



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE REVIEW

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Accelerated radiation therapy reduces toxicity in patients with advanced head and neck cancers

Phoenix, February 25, 2010 – Using an accelerated, shorter course of radiation therapy for patients with advanced head and neck cancer allows doctors to reduce the amount of chemotherapy, thus reducing toxicity, according to a study presented at the Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Symposium, sponsored by AHNS, ASCO, ASTRO and SNM.

Between July 2002 and May 2005, this multi-institutional randomized phase III trial analyzed 721 patients with stage III-IV carcinoma of the oral cavity, oropharynx, hypopharynx or larynx, with 360 receiving accelerated radiation and 361 receiving standard radiation with two and three cycles of cisplatin, respectively.

After a median follow up of 4.8 years, the overall survival of accelerated radiation patients versus standard radiation patients was 59 percent and 56 percent respectively. Disease-free survival rates were 45 percent and 44 percent respectively and local-regional failure and metastasis rates were also very similar at 31 and 28 percent and 18 and 22 percent, respectively.

“Accelerated fractionation concurrent with two doses of high dose cisplatin has the potential to reduce toxicity related to the chemotherapy regimen by not exposing patients to a third cycle,” said, Phuc Felix Nguyen-Tan, M.D., presenter of the study for the RTOG and assistant professor of radiation oncology at CHUM Notre-Dame in Montreal, Canada.

The abstract, “A Phase III Trial to Test Accelerated versus Standard Fractionation in Combination with Concurrent Cisplatin for Head and Neck Carcinomas (RTOG 0129): Report of Efficacy and Toxicity,” will be presented in the plenary session on Friday, February 26, 2010. To speak with one of the study authors, contact Beth Bukata or Nicole Napoli on February 25-26, 2010, in the press room at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa at 520-796-8228. You may also e-mail them at bethb@astro.org or nicolen@astro.org.

About the American Head and Neck Society

The American Head and Neck Society (AHNS) is the single largest organization in North America for the advancement of research and education in head and neck oncology. The purpose of the AHNS is to promote and advance the knowledge of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of neoplasms and other diseases of the head and neck; to promote and advance research in diseases of the head and neck; and to promote and advance the highest professional and ethical standards.

About the American Society of Clinical Oncology

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 28,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. For ASCO information and resources, visit www.asco.org. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at www.Cancer.Net.

About the American Society for Radiation Oncology

The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) is the largest radiation oncology society in the world, with more than 10,000 members who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, biology and physics, the Society is dedicated to improving patient care through education, clinical practice, advancement of science and advocacy. For more information on radiation therapy, visit www.rtanswers.org. To learn more about ASTRO, visit www.astro.org.

About SNM—Advancing Molecular Imaging and Therapy

SNM is an international scientific and medical organization dedicated to raising public awareness about what molecular imaging is and how it can help provide patients with the best health care possible. SNM members specialize in molecular imaging, a vital element of today's medical practice that adds an additional dimension to diagnosis, changing the way common and devastating diseases are understood and treated.

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