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Vinflunine Improves Response and Survival in Mesothelioma

NEW YORK NOV 08, 2007 (Reuters Health) - High-dose vinflunine, a novel microtubule inhibitor, provides encouraging response and survival rates in patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma, according to a report in the October 20th issue of the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

Although numerous systemic treatments have been evaluated malignant pleural mesothelioma, the authors explain, response rates are usually low and no survival advantage has been demonstrated.

Dr. Denis C. Talbot from Churchill Hospital, Oxford, UK, and colleagues assessed the overall response rate, progression-free survival, and overall survival of 67 patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma in phase II study of first-line vinflunine therapy.

The overall response rate, as assessed by an independent radiologist, was 13.8% (all partial responses), the authors report, and most patients either maintained (60%) or improved (13.8%) their baseline Karnofsky performance status.

The median progression-free survival was 3.2 months; the median overall survival was 10.8 months and the 1-year survival rate was 36.9%.

Only 10% of cycles had to be delayed because of hematologic toxicity, non-study-drug-related adverse event, or other reasons, the report indicates.

Vinflunine was generally well tolerated, the investigators say, but careful administration is required to minimize injection site reactions, which occurred in about half of the patients in this study.

"These results suggest that vinflunine is among the most active single agents in malignant pleural mesothelioma," the authors conclude.

"The results of our study, in terms of response rate and survival, suggest that vinflunine should be further evaluated in malignant pleural mesothelioma after progression with cisplatin/pemetrexed because no other therapy is available in this setting," the researchers add. "Synergy with cisplatin in the clinical setting should also be explored in this disease."

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