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Cancer Care Issues - Advice From Dr. Cary Presant

Bevacizumab ♦ the Story is Not So Simple

Cary Presant, MD, Oncology, Hematology/Oncology, 09:39PM Jul 15, 2013

One of the most widely used anticancer drugs is bevacizumab. The mechanism of action is binding of VEGF-A, leading to an anti-vascular effect. Elegant studies by R. Jain and coauthors (Nat Med 2001; 9: 987) showed that bevacizumab "normalizes" blood vessels, improving oxygenation and increasing delivery of chemotherapy. Most oncologists have accepted this explanation as a suitable rationale for combined modality therapy with bevacizumab plus standard chemotherapy drugs, which in some cancers improves patient outcomes.

Two recent articles make this explanation not so simple. A. van der Veldt and coauthors showed a reduction in tumor delivery of docetaxel after bevacizumab in lung cancer patients with NSCLC.

And M. Arjaans and coauthors with E. de Vries have recently shown that bevacizumab reduces uptake of antitumor antibodies (trastuzumab or IgG). These PET studies showed reduced accumulation by 27% to 41%.

This indicates to me that use of bevacizumab in combination is much more complex than previously thought. This argues for cautious combination of bevacizumab with any other drugs. It is important for us to use combinations that have been studied and have shown better patient outcomes. And this also argues for more comprehensive studies by the manufacturer to guide us in clinical use of the drug.

It is also a lesson to other manufacturers of other anti-vascular drugs to perform parallel studies to determine the impact of their drugs on drug and antibody uptake. It also leads us to ask, what is the effect on hormonal, liposomal, or other targeted agent delivery?

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ABOUT THIS BLOG

Dr. Cary Presant describes research results, observations on oncology issues, and discussions on current cancer care topics that can help improve your quality oncology care and your oncology practice.

Disclosure: Cary A. Presant, MD, has disclosed the following relevant financial relationships:

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Cary A. Presant, MD, FACP, a hematologist and medical oncologist, is a staff physician at Wilshire Oncology Medical Group. He has been director of cancer programs at Washington University School of

Medicine, the Jewish Hospital of St. Louis, and the City of Hope National Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. He is currently Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of Southern California School of Medicine. Dr. Presant's current research includes pharmacologic improvement of chemotherapy effectiveness by magnetic resonance spectroscopy, as well as the development of a new chemotherapy sensitivity test, based on apoptosis, for all types of cancer. He is the author of over 400 scientific articles in cancer treatment, cancer detection, chemotherapy, experimental tumor biology and pharmacology, liposomes for cancer diagnosis and therapy, magnetic resonance spectroscopy, measurement of quality of life in cancer patients, and quality care in oncology. As an author, Dr. Presant has written Navigating American Medicine, soon to be published, and is the physician columnist for the national patient Website HealthNews.com. Dr. Presant is past president of the California Division of the American Cancer Society, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Medical Oncology Association of Southern California (MOASC), past Director of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and past president of the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC).

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