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Treatment options for recurrent/metastatic HNC patients in an Indian survey

Sameer Chaudhari, Ramez Ahmed and Dilip Pawar
Biocon Limited, India

Introduction & Objective: Performance status (PS) of recurrent/metastatic HNC patients is often low and affects clinical decisions. A survey was conducted to understand importance of PS and different treatment options in these patients.

Method: A questionnaire was developed to undertake survey among oncologists across India in 2016. Response from 38 oncologists was analyzed.

Result: Around 55.5% doctors opined that <50 % undergo surgery and 71.1% doctors opined that <50% of these patients undergo re-irradiation. According to 31.6% doctors, <25% of these patients are fit for cisplatin, while 39.5% doctors opine that <25% are fit for cetuximab. In patients with PS 0 or 1, 42.1% doctors treat <25% of such patients with platinum based drugs+cetuximab, 28.9% doctors treat <25% with 5FU+cetuximab, 42.1% doctors treat <25% with taxane+cetuximab and 34.2% doctors treat <25% with triple drug combination. In patients with PS >1, 34.2% doctors treat <25% of such patients with cisplatin, 34.2% doctors treat <25% with cetuximab, 34.2% doctors treat 25-50% patients of such with taxane based drugs, 50% of doctors treat <25% with erlotinib/gefitinib. It was observed that 81.6% doctors use nimotuzumab in recurrent/metastatic HNC patients. Categories in which doctors prescribe nimotuzumab include elderly patients (18.4%), advanced metastatic (10.5%), patients which failed triple regime (7.9%), all metastatic patients (7.9%).

Conclusion: Multiple treatment options are present for recurrent/metastatic HNC patients. PS acts as critical factor for making clinical decisions. Nimotuzumab stands as a choice of treatment in recurrent/metastatic patients.

sameer.chaudhari@biocon.com