Importance of geriatric assessments in prediction of efficacy and tolerability in older patients with gastrointestinal cancer

Over the past decades survival of patients with metastatic colorectal cancer (mCRC) has increased constantly, especially for younger patients. Unfortunately mCRC is a disease of older age, but there is less knowledge in older patients, because they are under-represented in clinical trials. Individually tailored treatment strategies are key points in improving survival and minimizing toxicity of treatment in older patients. Focus is currently on how to select older patient for therapy, but the best method to predict efficacy and toxicity is not yet established. Knowledge on patient-reported information such as older patients’ attitudes and expectations to chemotherapy is also sparse.

Thus we initiated two clinical studies, a large Nordic randomized study and a prospective cohort study, which will form the foundation for 3 sub-studies with focus on different aspects of oncologic treatment of older patients with gastrointestinal cancer:

1. **Randomised Nordic multicenter study – NORDIC9**

   NORDIC9, a randomized multicenter study, will compare “full dose single agent strategy” with “dose-reduced combination chemotherapy strategy” in older patients with mCRC, who are not considered candidates for standard combination therapy. The purpose is to evaluate the optimal treatment strategy in older patients with mCRC.

2. **Prediction of efficacy and toxicity of oncological therapy for older patients included in NORDIC9.**

   Standard clinical characteristics, serological parameters and a number of geriatric assessment tools (G-8, VES13, TUG, grip strength, and Charlson Comorbidity Index) will be registered and evaluated in all patients included in NORDIC9. The purpose is to investigate the predictive and prognostic value of these baseline characteristics, in relation to efficacy, toxicity and Quality of Life (QoL).

3. **Older cancer patients’ attitude to chemotherapy.**

   A questionnaire based study aiming to clarify the attitude and expectations to chemotherapy in older patients with gastrointestinal cancer and whether there are differences in the attitude among older and younger patients.

Our project will add to the understanding of efficacy and tolerability of chemotherapy in older gastrointestinal cancer patients, offer a chance for tailored treatment strategies, and provide new important knowledge on planning and organization treatment of older cancer patients.

The project is a part of [AgeCare - Academy of Geriatric Cancer Research](https://www.agecareacademy.org/).