

Dresden scientist receives award of the German Society for Hematology and Oncology (DGHO)

New treatment options shown by clinical study for patients with liver metastases of a large intestine carcinoma



PD Dr. med. Gunnar Folprecht received the Vincenz Cerny Prize 2010 during the most important joint congress of German, Swiss and Austrian hematologists and oncologists in Berlin. The leading doctor of the interdisciplinary out-patient ward of the UniversityCancerCenter received the award, endowed with 7,500 Euro for extraordinary cancer research. He could prove in a clinical study, that malign, inoperable liver tumors grown there as a result of metastases of a colon cancer can be shrunk with the help of chemotherapy with a pharmaceutical combination containing the antibody Cetuximab for 60% of patients.

The reduced metastases could be surgically removed later on. The results for this special group of patients mark a further progress towards an individualised cancer therapy. "This is the first randomized study worldwide within this special group of patients" reports PD Dr. med. Gunnar Folprecht, who also is leading doctor of the oncological day clinic and out-patient ward of the Medical Clinic I at the University Hospital Dresden. 80 % of patients with liver metastases suffer from an inoperable tumor. This tumor can not be removed surgically because of its extend, big parts of the liver would have to be removed with it. Patients can only be treated by chemotherapy, whereas the prospects of a long-term survival without surgical removal are low.

The clinical study combined the three-year examination results of 114 patients. The study itself was jointly carried out by oncological research groups of more than 12 clinics in Germany and Austria. "It was a whole new approach, when we first started to treat patients with chemotherapy in combination with a pharmaceutical containing the antibody Cetuximab" declares Folprecht.

Cancer cells have specific connectors (receptors) on their surfaces, which may also receive and transmit chemical signals for cell growth. These are so called Epidermal Growth Factor Receptors (EGFR). The anti body Cetuximab connects to such a growth receptor and blocks signal transmission. The tumor cell is hence hindered in growth. Clearly more than 60 % of chemotherapy patients who received the antibody Cetuximab showed a reduction of malign liver metastases. One third of these patients was eligible for surgical removal.

The randomized long term study brought on further research for an individualized, optimised cancer therapy. Every study participant received an examination of colon cancer tissue. Hereby was confirmed that the genetic change of the tumor, e.g. a mutation of the k-ras-gene could predict the efficiency of the pharmaceutical combination.

The advanced surgery options of liver metastases have been proven by a blank test. "The tumors were scanned by CT at the beginning of treatment and after two, four and six weeks" says PD Dr. med. Folprecht of the UniversityCancerCenter. Surgeons of the associated clinics saw these images without reference of the date of imaging. They should only tell whether these cancers were operable or not. "We connected the single surgeons' opinions with the dates of the combined chemotherapy. The surgeons proved our findings in that blank trial. This confirms our concept of treatment towards a maximal reduction of the tumor."

The study was published in the British journal "The Lancet"

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- 2) Universitätsklinikum Wien
- 3) Universitätsklinikum Frankfurt/ Main
- 4/18) Klinikum Oldenburg
- 5) Klinikum rechts der Isar, München
- 6) Universitätsklinikum Tübingen
- 7) Universitätsklinikum Mainz
- 8) Universitätsklinikum Essen
- 10/14) Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg
- 13) Universitätsklinikum Göttingen
- 15) Krankenhaus der Barmherzigen Brüder, Trier
- 17) New York University Cancer Institute, New York

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The UniversityCancerCenter (UCC) is one of eleven „Oncological Top Centers” of the Deutsche Krebshilfe (Society for Cancer Help). The UCC received this award 2007 as one of the first such centers after an international audit. The UniversityCancerCenter Dresden was founded 2003 jointly by the University Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine Carl Gustav Carus as Comprehensive Cancer Center for a comprehensive interdisciplinary treatment of cancer patients, cancer research and teaching. Since 2004 the UCC is certified according DIN EN ISO 9001:2008.

Within the UniversityCancerCenter, highly specialised medical experts from all oncological disciplines collaborate to achieve an individually adjusted optimized therapy for the patient. Many specialists not only are experienced doctor but also university teachers and cancer researchers. Thus is provided, that state of the art knowledge is taken into account on every step of treatment.

2010, the German Center for Cancer Research Heidelberg has opened a subsidy of the Cancer Information Service, which answers questions of patients, family and doctors impartially, free-of-charge and well-founded.