



METASTATIC CARCINOMA of the Breast

by Dr. Joe DiBenedetto, Jr., M.D.
Medical Director, Oncology Associates

Metastatic carcinoma of the breast claims approximately 40,000 women in the United States each year. The median survival of this disease is between 18 and 24 months. Chemotherapy remains one of the main stays of treatment for this malignancy. The taxanes, specifically Taxol, Taxotere, and Abraxane are the most important chemotherapeutic drugs for breast cancer and have considerable activity in the metastatic setting.

The original taxane, Taxol, is given with premedication that includes both a cortical steroid and antihistamine in approximately

99% of cycles. Taxol, when used, has significant toxicity in the form of myelosuppression, peripheral neuropathy, and hypersensitivity reactions. Fortunately, there are other taxanes available that have an equal or higher response rate to Taxol with fewer side effects.

Taxotere is a highly effective agent in the treatment of carcinoma of the breast and has demonstrated a significant survival advantage over Taxol in patients with this disease.

Abraxane, a nanoparticle albumin-bound taxane, has superior efficacy to Taxol. This

taxane is given in approximately 30 minutes and does not require premedication with steroids. This can be a major advantage in patients who have a contraindication to cortical steroids. There is also significantly less myelosuppression with Abraxane versus Taxol, and the neuropathy seen with Abraxane appears to be more quickly reversible than Taxol leading to improvement in quality of life. Oncology Associates is glad to have partnered with Abraxis Oncology and sanofi aventis for the benefit of our members. OA



Credible Patient Resources (C.P.R.)

Jump Start Your Patients' Search for Reliable Web Information

Cut and copy the following web links for a handy reference guide for your patients.

4anemia.com

An unbranded educational site regarding the effect of anemia and fatigue induced by chemotherapy.

allaboutmds.com

Support for patients with MDS and their caretakers.

cancer.com

A comprehensive portal of credible information on cancer.

LAF.org

The Lance Armstrong Foundation provides practice information and tools for people living with cancer.

patientaccessnetwork.org

Provides financial co-pay assistance for qualified individuals for medications to treat anemia.

pinkribbon.com

A comprehensive breast cancer resource center.

procritline.com

Provides financial assistance for qualified individuals receiving Procrit therapy.

strength4yourjourney.com

An information-packed resource for newly-diagnosed cancer patients — from diagnosis to treatment.

strengthforcaring.com

A national program for caregivers of loved ones and family members with cancer.

toomuchiron.com

A resource for patients at risk for iron overload.