

Third Polish-German conference on oncology pharmacy

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Conference Chairwoman Karla Domagk (centre) with Aleksandra Warzajtis (left) and Agnieszka Jarmolowicz (right)

Polish and German pharmacists interested in oncology pharmacy met on 16-17 June 2006 in Frankfurt am Odra and Słubice (the two towns are neighbours across the Polish-German border) during the 3rd Polish-German conference on oncology pharmacy. About 120 pharmacists, working in pharmacies in oncology centres from both countries took part. As in previous years the meeting was held in the auditorium of Collegium Polonicum of Viadrina University in Słubice.

Klaus Meier, head of the German Oncology Pharmacy Association (DGOP) and President of the European Oncology Pharmacy Society (ESOP) was awarded the Professor Szaster Commemorative Medal by Dr Jerzy Lazowski. He was also awarded a diploma by the Executive Committee of the Polish Pharmaceutical Society for his achievements in the development of oncology pharmacy in Poland.

The Conference theme was "Theory for Practice". Sixteen lectures about progress in the treatment of cancers complemented practical sessions on oncology practice. Topics discussed during the conference included the technical problems connected with preparing cytostatic solutions and an example of how hospital pharmacists can join interdisciplinary teams to improve oncology care.

Hand-foot syndrome: how can oncology pharmacists help?

A presentation was given of research done by clinical hospital pharmacist Jurgen Barth from the University Clinic in Essen, who has developed an "antidote" for palmar-plantar erythrodysesthesia induced by 5-FU [1].

Hand-foot syndrome is caused by the administration of 5-FU infusions or its oral derivatives (capecitabine, tegafur-uracil). Toxicity to 5-FU has been known for many years, which is why pro-drugs have been developed, with moderate success. After some years of experimenting with several possible compounds, the central cytotoxic chemotherapy service of the Essen pharmacy developed two formulations of uridine for the treatment of the 5-FU induced hand-foot syndrome and accompanying mucositis, an ointment and an adhesive paste. These are not commercially available and their effectiveness has not yet been demonstrated in a large clinical study, but their palliative properties have made them popular in Essen. The ointment is also useful in treating extravasations with 5-FU, which may cause troublesome problems such as reversible but very painful blisters.

Our German colleagues are calling on oncology pharmacists to make and test these formulations in the hope of obtaining clinical evidence for the usefulness of this antidote. More information, including the composition of the formulations will be posted on the ESOP website www.esop.eu or can be requested from Mr Barth personally by email jurgen.barth@uni-essen.de

German-Polish cooperation

Of particular interest to Polish attendees was a report on the Phare European project "Occupational Health and Safety at Work" twinning Poland and Germany. The presentation was made jointly by Dr Katarzyna Kitajewska and Dr Gregor Buschhausen-Denker.

The Phare programme is designed to support new entrants to the European Union. Joining countries need to establish a modern, efficient administration and institutions that are capable of applying the *acquis communautaire* (the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all Member States of the EU). In practical terms, the project supports Poland in the task of incorporating European Directive 2000/54/EC into Polish legislation and in improving the administrative capacity and knowledge concerning biological agents in the workplace.

The project (which ran from 2004-2005):

- analysed the status quo concerning harmful biological agents in Poland
- supported the harmonisation of Polish regulations regarding work protection with EU law
- provided training, software and laboratory equipment and
- guided the creation of modern and efficient administrative structures to introduce Poland to the best European practices. Further cooperation is planned.

Author

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Reference

Uridin-Hand-Fußsalbe und Uridin-Haftpaste als effektive Antidota nach akzidenteller Hautkontamination mit 5-Fluorouracil – ein Fallbericht. Krankenhauspharmazie 2000; 21: 625-8.