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POSTER

# Safety and efficacy of bevacizumab (BEV) and chemotherapy in elderly patients with metastatic colorectal cancer (mCRC): results from the BEAT observational cohort study

E. Van Cutsem<sup>1</sup>, F. Rivera<sup>2</sup>, S. Berry<sup>3</sup>, A. Kretschmar<sup>4</sup>, M. Michael<sup>5</sup>, M. DiBartolomeo<sup>6</sup>, M.A. Mazier<sup>7</sup>, V. Georgoulas<sup>8</sup>, J. Bridgewater<sup>9</sup>, D. Cunningham<sup>10</sup>, on behalf of the First BEAT investigators. <sup>1</sup>University Hospital Gasthuisberg, Department of Internal Medicine, Leuven, Belgium; <sup>2</sup>Hospital Marqués de Valdecilla, Department of Medical Oncology, Santander, Spain; <sup>3</sup>Sunnybrook Odette Cancer Centre University of Toronto, Department of Medical Oncology, Toronto, Canada; <sup>4</sup>HELIOS-Klinikum Berlin Robert Rossle Klinik der Charité, Department of Haematology and Oncology, Berlin, Germany; <sup>5</sup>Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute Haematology and Medical Oncology, Department of Haematology and Medical Oncology, Melbourne, Australia; <sup>6</sup>Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Department of Medical Oncology, Milan, Italy; <sup>7</sup>Parexel, Department of Biostatistics, Paris, France; <sup>8</sup>University General Hospital, Department of Medical Oncology, Heraklion, Greece; <sup>9</sup>University College London Hospital, Department of Medicine, London, United Kingdom; <sup>10</sup>Royal Marsden Hospital, Department of Medical Oncology, Sutton, United Kingdom

**Background:** Addition of BEV to chemotherapy prolongs overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS) in 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-line treatment of patients with mCRC. Subgroup analyses from a recent pooled analysis of BEV pivotal studies [Kabbinnar et al, JCO 2009] have shown that older (≥65 years) and younger (<65 years) patients derive similar PFS and OS without a difference in the risk–benefit profile. We evaluated the safety and efficacy of BEV + chemotherapy by age group in patients who participated in BEAT (Bevacizumab Expanded Access Trial; study ID MO18024).

**Methods:** Patients with unresectable mCRC received physician's choice of chemotherapy plus bevacizumab (5 mg/kg q2w [5-FU regimens] or 7.5 mg/kg q3w [capecitabine regimens]). The primary endpoint was safety. Secondary objectives were progression-free survival (PFS) and overall survival (OS). BEAT is now complete. The effect of age on adverse events (AEs) of interest for BEV was analysed in patients aged <65, 65–74, and ≥75 years. The effect of age on survival was assessed using a Cox regression.

**Results:** Of the 1914 patients enrolled in BEAT, half received BEV + oxaliplatin-based therapy (FOLFOX, bFOL, XELOX, other), 35% received BEV + irinotecan-based therapy (FOLFIRI, IFL, XELIRI) and the remainder received BEV + monotherapy (5-FU bolus, 5-FU infusion, capecitabine). 1286 (67%) patients were <65 years, 499 (26%) were 65–74 years and 129 (7%) were ≥75 years. Median PFS and OS appear to be similar for the <65 and 65–74 age categories (Table). Median OS was numerically lower in the ≥75 year group, probably due to the small number of patients included in this category. BEV-targeted safety was similar in those aged <65, 65–74 and ≥75 years (Table).

**Conclusions:** These results show that older patients with mCRC can derive similar benefit from BEV + chemotherapy as younger patients without a substantial increase in toxicity and suggest that age alone should not preclude effective treatment.

	Age group, years			
	All (n = 1914)	<65 (n = 1286)	65–74 (n = 499)	≥75 (n = 129)
Survival, months				
Median PFS	10.8	10.8	11.2	10.0
Median OS	22.7	23.5	22.8	16.6
Safety, n (%)				
Gastrointestinal perforation	37 (1.9)	22 (1.7)	11 (2.2)	4 (3.1)
Arterial thromboembolism	29 (1.5)	14 (1.1)	10 (2.0)	5 (3.9)
Grade 3/4 bleeding	44 (2.3)	33 (2.6)	9 (1.8)	2 (1.6)
New/worsening hypertension	572 (29.9)	354 (27.5)	180 (36.1)	38 (29.5)

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# FOLFOX-4 versus FOLFIRI in the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer – a prospective randomised study

F. Badulescu<sup>1</sup>, A. Badulescu<sup>2</sup>, M. Schenker<sup>1</sup>, M. Ionescu<sup>1</sup>, C. Ninulescu<sup>1</sup>, A. Crisan<sup>3</sup>, S. Dinescu<sup>4</sup>. <sup>1</sup>University of Medicine and Pharmacy Craiova, Oncology, Craiova, Romania; <sup>2</sup>University Titu Maiorescu Bucharest, Surgery, Bucharest, Romania; <sup>3</sup>University of Medicine and Pharmacy Craiova, Radiotherapy, Craiova, Romania; <sup>4</sup>University of Medicine and Pharmacy Craiova, Epidemiology, Craiova, Romania

**Background:** The choice of chemotherapy protocol for patients with metastatic colorectal carcinoma (mCRC) remains an open discussion. A prospective study was commenced in 2002 in order to analyze differences in terms of overall survival and progression free survival for patients with mCRC treated with FOLFOX-4 and FOLFIRI, respectively.

**Methods:** The study was conducted in the Oncology Clinic of Craiova, Romania during May 2002 – November 2008. The most important eligibility criteria were: mCRC, +/- past adjuvant chemotherapy, measurable disease, no liver, renal or other severe organic impairment, ECOG performance status 0 or 1. Patients were randomized 1:1 (using a simple randomization software) in 2 groups: A, receiving the standard FOLFOX-4 regimen (oxaliplatin 85 mg/sqm, folinic acid 200 mg/sqm, 5-fluorouracil 400 mg/sqm bolus iv and 5-fluorouracil 600 mg/sqm continuous iv infusion for 22 hours, every 14 days); B, comprising patients who received standard FOLFIRI regimen (irinotecan 180 mg/sqm, folinic acid 200 mg/sqm, 5-fluorouracil 400 mg/sqm bolus iv and 5-fluorouracil 2400 mg/sqm continuous iv infusion for 46 hours, every 14 days). The treatment was discontinued due to intolerable toxicity or disease progression. Stratification criteria were: sex, age, past adjuvant chemotherapy or not, presence of complications at diagnosis. The endpoints of the study were: median overall survival, disease progression free survival and quality of life in each group. Kaplan Meier curves were used for statistical analysis – for overall survival and the logrank test.

**Results:** 356 patients admitted between May 2002 and November 2003 were randomized: 180 in group A and 176 in group B. The median number of chemotherapy cycles administrated was 9.4 in group A and 9.2 in group B. No significant difference between median overall survival appeared between the 2 groups: 17.8 months in group A and 17.2 months in group B, with a hazard ratio for survival of 0.88 (95%CI, 0.75–1.12, p<0.004). Progression free survival was also not significant different between these 2 groups: 6.9 months for group A and 7.2 months for group B. No significant difference was observed in term of quality of life between the groups.

**Conclusions:** First line chemotherapy regimen associated with molecular target therapy in metastatic colorectal cancer remains a decision of the physician, as no significant differences were observed between FOLFOX-4 and FOLFIRI regimens.

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# Influence of Cetuximab applied as biweekly infusion on the plasma disposition of CPT 11 and its metabolites in advanced colorectal cancer

J. Schueller<sup>1</sup>, M. Czejka<sup>2</sup>, A. Kiss<sup>2</sup>, A. Farkouh<sup>2</sup>, K. Aigner<sup>1</sup>, E. Krexner<sup>1</sup>, B. Gruenberger<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>KA Rudolfstiftung, Oncology, Vienna, Austria; <sup>2</sup>Department of Pharmacy, University Vienna, Vienna, Austria

**Background:** Combination of the Anti EGFR monoclonal antibody Cetuximab (C-MAB) with Irinotecan (CPT 11) is clinically effective in pretreated advanced colorectal cancer (ACRC) pts. As a more convenient alternative a biweekly instead of standard weekly C-MAB was introduced in clinical trials based on pharmacokinetic (PK) data demonstrating no difference between the respective C-MAB schedules (Pfeiffer et al., Tabernaro et al). Complex metabolism of CPT 11 using different enzymatic pathways makes this drug a target for potential PK interactions. Therefore, using biweekly C-MAB combined with FOLFIRI schedule, impact of C-MAB on the PK profile of CPT11 and its metabolites was investigated.

**Methods:** 11 pretreated ACRC pts received C-MAB as a 2H infusion of 500 mg/m<sup>2</sup> immediately followed by CPT11 180 mg/m<sup>2</sup> 1 HR infusion combined with infusional 5-FU folinic acid (FOLFIRI). For monitoring the conc of CPT11 and metabolites plasma samples were collected at 13 timepoints over 48H (quantation bei HPLC). The study was performed as a paired cross over with inpatient comparison: baseline analysis of CPT 11 on d1 of cycle 1 with the first C-MAB infused on d3 at end of sampling period of 48H. During all following cycles C-MAB was infused immediately before CPT11 and PK-analysis repeated on d1 of cycle 3 or 4 (PK assessment by Win nonlin pro v5.0).

**Results:** No influence of C-MAB on the PK of CPT11 and the main active metabolite SN38 was documented: AUC Ratio of CPT11 vs SN38 was 40 (mono) and 38.8 (comb), and AUC of SN38 represented 2.4% of

AUC/CPT11 in both arms.  $Cl_{tot}$  (17.6 vs 17.5 l/h) and Vss (150 vs 151) of CPT 11 were identical in both arms. Cmax and AUC of SN 38 gluc and APC were slightly lowered under C-MAB due to interpatient variation. Side effects of C-MAB 500 mg/m<sup>2</sup> every 2 weeks were comparable to those reported for standard dose, toxicity of concomitant CPT 11 was not increased.

**Conclusion:** This PK trial confirms safety and non influence of a biweekly instead of standard weekly C-MAB on the PK profile of CPT11 and SN 38 and supports its clinical use as a simplified scheduling in combination with FOLFIRI biweekly application.

n = 11 mean (+SE)	CPT 11				Cetuximab + CPT 11			
	CPT11	SN38	SN38gluc	APC	CPT11	SN38	SN38gluc	APC
cmax ng/ml	3828 (569)	40.7	153 (50)	266 (133)	3633 (474)	37.3	109 (30)	179 (126)
AUC inf ng/ml.H	21147 (5395)	519 (261)	3330 (2441)	4623 (4100)	20701 (4042)	533 (186)	2674 (1478)	3095 (3000)

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### Associations of various gene polymorphisms with toxicity in colorectal cancer patients receiving oral uracil and tegafur plus leucovorin: a prospective study

A. Tsunoda<sup>1</sup>, K. Nakao<sup>1</sup>, M. Watanabe<sup>1</sup>, N. Matsui<sup>1</sup>, A. Ooyama<sup>2</sup>. <sup>1</sup> Showa University, Department of Gastroenterological and General Surgery, Tokyo, Japan; <sup>2</sup> Taiho Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd, Research Center, Tokyo, Japan

**Background:** To assess the predictive value of polymorphisms within nine genes, which relates to 5-FU metabolism, for toxicity in patients treated with oral uracil/tegafur (UFT) plus leucovorin (LV) in a prospective study.

**Material and Methods:** Ninety-nine patients with stage II and III carcinoma of the colorectum were treated with oral UFT+LV. The study cohort consisted of 58 men and 41 women, with a mean age of 65 years ranging from 30 to 80 years. The performance status was 0 and 1 in 72 and 27 patients, respectively. The primary tumor was located in the colon in 59 cases and in the rectum in 40 cases. The depth of invasion according to the tumor-node-metastasis classification was 7 T<sub>1</sub> or T<sub>2</sub> tumors, 84 T<sub>3</sub> tumors, and 8 T<sub>4</sub> tumors. There were 51 stage II and 48 stage III tumors. Germ line DNA from patients was obtained and genotyped for TS VNTR, TS VNTR+G/C SNP, and TS 1494del6, and DPD IVS14+1G>A, T85C, A1627G, and G2194A, and OPRT G638C, and MTHFR C677T, and A1298C, and MTR A2756G, and MTRR A66G, and SLC19A1 G80A, and CYP2A6 variant (\*4, \*7, \*9 and \*11), and UGT1A1 -insTA(\*28), G211A(\*6), C1813T, and T3279G(\*60) using PCRs and RFLP. Toxicity was graded by National Cancer Institute Common Toxicity Criteria version 2.0.

**Results:** The 99 patients had received a total of 444 treatment courses (median, 5 courses; range 0.1 to 5 courses). The most common type of toxicity was fatigue. However, the incidence of grade 3 or 4 fatigue was very low. 13 patients had grade 2 or 3 hyperbilirubinemia. Six patients each had grade 3 diarrhea or anorexia. Allele frequencies of all 5-FU related genes were successfully assessed for all 99 patients. The distribution is in close agreement with that predicted by Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium. OPRT polymorphism was associated with severe overall toxicity, especially grade 3 diarrhea in univariate analysis (P = 0.007, P = 0.031, respectively). The multivariate logistic regression models revealed that only OPRT polymorphism had an independent value to predict grade 3 overall toxicity (odds ratio, 25.80 for patients with the G638C homozygous type compared with patients with heterozygous or wild type, P = 0.004) and grade 3 diarrhea (odds ratio, 23.25, P = 0.013). Polymorphisms in DPD A1627G or MTHFR C677T were associated with moderate to severe toxicity (P = 0.048, P = 0.021, respectively). Polymorphisms of UGT1A1 G211A or T3279G were also associated with hyperbilirubinemia (P = 0.010, P = 0.018, respectively).

**Conclusions:** OPRT polymorphism seems to be a useful marker for predicting severe toxicity to oral UFT+LV therapy.

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## POSTER

### Serum microRNAs as potential biomarkers for colorectal cancer

B. Brenner<sup>1</sup>, Y. Kundel<sup>1</sup>, Z. Levi<sup>2</sup>, A. Vilkin<sup>2</sup>, N. Vasserberg<sup>3</sup>, S. Gilad<sup>4</sup>, Y. Goren<sup>4</sup>, M. Kushnir<sup>4</sup>, Y. Niv<sup>4</sup>, A. Chajut<sup>4</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Rabin Medical Center, Institute of Oncology, Petah Tikva, Israel; <sup>2</sup>Rabin Medical Center, Institute of Gastroenterology, Petah Tikva, Israel; <sup>3</sup>Rabin Medical Center, Department of Surgery, Petah Tikva, Israel; <sup>4</sup>Rosetta Genomics, Rehovot, Israel

**Background:** Colorectal cancer (CRC) is a common and fatal disease, with a strong correlation between stage and prognosis. Current screening methods for CRC have significant limitations and newer technological

approaches are eagerly searched for. Circulating nucleic acids in body fluids offer unique opportunities for early diagnosis of various clinical conditions. Here we propose microRNAs, a family of small non-coding regulatory RNAs involved in human development and pathology, as an emerging class of effective serum biomarkers for CRC.

**Methods:** Rosetta Genomics has developed protocols for extracting and quantifying microRNA levels in serum and other body fluids. Serum levels of 364 microRNAs were measured using qRT-PCR in a semi-high-throughput manner on sera from 10 healthy controls and 10 CRC patients (Pts). A subset of the identified microRNAs, demonstrating significant differences in abundance between the two groups, was studied on a larger cohort of 118 pts and controls.

**Results:** By semi-high-throughput profiling of microRNAs in a small set of serum samples from CRC pts and healthy controls, we identified a subset of microRNAs that show significant differential abundance between the two groups. Measuring the levels of 22 microRNAs on a cohort of 118 pts and controls, we show that serum levels of microRNAs can be very informative in the identification of CRC.

**Conclusions:** Our results demonstrate that we have developed highly sensitive methods that enable the extraction and measurement of cell-free microRNAs in body fluids. Here, we demonstrate that certain microRNAs are found in different amounts in sera of CRC pts compared with healthy controls. Thus, circulating microRNAs represent promising candidates for robust, sensitive and easily accessible biomarkers in CRC.

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## POSTER

### A significance of circulating endothelial progenitor cells in metronomic chemotherapy using CPT-11 and bevacizumab for colon carcinoma

Y. Ogata<sup>1</sup>, H. Murakami<sup>1</sup>, K. Shirouzu<sup>2</sup>. <sup>1</sup> Kurume University Medical Center, Surgery, Kurume, Japan; <sup>2</sup> Kurume University School of Medicine, Surgery, Kurume, Japan

**Background:** Conventional cytotoxic anticancer drugs have anti-angiogenic effects, which could contribute to their efficacy, however, conventional chemotherapy requires 2- to 3-week break between successive cycles because of toxicity by MTD administration. The anti-angiogenic effects of chemotherapy seemed to be optimized by administering such drugs 'metronomically' – in other words in small dosages on a frequent schedule (daily, several times a week, or weekly) in an uninterrupted manner. It has been shown that the efficacy of metronomic chemotherapy can be significantly increased when administered in combination with anti-angiogenic drugs, such as antibodies against vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) or VEGF receptor 2, and some metronomic chemotherapy regimens induce sustained suppression in circulating endothelial progenitor cells (CEP). We have investigated antitumor efficacy of metronomic chemotherapy using CPT-11 combined with or without bevacizumab in colon cancer. We have also evaluated the relationship between the antitumor activity and circulating endothelial cell (CEC) and CEP.

**Materials and Methods:** A total of 10<sup>6</sup> KM12SM colon cancer cells/0.2 ml PBS was implanted into the subcutis of BALB/c nude mouse. The mice were divided into 4 groups according to treatment. The Group A received i.p. injection of 40 mg/kg CPT-11 every two weeks (MTD), the Group B received i.p. injection of 10 mg/kg CPT-11 twice per week (metronomic), the Group C received i.p. injection of 10 mg/kg CPT-11 twice per week combining with i.p. injection of 5 mg/kg bevacizumab twice per week. The Control Group received i.p. injection of 0.2 ml PBS every week. CEC and CEP in peripheral blood were evaluated by flow cytometry and microvessel density (MVD) was evaluated using immunohistochemical staining for CD34 in tumor tissues.

**Results:** The antitumor activity in the Group B (metronomic chemotherapy) was significantly higher than that in Group A. The antitumor activity in the Group C was significantly higher than that in Group B. A significant inhibition on CEP in day 15 was found compared with that in the Control Group, while there was no significant difference in CEC and CEP between each group in day 8. The MVD at day 15 in the metronomic groups was significantly lower than that in the conventional group.

**Conclusion:** The metronomic chemotherapy of CPT-11 with or without bevacizumab for colon cancer was more effective than the MTD therapy via antiangiogenic effects. Measurement of CEP may be a predictive factor for metronomic chemotherapy in colon cancer.