorial comments

Phase II trials of drug combinations: fairytales or fact?

Verweij J

Is high-dose chemotherapy dead?

Rodenhuis S

Infection, vaccination and protection against melanoma – a ray of hope for novel preventive and therapeutic strategies?

Coebergh JW, Grange JM, Doré JF

Position papers

Adjuvant endocrine therapy in postmenopausal women with early breast cancer: where are we now?

Baum M

The role of aromatase inhibitors as adjuvant therapy for early breast cancer in postmenopausal women

Mouridsen HT, Robert NJ

Current perspective

Microcompetition and the origin of cancer

Jariwalla RJ

Reviews

Indoor tanning by adolescents: prevalence, practices and policies

Lazovich D, Forster J

Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting: current and new standards in the anti-emetic prophylaxis and treatment

Jordan K, Kasper C, Schmoll H-J

Original papers

Clinical

Doxorubicin and cisplatin chemotherapy in high-grade spindle cell sarcomas of bone other than osteosarcoma or malignant fibrous histiocytoma. A European Osteosarcoma Intergroup Study

Nooij MA, Whelan J, Bramwell VHC *et al.*

High-dose chemotherapy with haematopoietic stem cell transplantation for metastatic breast cancer: final results of the French multicentric randomised CMA/PEGASE 04 Protocol

Lotz JP, Cure C, Janvier M *et al.*

Multicentre randomised Phase III study comparing the same dose and schedule of cisplatin plus the same schedule of vinorelbine or gemcitabine in advanced NSCLC

Martoni A, Marino A, Sperandi F *et al.*

Phase I study of concomitant chemoradiation with raltitrexed in locally advanced head and neck cancer

Planting A, de Jonge M, Jansen P *et al.*

Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention

Protection against melanoma by vaccination with Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) and/or vaccinia: an epidemiology-based hypothesis on the nature of a melanoma risk factor and its immunological control

Krone B, Kolmel KF, Henz BM, *et al.*

Seasonal variation in the occurrence of cutaneous melanoma in Europe: influence of latitude. An analysis using the EURO CARE group of registries

Boniol M, de Vries E, Coebergh JW *et al.*

Medical history and risk for lymphoma: results of a population-based case-control study in Germany

Becker N, Deeg E, Nieters A

Prior immunisation with vaccinia or BCG is associated with a better survival of patients with malignant melanoma. An EORTC cohort study on 542 patients

Kolmel KF, Grange JM, Krone B *et al.*

Experimental

CYP1A1 genotype-selective inhibition of benzo(a)pyrene activation by quercetin

Schwarz D, Kisselev P, Roots I

Vessel maturation effects on tumour growth: computer model validated in implanted human ovarian carcinoma spheroids

Arakelyan L, Merbl Y, Agur Z

Association of CK19 mRNA detection of occult cancer cells in mediastinal lymph nodes in non-small cell lung carcinoma and high risk of early recurrence

Le Pimpec-Barthes F, Danel C, Lacave R *et al.*

The human H19 gene is frequently overexpressed in myometrium and stroma during pathological endometrial proliferative events

Lottin S, Adriaenssens E, Berteaux N *et al.*