Conclusions

Treatment with Electrochemotherapy is appropriate for patients suffering with recurrent cutaneous disease. The best response is obtained when the tumour is less than 3cm in diameter, is sensitive to endocrine treatment and the patient has lesions that are localised close to the scar of the primary tumour. Local control of the disease has an important effect on quality of life and improves life expectancy.

Electrochemotherapy is an effective supplement to a cytotoxic systemic therapy and can be considered an effective addition to the cancer treatment armamentarium.

References


Further reading

**Rationale**

With advances in the treatment of metastatic cancer, patients are living longer and are therefore more likely to experience the symptoms of advanced disease such as cutaneous metastases (CM).

CM can cause significant morbidity including infection, bleeding, odour and pain. It has been demonstrated that amongst women with advanced or recurrent breast cancer, CM were associated with the greatest effect on quality of life. Systemic therapy alone often has limited efficacy in CM.  

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**How effective is Electrochemotherapy?**

The effectiveness of Electrochemotherapy is determined by the following factors:

- **Number and size of the lesions**
- **Anatomical location**
- **Sensitivity to endocrine treatment**

These considerations help to define which eligible patients will respond the best to the treatment and who will have good local tumour control and better survival overall.

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**Electrochemotherapy for breast cancer patients**

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<tr>
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**NICE guidelines**

NICE published guidance on Electrochemotherapy in March 2013, saying that it may reduce symptoms and improve quality of life for appropriately selected patients.

NICE has said that this procedure can be:

"offered routinely as a palliative treatment option for people with metastases in the skin from tumours of non-skin origin or melanoma...the procedure may reduce symptoms and improve quality of life for people with disease that cannot be treated with, or doesn’t respond to, other treatments."

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**Treat earlier for better results**

Results from recent clinical studies have indicated that patients with ten or fewer skin metastases, which are smaller than 3cm in diameter, are likely to have a positive response following a single treatment with Electrochemotherapy.

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**Palliative effect**

In addition to the patients described in Figure A, those patients requiring palliation of large ulcerated bleeding lesions can be treated with Electrochemotherapy. This treatment can improve quality of life and provide symptomatic relief, including immediate cessation of bleeding, decreased odour and reduction in ulceration.