

Accelerated radiation therapy reduces toxicity in patients with advanced head and neck cancers

February 25 2010

Using an accelerated, shorter course of radiation therapy for patients with advanced head and neck cancer allows doctors to reduce the amount of chemotherapy, thus reducing toxicity, according to a study presented at the Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Symposium.

Between July 2002 and May 2005, this multi-institutional randomized phase III trial analyzed 721 patients with stage III-IV [carcinoma](#) of the oral cavity, oropharynx, hypopharynx or larynx, with 360 receiving accelerated radiation and 361 receiving standard radiation with two and three cycles of cisplatin, respectively.

After a median follow up of 4.8 years, the overall survival of accelerated radiation patients versus standard radiation patients was 59 percent and 56 percent respectively. Disease-free survival rates were 45 percent and 44 percent respectively and local-regional failure and [metastasis](#) rates were also very similar at 31 and 28 percent and 18 and 22 percent, respectively.

"Accelerated fractionation concurrent with two doses of high dose cisplatin has the potential to reduce toxicity related to the chemotherapy regimen by not exposing patients to a third cycle," said, Phuc Felix Nguyen-Tan, M.D., presenter of the study for the RTOG and assistant professor of [radiation oncology](#) at CHUM Notre-Dame in Montreal, Canada.

Provided by American Society for Radiation Oncology

Citation: Accelerated radiation therapy reduces toxicity in patients with advanced head and neck cancers (2010, February 25) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-02-therapy-toxicity-patients-advanced-neck.html>

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