

Improvements in Breast Cancer Therapy

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PRESS BRIEFING SUNDAY, MAY 19, 11:30 A.M. (EDT)

Docetaxel Reduces Risk of Recurrence, Increases Survival in Early-Stage Breast Cancer Patients; Chemotherapy Provides Greatest Benefit for Early Stage Breast Cancer Patients When Given Before Tamoxifen; ASCO Expert Panel Examines Effectiveness of Aromatase Inhibitors

Orlando, FL ? New improvements in breast cancer treatment were examined in studies discussed today at a press conference at the 38th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

"These studies could influence the standard of care for many of the thousands of women diagnosed with breast cancer every year," said William J. Gradishar, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology/Department of Medicine at Northwestern University Medical School, and moderator of the press conference. "The use of docetaxel in combination chemotherapy may offer a step forward in reducing breast cancer recurrence among early-stage patients," Dr. Gradishar said.

"Also important for early-stage patients is a study showing that the benefit of chemotherapy may be greatest when it is followed by tamoxifen, rather than when the treatments are administered concurrently. This is an important debate in the cancer community and will affect many thousands of women with breast cancer."

At the press conference, ASCO will also present the findings of its recent expert panel on aromatase inhibitors. The panel, led by Eric Winer, MD, of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, was established to assess evidence on the effectiveness of this new class of drugs for early-stage breast cancer patients. The breast cancer press conference included these studies:

Research indicating that replacing 5-fluorouracil with docetaxel (Taxotere) in combination chemotherapy reduces disease recurrence and improves survival in node-positive early stage breast cancer patients. Following surgery, 1,491 patients were randomized to receive doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide, along with either docetaxel or 5-fluorouracil. Patients who received docetaxel were one-third less likely to suffer recurrence, and also lived longer.

A study comparing the disease-free survival of early stage breast cancer patients who received adjuvant chemotherapy and tamoxifen either concurrently or in sequence. Among 1,477 patients randomized to three study arms, including one with tamoxifen alone, those who received chemotherapy followed by tamoxifen were 18 percent more likely to survive without a cancer recurrence than those who received chemotherapy and tamoxifen concurrently.

For abstracts related to this press release go to ASCO's [Media Center](#) [1].

Links:

[1] http://www.asco.org/ac/1,1003,_12-002446,00.asp