

The Scoop From Rhonda's Club

December 2007

Avastin Effective for Recurrent Ovarian Cancer

Recently-reported data from two Phase II clinical trials suggest that Avastin® (bevacizumab) is effective and reasonably well tolerated for the treatment of ovarian cancer, says a report in the November 20 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

A Phase II trials conducted by the Gynecologic Oncology Group evaluated Avastin in 62 patients with recurrent or refractory ovarian cancer. Two-thirds of these patients had received two prior chemotherapy treatments, and 42% were considered platinum-resistant. All patients were treated with Avastin as a single agent for 21 days:

- 21% experienced a complete or partial response
- The median duration of response was 10 months
- 40% of patients survived at least six months without progression
- Median progression-free survival was 4.7 months
- Median overall survival was 17 months

The second study involved 44 patients with ovarian cancer who had received one to three prior treatment regimens. Eighty-four percent of these patients were considered platinum-resistant:

- Partial responses were observed in 16%
- Median progression-free survival was 4.4 months
- Median survival was 10.7 months

Avastin appears to provide anticancer activity and is generally well-tolerated by patients who have received prior therapy and who are platinum-resistant. Side effects included hypertension, GI perforation, bleeding and wound healing complications.

For the details:

Burger R, Sill M, Monk B, Greer B, Sorosk J. Phase II trial of bevacizumab in persistent or recurrent epithelial ovarian cancer or primary peritoneal cancer: a gynecology oncology group study. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2007; 25:5165-5171.

Cannistra SA, Matulonis UA, Penson RT, et al. Phase II study of bevacizumab in patients with platinum-resistant ovarian cancer or peritoneal serous cancer. *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 2007; 25: 5180-5186.

Ovarian & Gynecologic Cancer Coalition/Rhonda's Club
P.O. Box 12504, Arlington VA 22219
(703) 346-3893
www.cancer-ovarian.com

OGCC/Rhonda's Club is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) public charity.

OGCC's Educational Sessions January 28 Managing Recurrence and New Developments in Ovarian Cancer

Deborah K. Armstrong, M.D.

Associate Professor of Oncology,
Associate Professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics,
Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center
Dr. Armstrong joins us to provide information
on our nagging and persistent topic—
Recurrence.

Date: **Friday, January 28**

Time: 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Location: Auditorium

George Washington University Hospital
900 23rd St. NW, Washington, D.C.
At the Foggy Bottom Metro Station

Register. Leave a message at 202-332-3358.
(walk-ins welcome; registering helps us plan better)

National Cancer Institute Researchers Uncover Unusual Association Between Cell Survival Proteins and Ovarian Cancer Aggressiveness

NIH News, 11-15-07: An international scientific team led by researchers from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has found that the elevated levels of certain proteins typically associated with keeping cancer cells alive may actually correspond with improved patient survival in ovarian cancer. These proteins, all members of cellular networks that regulate apoptosis (programmed cell death) and response to stress together form a prognostic protein signature that provides key information about the tumor. If additional research verifies these findings, physicians may be able to use this protein signature to gauge aggressiveness of a woman's ovarian tumor at the time of diagnosis, and to identify patients who could benefit from various specific therapies.

Elise Kohn, MD, lead author of this research and head of the Molecular Signaling Section at NCI's Center for Cancer Research, stated. "We selected these proteins for study assuming that, because of their known abilities to promote the survival of cancer cells, they would likely correlate with worse outcomes and high tumor aggressiveness. We did not expect to find that increased expression of the proteins would actually be linked with better survival."

NIH

The data also open up avenues of investigation for understanding the molecular biology of chemotherapy resistance, provide additional insights into the signaling networks underlying cancer cell survival, and highlight potentially good new targets for new ovarian cancer therapies. There are limited treatment options available to women with ovarian cancer, so any research leading to therapeutic targets would be a great advance for women with the disease.

For more information on Dr. Kohn's research at NCI, see <http://ccr.cancer.gov/staff/staff.asp?profileid=5844>

To learn about Dr. Kohn's clinical trials now being conducted at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda:

<http://bethesdatrials.cancer.gov/investigator-profiles/kohn/default.asp>

For more information on this research:

Annunziata CM, Kleinberg L, Davidson B, Berner, Gius D, Tchabo N, Steinberg SM and Kohn EC. 2007. BAG-4/SODD and Associated Anti-Apoptotic Proteins are Associated with Aggressiveness of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer. *Clinical Cancer Research*. Vol. 21, Issue 22.

From the OGCC/Rhonda's Club Board:

Our 2008 will be full of activities and lots of opportunities for you to get involved as a volunteer.

Teal Class: Survivors Training Students. Our volunteers meet with third year medical students at GW University Medical School and Johns Hopkins University Medical School to tell their story. Students greatly appreciate our patient-oriented viewpoint. We need more volunteer to expand this program to additional medical and nursing schools. With a larger pool, our volunteers can anticipate sharing their time 2 or 3 times a year.

Survivor Education: Our core program continues in 2008 with a full schedule of educational sessions starting on January 28. Volunteers can help us organize these sessions, mail materials, and/or participate in the planning process

Public Symptom Awareness and Outreach:

OGCC/Rhonda's Club has several projects to reach as many people as possible with the warning signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer...so more women learn, and have a chance at earlier diagnosis than most of us did. We welcome volunteers to staff exhibit booths, outreach to local organizations and spread the word.

It's easy to volunteer! Call 703-346-3893 or e-mail: ann@cancer-ovarian.org. Add the program name to the e-mail subject line for more prompt handling (and to avoid the spam filter).

Your support makes the difference!

From the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance:

SAVE THE DATES!**Women Chefs Turn Up the Heat Again for Ovarian Cancer!**

Once again, to benefit the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance (OGCC/Rhonda's Club is a partner member), more than 25 superstars of the Washington Metro area culinary scene, including Ris Lacoste, Ann Amernick, Nora Pouillon and many more from wonderful restaurants including CityZen, Equinox, Morrison-Clark, Restaurant Eve, Oval Room, Willow will contribute their time and fabulous cooking for one of the most fun-filled benefits in Washington! Join us and be part of an important event to help the Alliance fight this disease.

3rd Annual Benefit**"Celebrate Women Chefs"**

February 26, 2008 – 6:30 – 9:30 pm
Ritz Carlton West End – Washington DC
www.ovariancancer.org/benefit/register

Call 202-331-1332, ext. 302

SAVE THE DATE:

11th Annual Ovarian Cancer
National Alliance Conference
July 8-9, 2008; Lobby Day July 10
Omni Shoreham, Washington, DC

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The Scoop From Rhonda's Club

Editor: Susan Lowell Butler

Communications Committee: Ann Mason, Kathleen McBride

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