

DGOP/ESOP: 2nd Polish-German annual conference for oncology pharmacy "Therapy for practice"

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A novelty of this symposium was the presentation of case reports from daily practice by two German pharmacists with extensive experience in oncology pharmacy, Matthias Wriedt, Hamburg and Beatrix Ulrich, Bad Säckingen. Both cases illustrated possible pharmaceutical interventions.

Beatrix Ulrich presented the case of a 39 year old female patient with ovarian cancer who had been helped by intensive pharmaceutical interdisciplinary support during the process of diagnosis. Ulrich emphasized the importance of educating the patient regarding the drug therapy and providing the treating physician with information, in this case for antiemetic drug treatment. Matthias Wriedt illustrated how important pharmacist support is even in complex cancer pathologies. He presented the case of a 38 year old male patient with a rare highly malignant B-cell lymphoma. The patient benefited greatly from the pharmaceutical care he received throughout his therapy. Wriedt highlighted the need for documentation. When assisting a patient over a long period it is important to keep track of the therapeutic development according to the SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) method. Both speakers stressed the importance of the pharmacist's role as drug therapy consultant to the

The 2nd Polish-German Annual Conference for Oncology Pharmacy took place on June 3–4, 2005 in the European University City of Frankfurt/Oder–Słubice and was attended by 130 participants from Germany and Poland. The meeting was organized jointly by the Polish Pharmacy Association and DGOP/ESOP.

patient and the medical team. Both speakers encouraged pharmacists to take responsibility for their patients and contribute to their care in an interdisciplinary team.

New information was presented about current advances in radiotherapy and chemotherapy of cancer (*Mikiciuk-Olasik E., Łódź; Wagner W., Osnabrück; Boss J., Münster*), errors in cancer therapy (*Justus H., Ludwigslust*), and practical aspects of pharmaceutical care of cancer patients (*Grześkowiak E., Poznań; Liekweg A., Hamburg*).

The meeting also addressed cooperation when using off-label anticancer drugs and how to disseminate knowledge of their actions. Unlicensed drugs are often prescribed in oncology for their mechanism of action and properties in order to overcome tumour resistance to chemotherapy. As costs are high, there is pressure to limit or even discontinue their use in Poland (<http://www.gazeta.pl>). The central distribution of drugs by National Health Fund (NFZ) is insufficient and in many hospitals there is no money for pivotal drugs. The patient has to pay for the expensive drugs or the medical staff has to decide who will or will not be treated. In Germany, reimbursement by insurance companies has also been reduced by the expert group (Expert group off-label <http://www.bfam.de/de/Arzneimittel/offlabel/index.php>).

The reduction of serious drug-associated adverse drug reactions (ADRs) is also an important task (*Ludwig W.D., Berlin*). The use of genetic tests to determine variations of the cellular therapeutic targets (*Niwiński P., Wrocław*) or gene expression profiling by

DNA microarray (bio-chips) (*Lipski S., Warszawa*) may predict the expected therapeutic response, may reduce the risk of therapy (ADRs) and may limit the cost of drugs.

Insights into those complex mechanisms enable researchers to develop new treatment strategies. Such new strategies will be more targeted to the individual compared to conventional chemotherapy. As examples Lipski outlined future gene therapy, as well as groups of drugs that are already internationally licensed, such as Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) inhibitors. The variety of future therapeutic options which Lipski presented clarified the great challenge for oncology pharmacists to contribute to tailor made antineoplastic therapies for their patients.

However the high cost of oligonucleotide arrays (150 US\$ per chip) and technical difficulties are still major obstacles to the widespread use of genetic tests. The application of tests to determine the usefulness of off-label drugs for individuals will be a subject for future consideration.

All 130 participants from Germany and Poland left this meeting with renewed understanding and friendship. This is what we need for the further development of Europe!

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Centralized production

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