Epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Kaposi's Sarcoma

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Epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Kaposi's Sarcoma

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Drug Dosage

The authors and the publisher have exerted every effort to ensure that drug selection and dosage set forth in this text are in accord with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication. However, in view of ongoing research, changes in government regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to drug therapy and drug reactions, the reader is urged to check the package insert for each drug for any change in indications and dosage and for added warnings and precautions. This is particularly important when the recommended agent is a new and/or infrequently employed drug.

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Giraldo, G.; Beth, E.; Buonaguro, F.M. (Naples): Kaposi’s Sarcoma: a Natural Model of Interrelationships between Viruses, Immunologic Responses, Genetics, and Oncogenesis ..........................................................................................................................
The epidemic occurrence of AIDS, known only since 1981 with first case reports from New York City and California, is extending also to Europe. The syndrome is apparently new, serious, increasing, and in certain subjects predisposing to cancer, particularly KS. Epidemiologic data suggest that AIDS is caused by an infectious agent, transmissible by sexual contact or blood products. The mortality rate after a 2-year period is about 90%. Various risk groups, listed in order of highest incidence, have been identified by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga.: (1) homosexual males; (2) intravenous drug abusers; (3) Haitians living in the United States or Haiti; (4) hemophiliacs receiving factor VIII concentrates; (5) female and male sex partners of AIDS patients, and (6) infants and children of high-risk groups. Recent reports have also identified another group at risk of developing AIDS and opportunistic infections, namely equatorial Africans living in France,
Belgium, or in their native country. This important observation leads to consider that this syndrome is an old illness, endemic in equatorial African regions, with a recent epidemic expression in the western civilization due to pertinent cultural changes in a selected population of our society. The marked immune deficiency involves not only the cell-mediated immunity, but every compartment of the immunologic apparatus. Additive immunosuppressive effects due to continuous large numbers of infections, not only viral, and their treatments in subjects belonging to the highest risk group, homosexual males, mainly due to promiscuity and certain sexual practices along with the use of various 'street' drugs, could possibly result in the expression of the oncogenic potential of ubiquitous viruses, i.e., cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, herpes simplex virus type 1 and 2 or herpesvirus, and human T cell leukemia virus, previously already associated with KS, Burkitt’s lymphoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and T cell leukemia, respectively.

The purpose of this workshop was multifocal: (1) to outline the overall spectrum of this devastating epidemic, whether from the epidemiologic or etiologic point of view or from clinical perspective; (2) to report the most recent data on this epidemic, whether obtained by the Center for Disease Control or other research units in the United States and in Europe; (3) to sensitize clinicians and general public on national level to be aware of the impact and severity of this syndrome, and (4) to establish a multidisciplinary European Study Group on this argument for future rapid and direct communications and collaboration. Participation from eight European countries and the USA and a general agreement to possibly annex such a study group to the World Health Organization should be considered as the first direct results.

The valuable assistance before and during the workshop of the members of the Division of Viral Oncology, the Division of Pathology, and the Division of Medicine of the Istituto Nazionale Tumori ‘Fondazione G. Pascale’ is greatly acknowledged. We are indebted to the Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca sul Cancro for its prompt response and action in supporting acute cancer research problems, such as promotion of knowledge in the epidemic of AIDS and KS.

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Elke Beth