

## New Advances in Aerodigestive Cancers

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-- PRESS BRIEFING SATURDAY, MAY 18, 11:30 A.M. (EDT) --NEW ADVANCES IN AERODIGESTIVE CANCERS

-- Study Shows Smoking During Cancer Therapy Reduces Survival; Vitamin A Derivative May Help Prevent Lung Cancer in Former Smokers; New Chemotherapy Regimen Shows Promise in Colorectal Cancer; Treatment with ZD1839 Shrinks Tumors and Reduces Symptoms in Advanced Lung Cancer Patients; Side Effects of Cisplatin for Head and Neck Cancer Outweigh Benefits --

Orlando, FL - Studies examining new treatments for aerodigestive cancers will be discussed at a press conference at the 38th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

"These studies represent important advances for patients with lung, head and neck, and colorectal cancers," said the session's moderator Karen Kelly, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. "In addition to the potential for improved survival, the findings discussed today may offer patients significantly better quality of life as they undergo treatment."

One important study highlighted the continued danger of smoking for patients undergoing lung cancer treatment. "These results can be added to the growing body of evidence that supports the benefits of smoking cessation, even in people already diagnosed with lung cancer," said Dr. Kelly.

Another study found evidence that a derivative of vitamin A may help prevent lung cancer in former smokers. "The results of this research warrant further study of agents for the chemoprevention of lung cancer. Physicians should encourage their patients to participate in these important studies."

Other promising research found that a new chemotherapy regimen called FOLFOX (oxaliplatin, 5-fluorouracil, and leucovorin), significantly delays tumor progression in patients with advanced colorectal cancer.

Another study demonstrated the promise of the signal transduction inhibitor ZD1839 (Iressa) for lung cancer patients who had failed other therapies. "The encouraging results of this study in heavily pre-treated patients represents a major contribution to lung cancer treatment," said Dr. Kelly. "These results were achieved with a once-daily pill and were associated with only mild toxicity."

A study examining the addition of the drug cisplatin to post-operative radiotherapy in patients with head and neck cancer will also be discussed.

The studies include: Research demonstrating that patients who continue to smoke during treatment for small cell lung cancer are more likely to die within five years than those who quit smoking before initiating their treatment. Although both groups in the trial tolerated treatment equally well, two-year survival rates were only 16 percent for those who continued to smoke, compared to 28 percent for those who quit.

A study suggesting that 9-cis retinoic acid, a form of vitamin A, may help prevent lung cancer in former smokers. The study of 226 patients found that 9-cis retinoic acid increased the expression of the retinoic acid receptor-beta, a protein that plays a key role in ensuring the normal growth of cells in the lungs.

Research suggesting that oxaliplatin (a new platinum-based therapy), when used in combination with 5-fluorouracil and leucovorin, a combination called FOLFOX, extends the lives of patients with advanced colorectal cancer. Patients who received oxaliplatin lived an average of 18 months compared to 14 months for those who received standard therapy (irinotecan, 5-fluorouracil, and leucovorin).

A Phase II study comparing two doses of the signal transduction inhibitor ZD1839 (Iressa) in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer. Ten percent of patients had their tumors shrink by 50 percent or more, and 36 percent had improved cancer symptoms. Tumor shrinkage was similar at both doses-250 mg and 500 mg-and fewer side effects occurred at the lower dose.

A clinical trial examining whether adding cisplatin to standard post-operative radiotherapy could improve control of squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck. Although the addition of cisplatin led to increased two-year disease-free survival-54 percent vs. 43 percent-it also resulted in significantly increased toxicity. For Abstract Information regarding this press release, go to [ASCO's Media Center](#) [1].

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.asco.org/people/nr/html/angeodigestive.htm>