



The 10 best recent articles in the medical literature relating to breast cancer are reviewed here.

TEN BEST READINGS ON BREAST CANCER

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Cox CE, Nguyen K, Gray RJ, et al. Importance of lymphatic mapping in ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS): why map DCIS? *Am Surg*. 2001;67:513-521.

Sentinel lymph node biopsy is a valuable tool in the treatment of patients with DCIS and DCISM and is particularly needed in those undergoing mastectomy. No "high-risk" group of patients can be identified for selective sentinel lymph node biopsy.

Nabholtz JM, Buzdar A, Pollak M, et al. Anastrozole is superior to tamoxifen as first-line therapy for advanced breast cancer in postmenopausal women: results of a North American multicenter randomized trial. Arimidex Study Group. *J Clin Oncol*. 2000;18:3758-3767.

In a study comparing anastrozole and tamoxifen as first-line therapy in postmenopausal women, anastrozole satisfied the predefined criteria for equivalence to tamoxifen. The authors also observed an increase in time to progression and a lower incidence of thromboembolic events and vaginal bleeding with anastrozole.

Freedman G, Gowble B, Hanlon A, et al. Patients with early stage invasive cancer with close or positive margins treated with conservative surgery and radiation have an increased risk of breast recurrence that is delayed by adjuvant systemic therapy. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys*. 1999;44:1005-1015.

This article demonstrates that, although the use of systemic therapy delays local relapses in patients with conservatively treat-

ed breast cancer, systemic therapy with long-term follow-up does not eradicate the effect of a positive margin.

Hartmann LC, Schaid DJ, Woods JE, et al. Efficacy of bilateral prophylactic mastectomy in women with a family history of breast cancer. *N Engl J Med*. 1999;340:77-84.

In women with a high risk of breast cancer on the basis of family history, prophylactic mastectomy can significantly reduce the incidence of breast cancer.

McMasters KM, Wong SL, Martin RC 2d, et al. Dermal injection of radioactive colloid is superior to peritumoral injection for breast cancer sentinel lymph node biopsy: results of a multiinstitutional study. *Ann Surg*. 2001;233:676-687.

Community-based surgical outcomes demonstrate that dermal injection of radioactive colloid significantly improves the SLN identification rate.

Leong SPL, Wong JH, eds. Sentinel lymph nodes in human solid cancer. *The Surgical Clinics of North America*. Philadelphia, Pa: WB Saunders Publishing Company; 2000.

An excellent compendium of the art of lymphatic mapping is compiled in this issue.

Slamon DJ, Leyland-Jones B, Shak S, et al. Use of chemotherapy plus a monoclonal antibody against HER2 for metastatic breast cancer that overexpresses HER2. *N Engl J Med*. 2001;344:783-793.

Details are provided about the groundbreaking work of the authors in improving the outcomes for women with HER2-overexpressing breast cancer.

Loprinzi CL, Thome SD. Understanding the utility of adjuvant systemic therapy for primary breast cancer. *J Clin Oncol.* 2001;19:972-979.

The authors present a user-friendly guide to assess the potential magnitude of benefit from adjuvant therapy for individual patients with early breast cancer.

Early Breast Trialists' Collaborative Group. Favourable and unfavourable effects on long-term survival of radiotherapy for early breast cancer: an overview of the randomized trials. *Lancet.* 2000; 355:1757-1770.

This article provides an objective look by meta-analysis of the benefits and hazards of radiation therapy used as an adjunct in breast cancer therapy.

Mouridsen H, Gershonovich M, Sun Y, et al. Superior efficacy of letrozole versus tamoxifen as first-line therapy for postmenopausal women with advanced breast cancer: results of a phase III study of the International letrozole Study Group. *J Clin Oncol.* 2001;19: 2596-2606.

This is one of the trials that show that several aromatase inhibitors are superior to tamoxifen as first-line therapy for estrogen-receptor-rich metastatic breast cancer in postmenopausal women.