International Clinical Hyperthermia Society

Proceedings of the

XII International Symposium on Clinical Hyperthermia

Rome, April 27-29, 1989
Palazzo dei Congressi (EUR)

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della II Università degli Studi di Roma

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Interesting aspects of clinical hypertermia: stabilization of neoplastic disease and intraoperative application

The optimal therapy of malignant tumors is an integrated approach to the particular disease, using hypertermia in combination with other modalities. In fact, chemotherapy, particularly associated with radio- and immunotherapy, represents a valid aid in cancer's treatment, especially when the traditional therapies have failed or can no longer be applied.

In these last years, the progress in the fields of experimental and clinical hyperthermia show significant improvement in the technical equipment and in their applicative methods, in thermosensilizing drug use, in patient selection and in the appropriate timing to give the hyperthermic therapy. Without doubt the most interesting aspects resulting from the treatment of neoplastic disease with hypertermia alone or in combination with other therapies are:

1) the stabilization of malignant tumors

2) the possibility to apply hypertermia in the intraoperative stage.

About the first consideration, it is interesting to give prominence to the fact that we can obtain these responses after hypertermic treatment: no response, complete or partial remission, stabilisation of the tumor.

About this last response, we would emphasise the importance of results, the possibility to obtain an arrest in tumor growth in 35-40% of treated patients with a good "performance status" and a good quality of life, with a follow-up from 6 months to some years, represents without doubt a new aspect in the response to cancer therapy.

We must consider that these cases no longer responded to other modes of therapy.

The exact pathogenetic mechanisms of this phenomenon is not yet clear (maybe the immunological system is involved); however, patients no longer responsive to radio- or chemotherapy can live after hypertermia in good conditions, despite the presence of very significant residual disease. In particular, in our experience, the stabilization of hepatic tumors (specially secondary from digestive tracts) lung tumors and pelvic tumors are numerous. The possibility