

CME Opportunities from MedImmune Oncology

The following continuing medical education (CME) programs are now available to radiation oncologists in audio-CD format. Please contact your local MedImmune Representative or contact MedImmune directly at 877.633.4411 to find out how to order the following CME audio programs:

Radiation Oncologists

Current Issues in Therapeutic Radiology:
Head and Neck Cancer

Treatments for head and neck cancer continue to become more aggressive by delivering high, curative doses of radiation and chemotherapy to active tumor sites. While these treatments improve cure rates, they also create an increased need to prevent mucositis and injury to the pharynx, esophagus and salivary glands. The presentations in this program, selected from the 43rd annual meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology (ASTRO) held in San Francisco, CA

in November 2001, address this problem. This program details approaches ranging from a variety of approved and investigational pretreatment cytoprotective agents to forward planning for precision delivery of high-dose radiation. Administration of radioprotective agents may lead to improved therapeutic tolerance, which may enhance compliance and outcomes in patients undergoing radiation therapy.

Radiation Oncologists

Issues in Radiation Therapy: Lung Cancer

Treatments for lung cancer have become increasingly precise at

delivering high, curative doses of radiation and chemotherapy to active tumor sites. However, the dilemma is to prevent toxicity to normal tissue at these doses. These presentations, selected from the 43rd annual meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology (ASTRO) held in San Francisco, CA, in November 2001, offer two approaches to these problems – cytoprotectants and risk prediction – to reduce toxicities such as acute pneumonitis, severe acute esophagitis and lung injury.

See page 12 for more information.

The educational materials listed above were jointly sponsored by Dannemüller Memorial Educational Foundation and Sciris Corporation

From the Desk of

Dr. DiBenedetto, Jr.



Anemia, secondary to cancer chemotherapy, can be an important clinical problem, which can adversely affect a patient's quality of life. With the new chemotherapy agents available today along with multiple drug combinations given, anemia has become significantly more relevant.

Recently ASCO and ASH published guidelines* for the use of epoetin for patients with anemia secondary to cancer. The guideline panel found good evidence to recommend the use of epoetin as a treatment option for patients with chemotherapy-associated anemia whose hemoglobin level is less than 10 g/dL. For those patients with less severe anemia but declining hemoglobin levels – less than 12 g/dL but greater than 10 g/dL – the decision to use epoetin immediately or wait until the

hemoglobin falls closer to 10g/dL should be determined by clinical circumstances governing the patient. There are two epoetins available in commercial use in the United States today, specifically epoetin alfa and darbepoetin alfa. Epoetin alfa is given thrice weekly or weekly, whereas darbepoetin may be given weekly or biweekly. The utilization of these agents can be successful in treating chemotherapy-induced anemia and may result in an improved quality of life and a higher sense of physical well being in patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

* Journal of Clinical Oncology, Vol. 20, No. 19 (October 1), 2002: pp 4083-4107

A practicing oncologist in Providence, RI, Dr. DiBenedetto directs the Oncology Associates (OA) advisory board for establishing treatment guidelines, selection of product and therapeutic alternatives and reporting on reimbursement/legislative issues that affect the OA membership. Dr. DiBenedetto is active in ASCO as well as many other societies and committees specific to the practice of oncology treatment. In his columns, Dr. DiBenedetto, Jr. discusses topics pertinent to the community-based oncology practice.