INTERNATIONAL EXTRANODAL LYMPHOMA STUDY GROUP

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NEWSLETTER 19

May 2005

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 8TH IELSG ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN ASCONA ON FEBRUARY 25-26, 2005

BONE LYMPHOMA STUDY GROUP (PBLWG)

The inaugural meeting of the PBLWG was held on 25.2.05. The progress with the analysis of the IELSG-14 data was reviewed. Given the large size of the group and the heterogeneity of the results so far it was agreed to separate out the patients with DLBCL for a repeat analysis with a view towards publishing and presenting the data during the next 12 months. The possibity of cooperation with the current TROG 99.04 prospective study running in Australasia was considered taking into account the small response to the recent survey. It was decided that the IELSG as a group would not participate but that individual centres could be approached. The use of three rather than six cycles of chemotherapy, the absence of Rituximab, and the need for every centre to pass the project through an ethics committee were cited as reasons by the members of the group. The possibility of new studies was also considered and a plan made to meet again later this year with a new proposal was agreed. **One possibility would be to perform randomised trial in which all patients with extranodal DLBCL in relatively favourable subgroups (except CNS and Testicular) were included, comparing three with six cycles of chemotherapy, as well as testing the addition of monoclonal antibodies**.

NEW CLINICAL STUDIES TO BE ACTIVATED

A phase II study of antibiotics on primary ocular adnexa lymphoma will be activated within a few months. Protocol writing committee: J. Radford, Manchester and A. Ferreri, Milan et al.

A second major clinical study that has been decided to activate is **a study of primary mediastinal lymphoma**. It will be a prospective non-randomized clinical study with three major aims:

- Collection of biological material to confirm the specificity of this subtype. Centralized histological review will be mandatory.
- Evaluation of the clinical role of PET.
- Collection of prospective clinical information about the activity of chemotherapy +/- radiotherapy: each institution will have to decide in advance the type of therapy they are going to use (i.e. chemotherapy regimen and intention to irradiate).

TWO NEW RETROSPECTIVE IPCG STUDIES

In the frame of the IELSG participation to the IPCG two studies have been activated:

IPCG retrospective analysis of CNS relapse from non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The forms will be soon available on the website and filled forms will have to be sent to E. Zucca at the IELSG Operation Office, Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland, Ospedale San Giovanni, 6500 Bellinzona.

IPCG retrospective survey of primary ocular non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Andrés Ferreri will contribute with the cases already included in the IELSG 7 study. Inclusion of any additional series can be discussed with him (ferreri.andres@hsr.it).

NEW CLINICAL STUDIES ALREADY OPEN FOR ACCRUAL

IELSG 24 - Phase I study of intrathecal Rituximab in patients with lymphomatous meningitis

This study will be conducted at four centers: Bellinzona, St. Gallen, Bergamo and Milan, HSR. It has been open for accrual in Switzerland whilst it is not yet activated in Italy.

IELSG 25 A and B - Phase II study of Velcade™ in Extranodal Marginal zone B-cell Lymphoma of MALT type

This study is also open for accrual in Switzerland but still waiting for the approval from Italian, Spanish and English Regulatory Agencies and EC.

These are studies that will be open only at few Institutions.

EDUCATIONAL LECTURE
on WHO-EORTC consensus classification for cutaneous lymphomas and further proposals

The educational talk by Prof. Günter Burg on the joint EORTC/WHO classification of cutaneous lymphoma has been greatly appreciated.
Later we had from Prof. Burg a proposal of a virtual seminar in cutaneous lymphomas. The details are reported in the enclosed letter we had from him. If there is interest from the IELSG members we will proceed with the needed arrangements.

THE LLMPP PROPOSAL

The proposal from Prof. Joe Connors from Vancouver for a collaboration to investigate the molecular profile of MALT lymphomas has been discussed. It has been decided that each institution will have to make its own arrangements directly with the LLMPP.
More detailed information can be seen in the enclosed correspondence with Prof. Connors.

PANCREATIC LYMPHOMA

A proposal for a retrospective study of Primary Pancreatic non-Hodgkin Lymphoma has been presented. The study cannot be activated now but it will be discussed again in the next IELSG meeting.

IELSG MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors has decided that the Operation Office will prepare a list of Institution and Intergroups that will be formally asked to confirm their IELSG memberships and to identify their representatives. On this basis a preliminary formal list of the IELSG members will be prepared and posted on the IELSG website after its approval by the Board of Directors (which will meet in Lugano in June during the next Lymphoma Conference).

«MALT LYMPHOMAS»

The book “MALT Lymphomas” Edited by Francesco Bertoni and Emanuele Zucca has been published. It contains contributions from several IELSG investigators. See the attached flyer.

THANKS A LOT, ENNIO

Finally, we would like to wish all the best to our colleague and IELSG co-founder **Ennio Pedrinis**, who will be retiring from his position as the Head of the Istituto Cantonale di Patologia of Locarno (ICPL), Switzerland. He has been a significant and influential presence and of vital importance to the IELSG success. Ennio will be replaced by Luca Mazzucchelli.

F. Cavalli, E. Zucca, A. Conconi, C. Morinini, M. Bertini

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Zurich, 9 March 2005 / vf

Dear Prof. Cavalli,
dear PD Dr. Zucca

This is to thank you very much again for the kind invitation to present the new WHO/EORTC-classification of cutaneous lymphomas in Ascona two weeks ago.

PD Dr. Werner Kempf from our clinic and myself would be interested in getting included into the mailing-list of the IELSG.

We also would like to offer to the group a virtual seminar of clinicopathologic correlations in cutaneous lymphomas.

We are in the lucky position to have one of the first ScanScopes, an apparatus which allows to digitally scan histologic sections, which than can be looked at via an interned-based programme with extremely high quality on the PC from the working-desk as if they were under the microscope. This could be done in correlation with clinical pictures.

If there is some interest from the members of the IELSG we certainly have to discuss with you the time, the shape and the organisation of this virtual conference, which would have a teaching character and could be repeated. I think 2 – 3 hours on a Saturday morning would be a good time.

Please let us know if there is some interest in such an activity.

With best regards,
sincerely yours

Günter Burg, M.D.

Werner Kempf, M.D.

cc: Prof. Dr. med. Cavalli, Ospedale San Giovanni, 6500 Bellinzona

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21 February 2005

Emanuele Zucca, MD
Scientific Director
International Extranodal Lymphoma Study Group

Dear Dr Zucca:

Thank you for inviting me to explain the potential for collaboration between the IELSG and the Leukemia Lymphoma Molecular Profiling Project to investigate the gene expression molecular profile of MALT type lymphomas. I am writing to provide further background concerning this idea and to propose steps to formalize the project.

I am sure that you and your co-investigators in the IELSG are familiar with the work of the LLMPP in the area of gene expression profiling of B cell neoplasms. We have successfully demonstrated that such profiling revealed new information of both basic and clinical relevance for diffuse large B cell lymphoma, mantle cell lymphoma, primary mediastinal large B cell lymphoma and follicular lymphoma. We are in the final steps of completing a similar project focused on Burkitt lymphoma. For each of these lymphomas useful new insights into the diagnosis, molecular biology and prognosis of the lymphoma have emerged from this type of analysis.

Presently the LLMPP intends to continue its systematic profiling of lymphoproliferative neoplasms moving on to study additional B cell lymphomas. As we move to the less common lymphomas such as the MALT type lymphomas it has become clear that it would be very useful to reach out and develop collaborations with groups such as the IELSG which have developed a special interest in these less common types. Ideally, in such a collaboration we in the LLMPP can bring our expertise in the evolving area of gene expression profiling and the associated bioinformatics and the specialized group, such as the IELSG, can bring its experience with the clinical and basic studies of the uncommon lymphoma to be investigated. It is because of the past record of the IELSG in the investigation of MALT lymphomas and the current interest of the LLMPP in characterizing this particular type of lymphoma that I approached you and your group at the recent ASH meeting.

If the IELSG is interested in pursuing a collaboration between its investigators and the LLMPP to profile MALT lymphomas we should set up a working group composed of leaders from the two groups to discuss details. There are many to discuss. In particular, we will need to explore the type and quality of the necessary fresh frozen tissue samples, submission and analysis of clinical follow-up information, means of collecting, assembling and analyzing the actual specimens, recognition of collaborators in resulting publications by way of authorship and identification as contributors and other matters as they arise.

The current investigators in the LLMPP have begun to assemble the specimens of MALT tumors available at their own institutions. This would be an ideal time to add the available specimens from the participating IELSG centers so that the full collection of specimens can be readied for gene expression analysis all at the same time.

Thank you for discussing this proposal with your co-investigators in the IELSG. If you think that this collaboration would be productive please identify a set of representatives from the IELSG who can serve as the coordinators for this project. Drs Lou Staudt and John Chan, the leaders of the LLMPP effort and the member of the LLMPP executive can then work with the representatives from the IELSG to settle the details of the collaboration.

I, and my co-investigators within the LLMPP, look forward to working with your group.

Sincerely,

Joseph M Connors, MD
Chair, Lymphoma Tumor Group
British Columbia Cancer Agency and the University of British Columbia
Member, Leukemia Lymphoma Molecular Profiling Project

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Bellinzona, 14th March, 2005

Dear Prof. Connors,

after your recent letter concerning a possible collaboration between the IELSG and the LLMPP to investigate the gene expression profiling of MALT lymphomas, the issue has been discussed on February 26 by the IELSG Board of Directors, as well as by the General IELSG Assembly. It has became quite clear that only a few IELSG investigators have adequate tumor specimens collections at their own Institutions. Moreover, some of them are already conducting their own research projects. Therefore, it seems that it will not be practical to set up an official collaboration and to identify official IELSG representative to coordinate the collaboration. Nevertheless, we have decided to encourage all those IELSG investigators with available frozen material, who are not already involved in other programs to join the LLMPP project getting directly in touch with you. Some of them already expressed their interest and you can find in the attachement more detailed information about these groups.
In addition, if you agree, we would include your letter from February 21, and the present reply to the coming IELSG newsletter again suggesting to all our members who can do it, to join the LLMPP project.
I think this solution may avoid useless burocracy and speed up a fruitful collaboration between the IELSG co-investigators who are really interested and the LLMPP.
I do hope this will work.
Sincerely,

Emanuele Zucca, MD
Scientific Director

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MALT Lymphomas

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Extranodal marginal zone B cell lymphoma of mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue (MALT lymphoma) is one of the lymphoma subtypes that has allowed us some of the most interesting steps forward in the understanding and treatment of human cancers. This multidisciplinary book covers all the aspects of MALT lymphomas, from the molecular biology, the etiology and the pathology to all the possible therapeutic approaches. The eight contributions have been written from a team of international experts and represent an essential reading for oncologists, hematologists, gastroenterologists, pathologists and all other physicians and researchers involved in cancer. The book is also enhanced by a series of figures illustrating the histology, the clinical features and the treatment.

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