(MDR) associated with expression of energy-dependent transport proteins, extruding MDR-drugs out of the cells. In fact, this is an explanation of the well-known clinical phenomenon of increased efficacy of platinum agents in combination with inactive MDR-drugs in treatment of MDR tumors. It is obvious then that to maximize platinum inhibition of MDR-transporter function the sequence of drug administration "platinum-MDR-drug" should be maintained during the entire chemotherapy duration. Our own clinical experience may be a positive example demonstrating efficacy of this approach.
Design of the investigation: Patients with locally-advanced esophageal cancer received preoperative chemotherapy with cisplatin, etoposide, 5-fluorouracil, leukovorin (FLEP); cisplatin being administered by different modes, i.e. by standard schedule: cisplatin on day 1, or by modified schedule: cisplatin on days 1 to 3. The remaining drugs were always given on a daily basis, with etoposide administered after cisplatin. Response was assessed after 2 three-day cycles with a 3-week interval. The 36 patients enrolled in the two arms were fairly homogeneous in terms of major clinical characteristics.
Results: The number of cases demonstrating decreased severity of dysphagia after chemotherapy completion was greater in the modified schedule group (43% vs. 24% of cases), though there were more patients with higher dysphagia intensity in this group at baseline (19% vs. no patients with grade III dysphagia). More patients receiving modified FLEP regimen as compared with the standard regimen group demonstrated decrease (60% vs. 48%) or no change (40% vs. 26%) in disease extent by x-ray after chemotherapy completion. Complete responses (20% of cases) were shown in the modified regimen group only, and no patients had progressive disease vs. 26% of cases with progressive disease in the standard regimen group. And finally, more patients receiving modified FLEP survived 1 year of follow-up (79% vs. 65%).
Conclusion: Although these findings are but interim, we nevertheless believe that modification of cisplatin administration schedule alone may improved response to chemotherapy even in this very serious and a priori resistant patient category.
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503 POSTER

ABCG2 transporter gene expression in childhood rhabdomyosarcoma

H.P. McDowell[1], S. Marsilio[2], P. Altavista[3], S. Bosco[4], A. Donfrancesco[5], A. Inserra[6], P.D. Losty[7], C. Dominici[2]. *[1]Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust Alder Hey, Oncology, Liverpool, United Kingdom; [2]La Sapienza University, Pediatrics, Rome, Italy; [3]ENEA Research Center Casaccia, Toxicology and Biomedical Sciences, Rome, Italy; [4]La Sapienza University, Experimental Medicine/Pathology, Rome, Italy; [5]Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital, Oncology, Rome, Italy; [6]Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital, Surgery, Rome, Italy; [7]Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust Alder Hey, Surgery, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

Background: Multidrug resistance (MDR) to cytotoxic drugs can be caused by increased expression of one or multiple genes belonging to ATP-binding cassette (ABC) superfamily, which function as drug efflux transporters. In childhood rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS), ABCB1 (MDR1) and ABCC1 (MRP1) genes have been shown to be expressed and their role in determining MDR and therapeutic failure has been described. ABCG2 (BCRP) is the third ABC gene primarily related to MDR. This study was aimed at investigating if this gene is expressed in childhood RMS and the possible associations with clinicopathological features.
Materials and Methods: Primary tumor samples were obtained and snap frozen from 26 pts (14 male/12 female), aged 5–183 months (median, 59), with newly diagnosed RMS. Primary site was favourable (orbit and genitourinary non-bladder/prostate) in 5 pts and unfavourable (head and neck parameningeal and non-parameningeal, genitourinary bladder or prostate, extremity and others) in 21. Pts were staged according to the IRS post-surgical grouping system and assigned as group I (n. 2), II (n. 6), III (n. 16) or IV (n. 2). Histological subtype was embryonal in 20 pts and alveolar in 6. ABCG2 mRNA expression in RMS samples, normal skeletal muscle (constitutive low expression) and normal ovary (constitutive high expression) obtained from healthy voluntary donors (5 for each tissue) was measured by quantitative real-time PCR. Institutional written informed consent from the patient's parents and ethical approval according to local institutional guidelines were obtained.
Results: ABCG2 mRNA levels significantly higher than the mean level in normal skeletal muscle were found in all 26 RMSs, with 9/26 (35%) tumors expressing high levels, i.e., levels in the range ($\pm$20%) of the mean level in normal ovary. No associations between ABCG2 mRNA levels and well-established clinicopathological features such as age at diagnosis, sex, primary site, and size of primary were demonstrated. A non significant trend was identified for tumors with high levels of ABCG2 expression to have embryonal histology: 8/20 (40%) of embryonal cases vs. 1/6 (17%) of alveolar cases ($p = 0.7$).
Conclusions: ABCG2 mRNA expression in childhood RMS is widely increased compared to its normal counterpart, with a substantial part of tumors expressing high levels, i.e., levels physiologically significant. The role of ABCG2 in determining MDR in RMS deserves further investigations in a larger series.

Monoclonal antibodies and targeted toxins/nuclides

504 POSTER

GA101, a therapeutic glycoengineered CD20 antibody recognizing a type II epitope mediates outstanding anti-tumor efficacy in Non-Hodgkin lymphoma xenograft models and superior B cell depletion

C. Klein[1], F. Herting[1], T. Friess[1], C. Gerdes[2], A. Nopora[2], S. Bauer[3], R. Grau[2], E. Moessner[2], J. Dal Porto[4], P. Umana[5]. *[1]Roche Diagnostics GmbH, Discovery Oncology, Penzberg, Germany; [2]GLYCART Biotechnology AG, Discovery Oncology, Schlieren, Switzerland; [3]Roche Diagnostics GmbH, Pharma Research, Penzberg, Germany; [4]Roche Palo Alto, Inflammation Discovery, Palo Alto, CA, USA; [5]GLYCART Biotecnology GmbH, Discovery Oncology, Schlieren, Switzerland*

Background: GA101 is the first humanized, glycoengineered CD20 antibody recognizing a type II epitope. GA101 was derived by humanization of the murine B-Ly1 antibody and is characterized by high binding affinity, type II mode of CD20 binding with reduced CDC but strong direct cell death induction compared to classical type I CD20 antibodies. The glycoengineered Fc region binds with enhanced affinity to FcgRIIIa on immune effector cells leading to enhanced ADCC.
Material and Methods: We studied the dose-dependent effects of GA101 on the growth of s.c. and orthotopic NHL xenografts in SCID beige mice; both as single agent and in combination with chemotherapeutic agents and Bcl-2 inhibitors in direct comparison to rituximab. Depletion of non-malignant B cells was studied in hCD20 transgenic mice and in cynomolgus monkeys.
Results: In various NHL models GA101 demonstrated outstanding anti-tumor efficacy. Specifically, complete tumor remission was induced in SU-DHL4 DLBCL xenografts. By contrast, rituximab at equal or higher doses was only able to slow down tumor progression. Treatment with GA101 increased the median and overall survival in an orthotopic disseminated Z138 MCL model compared to rituximab. Combination studies showed that GA101 works in a synergistic and superior manner in combination with chemotherapeutic agents such as vincristine or cyclophosphamide as well as with novel targeted therapeutic agents such as Bcl2 inhibitors. In hCD20 transgenic mice, GA101 demonstrated superior depth of B cell depletion. The increased B cell depletion extended into the peripheral lymphoid compartments and to the range of B cell subsets targeted. Analogous findings were observed in cynomolgus monkeys where the efficacy of GA101 in depleting B cells in lymphoid tissues was compared with that of non-glycoengineered GA101 and rituximab. These studies showed that the enhanced anti-tumor efficacy and depth of depletion observed with GA101 treatment is influenced by its unique binding mode and the induction of CD20-dependent cell death.
Conclusions: In summary, the data demonstrate that GA101 represents a novel class of CD20 antibodies with outstanding efficacy compared to classical type I CD20 antibodies. GA101 is currently in Ph I clinical trials. It is anticipated that the combination of the type II epitope recognition with improved ADCC potency exclusive to GA101 will translate into superior clinical efficacy establishing GA101 as best in class anti-CD20 therapy.

505 POSTER

Preliminary results of a phase II clinical trial of the anti EGFR monoclonal antibody Nimotuzumab in combination with whole brain radiation therapy in patients diagnosed with advanced non-small cell lung cancer tumors unresectable brain metastases

A. Macias[1], E. Neninger[2], E. Santiesteban[3], J. Figueredo[4], A. Hernandez[4], F. Aguirre[5], N. Aguilera[6], T. Crombet[1]. *[1]Center of Molecular Immunology, Clinical Immunology, C. Havana, Cuba; [2]Hermanos Almejeiras Hospital, Oncology Unit, C. Havana, Cuba; [3]University Hospital J R Tabranes, Oncology Unit, Matanzas, Cuba; [4]Clinical-Surgery Investigacional Center Hospital, Neurosurgery Unit, C. Havana, Cuba; [5]University Hospital JR Tabranes, Oncology Unit, Matanzas, Cuba; [6]National Clinical Trial Coordinator Center, Clinical Trial Unit, C. Havana, Cuba*

Brain metastases are the most common intracranial tumor of adults. Lung cancer is the main primary tumor given rise to brain metastases.

Nimotuzumab is a humanized monoclonal antibody (MAb) directed against the extracellular domain of human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR). Clinical experience in more than 2000 patients indicates that it does not exhibit the typical skin and gastro-intestinal (GI) toxicity seen with other agents within the same class. A phase II trial was designed to assess the feasibility of administering Nimotuzumab in conjunction with whole brain radiation therapy (WBRT) in patients with advanced NSCLC brain metastases. Here we outline the preliminary results of this trial of Nimotuzumab given concurrently with palliative WBRT.
It was an open, controlled trial in which 30 patients with unresectable brain metastases were randomized to receive Nimotuzumab plus irradiation or irradiation alone.
Nimotuzumab (200 mg) was administered as weekly IV infusions over weeks 1–6 while irradiation in both groups consisted in 40 Gy in 4 weeks. If response or disease stabilization was observed, Nimotuzumab was continued until disease progression or unmanageable toxicity. Primary endpoint was disease control rate (DCR = CR+PR+SD) and secondary endpoints were overall survival (OS) and safety.
Here we present the data from the first 21 patients. DCR was 91.6% (11 pts SD and1 pt PD) for the Nimotuzumab and radiation arm, compared to 44.4% (4 pts SD and 5 pts PD) for the control group. The analysis of overall survival (OS) showed that patients treated with the combination had a mean and median survival of 7.32 and 7.00 months respectively (5 patients still alive), compared with the control group for whom the mean and median survival was of 3.03 and 2.47 months, respectively (1 patient still alive). This difference reached statistical significance ($p = 0.0039$, Log Rank test).
Nimotuzumab administered concurrently with whole brain radiation therapy was well tolerated in NSCLC patients with unresectable brain metastases. The antibody did not provoke skin rash or GI adverse events. Substantial radiological responses and meaningful clinical responses have been seen in patients treated to date.

506 POSTER

The apogenic anti-CD9 antibody, AR40A746.2.3, inhibits tumor growth in breast and pancreatic cancer and targets cancer stem cells in acute myeloid leukemia

J. Menendez[1], L. Jin[2], A.G. Poeppl[2], K. O'Reilly[1], R.H. Brunet[1], J. Grabell[1], A.K. Gupta[1], J.E. Dick[2], D.S. Pereira[1], D.S. Young[1]. *[1]Arius Research Inc, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; [2]University Health Network, Cell Biology, Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

Background: CD9 is a 24 kDa member of the tetraspanin family. It interacts with assorted receptors and is involved in a variety of cellular functions. Its surprising role in cancer biology and its function on cancer stem cells is only now being delineated. Using the ARIUS FunctionFIRST™ platform, AR40A746.2.3, an apogenic monoclonal antibody targeting CD9, was discovered.
Methods: Immunohistochemical (IHC) and FACS were performed to determine the distribution of the AR40A746.2.3 epitope on normal and tumor cells. The cytotoxicity of AR40A746.2.3 was confirmed on a variety of cancer cell lines in vitro. Sub-cutaneous human pancreatic and breast cancer, as well as orthotopic established primary human AML xenograft models were used to define in vivo efficacy. Phosphoproteome profiler arrays were used to monitor cell signaling molecules. FACS was used to measure apoptosis in cells stained with Annexin-V.
Results: IHC revealed moderate to strong staining in 38% of assorted solid tumor samples and 60% of human pancreatic cancer samples. 16 of 20 AML samples contained a CD34+38− cancer stem cell population that was CD9 positive (42.7±10.1%). Stem cells from 8 normal lineage depleted cord blood samples expressed low levels of CD9 (9.9±2.8%). Similar results were found in bone marrow. AR40A746.2.3 induced cytotoxicity in a variety of solid tumor cell lines in vitro. AR40A746.2.3 treatment showed significant tumor growth inhibition in human pancreatic (99.56%TGI, $p < 0.0001$) and breast cancer (80.6%TGI, $p < 0.0001$) xenografts. AR40A746.2.3 treatment also inhibited established patient derived AML outgrowth of CD34+CD38−CD9+ AML stem cells in primary and secondary transplanted NOD/SCID mice. AR40A746.2.3 treatment led to a decrease in phosphorylation of receptor tyrosine kinases (ex. ErbB3 and RON). A reduction in phosphorylation of Akt and GSK-3 was also observed, indicating that AR40A746.2.3 affects important survival pathways in cancer. AR40A746.2.3 treatment potently induced apoptosis in BxPC-3 pancreatic cancer cells.
Conclusions: CD9 is a differentially expressed on AML CD34+CD38− cancer stem cells compared to normal cord blood and bone marrow stem cells. It is also broadly distributed in solid tumors. As a naked MAb, AR40A746.2.3 has significant anti-tumor efficacy in solid and liquid tumors and produces apoptosis through well established signaling pathways. These findings highlight the potential novel therapeutic value of targeting CD9 with a MAb in cancer.

507 POSTER

Potent antitumor activity of the anti-CD19 auristatin antibody-drug conjugate hBU12-vcMMAE in rituximab sensitive and resistant lymphomas

H.P. Gerber[1], I. Stone[1], M. Kung-Sutherland[1], J. Miyamoto[1], N. Okeley[2], S.C. Alley[2], D.L. Meyer[2], D. Sussman[3], P. Senter[2], I.S. Grewal[4]. *[1]Seattle Genetics Incorporated, Translational Biology, Bothell, WA, USA; [2]Seattle Genetics Incorporated, Chemistry, Bothell, WA, USA; [3]Seattle Genetics Incorporated, Antibody Technology, Bothell, WA, USA; [4]Seattle Genetics Incorporated, Preclinical Therapeutics, Bothell, WA, USA*

The cell surface antigen CD19 is expressed on most cancers of lymphoid origin, including the vast majority of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL), Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) and Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). Despite major advances in treatment options for NHL patients, including the use of cytotoxic compounds and the anti-CD20 antibody rituximab, a significant fraction of NHL patients will eventually relapse and salvage treatments with non-cross resistant compounds are needed to further improve patient survival. Here, we evaluated the antitumor effects of the microtubule destabilizing agent monomethyl auristatin E (MMAE) conjugated to the humanized anti-CD19 antibody hBU12 via a protease sensitive valine-citrulline (vc) dipeptide linker. Potent tumor cell killing by hBU12-vcMMAE was identified in rituximab resistant and sensitive CD19 /20 double-positive NHL cell lines. CD21 is a cell surface receptor with the potential to form heterodimers with CD19 and high levels of CD21 expression were reported to interfere with internalization and cell killing of some antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) targeting CD19. We found similar frequencies of durable tumor regressions in mice xenografted with CD21 high and low expressing NHL tumors, suggesting that CD21 levels do not affect potency of the hBU12-vcMMAE conjugate. In support of this notion, comparable ADC internalization, intracellular trafficking and release of free drug was observed in CD21 low and high expressing tumor cell lines treated with hBU12-vcMMAE. Combined, our data support further studies with hBU12-vcMMAE as a novel therapeutic option for the treatment of untreated and rituximab refractory NHL as well as other hematologic malignancies, including CLL and ALL.

508 POSTER

PDL192, a novel, humanized antibody to TWEAK receptor, shows potent anti-tumor activity in preclinical models

P. Culp[1], D. Choi[1], J. Yin[1], S. Tan[1], D. Chao[1], M. Su[1], M. Sho[1], R. Steinle[2], E. Hsi[2], V. Ramakrishnan[1]. *[1]PDL BioPharma, Research, Redwood City, CA, USA; [2]Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Pathology, Cleveland, OH, USA*

Background: TWEAK receptor (TweakR) is a member of the tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily, a group of receptors that has garnered significant interest as therapeutic targets in cancer and autoimmune disease. TweakR expression has been reported in some solid tumors. In addition, signaling via TweakR can induce apoptosis in certain cancer cell lines.
Methods: Expression of TweakR in primary tumors was assessed by immunohistochemistry (IHC). PDL192, a novel, humanized, IgG1 monoclonal antibody to TweakR, was assessed for its ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cell lines both *in vitro* (soft agar and anchorage-dependent proliferation assays) and *in vivo* (xenograft models in SCID mice). In addition, antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC) assays were performed with PDL192 on tumor cell lines using peripheral blood mononuclear cells from normal human donors in a ^{51}Cr release assay.
Results: TweakR was found to be expressed by IHC in a variety of solid tumors, including pancreatic, breast, lung, and renal cancer. In *in vitro* assays, the anti-TweakR antibody, PDL192, inhibited the growth of approximately 30% of TweakR-expressing cancer cell lines tested. PDL192 also potently induced ADCC against TweakR-expressing cancer cell lines *in vitro*. PDL192 significantly inhibited tumor growth in several xenograft models representing a variety of tumor types. In an orthotopic model of breast cancer, PDL192 inhibited both primary tumor growth as well as the growth of lung metastases. In a pancreatic model, PDL192 or gemcitabine significantly slowed tumor growth; however, the two agents in combination caused complete tumor regression.
Conclusions: The humanized anti-TweakR antibody, PDL192, has been found to have anti-tumor effects against multiple TweakR-expressing tumor cell lines both *in vitro* and in xenograft models. In addition, PDL192 has been found to enhance the anti-tumor activity of some chemotherapeutic agents in xenograft models. These data, together with the histological data showing that TweakR is expressed on a variety of tumor types, suggest that PDL192 has the potential to be a therapy for patients with solid tumors. This data is the basis for an upcoming Phase I safety study of PDL192 in patients with solid tumors.