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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Printed in Germany by Bonitas-Bauer, Würzburg

ISBN 3-8055-5233-5

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Preface

The purpose of this volume is twofold: 1) Selecting a topic which deserves more attention, namely Cancer in the First Year of Life, concentrating mainly on leukemias, neuroblastomas and soft tissue sarcomas, and 2) documenting an example of Italian-German collaboration in the field of pediatric cancer.

In 1985 at a meeting in Cologne, the Bilateral Agreement Italy - Federal Republic of Germany, funded by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Progetto Finalizzato `Oncologia' and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, was started, and pediatric oncology was one of the fields included. In the meantime, there were many bilateral activities, including exchange of diagnostic and therapy protocols and also laboratory and clinical
personnel. So far, several Italian scientists from Italy have stayed at laboratories (Giessen, Göttingen, Heidelberg) for up to 6 months. Genoa was the host of the first Workshop of Pathologists in December 1987, and the first Workshop on Pediatric Oncology in November 1987, focusing on metastatic neuroblastoma, rhabdomyosarcoma, histiocytoses, B-cell disease. The idea of joined efforts was to have either combined studies in rare tumor diseases or parallel studies in common malignancies in order to gain more knowledge and to cure more children.

Thus, a second Italo-German Workshop on Pediatric Oncology (with 34 Italian and 25 German participants) took place October 27/28, 1989, at Braunfels, an ancient Hessian town in the Taunus mountains, and had only one sole topic: Cancer in the newborn and infant. 35 papers were presented, regarding epidemiology, diagnosis, therapy, general management of malignancies in infancy, particularly leukemias, neuroblastoma, soft tissue tumors. Due to space limitations in this volume we had to omit contributions on general aspects; and in some instances only abstracts with some tables or diagrams could be printed. It was anticipated, however, that Italian and German papers should alternate, often on the same subject.

Some results of the workshop can be summarized: Cancer incidence was found to be higher in infants as compared to age groups of older children, and neuroblastoma was the most frequent tumor. Leukemias, on the other hand, occur more rarely and, in ALL, have a poorer therapy response in infants as compared to older children. The immunophenotypes of leukemic cells in infancy are different as are the genotypes, with translocation t(4;11) being the most common one. Clinical and cytological peculiarities are seen in the Transient Myeloproliferative Disorders, often affecting newborns with Down's syndrome, and in these cases intensive therapy should be restricted. Neuroblastomas in infants could be evaluated as to prognostic factors, and the high number of low stage patients was found to be responsible for the high survival rate in infancy. It was possible to demonstrate that 1p-aberrations and copy number of the oncogene N-myc were the most important cytogenetic predictors. Cytogenetic investigations in families with a neuroblastoma patient pointed to a certain disposition for tumor occurrence. Highlight of the workshop was the guest lecture of Thomas Boehm from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, who demonstrated how breakpoints on the short arm of chromosome 11 in cells of T-acute lymphoblastic leukemia could be located, sequenced, and explained in their gene expression.

Gieen / Genoa, August 1990
Fritz Lampert
Luisa Massimo