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IN BRIEF

PANCREATIC CANCER

Survival of patients with advanced pancreatic cancer is increased by nab-paclitaxel plus gemcitabine

Albumin-bound paclitaxel (nab-paclitaxel) plus gemcitabine benefits patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer, according to the findings of a phase III study published in *New England Journal of Medicine*. Combined therapy significantly improved progression-free survival, overall survival and response rate compared with gemcitabine monotherapy. Grade 3 adverse events more frequent in the combined therapy group included neutropenia, fatigue and neuropathy.

Original article Von Hoff, D. D. *et al.* Increased survival in pancreatic cancer with nab-paclitaxel plus gemcitabine. *N. Engl. J. Med.* doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1304369

GENETICS

New susceptibility loci identified for Barrett oesophagus and oesophageal adenocarcinoma

Three new genetic associations—19p13 in *CRTC1*, 9q22 in *BARX1* and 3p14 near *FOXP1*—have been identified for Barrett oesophagus and oesophageal adenocarcinoma, supporting the role for a genetic component in the development of these diseases. In this genome-wide association study, Levine *et al.* compared 2,390 oesophageal adenocarcinoma cases and 3,175 precancerous Barrett oesophagus cases with 10,120 controls.

Original article Levine, D. M. *et al.* A genome-wide association study identifies new susceptibility loci for esophageal adenocarcinoma and Barrett's esophagus. *Nat. Genet.* doi:10.1038/ng.2796

PANCREATIC CANCER

Adjuvant gemcitabine improves long-term outcomes of patients with resected pancreatic cancer

A multicentre, open-label, phase III randomized trial supports the use of adjuvant gemcitabine in patients with advanced pancreatic cancer who undergo resection with curative intent. The median follow-up time for the 354 (of 368) patients included in the intention-to-treat analysis was 136 months. Compared with observation alone, adjuvant gemcitabine given for 6 months prolonged median disease-free survival and overall survival (measured at 5 and 10 years).

Original article Oettle, H. *et al.* Adjuvant chemotherapy with gemcitabine and long-term outcomes among patients with resected pancreatic cancer. *JAMA* **310**, 1473–1481 (2013)

IBS

Does peppermint oil have a role in the treatment of IBS?

In their systematic review and meta-analysis, Khanna *et al.* evaluated data from 726 patients who took part in nine randomized placebo-controlled trials of peppermint oil capsules (taken for at least 2 weeks) for the treatment of IBS. Peppermint oil was significantly better than placebo for global improvement of symptoms and improvement in abdominal pain. Adverse events were more likely in the treatment group but were mild and transient.

Original article Khanna, R. *et al.* Peppermint oil for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J. Clin. Gastroenterol.* doi:10.1097/MCG.0b013e3182a88357