PRODUCT UPDATE

Vickie K. Fieler, RN, MS, AOCN®
Associate Editor

PHARMACY CORNER

Pemetrexed Approved for Use With Cisplatin for Treatment of Mesothelioma

Pemetrexed (Alimta®, Eli Lilly and Company, Indianapolis, IN) is a new cancer agent for the treatment of malignant mesothelioma. Pemetrexed blocks three enzyme targets that are necessary for cancer cells to grow and divide. In a pivotal phase III trial (N = 448), pemetrexed combined with cisplatin demonstrated an overall survival increase of 30% compared to cisplatin alone. In addition, 50.3% of patients were living one year after treatment compared to 38% receiving cisplatin alone. Complete description of the trial and results can be found in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (Vol. 21, pp. 2636–2644).

Adverse effects of pemetrexed include pancytopenia, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, diarrhea, skin rash, and pain. Patients low in some essential vitamins were found to have more toxic side effects; therefore, all patients on pemetrexed also must receive daily doses of folic acid and periodic intramuscular doses of B_{12}. Pemetrexed has potential interactions with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Patients with renal impairment should not receive pemetrexed.

Pemetrexed also is being investigated for use in non-small cell lung cancer as well as other solid tumors. For full prescribing information, visit www.alimta.com or call 800-545-5979.

Oxaliplatin Approved for First-Line Treatment of Advanced Colorectal Cancer

Oxaliplatin (Eloxatin™, Sanofi-Synthelabo Inc., Malvern, PA), in combination with infusional 5-fluorouracil and leucovorin (5-FU/LV), now is indicated for first- and second-line treatment of advanced carcinoma of the colon or rectum. This new indication comes after the completion of a multicenter, randomized, open-label, clinical trial. Patients in the oxaliplatin with 5FU/LV group had significantly longer median survival, longer time to tumor progression, and a significantly greater response rate. Compared to patients treated with irinotecan plus 5FU/LV, the oxaliplatin with 5FU/LV group had a lower incidence of grades 3–4 gastrointestinal toxicity and febrile neutropenia but higher incidences of grades 3–4 paresthesia and neutropenia. For more information, call 877-4ELOXATIN or visit www.eloxatin.com.

Cetuximab Also Approved for Metastatic Colorectal Cancer

Cetuximab (Erbitux™, ImClone Systems Inc., New York, NY, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, New York, NY) is a new therapeutic monoclonal antibody that has been approved for use with irinotecan to treat patients with epidermal growth factor receptor- (EGFR-) expressing metastatic colorectal cancer who are refractory to irinotecan-based chemotherapy and for use as a single agent in the treatment of patients with EGFR-expressing metastatic colorectal who are intolerant to irinotecan-based therapy. Cetuximab binds to EGFRs in normal and tumor cells and inhibits the binding of epidermal growth factors, thereby preventing cell growth. EGFR is expressed in normal and tumor cells and is overexpressed in many human cancers, including those of the colon and rectum.

Adverse effects of cetuximab may include severe infusion reactions, interstitial lung disease, dermatologic toxicities, fever, sepsis, kidney failure, pulmonary embolus, dehydration, and diarrhea. Additional adverse effects seen in cetuximab in combination with irinotecan include rash, asthenia or malaise, diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, fever, and constipation. Patients should be tested for EGFR expression to determine whether cetuximab is appropriate. Full prescribing information is available at www.erbitux.com.

New Drug Approved for Treatment of Metastatic Colorectal Cancer

Bevacizumab (Avastin™, Genentech Inc., South San Francisco, CA) has been given U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for the treatment of previously untreated metastatic colorectal cancer, in combination with 5-fluorouracil-based chemotherapy. Bevacizumab is the first approved monoclonal antibody that inhibits angiogenesis, thereby slowing tumor growth and metastasis. In a large, placebo-controlled, randomized study, patients who were treated with bevacizumab and irinotecan, 5-fluorouracil, and leucovorin (IFL) survived, on average, five months longer than those who received IFL alone.

The most common severe side effects found with bevacizumab are hypertension, nosebleeds, and asymptomatic proteinuria. Uncommon serious side effects include gastrointestinal perforations and wound healing complications. For more information, visit www.avastin.com or www.gene.com or call 650-225-7739.

NEW PRODUCTS

Avon Breast Cancer Crusade Offers Two New Products

Avon (New York, NY) has announced two new products that will raise funds for breast cancer research, education, screening and diagnosis, treatment, and support services with a focus on reaching the medically underserved. The Pink Ribbon necklace and locket key chain can be purchased by calling 800-FOR-AVON or by visiting www.avonfoundation.org. The necklace is priced at $7.50 and the key chain at $5.

New Ambulatory Infusion Pumps Are Available

Sorenson Medical (West Jordan, UT) has announced the availability of two new ambulatory infusion pumps: the ambIT™ continuous infusion pump and the ambIT intermittent infusion pump. These pumps are small, lightweight, battery-operated, and simple to program. The pumps have occlusion alarms and free-flow protection that meets standards of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations standards and International Electrotechnical Commission. The cost of the ambIT pumps is less than most other multitherapy pumps. These small pumps also store history reports on infusion activity for easy charting and accommodate any collapsible fluid bag up to 1,000 ml. For more information, visit www.sorensonmedical.com.

Description of products does not indicate or imply endorsement by the Oncology Nursing Forum *or the Oncology Nursing Society.*

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/04.ONF.651-652

Biosensor May Act as a Lung Cancer "Breathalyzer"

Cyranose® (Cyrano Sciences, Pasadena, CA) is a biosensor that might be able to sniff out lung cancer on people's breath. The electronic nose uses chemical sensors to detect the presence of volatile organic compounds. A single exhaled breath contains hundreds of these compounds. The researchers hypothesized that an electronic nose might be able to detect lung cancer based on a distinct pattern of volatile organic compounds. On tests on patients with lung cancer and normal controls, the Cyranose was able to detect a distinct clustering of patterns from the patients with lung cancer, although the researchers are aiming for even better discrimination. Much more research will need to be done, but this technology is very exciting. Visit Cyrano Sciences at www .cyranosciences.com/ applicationsmedical .html.

Postsurgical Bra Offers Support Following Surgery

Dale Medical Products' (Plainville, MA) postsurgical bra provides support and gentle

compression for women immediately following surgical procedures or radiation. The bra has Velcro®-type front closures that allow for quick access to the chest area. The bra can be worn alone or used to hold surgical dressings in place, eliminating the need for tape. The soft, stretchy material conforms, expands, and contracts to accommodate postoperative changes and healing. The neckline and bottom edges are nonslip and nonirritating. For more information, call 800-343-3980 or visit www.dalemed.com.

Additional Lots of Duragesic Are Recalled

Janssen Pharmaceutica Products, LP, is recalling **additional** manufacturing lots (**control numbers 0327192, 0327193, 0327294, 0327295, and 0330362**) of the 75 mcg per hour strength of its prescription Duragesic® (fentanyl transdermal system CII) patches. A small percentage of these patches may leak medication along one edge.

If the medication leaks from the patch, patients can get either too much or too little medication. Overexposure may cause nausea, sedation, drowsiness, or potentially life-threatening complications. If the medication leaks out, there may not be enough to provide adequate pain control and the patient may experience withdrawal symptoms.

Healthcare professionals, caregivers, or anyone who comes in contact with an affected patch from these lots also may be at risk. Anyone who comes in contact with the leaked medication should thoroughly rinse exposed skin with water only; do not use soap.

Those who have patches from the affected lots must contact their physician or pharmacist immediately for specific instructions and to coordinate returning affected patches and obtaining a new supply.

For information on this product recall or to report an adverse event, please visit www .Duragesic.com or call 800-JANSSEN.

Varian Medical Systems Announces New Three-Dimensional Cone-Beam Imaging System

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted Varian Medical Systems (Palo Alto, CA) 510(k) clearance for a three-dimensional (3D) cone-beam computed tomography (CT) imaging system. The cone-beam CT creates a 3D image of tumors and surrounding anatomy. 3D imaging makes sparing healthy tissue easier while targeting radiation delivery to tumor tissue. The Acuity™ imaging system is an option for Varian's simulator. This new system also can be used for brachytherapy treatment planning and to guide the placement of catheters and seeds. For more information, visit www.varian.com.