



NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF ONCOLOGY

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Top Five Recent Advances in Veterinary Oncology

In November the Veterinary Cancer Society met, the following is a summary of the top five advances:

1. **The Melanoma Vaccine:** The vaccine continues to demonstrate success in treating melanoma in dogs. Though developed for oral melanoma, survival advantages are seen for melanoma in other sites. This vaccine, which I have been using at VEC/RC since the fall, induces an immune response against neoplastic melanocytes. In low stage disease, the vaccine has extended survival from 9 months, with surgery or radiation alone, to approaching 2 years.

2. **New Rescue Protocol for Lymphoma:** A new rescue protocol for lymphoma has been developed which demonstrates a significant survival advantage over all currently available rescue protocols. The new protocol, which combines drugs from current first line protocols and previous 2nd and 3rd line protocols, has a response rate of 90% and a median second remission time of 141 days (if treated with a Madison-Wisconsin based protocol first). This compares favourably to the 65% response rate and median second remission time of 63 days available up until now.

3. **New Treatments for Mast Cell Tumours:** One of the major complications with chemotherapeutic treatment of MCT is the hepatotoxicity (necrosis) and chronic myelosuppression associated with CCNU use. CCNU, when used in combination with vinca-alkyloids is the standard of care for MCT. Now new research has demonstrated that the substitution of cyclophosphamide (also an alkylating agent) into the protocol in place of CCNU, offers the same response rate and survival times. The benefit of the new protocol is the lack of serious side effects or toxicities.

4. **Adjunctive care of Grade I and Grade II soft tissue sarcomas (STS):** An area of "hot" debate amongst veterinary oncologists is how to best approach incompletely resected low to mid grade STS. In the past the recommendation was to use adjunctive radiation therapy. This treatment would achieve survival times of over one year for over 90% of patients with 75% being alive at 5 years. Now new data from Colorado State University have demonstrated that, after an initial surgery with curative intent, repeated surgeries, as necessary, will offer as successful an outcome as follow-up with radiation. When followed up with surgery alone the recurrence rate was 37% and the survival time was 826 days. Only 12% of dogs were euthanized due to problems related to local disease.

5. **Hemangiosarcoma (HSA):** New data have demonstrated that Stage III (metastatic) HSA shows a good response to chemotherapy. After surgery to remove the primary mass and chemotherapy, the survival time is 120 days. This is 60 days less than the same treatment for lower stage disease and much higher than had previously been reported for treatment of high stage HSA. In other news metronomic therapy has begun to show some promise as an adjunctive therapy following chemotherapy. Metronomic therapy is the continued low dose administration of antiangiogenic agents with the goal of inhibiting angiogenesis. The prevention of the formation of new blood vessels is an ideal therapeutic target for many tumours but for HSA in particular, as it is essentially a tumour of blood vessels. Agents used in metronomic therapy include both chemotherapeutic agents and non-chemotherapeutic agents.

All of these latest advances will be included in the treatment protocols I design for my cancer patients.

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