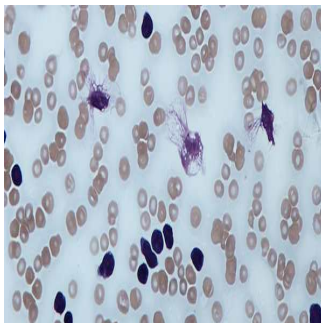

Cancer Advance of the Year: New Therapies For Chronic Leukaemia



The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) has designated four new leukaemia therapies as its cancer Advance of the Year. The announcement was made this week in ASCO's 10th Annual Report on Progress Against Cancer, which has been published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

New Treatments, New Hope for CLL Patients

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) is the most common form of leukaemia in adults. The condition affects almost 120,000 Americans, almost 90 percent of whom are diagnosed past the age of 55. Effective treatment options have been limited for many CLL patients, although the outlook is now more optimistic with the newly developed therapy drugs.

"These new therapies fill an enormous need for thousands of patients living with CLL," stated Gregory Masters, MD, FACP, FASCO, the co-executive editor of the ASCO report. "For many older patients, especially, these drugs essentially offer the first chance at effective treatment, since the side effects of earlier options were simply too toxic for many to handle."

The four new CLL treatments include two drugs for patients who have not been previously treated and two drugs for resistant or relapsed CLL. The immunotherapy drugs, to be used in combination with regular chemotherapy, are obinutuzumab and ofatumumab. The molecularly targeted therapies for hard-to-treat CLL are ibrutinib and idelalisib.

"This has truly been a banner year for CLL and for clinical cancer research as a whole. Advances in cancer prevention and care, especially those in precision medicine, are offering stunning new possibilities for patients," said Peter P. Yu, MD, FASCO and ASCO's president.

Clinical Cancer Advances 2015

An editorial board comprised of 18 oncology experts developed ASCO's Clinical Care Advances 2015 report, which identifies trends in cancer prevention, screening, tumour biology, treatment, quality of life and survivorship. It receives financial support from the Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology Mission Endowment Fund.

The 2015 report also includes a progress report on rare cancers, a Decade in Review and a 10-Year Horizon. The latter feature previews the cancer care trends likely to dominate the coming decade, such as genomic technology, health IT (including ASCO's CancerLinQ) and nanomedicine applications.

Ongoing Need For Federal Funding

The report emphasises the importance of federal funding for advancing cancer research. Dr. Yu noted that nearly a third of the year's research studies were funded by federal research money. "We cannot underestimate the importance of federal investment for answering critical cancer care questions, particularly in rare, under-studied cancers," he said.

"The U.S. federal cancer research enterprise faces critical funding challenges that threaten the pace of research progress," cautioned ASCO's Chief Medical Officer Richard Schilsky, MD, FACP, FASCO. "Now is the time to increase our nation's investment in cancer research to ensure that we can build on these advances well into the future."

The full report is available at www.CancerProgress.Net/CCA.

Source: American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

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