

Efficacy and Tolerability of Irinotecan in Patients with Advanced Colorectal Cancer in Singapore

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Abstract

Introduction: Colorectal cancer is the commonest malignancy encountered in Singapore. The long-term outcome of patients with advanced diseases is poor. For many decades, 5-fluorouracil was the only effective cytotoxic drug against colorectal cancers. Randomised trials have documented the efficacy of irinotecan in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer. We investigated the efficacy and safety profile of irinotecan (CPT-11), as a second-line treatment for an Asian population who had failed 5-fluorouracil-based chemotherapy. **Materials and Methods:** A total of 33 patients were enrolled in the study between October 1996 and May 1999. This was an open label phase II study. All patients who had received at least one dose of CPT-11 were evaluated for toxicity. Thirty patients were evaluated for response. **Results:** Six patients (20%) had partial responses and 1 (3%) experienced minor response. Fourteen patients (47%) progressed. Nine patients (30%) had stable disease. The range of time to progression was 5.8 months to 21 months. The median survival was 9.5 months. There was no treatment-related death. Seven patients (23%) who received treatment had diarrhoea. Only 2 of the 7 patients had grade 3-4 diarrhoea. Eleven patients (37%) suffered from haematological toxicity, of whom 2 patients had grade 3-4 neutropenia. **Conclusion:** We demonstrated efficacy and tolerability of CPT-11 in Singaporean patients with advanced colorectal cancer.

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