

This issue's topics



Keeping our eye on the ball –is surveillance effective?

Effectiveness of surveillance in families with BRCA mutations

“If each mutation carrier is to make the most appropriate decision, she should be informed about all of the advantages and disadvantages of the options open to her”, according to authors reporting in this issue. Vasen and colleagues examined women from 68 families with BRCA mutations by annual mammography, transvaginal ultrasound and estimation of CA125. 202 women had examinations for breast cancer and 138 for ovarian cancer. 21 breast cancers at relatively early stages and 6 advanced ovarian cancers were detected. As interval breast cancers appeared relatively frequently in their subjects, the authors propose screening every 6 months, alternating mammography and magnetic resonance imaging. “Surveillance for ovarian cancer was not effective”, they concluded.

Do statins have a role in treating cancer?

Statins are known to have anti-tumour activity. However, only a few clinical studies have explored the optimal dose, feasibility and efficacy of statins given as single agents. Further, studies as part of multi-drug regimens are completely lacking. Sleijfer and colleagues provide a review of the potential of statins as anti-cancer treatments. They conclude, “The interesting pre-clinical anti-tumour activity of statins combined with a favourable toxicity profile warrant their further development as anti-tumour agents, in particular as part of multi-drug regimens”. Knox and colleagues report on a Phase I trial of prolonged administration of Lovastatin in patients with metastatic squamous cell carcinoma. They show a disease stabilisation rate of about 20% and state their schedule (7.5 mg/kg/day for 21 continuous days on a 28-day schedule) warrants further investigation.

Soy isoflavone daidzein may protect against mammary tumours

The efficacy of tamoxifen with regard to mammary carcinogenesis was assessed in rats fed on various diets in this issue. Constantinou and colleagues found that a combined diet of tamoxifen and daidzein was the most effective. According to the authors, “It reduced tumour multiplicity by 76%, tumour incidence by 35%, tumour burden by over 95% and increased tumour latency by 62% compared with positive controls”. Our study shows for the first time that the combination of daidzein with tamoxifen produces increased protection against mammary carcinogenesis, they concluded.

Forthcoming papers

Editorial Comment

Search and destroy – the right cancer strategy for Europeans?
Welch HG

Reviews

The difficulties industry is facing with investigators
Blackledge GRP
Systemic treatment for oesophageal cancer
van Meerten E, van der Gaast A
Hormonal therapy of endometrial cancer
Markman M

Original papers

Clinical

Effects of tamoxifen and octreotide LAR on the IGF-system compared with tamoxifen monotherapy
Helle SI, Mietlowski W, Guastalla JP, *et al.*
Phase I study and pharmacokinetic of CHS-828, a guanidino-containing compound, administered orally as a single dose every 3 weeks in solid tumours: an ECGS/EORTC study
Ravaud A, Cerny T, Terret C, *et al.*

Paediatric

Ovulation induction, assisted conception and childhood cancer
Lightfoot T, Bunch K, Ansell P, Murphy M

Outcome for patients with metastatic (M2-3) medulloblastoma treated with SIOP/UKCCSG PNET-3 chemotherapy

Taylor RE, Bailey CC, Robinson KJ, *et al.*

Ovulation induction, assisted conception and childhood cancer. Is there a link?

Wallace WHB

Age at diagnosis of isolated unilateral retinoblastoma does not distinguish patients with and without a constitutional *RBI* gene mutation, but is influenced by a parent-of-origin effect

Schuler A, Weber S, Neuhauser M, *et al.*

Epidemiology and cancer prevention

Relationships between perinatal and maternal characteristics and childhood hepatic tumours. A report from the UKCCS

Ansell P, Mitchell CD, Roman E, *et al.*

Perinatal and reproductive factors: a report on haematological malignancies from the UKCCS

Roman E, Simpson J, Ansell P, *et al.*

Increasing incidence and improved survival of cancer in children and young adults in Southern Netherlands, 1973–1999

Reedijk AMJ, Janssen-Heijnen MLG, Louwman MWJ, *et al.*

Experimental

Resveratrol-mediated sensitisation for TRAIL-induced apoptosis depends on death receptor and mitochondrial signalling

Fulda S, Debatin K-M

Tumour parameters affected by combretastatin A-4 phosphate therapy in a human colorectal xenograft model in nude mice

El-Emir E, Boxer GM, Petrie IA, *et al.*

Human papillomavirus-16 associated squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (SCCHN): a natural disease model provides insights into viral carcinogenesis

Ferris RL, Martinez I, Sirianni N, *et al.*