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## IN BRIEF

### BREAST CANCER

#### Adverse effects and mammographic density as markers

Two publications in *Journal of Clinical Oncology* have reported that response to endocrine therapy in patients with breast cancer is associated with clinical markers. In the first study, 974 postmenopausal patients with breast cancer received a baseline and a follow-up mammogram to determine response to adjuvant therapy. The women receiving tamoxifen who had a decrease in mammographic density of >20% also had a decrease in the risk of death from breast cancer of 50%. The second study assessed the association between survival of 9,325 patients receiving endocrine therapy and the incidence of adverse effects associated with the depletion of oestrogens. The effects were vasomotor symptoms, musculoskeletal adverse events, and vulvovaginal symptoms. The authors report that the incidence of these specific adverse effects were associated with improved survival outcomes, and might be useful in predicting response.

**Original articles** Li, J. *et al.* Mammographic density reduction is a prognostic marker of response to adjuvant tamoxifen therapy in postmenopausal patients with breast cancer. *J. Clin. Oncol.* doi:10.1200/JCO.2012.44.5015 | Fontein, D. B. Y. *et al.* Specific adverse events predict survival benefit in patients treated with tamoxifen or aromatase inhibitors: an international tamoxifen exemestane adjuvant multinational trial analysis. *J. Clin. Oncol.* doi:10.1200/JCO.2012.45.3068

### GASTROINTESTINAL CANCER

#### Reduced risk of gastric cancer associated with statins

A number of recent observational studies have shown that statins might be associated with a lower risk of gastric cancer. This finding is now supported by a systematic review and meta-analysis. The authors included 11 studies, covering a total of 5,581 cases of gastric cancer and showed a 32% reduction in gastric cancer risk was associated with statin use. After excluding one study that was contributing to considerable heterogeneity in their results, a significant 16% reduction was defined as a more-consistent estimate of the reduction in gastric cancer risk associated with statin use. This chemopreventative association was present in both Asian and Western populations and was dose dependent.

**Original article** Singh, P. P. & Singh, S. Statins are associated with reduced risk of gastric cancer: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ann. Oncol.* doi:10.1093/annonc/mdt150

### EPIDEMIOLOGY

#### Epidemic rates of cancer incidence in Latin America

A study in the *Lancet Oncology* reports an alarming future epidemic in cancer incidence rates in Latin America. Although cancer incidence in this region is lower than the USA or Europe, the death rate from cancer is almost twice as high as the USA. By 2030, an estimated 1.7 million cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Latin America with over a million deaths annually. Reasons for these dismal statistics in Latin America include advanced-stage cancer at diagnosis, when treatment options are much more limited, and the fact that people in poorer or rural communities have little or no access to cancer services. The authors comment that unless action is taken to prevent cancers, and improve health-care systems and access to vital medical care, cancer incidence will threaten to cause widespread mortality.

**Original article** Goss, P. E. *et al.* Planning cancer control in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Lancet Oncol.* **14**, 391–436 (2013)