Market Research Study Shows Lung Cancer Treatments Differ Significantly by Both Age and Geography

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New Merck KGaA Study Reveals Wide Variations in Therapy Regimens, with Monotherapy Most Common in Elderly Patients and Triplets Most Prevalent in the US

There are striking differences in treatment regimens for non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients, based on both age and geography, according to a new market research study conducted by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, presented as a poster on Saturday at the 2009 ASCO (American Society of Clinical Oncology) meeting in Orlando, Florida (Abstract no.: 8053; Poster no.: N15).

Performed in conjunction with TNS Healthcare, the representative study shows that among patients with advanced NSCLC, monotherapy is used most often among those 70 or older, while combination therapies are administered most frequently to younger patients.

Location also is a key factor in determining therapy choice, with a chemotherapy doublet plus a targeted agent far more common in the US than in Europe.

"While chemotherapy doublets remain the standard regimen for first-line treatment of stage IIIB and IV NSCLC, there are substantial differences among regions in the doublets most often chosen and whether a targeted agent is concurrently administered," says J.F. Vansteenkiste, first author of the poster.

"For example, the preferred doublet in Europe is platinum plus gemcitabine, used in 29% of patients.

In contrast, in the US and Japan, platinum plus taxanes is predominant, used in more than a quarter of American and more than half of Japanese patients.

"The most extensive use of doublets plus targeted agent is in the US, in contrast with Europe and Japan. Almost half of non squamous cancer patients younger than 70 are being treated with these combinations in the US. Even among those older than 70, more than a quarter of patients are on chemotherapy doublets plus targeted agent."

Randomized phase III studies have shown that adding targeted agents to standard first-line treatments can prolong overall survival.

Almost 5,000 NSCLC Patients Monitored
Merck KGaA already had presented at last yearâ€™s ASCO a landmark study for Erbitux in combination with standard 1st-line chemotherapy in advanced NSCLC which showed for the first time in 10 years a significant survival benefit in a broad patient population.

In the current study Merck KGaA monitored 4,950 patients from May to mid-July 2008 across Western Europe (Spain, Italy, Germany, France and the UK), the US and Japan.

TNS Healthcare recruited oncologists in the US, oncologists, radiotherapists and pulmonologists in Europe and pulmonologists and respiratory surgeons in Japan to participate.

Physicians who contributed provided information through on-line patient record forms.

About Merck
Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of €7.6 billion in 2008, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by 32,700 employees in 60 countries.

Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and free shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%.

In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriatedÂ and has been an independent company ever since.

About TNS Healthcare
TNS Healthcare provides market research consulting to the worldwide pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device industries, as well as health-focused ad agencies, media and analysts.

It offers globally consistent solutions and custom advisory services to support product introductions; brand, treatment and sales performance optimization; and physician and DTC promotional assessment.

Informing decisions across the life cycle, TNS Healthcare offers action-ready insights for pre-launch landscaping, market and opportunity assessment, segmentation, positioning, message and campaign creation, pricing, forecasting, attitude and awareness measurement and post-launch tracking.

It delivers information across stakeholders - including physicians, patients and consumers - to help companies anticipate and impact customersâ€™ behaviors.

TNS Healthcare provides both qualitative and quantitative offerings, using traditional and on-line methodologies, combining worldwide reach with local expertise.

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