Medical Xpress

# Studies give new insights on immunotherapy in elderly patients with advanced NSCLC

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| | Pembro | | Chemo | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AEs, n (%) | ≥75 y n = 149 | <75 y n = 1323 | ≥75 y n = 105 | <75 y n = 969 |
| Any treatment-related AE | 102 (68) | 862 (65) | 99 (94) | 840 (87) |
| Grade 3–5 treatment-related AE | 36 (24) | 224 (17) | 64 (61) | 379 (39) |
| Serious treatment-related AE | 24 (16) | 170 (13) | 28 (27) | 136 (14) |
| Treatment-related AEs leading to discontinuation | 16 (11) | 90 (7) | 16 (15) | 93 (10) |
| Treatment-related AEs leading to death | 2 (1) | 17 (1) | 2 (2) | 20 (2) |
| Immune-mediated AEs and infusion reactions | 37 (25) | 331 (25) | 7 (7) | 57 (6) |

Two studies to be reported at ELCC 2019 provide new insights on the efficacy and safety of immunotherapy in elderly patients with advanced non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC), where information has previously been lacking despite being the age group most commonly affected. Credit: © European Society for Medical Oncology

Two studies to be reported at ELCC 2019 provide new insights on the efficacy and safety of immunotherapy in elderly patients with advanced non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC), where information has previously been lacking despite being the age group most commonly affected.

Immunotherapy with drugs that target immune pathways to enhance the body's ability to recognise and destroy tumour cells is emerging as an effective treatment option for patients with advanced NSCLC. Although

around half of all people newly diagnosed with NSCLC are elderly there is currently limited evidence on the efficacy and safety of immunotherapy in this age group because they have been under-represented in clinical trials. There have also been concerns that age-related decline in the immune system might affect the efficacy of immunotherapy in older patients.

Real-life study suggests shorter overall survival with immunotherapy in elderlyA retrospective study of patients with advanced NSCLC treated with immunotherapy in real-life clinical practice suggested that elderly patients (greater than equal to 70 years) may have shorter overall survival than younger patients but demonstrated that toxicity was similar.

Researchers retrospectively reviewed all patients with advanced NSCLC treated with immunotherapy agents at Hospital Universitario Ramon y Cajal in Madrid, Spain, between 2014 and 2018. Just over one in four (27 patients; 27.5%) of the 98 patients treated with immunotherapy agents over this four-year period were aged 70 years or older. PD-L1 status was known in 50% of patients.

Overall survival in these elderly patients was significantly shorter than in patients younger than 70 years of age (median 5.5 months vs 13 months, hazard ratio [HR] 3.86, 95% confidence interval [CI] 2.073-7.214, p

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