Immunotherapy in combination points to paradigm shift in the treatment of cervical cancer
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Ana Oaknin, Principal Investigator of VHIO's Gynecological Malignancies Group, and Chair of the ESMO Congress 2019's Gynecological Cancer Track, this cohort paired nivolumab with ipilimumab for the treatment of patients with recurrent or metastatic cervical cancer, with or without prior systematic therapies, and irrespective of PD-L1 expression.

"Importantly, the only treatment option for these patients in the second line setting is pembrolizumab. This immune-based therapy hones in on and blocks the PD-L1 protein found on the surface of T-Cells. Only those individuals whose tumors express PD-L1 are eligible to receive this treatment," said Ana Oaknin.

She continued, "In order to explore novel treatment avenues and thus provide fresh hope for all of our patients, Checkmate 358 has been designed to tackle virus-associated cancers, irrespective of PD-L1 expression status."

Patients who had received prior previous systemic therapy or not were randomized to either combination A, receiving nivolumab plus ipilimumab, or B, with this same combination followed by subsequent therapy with nivolumab. While results showed clinical benefit in both combinations, the objective response rate (ORR) was significantly higher in B, particularly in those patients who had not received prior therapy (46% vs 32%).

Median overall survival (OS) with current first-line standard of care is around 17 months. While median OS has not yet been reached with this novel immunotherapy combination, strikingly, among those patients who received regimen B after failing to respond to platinum-based therapy, OS is 25 months.

For patients receiving the nivolumab and
iplimumab combination without previous treatments for metastatic disease, OS rate was 83% vs 38% for those who had.

"Not only do these results reflect the increasing promise of immunotherapeutics administered in combination, they also show improved efficacy for those patients who have very few therapeutic options available. As importantly, results were particularly encouraging in chemotherapy-naïve patients. Our results therefore represent a crucial forward step towards a new standard of care, warranting further investigation in an extended population," concluded Ana.

These present findings also confirm the promise of nivolumab recently reported by the study's monotherapy cohort. Co-authored by Ana Oaknin, results published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology evidenced the safety and efficacy of treating patients with recurrent and metastatic cervical, vaginal or vulvar virus-associated cancers with nivolumab alone.

**More information:** LBA62 - Efficacy and safety of nivolumab (Nivo) + ipilimumab (Ipi) in patients (pts) with recurrent/metastatic (R/M) cervical cancer: Results from CheckMate 358.


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