Introductory Remarks

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The second-generation platinum compound carboplatin has been studied extensively in recent years and serves as a valuable example of the analogue's potential for reducing toxicity while retaining the efficacy of the parent drug. In these proceedings of the symposium 'Carboplatin: Present Status and Future Directions', which was held in Paris, France, on February 2, 1993, the impact of carboplatin is elaborated by a faculty intimately involved in its use and evaluation. The issue opens with several presentations examining the status of carboplatin as it is currently used in the treatment of a broad range of malignancies. The common theme of carboplatin's improved side effects profile in comparison to other available agents provides the foundation for discussion. Dr. Edward Han-nigan confirms carboplatin's favorable therapeutic index in a Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG) phase III study of carboplatin versus the first-generation compound cis-platin in patients with advanced ovarian cancer. Dr. Ian Smith concurs, citing the advantages of carboplatin for reducing toxicity in patients with small cell lung cancer, in whom aggressive therapy at the expense of greater toxicity appears to have little impact on survival and may, therefore, be inappropriate. Regarding the use of carboplatin in head and neck cancers, Dr. Thomas Schnabel discusses the additive impact of radiotherapy given with chemotherapy, and Dr. Joel Depondt suggests that the benefits of carboplatin may extend to reducing the need for mutilating surgery in these patients. In the management of still other types of malignancies, numerous studies confirm the relative efficacy and reduced toxicity of carboplatin against advanced urothelial cancer and non-small-cell lung cancer, as reviewed by Drs. N. Mottet-Auselo and Robert Comis, respectively. Dr. Ralph Vogler provides evidence of carboplatin's benefits in treating hematologic cancers, and Dr. J.-L. Pico presents data on its use in solid tumors.

In addition to the extensive applications presented in this issue, such strategies as stem cell support, combination therapies incorporating new oncologic agents, and alternative dosing regimens are also discussed with an eye toward taking full advantage of the many facets of carboplatin therapy.

The role of carboplatin in cancer management has yet to be fully defined, but the unparalleled value of this important chemotherapeutic option is beyond question, as evidenced by the clinical data, personal experiences, and provocative debate provided in this forum. 1993;50:1