Mitoxantrone Therapy of Advanced Adenocarcinoma of the Endometrium
A Phase II Trial

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Introduction

Table 1. Patient characteristics

Characteristics Patients, n

Chemotherapy for advanced endometrial carcinoma remains ineffective. Only a minority of patients respond and the responses are generally partial and brief [1,2]. Further studies are required to identify new chemotherapeutic agents of untested chemical configuration and non-cross-resistance with commonly used drugs. Mitoxantrone, a synthetic amino-anthraquinone whose activity appears to be mediated by intercalation into the DNA double helix, was chosen for our phase II trial in patients with advanced or recurrent adenocarcinoma of the endometrium. Mitoxantrone showed a significant activity against animal tumors [3], it showed in vitro antitumor activity against human tumor colony-forming units [4, 5], and it has a very acceptable toxicity observed in phase I trials [6].

Patients and Methods

Eligible patients were required to have histologically confirmed recurrent or metastatic measurable disease of Figo-Stage III and IV, performance status (Karnofsky > 50%), adequate hematologic function (granulocyte count > 3,000/mm3 and platelet count > 100,000 mm3), bilirubin < 1.5 mg/dl 0.0ml, SGOT < 50IU and no former treatment with anthracyclines. Mitoxantrone was given at a dose of 12mg/m2, via a 5–10min infusion (150ml, NaCl 0.9%), and repeated every 21–28 days. The dose was diminished for patients showing a granulocyte or platelet count toxicity detected in weekly blood cell counts (World Health Organization toxicity criteria), and for those with gastrointestinal toxicity [7].

Tumor responses were assessed using standard criteria for complete response (CR), partial response (PR), stable disease (SD), and progressive disease (PD) [7]. Of 13 patients 9 were evaluable for response and toxicity. Six patients had adenocarcinoma, one had adenosquamous carcinoma, one had clear cell carcinoma, and one had endome-trioid carcinoma. Patient characteristics are shown in table 1.

Results
A brief no-change status (3 months) was noted in a 64-year-old woman with upper abdominal metastasis which was followed by progression of disease under 2 further courses of therapy. Toxicity was mild. The granulocyte count (cells/mm$^3$) during  

Patients, total n 13  
Patients evaluable 9  
Median age in years (range) 67 (61–75)  
Grading  
I (well) 0  
II (medium, differentiated) 2  
III (poorly) 7  
Metastatic site  
Pelvis only 1  
Outside pelvis 8  
Prior therapy  
Surgery 7  
Radiation therapy 4  
Hormonal therapy 3  
Chemotherapy 0  
Doses of mitoxantrone  
Total 20  
Average 2.2 (1–5)  
Results  
Refusal of therapy 0  
CR 0  
PR 0  
NC 1  
PD 8  
Median survival time  
in months (range): 5.2 months (2.5–10)  

Table 2. Mitoxantrone phase II trials in adenocarcinoma of the endometrium:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Patients</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>CR (%)</th>
<th>PR (%)</th>
<th>NC (%)</th>
<th>PD (%)</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Median survival time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gynecologic Oncology Group study 1987 [9]</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12 mg/m$^2$</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>4 (21)</td>
<td>14 (74)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Refusal of therapy 0</td>
<td>2.1 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Oncology Group study 1985 [8]</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12 mg/m$^2$</td>
<td>4 (27)</td>
<td>11 (73)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>4.0 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mild nausea and vomiting occurred in 2 patients. No cardiac toxicity was observed. In this study, a no-change rate of 12% (1 response among 9 patients) and progression of disease in 88% of patients was observed. Our results are similar to those of the Southwest Oncology Group [8], where none of 15 patients with endometrial carcinoma responded, 9 having received prior doxorubicin (table 2). The results of Muss et al. [9] and Veenhof et al. [10] support these poor findings (table 2).

This indicates that mitoxantrone at this dosage is inactive as a single agent in the treatment of advanced or recurrent adeno-carcinoma of the endometrium.

References


WHO: WHO handbook for reporting results of cancer treatment (Govi-Verlag, Eschborn 1979).


Einladung zur Fortbildungsveranstaltung
Ernährung und Tumorerkrankungen
20. Mai 1989
Hörsaal der Medizinischen Klinik der Universität Göttingen Robert-Koch-Str. 40, D-3400 Göttingen
9.00–13.00 Uhr
Für DAKE- bzw. AIO-Mitglieder DM 20,- Für Nichtmitglieder DM 40,-
Bezahlung bei Erhalt der Teilnahme-bestätigung im Tagungssekretariat.
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