Doctors Warn Against Heart Problems in Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Patients on Rituximab, According to the Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Center

Careful screening is recommended to protect Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma patients against this dangerous side effect of rituximab.

Raleigh, NC (PRWEB) February 22, 2014 -- The Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Center is reporting on a newly-published article illustrating the potential dangers of rituximab therapy.

Rituximab is a monoclonal antibody that is often used along with traditional chemotherapy in the treatment of Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and other cancers involving the immune system B-cells. Doctors know that rituximab carries a risk of heart problems and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma patients are typically screened for risk factors before treatment. But a new report out of Italy warns that in-depth testing may be needed to uncover patients at highest risk.

The article details the cases of two Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma patients who developed serious heart problems after chemotherapy with rituximab. One patient experienced atrial fibrillation, a heart rhythm disorder, immediately after rituximab infusion. The other Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma patient experienced chest pain, fever, and chills during rituximab infusion.

“Both patients presented several cardiovascular risk factors but preliminary cardiac function assessment excluded signs of heart dysfunction,” report Dr. Caterina Passalia and her colleagues with Italy’s National Institute for Cancer Research. Although the cause of heart problems in Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma patients on rituximab remains unclear, the authors say it could be the result of preexisting cardiac damage and recommend thorough testing for all Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma patients considering this therapy.

“We consider our clinical experience relevant because it raises an issue of good clinical practice,” they conclude. “Patients with cardiovascular risk factors should undergo accurate cardiac assessment so that silent heart disease can be detected.” If cardiac damage is suspected, Passalia and her colleagues recommend more extensive cardiac testing.


The Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Center is part of the Cancer Monthly organization. The Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Center has been established by Cancer Monthly to provide more comprehensive information on the causes, diagnosis, and treatments for the many different subtypes of Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. For over ten years, Cancer Monthly has been the only centralized source of cancer treatment results. Patients can see the actual survival rate, quality-of-life indicators, and other key data for approximately 1,500 different cancer treatments. Cancer Monthly provides timely and ground-breaking news on the causes, diagnoses and treatments of the most common cancers including Bladder, Brain, Breast, Colon, Kidney (Renal), Liver, Lung (NSCLC), Ovarian, Prostate, and Rectal Cancers, Melanoma, Mesothelioma, and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Written for patients and their loved ones, Cancer Monthly helps families make more informed treatment decisions.
Contact Information
Michael Ellis
Cancer Monthly
http://www.survivingmesothelioma.com
+1 (919) 570-8595

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