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# PHARMACOLOGY 101:


## MECHANISM AND TARGETS IN MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

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# Biography



Lindsay Williamson is board certified as an Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner as well as an Adult Nurse Practitioner. She received her BSN at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania and her MSN at La Salle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lindsay has been an Oncology Nurse for 19 years with 11 of those years in the role of Nurse Practitioner. She has worked in a variety of settings including inpatient and outpatient as well as community based and academic based. Also, she has worked in a variety of roles including Oncology Staff Nurse, Infusion Nurse, ARNP in a community practice, Pharmaceutical Sales Representative and Clinical Operations Manager of the Lab Draw and Infusion areas at Moffitt Cancer Center. She is currently pursuing her DNP and teaching nursing students at St. Petersburg College and Pinellas Technical College.

# Financial Disclosure



No financial disclosures exist

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# Objectives

To define the purposes of cancer therapy

To describe the differences among cancer therapies

To have a basic understanding of the mechanisms of actions of chemotherapy, hormone therapy, targeted therapies, and immunotherapy

To have a basic understanding of common toxicities for cancer treatments

To have an understanding of available resources for information regarding cancer therapies



# Cancer treatment

and diversity of modern treatment methods, diverse  
of treatment for each patient individual  
contraindications to repeated use  
therapy





# Cancer therapy

- Cure
  - No evidence of disease (NED)
- Control
  - Prolong length and quality of life, prevent distant and possible unknown metastases
  - Cure is not realistic
- Palliation/Comfort
  - Symptom management, improve comfort and quality of life
  - Appropriate when cure and control are not feasible
- Systemic Treatment types
  - PO, IV, IM, SQ, IT
- Combination therapy
- Treatment considerations
  - Neoadjuvant
  - Adjuvant
  - Induction
  - Maintenance
  - Metastatic
  - Radio sensitizer

# Cancer Therapy Agents



# Common Cancer Therapy Side Effects

Fatigue

Myelosuppression

Nausea/Vomiting

Diarrhea/Constipation

Mucositis

Peripheral Neuropathy

Alopecia

Immune-mediated pneumonitis, hepatitis, colitis,  
endocrinopathies and rash

Oncology Emergencies



# Cancer Therapy Limitations

Toxicity of agents

Lifetime dose

Hypersensitivity reactions

Drug resistance

Secondary malignancies

Adherence

Insurance Authorization

Patient cost

**(Simple 'n Easy**



**Pharmacology**

# Chemotherapy

- Treatment of cancer cells with chemicals
- Cytotoxic-poisonous to cells



# Chemotherapy

## **Phase cycle specific agents**

Only the cells in a specific cycle are affected dividing throughout cycle

## **Cell cycle specific agents**

Effects are mostly on the cells actively

## **Cell cycle non-specific agents**

Effects are on cells at any phase



# Chemotherapy Classifications

- Alkylating Agents
- Antimetabolites
- Antimicrotubule Agents
- Topoisomerase I Inhibitors
- Topoisomerase II Inhibitors
- Antibiotic Oncologics
- Asparaginase derivatives
- Hypomethylating Agents
- Other



# Alkylating Agents

- Mechanisms of action: Interfere with DNA replication through cross linking of DNA strands, DNA strand breaking, and abnormal base pairing of proteins
- Most agents are **cell cycle nonspecific**
- Activated by cytochrome p450
- **Toxicities:** Nausea/Vomiting, Hematopoietic, Reproductive





# Alkylating Agents

- Alkyl sulfonates
  - busulfan; CML, Myelofibrosis
- Ethyleneimines
  - thiotepa; Breast, Ovarian
- Nitrogen mustards
  - bendamustine; Given IV; CLL, NHL
  - chlorambucil; HL, NHL, CLL
  - cyclophosphamide; Given IV or PO
    - HL, NHL, MM, CML, AML, Breast
  - ifosfamide; Testicular, Sarcoma
  - melphalan; MM



# Alkylating Agents

## ➤ Nitrosoureas

- **Most agents cross blood-brain barrier**
- carmustin; Brain, MM, HL, NHL
- lomustine-oral agent: Brain, HL, NHL
- streptozotocin; Pancreatic



# Alkylating Agents

- Platinum Analogues
  - cisplatin-heavy metal; Testicular, Ovarian, Bladder, Lung
  - carboplatin-2<sup>nd</sup> generation platinum analogue; Solid tumors
  - oxaliplatin-3<sup>rd</sup> generation platinum analogue; Colorectal
- Triazines
  - dacarbazine; HL, Melanoma
  - temozolomide; Brain



# Alkylating Agents

- Other

- procarbazine; HL

# Antimetabolites

- Mechanism of action: Inhibit DNA synthesis by substituting metabolites or structural analogues during DNA synthesis
- Most agents are **phase cycle specific**
- Toxicities: Hematopoietic and GI
- Folate Analogs, Purine Analogs, Pyrimidine Analogs, Other



# Antimetabolites

## ➤ Folate Antagonists

- methotrexate; Breast, Osteosarcoma, H/N
- pemetrexed; Lung, Mesothelioma
- pralatrexate; Peripheral T-cell lymphoma





# Antimetabolites

## ➤ Purine Antagonists

- cladribine; Hairy Cell Leukemia
- fludarabine phosphate; CLL

## ➤ Pyrimidine Antagonists

- 5 fluorouracil-GI malignancies
- capecitabine-**oral agent**; GI, Breast
- cytarabine; AML
- fluorouracil; GI, Pancreatic, Breast
- gemcitabine; Pancreatic, breast, ovarian, Lung



# Antimetabolites

## ➤ Other

- hydroxyurea-oral agent; P vera, thrombocythemia, H/N

# Antimicrotubule Agents

- Mechanism of action: Block cell division by preventing microtubule function
- Plant derived
- Toxicities: Peripheral Neuropathy



# Antimicrotubule Agents

- Epothilones

- ixabepilone; Breast

- Halichonrin B analogue

- eribulin mesylate; Breast, Liposarcoma

- Taxanes

- paclitaxel; Breast, Ovarian, Lung, Sarcoma
- albumin-bound paclitaxel; Breast, Pancreatic, Lung
- cabazitaxel; Prostate



# Antimicrotubules

- Vinca Alkaloids
  - vinblastine; HL, Testicular
  - vincristine; HL, NHL, ALL, Solid tumors
  - liposomal vincristine; ALL
  - vinorelbine; Lung, Breast

# Topoisomerase I Inhibitors

- Mechanism of action: Interferes with the activity of topoisomerase in the process of DNA replication
- Toxicities: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping.





# Topoisomerase I Inhibitors

- Camptothecin derivatives
  - irinotecan; Colorectal
  - irinotecan liposome; metastatic pancreatic
  - topotecan; Ovarian, Lung, Cervical

# Topoisomerase II Inhibitors

- Mechanism of action: Interferes with the activity of topoisomerase in the process of DNA replication
- Toxicities: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, bone marrow suppression



# Topoisomerase II Inhibitors

- Anthracyclines
  - daunorubicin; ALL, AML
  - doxorubicin; -**baseline EF, lifetime cumulative dose**; Breast, Sarcoma
  - liposomal doxorubicin; Ovarian, Kaposi sarcoma
  - epirubicin; Breast
  - idarubicin; AML
- Epipodophyllotoxins
  - etoposide; Lung, Testicular

# Antibiotic Oncologics

- Mechanism of action: DNA intercalation (insert between two strands of DNA), generate highly reactive free radicals that damage intercellular molecules
- Toxicities: Bone marrow suppression
- Antitumor antibiotics
  - Bleomycin; Pulmonary toxicities; Lung, Testicular, NHL
  - Mitomycin; Delayed bone marrow suppression; Anal, Pancreatic, Stomach



## Antibiotic Oncologics

- Mechanism of action: DNA intercalation (insert between two strands of DNA), generate highly reactive free radicals that damage intercellular molecules
- Toxicities: Bone marrow suppression

# Asparaginase Derivatives

- Mechanism of action: Catalyzes asparagine deamination resulting in decreased circulating asparagine and cytotoxicity of asparagine-dependent leukemic cells
- Toxicities: Hypersensitivity reaction, hyperglycemia





# Asparaginase Derivatives

- Mechanism of action: Catalyzes asparagine deamination resulting in decreased circulating asparagine and cytotoxicity of asparagine-dependent leukemic cells
- Toxicities: Hypersensitivity reaction, hyperglycemia
- E. coli derived asparaginase; ALL
- Pegaspargase; ALL

## Hypomethylating Agents

- Mechanism of action: Produces DNA hypomethylation restoring normal tumor suppressor gene function and control of cellular differentiation and proliferation
- Toxicities: Bone marrow suppression



# Hypomethylating Agents

- Mechanism of action: Produces DNA hypomethylation restoring normal tumor suppressor gene function and control of cellular differentiation and proliferation
- Toxicities: Bone marrow suppression
- azacitidine; MDS
- decitabine; MDS



# Other Chemotherapy

- Other
  - arsenic trioxide; causes apoptosis-like changes to NB4 human promyelocytic leukemia cells in vitro; APL
  - trabectedine; binds and alkylates DNA in the minor groove leading to disruption of the cell cycle and eventual cell death; Liposarcoma, Leiomyosarcoma
  - octreotide; inhibits multiple hormones including growth hormone, glucagon, insulin and LH; Carcinoid tumors, diarrhea



# Hormonal Therapy

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Used in managing hormonally sensitive cancers (Breast, Prostate, Ovarian, and Endometrial cancer)



Mechanism of action: The hormone changes the hormonal environment that alters growth factors thus the stimulus for tumor growth is suppressed or removed



# Hormone Therapy

## Women

- Fatigue
- Hot flashes
- Mood swings
- Nausea
- Osteoporosis
- Weight gain

## Men

- Decreased sexual desire
- Enlarged breasts
- Hot flashes
- Impotence
- Incontinence
- Osteoporosis

# Examples of Hormonal Therapy

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Androgen  
receptor  
antagonists

Aromatase  
Inhibitors

Estrogen receptor  
antagonist

Selective  
estrogen  
receptor  
modulator (SERM)

LH-RH (GnRh)  
analogues and  
antagonists

Other



# Androgen Receptor Antagonists

- Mechanism of action: Binds and inhibits androgen receptors
- bicalutamide; Prostate
- flutamide; Prostate
- enzalutamide; Prostate

# Aromatase Inhibitors

- Mechanism of action: lowers the amount of estrogen which signals hormone receptors.
- Slows tumor growth by inhibiting this process.
- Used in post-menopausal women with hormone receptor positive breast cancer
- Toxicities: Arthralgia, vaginal dryness, accelerated bone loss
- letrozole; Breast
- exemestane; Breast
- anastrozole; Breast

# Estrogen Receptor Antagonist

- Mechanism of action: Binds to estrogen receptors and down regulates estrogen receptor protein producing anti-estrogenic effects
- Toxicities: Injection site pain, hot flashes, arthralgia
- fulvestrant; Breast

## Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator (SERM)

- Mechanism of action: Selectively binds to estrogen receptors producing anti-estrogenic effects
- Toxicities: Hot flashes, vaginal dryness
- tamoxifen; Need baseline GYN exam; Breast, premenopausal
- raloxifene; Post menopausal high risk for invasive breast cancer

# Luteinizing Hormone- Releasing Hormone

- Agonists
  - Suppress secretion of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) from pituitary gland thus decreasing testosterone levels
- Antagonists
  - Works on the gonadotropin releasing hormone

# Luteinizing Hormone- Releasing Hormone Agonists

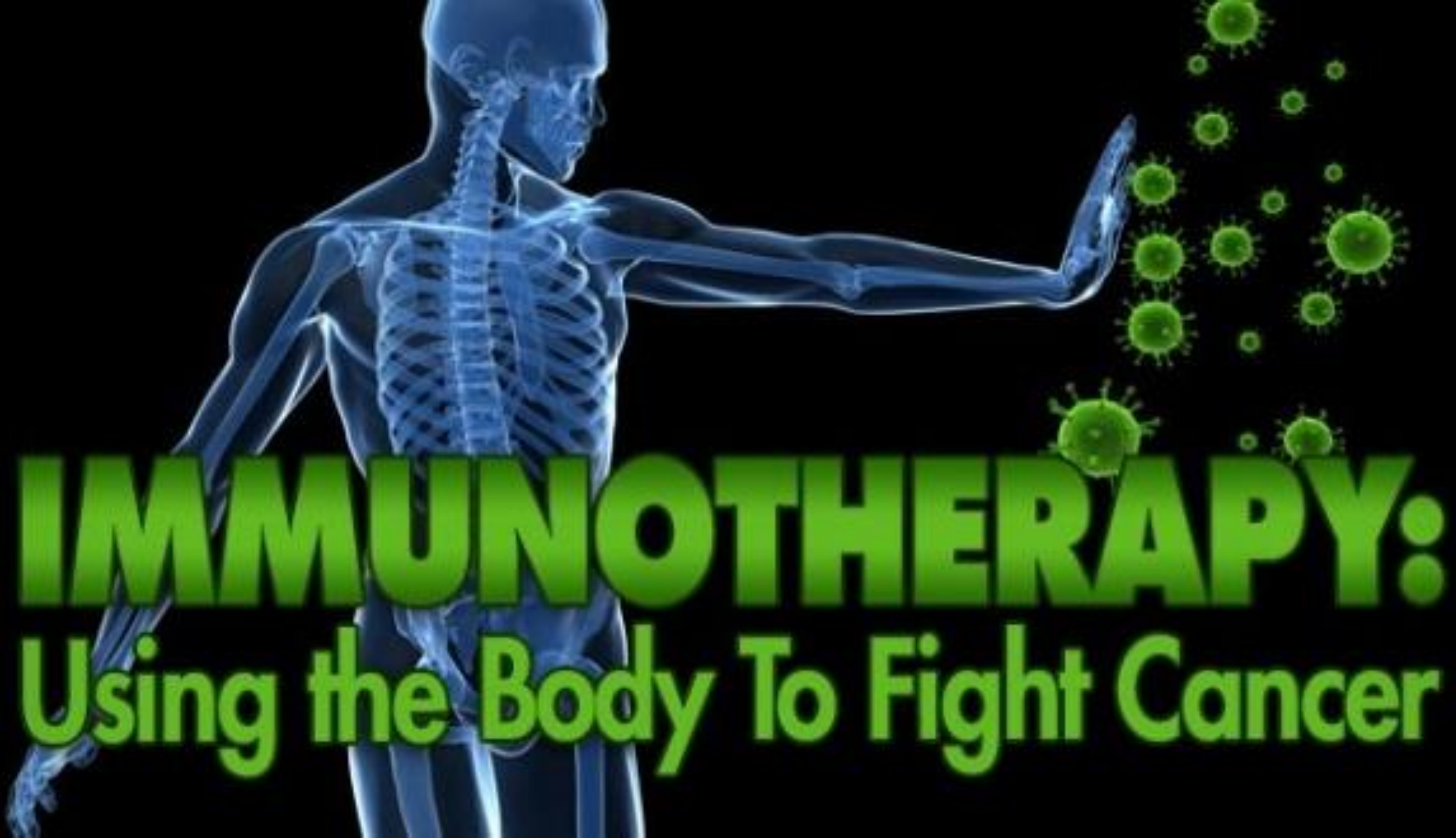
- leuprolide
  - Gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist
  - Indicated for prostate cancer
- goserelin
  - Indicated for advanced breast and prostate cancers
- triptorelin
  - Indicated for ovarian and prostate cancers

## Other Hormonal Agents

- abiraterone; inhibits 17 alpha-hydroxylase/C17,20-lyase to block androgen biosynthesis leading to decreased androgen-sensitive tumor growth; Prostate
- megestrol acetate; agonizes glucocorticoid receptors; Cancer related anorexia
- ketoconazole-inhibits fungal cell membrane ergosterol synthesis; Prostate







# **IMMUNOTHERAPY:** **Using the Body To Fight Cancer**

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# Immunotherapy



Also called Biological Response Modifier Therapy



Stimulate or restore immune system to fight cancer cells



Modify the relation between the tumor and the host



Includes antibodies, cytokines, and other substances that stimulate immune function

# Immunotherapy

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## Types

Interferon, interleukins, anti-CTLA4, anti-PD-1, anti-PDL-1, cancer vaccines



**ipilimumab; binds to CTLA-4 antigen to block activity and augment T-cell activation and proliferation; Melanoma**



**nivolumab; binds to PD-1 receptor on T-cells blocking PD-1 pathway mediated anti-tumor immune response inhibition; Metastatic NSCLC, Metastatic Melanoma, Renal cell carcinoma, Squamous cell H/N, Classic HL, Urothelial, MSI-H (microsatellite instability-high) or dMMR (mismatch repair deficient met. Colorectal cancer**

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## Immunotherapy

pembrolizumab; binds to PD-1 receptor on T-cells blocking PD-1 pathway mediated anti-tumor immune response inhibition; Melanoma, NSCLC, HNSCC, Classical HL, Urothelial/Bladder

durvalumab; blocks PD-L1 with the PD-1 and CD80 molecules; recombinant DNA technology in Chinese Hamster Ovary cell suspension culture; Urothelial

atezolizumab; binds to PD-L1 and blocks interactions with both PD-1 and B7.1 receptors; Urothelial.

# Immunotherapy

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elotuzumab; humanized monoclonal antibody targeting SLAMF7 (Signaling Lymphocytic Activation Molecule Family member 7) protein; activates NK cells through both the SLAMF7 pathway and Fc receptors; Multiple Myeloma



sipuleucel-T; Induces T-cell mediated immune response targeted against prostatic acid phosphatase antigen; Prostate



talimogene laherparepvec; Replicates within tumor and produces GM-CSF inducing tumor cell death and enhancing antitumor immune response; genetically engineered oncolytic virus; Given in divided doses to the tumor lesions in Melanoma



# Interferon

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Mechanism of action: Antiviral (inhibits viral replication), antiproliferative, and immunomodulatory effects, activate and increases cytotoxicity of natural killer cells, enhances immune response

Cytokines

Alpha, beta, and gamma derivatives

interferon alfa 2b; Hairy cell leukemia, Melanoma, NHL, Hepatitis





# Interleukins

Mechanism of action:  
Stimulates T-lymphocyte  
proliferation, enhances  
killer T-cell activity,  
stimulates and enhances  
natural killer cells

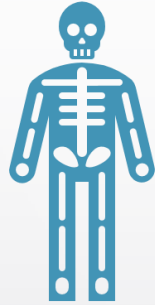
Cytokines

Produced by helper T-cells

aldesleukin; Renal cell,  
Melanoma

# Colony Stimulating Factors

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## Red Cell

darbepoietin alpha  
Epoetin alpha



## White Cell

filgrastim  
tbo-filgrastin  
pegfilgrastim  
sargramostim



# Therapeutic Antibodies

- Engineered antibodies produced by a single clone of cells that is specific for a given antigen
- Passive immunotherapy
- Names end in “mab”

# Therapeutic Antibodies

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Murine-mouse



Humanized-human



Human Anti-Murine  
Antibody (HAMA)



Chimeric-part  
mouse/human



Conjugated-a  
chemotherapy drug,  
radioactive particle, or  
toxin is connected to  
monoclonal antibody



Unconjugated-monoclonal  
antibody without any drug,  
radioactive particle, or  
toxin attached

# Therapeutic Antibodies Common Targets

- CD20
- CD52
- EFGR
- HER2
- PD 1
- PIGF
- VEGFA



# Therapeutics Antibodies

- CD20
  - rituximab; NHL, CD20-positive CLL, RA
  - ibritumomab tiuxetan; NHL
  - ofatumumab; CLL





# Therapeutic Antibodies

- EGFR (epidermal growth factor receptor)
  - panitumumab; Colorectal
  - cetuximab; Colorectal, Squamous H/N
- HER2
  - pertuzumab; HER2 positive Breast
  - trastuzumab; HER2 positive Breast, HER2 positive Gastric



# Therapeutic Antibodies

- PlGF (Phosphatidylinositol-glycan biosynthesis class F protein)
  - ziv-afercept; Colorectal
- RANKL (Receptor Activator of Nuclear Factor Kappa-B Ligand)
  - denosumab; Solid tumor bone metastasis, hypercalcemia, Giant cell tumor of bone
- VEGF (Vascular endothelial growth factor)
  - bevacizumab; Colorectal, NSC Lung non squamous, GBM, Renal cell, Cervical, Breast
  - ramucirumab; Gastric, NSC lung, colorectal



# Antibody-Drug Conjugates

## ➤ CD30

- brentuximab vedotin; HL, Systemic anaplastic large cell lymphoma

## ➤ HER2

- ado trastuzumab emtansine; HER2 positive breast

# Kinase Inhibitors

- Mechanism of action: Enzyme inhibitor that blocks the action of one or more protein kinase which alters biological processes including but no limited to modulate cell function; Most names end in “nib”
- Toxicities: Vary based on target



# Kinase Inhibitors

- BCR-ABL (Abelson murine leukemia viral oncogene)
  - nilotinib; Ph-positive CML
  - dasatinib; Ph-positive CML
  - bosutinib; Ph-positive CML
- ALK (anaplastic lymphoma kinase)
  - crizotinib; 1<sup>st</sup> generation ALK/ROS1 positive NSCLC
  - ceritinib; 2<sup>nd</sup> generation ALK positive NSCLC
  - alectinib; 3<sup>rd</sup> generation ALK positive NSCLC
  - brigatinib; ALK positive NSC Lung



# Kinase Inhibitors

- BRAF
  - dabrafenib; Melanoma
  - vemurafenib; Melanoma
  - cobimetinib; in combination with vemurafenib; Melanoma
- BTK (Bruton's Tyrosine Kinase)
  - ibrutinib; CLL, Mantle cell lymphoma
- CDK 4,6
  - palbociclib; ER/PR positive HER2 negative Breast



# Kinase Inhibitors

## ➤ EGFR (epidermal growth factor receptor)

- osimertinib; wild type sparing; NSC Lung with EGFR T790M mutations
- afatinib; NSC Lung with EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21
- erlotinib; NSC Lung with EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21, Pancreatic with gemcitabine
- gefitinib; NSC Lung with EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21 mutations





# Kinase Inhibitors

- FLT3 (FMS related Tyrosine Kinase 3)
  - sorafenib; Hepatocellular, Renal Cell, Thyroid
  - sunitinib (Sutent); Renal Cell, GIST, Pancreatic neuroendocrine
- BCL-2
  - ventoclax; CLL with 17p deletion
    - Restores apoptosis



# Kinase Inhibitors

- HER2 (ERBB2/neu)
  - afatinib; NCS Lung with EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21 mutations
  - lapatinib; HER2 overexpressing Breast
- JAK 1/2
  - ruxolitinib; Myelofibrosis, Polycythema vera



# Kinase Inhibitors

## ➤ KIT

- axitinib; Renal cell
- regorafenib; Colorectal, GIST
- dasatinib; Ph-positive CML, Ph-positive ALL
- pasopanib; Renal cell, Soft tissue sarcoma
- imatinib; Ph-positive CML
- sunitinib; Renal cell, GIST



# Kinase Inhibitors

- MEK (Mitogen-activated protein kinase)
  - trametinib; Melanoma
- mTOR (Mechanistic Target of Rapamycin)
  - sirolimus; Kidney transplant rejection prophylaxis
  - temsirolimus; Renal cell
  - everolimus; ER/PR positive HER2 negative Breast, Pancreatic neuroendocrine, Renal cell

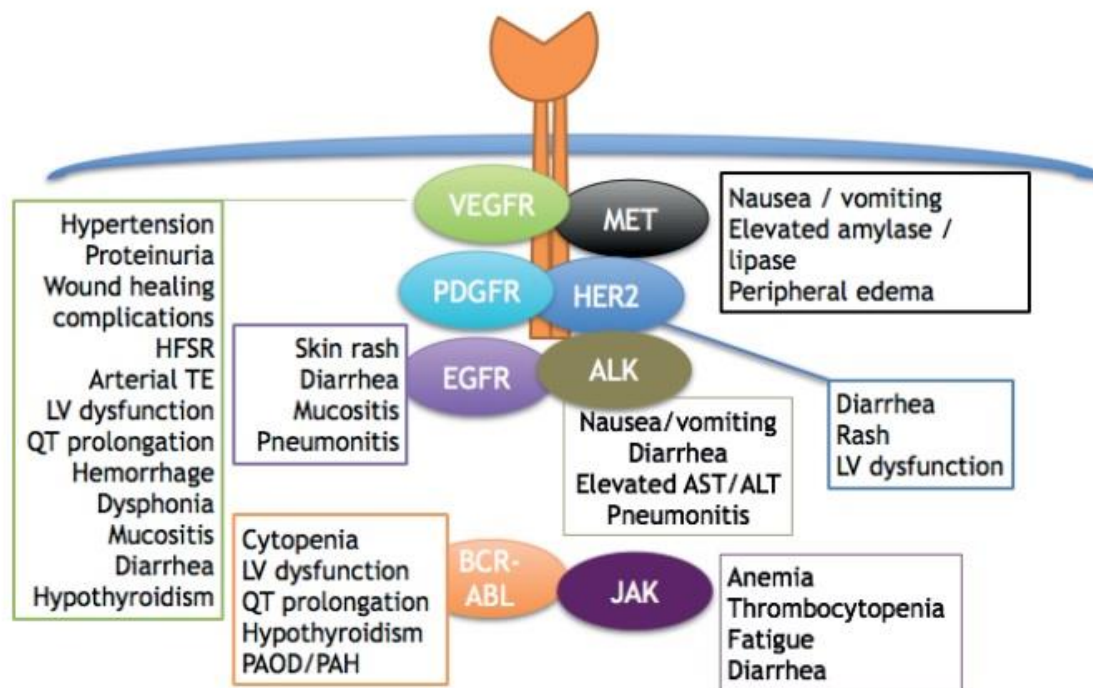


# Kinase Inhibitors

- idelalisib; inhibits P13K, disrupting B-cell receptor and cytokine signaling pathways, thus inhibiting malignant B-cell proliferation; CLL



## OVERVIEW OF TOXICITIES ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT TKI TARGETS



# Other Cancer Therapy

- PARP (poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase)
  - olaparib; BRCA-mutated Ovarian
- Proteasome
  - bortezomib; Multiple Myeloma, Mantle Cell Lymphoma
  - carfilzomib; Multiple Myeloma
  - ixazomib; Multiple Myeloma
- omacetaxine mepesuccinate; inhibits protein synthesis; CML





# Other Cancer Therapy

- Other
  - pomalidomide; Multiple Myeloma
  - lenalidomide; Multiple Myeloma, MDS, Mantle Cell Lymphoma
  - thalidomide; Multiple Myeloma



# Supportive Care Medications

- IV hydration
- Electrolyte replacement
- Antiemetic's
- Antidiarrheal
- Stool softeners/laxatives
- Nutritional support
- Appetite stimulants
- Antidepressants/Antianxiety



# Advanced Practice Considerations

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Maintain awareness  
of cancer agents  
and treatment  
options



Utilize Package  
Insert for drug  
details including  
dosing and toxicity  
management



Encourage  
supportive care to  
minimize toxicity



Collaborate with  
respective  
disciplines



Support patients  
physically (symptom  
management),  
psychosocially  
(referrals to social  
work/case  
management),  
emotionally  
(referrals to  
psychology/support  
groups) and  
spiritually (refer to  
chaplain/spiritual  
counselor)



Spend time with  
other team  
members



# Resources

- chemocare.com
- uptodate.com
- Oncology Business Review
- ASCO
- American Cancer Society
  - 1-800-813-HOPE (4673)
  - <http://www.cancer.org/>
- National Cancer Institute
  - 1-800-4-CANCER (422-6237)
  - <http://www.cancer.gov/>
  - <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/drugs>
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network
  - <http://www.nccn.org/>
- Vanderbilt My Cancer Genome
  - [www.mycancergenome.org](http://www.mycancergenome.org)



Taking care  
of your mind &  
thoughts

Taking care of  
your physical  
health & body

# Self-Care

Increasing your  
own well-being through self-  
care behaviors

Taking care  
of your spiritual  
health

Taking care of  
your emotions



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