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First Standard Treatment Improves Survival for People With Advanced Biliary Tract Cancer

Treatment with the drugs cisplatin (Platinol) and gemcitabine (Gemzar) increased survival and slowed cancer growth for people with biliary tract cancers (gallbladder and bile duct cancers) that could not be removed with surgery. Patients who received these two drugs were 32% less likely to die from the disease and 30% less likely to have the cancer grow than the patients who received only gemcitabine.

What this means for patients

?Based on these findings, we can now establish the first-ever standard of care for advanced biliary tract cancers. We found treatment with gemcitabine and cisplatin greatly slowed cancer growth and increased survival,? said lead author Juan Valle, MD, Senior Lecturer and Medical Oncologist at the University of Manchester and the Christie National Health Service Foundation Trust in Manchester in the United Kingdom.

The most common side effect that people in this study experienced was low white blood cell count, although it did not cause symptoms for most people.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What is the stage? What does this mean?
- What treatment options are available to me?

For More Information

Listen [1] to Dr. Juan Valle discuss this study during the May 14, 2009 presscast

Cancer.Net Guide to Gallbladder Cancer [2]

Cancer.Net Guide to Bile Duct Cancer [3]

Links:
[1] http://www.asco.org/ASCOv2/Department%20Content/Communications/Downloads/May14Presscast%20Dr_Valle.mp3
[2] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Gallbladder+Cancer
[3] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Bile+Duct+Cancer