IV. 研究成果の刊行物・別刷り

# 肺神経内分泌腫瘍の分類と組織診断

大場岳彦 石川雄一

# はじめに

神経内分泌とは、神経細胞や内分泌細胞が有する、様々な化学伝達物質を産生・分泌する能力をいう、神経内分泌腫瘍は、神経内分泌性格を有する細胞からなる腫瘍であり、肺に限らず、膵や腸管などの消化器、副腎や甲状腺などの内分泌臓器、さらには胸腺や膀胱など、種々の臓器に発生する。しかし、小細胞肺癌small cell lung cancer (SCLC)で多数の死亡者(日本では年間約1万人)が出ていることからもわかるように、肺は神経内分泌腫瘍の最も重要な発生臓器である。また、神経内分泌腫瘍には、非上皮性のパラガングリオーマも含まれ、膀胱などのようにカルチノイドよりはるかに高頻度である腺器もあるが、肺では稀であるので、本稿では上皮性神経内分泌腫瘍に記述を限定したい。

従来、肺に発生する神経内分泌腫瘍は、定型的カルチノイド・非定型的(あるいは異型)カルチノイド・SCLCの3つのカテゴリーに分類されていたが、1999年のWHO分類改訂により、大細胞神経内分泌癌large cell neuroendocrine carcinoma (LCNEC)という第4のカテゴリーが導入された。したがって現在では、肺神経内分泌腫瘍には以上の4組織型が含まれる。これらのうち、定型的/非定型的カルチノイドとLCNEC/SCLCの間には生物学、臨床的に大きな相違があり、前二者を低悪性度神経内分泌腫瘍、後二者を悪性度神経内分泌腫瘍、後二者を高悪性度神経内分泌腫瘍または神経内分泌癌として区別する

本稿では、LCNECとSCLCの病理組織学的鑑別を 中心に解説するとともに、その限界と両者を鑑別する 臨床的意義につき現状を考察し、次期WHO分類にお ける神経内分泌腫瘍の方向性を探る。

### <sup>®</sup>癌研究会癌研究所病理部

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# I. 神経内分泌腫瘍の組織学的特徴

神経内分泌腫瘍は一般に、神経内分泌形態 neuroendocrine morphology と神経内分泌分化 neuroendocrine differentiation と呼ばれる2つの組織学的特徴を 有する、神経内分泌形態とは、図1に示すような類器 官構造organoid nesting·栅状配列peripheral palisading・索状構造 trabecular pattern・ロゼットない しロゼット様構造 rosette-like structure などの構築を いう、肺に限らず種々の臓器に発生する神経内分泌腫 **瘍にはこの形態がみられる。特に肺神経内分泌腫瘍に** おいては、こうした形態を示すことが定義の一つとも なっており、神経内分泌形態の認知は重要な診断の第 一歩となる。神経内分泌分化は、細胞質や膜に神経内 分泌物質を含有する状態をいう。免疫染色で神経内分 泌マーカーが陽性となるか、 電顕で神経内分泌顆粒を 認識することにより証明すべきとされているが、現今 の診断現場では免疫染色でほとんどの診断が行われて いる. 神経内分泌マーカーとしては, chromogranin A, synaptophysin, neural cell adhesion molecule (NCAM, CD56)の3マーカーが推奨されている(肺 以外の臓器では、この3つのマーカーが最良であると は限らないので要注意)、神経内分泌形態をとる腫瘍 で、これらのマーカーのうち1つでも陽性となれば、 神経内分泌腫瘍と診断することが多い なお、神経内 分泌形態をとらない大細胞癌、腺癌、扁平上皮癌など の非小細胞肺癌 (NSCLC) の中にもこれらのマーカー が陽性となるものがあるが、このような腫瘍について は NSCLC with neuroendocrine differentiation と記載 し、狭義の神経内分泌腫瘍とは区別するよう求められ

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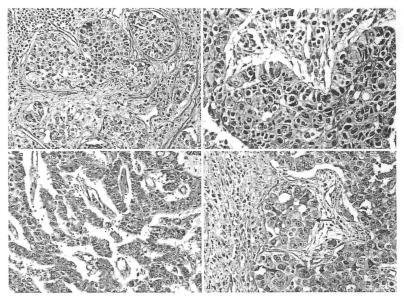


図1 神経内分泌形態 a:頻響官構造 organoid nesting,b:欄状配列 peripheral palisading,c:索状構造 trabecular pattern,d:ロゼットおよびロゼット線構造 rosette-like structures,

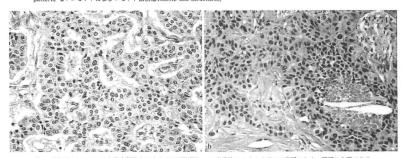


図2 定型的カルチノイドと非定型的カルチノイドの組織像 a: 定型的カルチノイドでは壊死はなく、間質は血管である。 b: 非定型的カルチノイドでは巣状の壊死がみられる。

# Ⅱ. 各組織型の特徴

# 1. 定型的カルチノイド, 非定型的カルチノイド

典型的な組織像を図2に示す、腫瘍細胞はほぼ均一 で、好酸性の細胞質、微細顆粒状(ごま塩状)の核クロ マチンを有する。核小体は目立つものと目立たないも のがありうる. 類器官構造や索状構造を示すパターン が多いが, spindle cell type, pseudoglandular type などバリエーションが多く, 特に生検診断では注意を 要する。間質に豊富な血管網を認めることも特徴の一 つである. 定型と非定型の鑑別は、細胞の異型度は参 考にならず、核分裂像の数と壊死の有無によってなさ れることになっている。2 mm² (10HPF) あたりの核 分裂像が1個以下であれば定型的カルチノイドと診断 される。核分裂像が2~10個か、またはわずかでも壊 死巣を伴えば非定型的カルチノイドと診断される。 カ ルチノイドは、若年者や女性に発生することも少なく なく、喫煙とは無関係である。また、非定型的カルチ ノイドの頻度は、定型的カルチノイドの約1/10であ ることも重要である。

### 2. LCNEC, SCLC

2 mm² あたりの核分裂像が11個を上回る神経内分 溶腫瘍が高悪性度群と定義される。通常、高悪性度群 では数10個の核分裂像がみられ、壊死も非定型的カ ルチノイドに比べて広範にみられることが多い。

LCNECは、①神経内分泌形態、②11個/2 mm²以上の核分裂像、③広範な壊死、④ NSCLC の細胞形態、⑤神経内分泌分化の5つを備えた腫瘍と定義されている。典型的な LCNEC の組織像を図3に示す。LCNEC

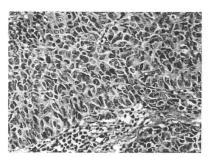


図3 大細胞神経内分泌癌 (LCNEC) の組織像 空胞状の大型核と 好酸性細胞質をもつ細胞からなり, ロゼット様構造, peripheral palisading がみられる.

の診断には神経内分泌分化の証明が必須である。したがって、HE 像でLCNEC 的な特徴をそなえるが神経内分泌分化が証明されない場合には、large cell carcinoma with neuroendocrine morphology とし、LCNECとは区別することになっている。

SCLCもLCNECと同様に、類器官構造・棚状・ロゼット構造などの神経内分泌形態、多くの核分裂像、広範な壊死がみられる、SCLCと診断する最も重要な所見は特徴的な細胞所見、特に核の所見である。LCNECや他のNSCLCとは異なり、核クロマチンが繊細顆粒状、核小体が目立たず、細胞の大きさは小型的なSCLCの組織像を図4に示す、神経内分泌分化の証明は診断には必須ではないが、3種の神経内分泌

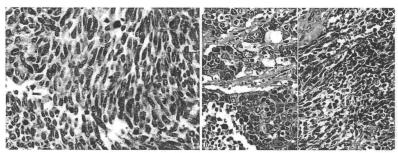


図4 小細胞癌(SCLC)の組織像 a: 典型的な小細胞癌の例。高いN/C比、紡錘形の核、クロマチンは繊細で、核小体は 目立たない。b: combined small cell and LCNECの例。左にLCNEC。右にSCLCの部分を示す。

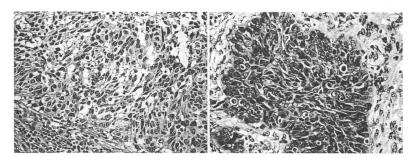


図5 大掘設神経内分泌癌との鑑別が側側となる小細胞癌の例 a:細胞質がやや多い例、核が小型、紡錘形で、核小体が 目立たないが、細胞質が多いので、小細胞癌とされないことがある。b:N/C比は高いが、核が多角形でやや大きく、一部 の細胞で核小体がみられるので、小細胞癌とされないことがある。

マーカーの1つ以上は陽性になることが通常である。

# Ⅲ. LCNEC と SCLC の病理組織学的鑑別

定義から明らかなように、LCNEC と SCLC との鑑別には細胞形態の相違が重要である。すなわち、細胞が大きく(リンパ球の3倍以上)、中等度から豊かな細胞質をもちN/C比が低く、核クロマチンが粗糙、核小体の目立つことがLCNEC の特徴である。一方、小型(リンパ球の3倍以下)で、N/C比が高く、核クロマチンが繊細顆粒状、核小体が目立たないことが SCLC の特徴である。免疫組織化学による鑑別として LCNEC では、CK7、CK18、E-カドヘリン、 $\beta$ -カテニンが、SCLC より有意に強発現していたとの報告がある $^{10}$ .

しかしながら、LCNECとSCLCの鑑別は必ずしも容易ではない。Travisら5人の病理医によるレビューでは、神経内分泌腫瘍のうち診断の一致率が最も悪かったのがLCNECとSCLCの鑑別であった<sup>20</sup>. 我が国でも、厚労省がん研究助成金(課題11-19)において318の肺神経内分泌腫瘍がレビューされた、低悪性度、高悪性度群の鑑別は高い一致率で成されたが、LCNECとSCLCの鑑別には病理医間較差が存在し<sup>20</sup>,高悪性度群とされた腫瘍の約5%は1回目のパネルディスカッションで最終診断できなかったほど微妙な症例であった<sup>40</sup>.

このように病理医間較差や鑑別困難例が生じる原因 は、両者の中間的な細胞からなる高悪性度神経内分泌 腫瘍が少なからず存在することも一つの原因と思われ る。高悪性度神経内分泌腫瘍であることの診断までは 比較的容易になすことができるが、LCNEC と SCLC の鑑別に悩む、というのが肺癌診断に携わる病理医の 実感ではないだろうか. Marchevsky らは, LCNEC と SCLC の細胞の大きさについて分析し、 SCLC の約 1/3はリンパ球の3倍以上の細胞を少なからず含んで いること、LCNECの1/3ではリンパ球の3倍以下の 細胞が優勢であったことを報告した5) 図5には NSCLCとの鑑別が問題となるSCLCの例を示した。 図5aのように、N/C比が低くその点ではNSCLC的 だが、核の所見はSCLC的というようなケースにも稀 ならず遭遇するが、このような場合、細胞質の所見を 重視する病理医はLCNEC,核の所見を重視する病理 医はSCLCと診断しているのが現状であろう。図5b は核がやや大きく, 一部で核小体がみられる症例であ る。このような中間的なものをどのように診断するか は、今後の大きな課題である。ちなみにこの2例は、 厚労省班のコンセンサス診断はLCNEC であったが、 筆者のコンサルトした3名の米国の肺専門病理医はい ずれもSCLCと診断した。筆者は、SCLCの幾つかの 特徴のうち、核所見が最も重要と考えており、この見 解は、米国の肺癌専門病理医と一致している。また、 核所見を重要視した診断基準は化学療法感受性ともよ く相関するという経験がある。これらについては、ま た稿を改めて紹介するつもりである。

# IV. LCNECの取り扱いを巡る現状と展望

現在のところLCNECに対する標準化学療法は確立

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されていない。分類上、大細胞癌であるからNSCLC の治療プロトコールで行うべきか、神経内分泌癌であ ることからSCLCに準じて治療するべきか、臨床医・ 各施設の方針や、患者の状況に応じて判断されている のが環状である。

しかしながら、LCNEC 症例の蓄積が進みその生物 学的・臨床的特徴の理解が進むにつれ、LCNEC は SCLCに近い腫瘍であるという認識が主流になってき ているのではないかと思われる.切除後の5年生存率 は全体で28~43%, I 期症例に限っても33~58% と, 他のNSCLCと比較して著しく不良であり<sup>4.6.7)</sup>, SCLC に匹敵するものである。その不良な切除予後から、 LCNEC に対しては積極的に補助化学療法を行う必要 があるとの認識はほぼコンセンサスとなりつつあ る8). 分子生物学的にも、遺伝子発現プロファイリン グ9 や遺伝子の増幅・欠失のパターン10 に多くの共通 点がみられることが報告されている。化学療法につい ては少数の後方視的報告しかないが,奏効率50~ 60%と他の非小細胞肺癌と比べて良好である可能性 がある<sup>11.12)</sup> Rossi らは LCNEC に対する術後補助化学 療法および再発後化学療法の奏効率や予後について後 方視的に検討し、いずれの局面においても SCLC の治 療プロトコールのほうが NSCLC の治療プロトコール より予後良好であったことを報告している".

現行の規約では、LCNECは非小細胞肺癌である大細胞癌の亜型として分類されている。しかしながらもし、LCNECがSCLCにより近い類縁関係にあり、かつ、LCNECとSCLCを共通の治療方針で制御できるとすれば、両者を同一の疾患概念としてとらえていくほうが実際的である。この仮定にはさらなる検証が必要ではあるが、将来、先述したような両者の鑑別をめぐる病理医の苦労は不要となり、両者は同一病理学的疾患単位としてまとめられていくことも考えられる。

# おわりに

肺の高悪性度神経内分泌腫瘍にLCNECが導入されて10年が経過した。次第にその特徴についての知見が集積されてきてはいるが、LCNECの治療に直結する臨床的・病理的特性に関する研究は端緒についたばかりである。分子生物学を含めた基礎的知見から臨床的知見まで、さらなる食績が必要である。その鍵となるのが高い再現性をもったLCNECの診断である。病

理医に課せられた役割は大変大きいと思われる。

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# 話題

# ALK肺癌の臨床病理学的特徴 一形態からわかるその疫学的背景\*

石川雄一\*\*

Key Words: ALK, lung cancer, translocation, histology, etiology

# はじめに

EML4-ALK融合遺伝子肺癌が報告されて3年 が経つい、この癌は、肺非小細胞癌の数パーセン トを占めるにすぎないのだが、非常に注目され た. まず、 固形癌において染色体転座により発 生する癌として興味を持たれた. 転座による癌 関連遺伝子の活性化というメカニズムの単純さ が癌のゲノムの構造を理解させやすくする。 し かし、転座による固形癌はすでに、骨軟部腫瘍 のみならず前立腺癌, 腎癌などで報告されてい たし, 比率的にも前立腺癌は数パーセントより 遥かに高率であった。では、なぜALK肺癌が注 目されたかというと、発生部位が、癌の中で最 も頻度の高い肺であったということもさること ながら, 前立腺癌や腎癌などでは活性化するの が転写因子などであり、 転写因子では作用する 遺伝子が決めにくいのである. それに対してALK 肺癌の場合、活性化するのがALKという癌遺伝 子であり直接の治療の対象となりやすく, すで に報告されていたリンバ腫や骨軟部腫瘍などい くつかの癌に対する阻害薬の開発中であった. というのが大きな理由である. EML4-ALK融合遺 伝子の場合, ALK遺伝子のキナーゼ部分には変 異などはないが、転写されるキメラ蛋白の頭の 部分のEML4蛋白が2量体を作るので、その後 ろについているALKのキナーゼ部分がtransactivate される. この辺の所は、本特集号の他の項で専 門家が詳しく述べていると思う.

本稿では、まず、竹内らにより当院で見出されたALK融合遺伝子肺癌"の特徴をまとめる。そして、それらの特徴が肺癌全体のなかでどのような意味を持つのかを考えたい。ALK肺癌に最適な増密法であるiAEP法により見出されたKIF5B-ALK融合遺伝子肺癌"は、まだ例数が少なく、特徴が判然としないので、本稿ではEML4-ALK肺癌に絞って話を進める。

# ALK肺癌の病理学的特徴

当病理部の竹内らは多重PCR法を開発して肺癌 のスクリーニングを行い、11例のEML4-ALK融合 遺伝子肺癌を見出した2). その臨床病理学的特徴 および他の遺伝子変異も検索されたり、その結果、 EML4-ALK肺癌は腺癌でのみ見出され、扁平上皮 癌、小細胞癌など他の組織型には認められなかっ た、また、腺癌の中でも粘液を産生する腺房腺癌 の像を呈するものが多かった. この癌は、中分化 では粘液産生性のcribriform patternを呈し、低分 化では印環細胞腺癌(signet ring adenocarcinoma) の像と関連する(図1). 細胞系列については、全 例がTTF-1 (thyroid transcription factor-1) 陽性の 腺癌であった(TTF-1については後述)、癌関連遺 伝子では、EGFR変異、K-ras変異はみられず、p53 変異頻度も低く,変異のあった1例は,内因性 とされる中性変異であった.

現在では、肺の腺癌は表1のように大きく2大別できると考えられている51~8)。 すなわち、喫煙者の比較的中枢側の肺に発生し、形態学的には円

<sup>\*</sup> Lung cancer with ALK translocations: Its clinicopathological characteristics and histology-etiology correlations.
\* Yuichi ISHIKAWA, M.D., Ph.D.: 財団法人癌研究会癌研究所得理能(牽135-8550 東京都江東区有明3-8-31); Division of Pathology, The Cancer Institute, Japanese Foundation for Cancer Research, Tokyo 135-8550, JAPAN

柱細胞からなる腺房腺癌の像を呈し、EGFR変異 が少なく、K-ras変異が多く、p53変異(それも喫 煙関連変異)の頻度の高い肺癌が第1群,および, 非喫煙者の末梢肺に発生し、EGFR変異が多く、 K-ras変異が少なく、p53変異は比較的少なく、あっ ても中性変異であるという第2群である. 谷田 部らは、後者の癌をTRU(terminal respiratory unit)型の腺癌と呼び、TTF-1がそのマーカーであ るとしている677. 肺の腺癌では、形態(細胞像・ 組織像),遺伝子変異,疫学的背景因子の3者が よく相関しているのである. 近年は、第2群の 肺癌が増加しているといわれており, 非喫煙者 の肺癌が注目を集めているが、 日本は以前から 第2群の癌が多く、そのため、CTの発達も相まっ て、早期肺腺癌の研究で世界のトップを行くよ うになったのである.

当初われわれは、EML4-ALK肺癌の第1例が 喫煙者であったこと、および組織像が粘液産生 性中分化腺房腺癌であったことから、 喫煙者の 腺癌に特徴的な遺伝子を見出したと思い、非常 に興奮した. しかし実は、本稿で詳しく述べる ように、この肺癌は非喫煙者の肺癌、すなわち TRU型の腺癌の1つだったのである. ちなみに、 第2群の癌では、EGFR変異が多いのであるが、 EML4-ALK肺癌はEGFR変異を持たないことが1つ の特徴であり、その意味で第2群の癌における EGFR変異肺癌に大ぐ2番目のカテゴリーという ことになる、KIFSB-ALK肺癌は、おそらく3番目のカテゴリーであるう。

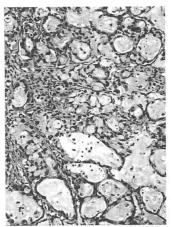


図1 代表的なEML4-ALK肺癌の組織像 結液を産生する腺房腺癌の像で、中分化の部分は cribriform patternを呈し、低分化になると印環細胞 腺癌となっている。ALK染色では、分化度によらず 一様に細胞質に陽性となる、(癌研肺器ref. 39673)

# 肺癌の病理組織学的特徴と癌の発生 —ALK肺癌との関連を念頭に

そもそも肺癌には、胃癌や大腸癌などにはない際だった臨床病理学的特徴がある。それは、 ①腺癌、扁平上皮癌、大細胞癌、小細胞癌など 組織型が多数あること、②喫煙が肺の発癌にしめる割合が高く、直接的原因のはっきりしない 胃癌や大腸癌と対照的であること(最も、近年は

表 1 肺の腺癌を臨床病理学的・疫学的観点から2大別した際の、それぞれの群における典型像

	第1群	第2群		
<b>B</b>		内因性肺癌(TRU型)		
発生集団	男性に多い	女性にも多い		
発生部位	中枢発生も多い	末梢発生		
組織像の特徴	腺房腺癌、粘液産性、中~低分化も多い	高~中分化が多い、BACなど		
細胞像	円柱細胞, 多角形細胞	hobnail細胞, Clara型細胞		
TTF-1発現	なし	あり		
EGFR変異	少ない	多い		
K-ras変異	(相対的に)多い	少ない		
p53変異	多い、特に喫煙関連変異	少ない、あっても中性変異		

太字は、EML4-ALK融合遺伝子肺癌の特徴を示す。

胃癌の原因のほとんどすべてはH. pylori歯の感染によることが判明したが), ③小細胞癌などの神経内分泌癌の比率が高く全体の2割近くに達すること, ④喫煙以外では起こりにくい扁平上皮癌が減少しつつあり, 原因がはっきりしない腺癌が増加していること, そして⑤腺癌においてい。組織像・細胞像)と遺伝子型とが相関していることが判しつつある。ということである。以下、少し詳細に触れよう.

### 1. 肺癌に組織型が多数あることの意味

ヒトの体は大まかに外側は扁平上皮, 内側(肺 や消化管など)は腺上皮でできており、発生の早 い段階で胚細胞からの分化の方向が、それぞれの 上皮の目的に従って決められるようである。すな わち、外側は外部環境から体を護る性質を持つ扁 平上皮へ、内側は分泌や吸収のための腺上皮へと それぞれ分化して, committed stem cellsになる. 皮膚では扁平上皮癌が、消化管では腺癌がそれぞ れ発生するということは、通常の癌はこのcommitted stem cellsのレベルで癌化していることを示 唆している.未分化な胚細胞がcommitted stem cellsになる分化は、かなり根本的なようであり、 癌のようにゲノムの構造が大幅に変化するような 場合でも、committed stem cellsよりさらに未分 化な状態にはなりにくいようだ. 胃や大腸の癌は 腺癌であって、めったに扁平上皮癌が起こらず. 皮膚では基本的に扁平上皮癌が起こり、附属器の ものを除き、腺癌がほとんど起こらないことは、 このことと関係しているであろう、いずれにせよ、 肺では腺癌が基本的な癌と考えられ、ALK融合遺 伝子肺癌も腺癌である.

しかしこれにも例外がある。最もよく知られているのは、肺(気管支)と子宮頸部の扁平上皮癌である。気管支と子宮頸部には元来、扁平上皮は存在しない。タバコ煙などの吸入性発癌因子やHPVなどのウイルスなどに晒されているとトの場合、慢性刺激を受けている状態にあり、扁平上皮化生が生じている。のまり、腺上皮に観われた臓器に扁平上皮癌が発生する機序とは、慢性外部激に対する扁平上皮化生のメカニズムと関連したものであろう。タバコ煙に慢性的に晒されている喫煙者の気管支粘膜の細胞は、タバコ煙の強い刺激から内部を保護するために

扁平上皮化生の機序を発動しているが、それが 破綻して、扁平上皮癌が生じるのであろう。ALK 肺癌がすべて腺癌であるということは、この転 座は扁平上皮化生を起こす機序とは関係が薄い ことを示唆する。

では、肺癌全体の約10%をしめる大細胞癌と はなんであろうか. 大細胞癌は, 大型の細胞か らなり、腺上皮や扁平上皮への分化を示さない 未分化な癌であるが、多くは非常に低分化な腺 癌ではないかと考えられる。このような未分化 な癌は肺に限らず、どの臓器にも生じる. しか し、肺ではその頻度がほかの臓器より高いので、 1つの組織型として認知されているのである。な ぜ、肺ではこのような未分化な癌が多いのだろ うか. これに対する答えはまだないのであるが. 筆者は以下のように想像している. 腺癌を分化 度別に高分化から低分化に分けて、全染色体に おける数十個のマーカーでLOHを調べた. その 結果を大細胞癌および扁平上皮癌と比較した。 すると, 高分化腺癌から分化度が低くなるにつ れてLOH頻度が上昇し、大細胞癌/扁平上皮癌で 最高となった。また、喫煙指数も、まったく同 じ傾向であった. すなわち, 喫煙のような発癌 因子の高度曝露と低分化腺癌や大細胞癌/扁平上 皮癌の発生とが相関していると推定される. 肺 という臓器は、マクロファージによる異物の排 出と扁平上皮化生という防御機能を持ってはい るものの、外界からの発癌因子に幹細胞が直接 晒される度合いがほかの臓器に比べて高いので はないだろうか.

# 2. 肺では他の臓器より神経内分泌癌の比率が

肺に神経内分泌癌が多いのはなぜだろうか(本 稿では、小細胞癌と大細胞神経内分泌癌を総称 する場合、神経内分泌癌と呼ぶことにする). 神 経内分泌癌を多数集めて臨床病理学的特徴を調 べてみると、大部分が男性、喫煙者であるとい うことがわかる. よく調べてみると興味深いこ とに、神経内分泌癌の方が扁平上皮癌に高い 屋指数が有意に低く、女性の比率が有意に高い ことがわかってくる. 別の面から見ると、非喫 煙者の女性に扁平上皮癌が生じることはほとん どないが, 小細胞癌は稀ではあるものの非喫煙 者の女性に生じることがある.

さらに興味深いのは、起源細胞である。肺の神経内分泌癌は高頻度でTTF-1を発現している。
TTF-1は、胎児期に肺の II 型肺胞上皮細胞への分化を起こさせる転写因子であり、成人となってからもその分化を維持するのに必要である。
II 型肺胞上皮は腺上皮であるから、TTF-1は腺癌のマーカーと考えるのが自然であろう。実際、多くの腺癌でTTF-1が発現している。ここから想像するに、腺癌と神経内分泌癌の起源細胞は共通だと推定される。これには、興味深い実験的裏づけがあるので、参照されたいか。

このように考えてくると、重喫煙者の場合. タバコ煙の強い影響を中枢に近い気管支上皮細 胞が受け、扁平上皮化生のメカニズムを発動し てなんとか対処しているが、それが破綻すると 扁平上皮癌が発生してくるようである。この場 合は, 中枢に近い気道上皮からの発生が多い. それに対し、喫煙の影響がやや弱かったり、末 梢の細胞がタバコ煙に晒されたりする場合, Ⅱ型 肺胞上皮細胞への分化を保ったまま発癌し、神 経内分泌性を獲得すると小細胞癌などが起こる のかもしれない。神経内分泌性の獲得とともに、 癌細胞ではケラチンの発現が減少し増殖能力が 高進して, 非常に悪性度の高い癌となっていく. 小細胞癌ではケラチンの発現が一般に減少して いるが、vimentinが高度に発現しているわけでは ないので、epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT)の機序とも少し異なっているようである。

まとめると、肺は通常の臓器よりは、高度の発 癌物質に晒され、いくつかの防護機能はあるもの のそれだけでは防御しきれず、末梢の腺上皮が癌 化し、腺癌にならない場合、神経内分泌癌になる のであろう・小細胞癌などの神経内分泌癌は、発 生数(辛死亡数)はわが国で約15,000人/年と決して少なくはないのであるが、進行して発見される ため大部分が手術の対象とならず、実験的研究に 必要な検体が集まりにくい、そのため、思うよう に研究が進んでいないのが実情である。それで も遺伝子変化の研究、遺伝子発現の研究などか ら、小細胞癌と腺癌との類似性がわかってきて、 「小細胞癌は気管支のクルチツキー細胞から発生 する」との教科書の記載は、はるか昔のこととなった。これまでの検索ではALK肺癌に神経内分泌癌は1例もない。しかし、神経内分泌癌と腺癌との密接な関係から、今後は神経内分泌癌でもALK融合遺伝子が見出される可能性がないとは言えないのである。

# 3. 「肺癌の原因のほとんどは喫煙である」

肺癌は、以前は珍しい癌であった、第2次大 戦後の時期で、肺癌の剖検例があると、医学部 の学生は授業を中断して見学に出かけたという。しかし現在は、癌死因の第1位を占め、日本では約70,000人/年が死亡しており、まだ増加中である。欧米では、肺癌の90%以上が喫煙によるものであると推定され、事実、喫煙率が大幅に減少している。日本では、男女あわでは、肺癌による死亡率はせた 喫煙率は減少旬向にあるのに、なぜ肺癌死亡や数が増加しているのか、疑問に思われたもして、減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速でに減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速では減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速では減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速でに減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速でに減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速でに減少傾向となっている。日本では、急速が増加しているのである。

喫煙との関連で指摘しなければならないのは、 日本では、欧米に比べて非喫煙者の肺癌が多い、 ということである。実際、腺癌の癌遺伝子変化 をみてみると、癌研では50~60%にEGFR変異を 認める、EGFR変異肺癌は非喫煙者に多く、女性 に多い、肺癌全体の半数から6割程度が腺癌で あるから、癌研で手術される肺癌の約3割は、 喫煙と関連の強いが薄いと推定される。つまり、喫 煙と関連の強い肺癌は約70%となり、欧米での 推定値である90%以上とはやや異なっている。 病理診断の現場からみると、非喫煙者の肺癌が 増加しているという印象もある。

すなわち、これまでは肺癌といえば喫煙が原因であり、肺癌対策はすなわち喫煙対策であると考えられてきた。今後は、喫煙以外の原因、たとえば吸入性因子ならアスペストや粉塵、代謝性因子なら食品中の発癌因子なども考慮すべきであろう。また、EGFR変異が東洋人に多いいうことから、なんらかの民族差が絡んでいるとも推定され、その点で、EGFR遺伝子中の多型も注目される100~121、ALK肺癌は、非喫煙者の肺

腺癌としてEGFR変異肺癌に次ぐカテゴリーである。その頻度はEGFR変異肺癌の10分の1以下ではあるが、EGFR変異との排他性からも興味が持たれる。

4. 肺の腺癌における,形態学と遺伝子型との

以前は, 肺癌は組織型が複雑で, 特に肺の腺 癌はどのような組織像もありうると考えられて いて、消化器癌ほどは病理学的研究(組織発生を 含む)が進んでいなかった。しかし、癌が遺伝子 の病気であることが判明し、腺癌におけるK-ras をはじめとした癌遺伝子の変異が解明されてか らは、情勢が一変してきた、特に、近年のEGFR 変異肺癌の発見以来, 肺腺癌は癌遺伝子による 分類と治療選択が可能になるほど、遺伝子的解 明が進んだ. 一般に癌の80~90%は, 1つの癌遺 伝子に依存して増殖しているといわれ、癌遺伝 子の変化による分類の可能性がある. 特に、早 期の癌や治療前の癌にこのことが当てはまる. 癌遺伝子の変化による分類は、治療と直結する ので、重要なのである. ALK肺癌は、相互排他 的な肺腺癌の癌遺伝子変化としては、EGFR.Kras, HER2などの変異、Metの遺伝子増幅に次ぐ ものであり、注目される、また肺腺癌は、形態 (細胞像・組織像)と遺伝子変化とがよく相関す ることも, 最近とみに解明が進み、非常に興味 深い。

当部でまとめた、肺腺癌の形態と遺伝子型と の相関の1例を紹介しよう. Ninomiyaらは, EGFR変異を持つ腺癌とそれ以外の腺癌とを、BAC パターンの有無, micropapillaryパターンの 有無13)、およびTsuchiyaらの提唱する腺癌の細胞 型(鋲釘型細胞, 円柱細胞, 多角形細胞)5)につい て比較した14). その結果, EGFR変異肺癌ではそ れ以外の癌に比べ,有意にBACパターン, micropapillaryパターンおよび鋲釘型細胞と相関してい た. つまり、これらの像を示す肺癌では、有意 にEGFR変異を持つ頻度が高い、肺腺癌の組織像 から遺伝子変異の有無を非常に高い確率で言い 当てることができるわけであり、実臨床上も有 用である. EML4-ALK肺癌は、先述のように粘液 産性性の腺房腺癌(ないしその低分化形である印 環細胞腺癌signet ring adenocarcinoma)という特 徴があり、これをみればかなりの確率でEML4-ALK肺癌であることを予測できる。

# 今後の課題

EML4-ALK肺癌の特徴と、その意味するところを肺癌の臨床病理学的特徴、特に組織像の点から解説した、EML4-ALK肺癌は、非ないし軽度喫煙者に発生する腺癌としてはEGFR肺癌に次いで発見された、特徴ある肺癌である。1つの癌遺伝テに依存してがん細胞が増殖しているという点でも、EGFR変異肺癌と類似しており、実際、ALK阻害薬が著効することが報告されている。

今後は、このような特定の癌遺伝子が活性化している癌をさらに見つけようとする方向(頻度が低く種類が多いであろうが)、また当然であるが、治療不応性となった癌のメカニズムなどが臨床的に重要となってくる。発癌の観点からは、なぜ、このような転座が生じるのかというメカニズムの解明、すなわち単に、タバコ煙中のgenotoxicな発癌因子が染色体異常を起こ発布といった説明は両しないで、外来ので、外来の発布因子が中ので、外来の方法ではなく、新たな癌細胞増殖制御、ゲノム安定性保持の機構などに注目した、別のバラダイムに基づく方法論が有効かもしれない。

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# Circulating tumor cells as a surrogate marker for determining response to chemotherapy in patients with advanced gastric cancer

Satoshi Matsusaka,<sup>1</sup> Keisho Chin,<sup>1</sup> Mariko Ogura,<sup>1</sup> Mitsukuni Suenaga,<sup>1</sup> Eiji Shinozaki,<sup>1</sup> Yuji Mishima,<sup>2</sup> Yasuhito Terui,<sup>1</sup> Nobuyuki Mizunuma<sup>1</sup> and Kiyohiko Hatake<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Oncology, Cancer Institute Hospital of Japanese Foundation for Cancer Research, Tokyo; <sup>2</sup>Cancer Chemotherapy Center, Clinical Chemotherapy, Japanese Foundation for Cancer Research, Tokyo, Japan

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The purpose of this study was to quantify circulating tumor cells (CTCs) in advanced gastric cancer (AGC) patients, and to demonstrate the role of CTCs in cancer therapy. This study investigates the hypothesis that CTCs can predict clinical outcomes in patients with AGC. From November 2007 to June 2009, 52 patients with AGC were enrolled into a prospective study. The chemotherapy regimen was an S-1-based regimen (S-1 with or without cisplatin) or paclitaxel. CTCs of whole blood at baseline, 2 weeks, and 4 weeks after initiation of chemotherapy, were isolated and enumerated using immunomagnetics. Patients with ≥4 CTCs at 2-week points and 4-week points had a shorter median progression-free survival (PFS) (1.4, 1.4 months, respectively) than those with the median PFS of <4 CTCs (4.9, 5.0 months, respectively) (log-rank test; P < 0.001, P < 0.001, respectively). Patients with ≥4 CTCs at 2-week points and 4-week points had shorter median overall survival (OS) (3.5, 4.0 months, respectively) than those with the median PFS of <4 CTCs (11.7, 11.4 months, respectively) (log-rank test; P < 0.001, P = 0.001, respectively). In conclusion, this study demonstrates that CTC measurement may be useful as a surrogate marker for determining response to S-1-based or paclitaxel regimens in AGC. (Cancer Sci 2010; 101: 1067-1071)

G astric cancer is more prevalent in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central and South America than in other areas. In Japan, this cancer is one of the most common causes of cancer-related mortality, despite dramatic advances in diagnosis and treatment. Outcomes are extremely poor in patients with unresectable gastric cancer, with the median survival ranging from 3 to 5 months with the best supportive care. (1-3) The ability to identify patients with the worst prognoses or those destined to progress quickly could have broad clinical applications.

Circulating tumor cells (CTCs) or disseminated tumor cells (CTCs) in bone marrow and peripheral blood from patients with cancers have been documented. Po Braun et al. Po Ported that ~30% of women with primary breast cancer have DTCs in bone marrow, and a 10-year follow-up of these patients revealed a significantly decreased disease-free survival and overall survival (OS) when compared with patients without DTCs. However, aspiration of bone marrow is time consuming and, in many cases, uncomfortable for the patients precluding multiple samplings for therapy monitoring studies. Therefore, recent efforts have concentrated on the detection of CTCs in the peripheral blood of cancer patients. Cristofanilli et al. Policy in the peripheral prospective study that CTC detection provided significant prognostic information for patients with metastatic breast cancer. Chone et al. Policy howed that the number of CTCs before and during treatment was an independent predictor of PFS and OS in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer. It is not clear whether CTC detection using this system provides prognostic

information for patients with advanced gastric cancer. We initiated this study to evaluate whether CTCs could serve as a prognostic and/or predictive marker in patients with AGC.

### Materials and Methods

Patients. All patients were enrolled using institutional review board-approved protocols at the Cancer Institute Hospital at the Japanese Foundation for Cancer Research and provided informed consent. The study population consisted of patients aged 18 years or older with histologically proven AGC. Other inclusion criteria were Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) performance status of 0 or 2; adequate organ function; and S-1-based (S-1 with or without cisplatin) or paclitaxel chemotherapy regimen. The subjects were five patients treated with S-1 (40 mg/m², twice daily, days 1–28, repeated every 6 weeks), 26 patients treated with S-1 plus CDDP (S-1 40 mg/m², twice daily, days 1–21, CDDP 60 mg/m², day 8, repeated every 5 weeks), and 21 patients treated with paclitaxel (80 mg/m², weekly).

Sample preparation for isolation of CTCs from blood. Blood was drawn from advanced gastric cancer patients into 10 mL of evacuated blood for CTC in a Cell Save Preservative Tube (Veridex, Raritan, NJ, USA). Blood was always drawn from cancer patients before treatment initiation (baseline), 2 weeks, and 4 weeks after the administration of an S-1-based or paclitaxel regimen. The CellSearch system (Veridex) consists of the CellPrep system, the CellSearch Epithelial Cell Kit (for the measurement of CTC), and the CellSpotter Analyzer. The CellPrep system is a semi-automated sample preparation system, and the CellSearch Epithelial Cell Kit consists of ferrofluids coated with epithelial cell-specific EpCAM antibodies to immunomagnetically enrich epithelial cells; a mixture of two phycoerythrin-conjugated antibodies that bind to cytokeratin 8, 18, and 19; an antibody to CD45 conjugated to allophycocyanin; nuclear dye 4',6- diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) to fluorescently label the cell; and buffers to wash, permeabilize, and resuspend the cells. Sample processing and evaluation were done as described by Allard et al. Briefly, 7.5 mL of blood for CTCs were mixed with 6 mL of buffer, centrifuged at 800g for 10 min, and then placed on the CellPrep system. After aspiration of the plasma and buffer layer by instrument, ferrofluids were added. After incubation and subsequent magnetic separation, unbound cells and remaining plasma were aspirated. The staining reagents were then added in conjunction with a permeabilization buffer to fluorescently label the immunomagnetically labeled cells. After incubation in the system, the magnetic separation was repeated, and

<sup>3</sup>To whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: khatake@jfcr.or.jp

excess staining reagents were aspirated. In the final processing step, the cells were resuspended in the MagNest Cell Presentation Device (Veridex). This device consists of a chamber and two magnets that orient the immunomagnetically labeled cells for analysis using the CellSpotter Analyzer.

Sample analysis. The MagNest was placed on the CellSpotter Analyzer, a four-color semi-automated fluorescence microscope. Image frames covering the entire surface of the cartridge for each of the four fluorescent filter cubes were captured. The captured images containing objects that met predetermined criteria were automatically presented in a web-enabled browser from which final selection of cells was made by the operator. The criteria for an object to be defined as a CTC include round to oval morphology, a visible nucleus (DAPI positive), positive staining for cytokeratin, and negative staining for CD45. Results of cell enumeration are always expressed as the number of cells per 7.5 mL of blood for CTCs.

Statistical analysis. Progression-free survival (PFS) was defined as the elapsed time from blood collection to progression. Kaplan-Meier survival plots were generated based on CTC levels each time blood was collected, and the curves were compared using a log-rank testing. A P-value <0.05 was considered significant. Cox proportional hazards regression was used to determine univariate and multivariate hazard ratios for selected potential predictors of PFS and OS. The distribution of patients above and below the CTC threshold and clinical response was compared using Fisher's exact test.

#### Results

Patient characteristics. A total of 52 patients were enrolled. Patients' characteristics at baseline are summarized in Table 1. Patients' characteristics were as follows: median age, 62 years (range, 24–78 years); PS 0/1/2, 39/12/1; primary tumor +/-, 33/19; and regimen S-1/S-1 with cisplatin/paclitaxel, 5/26/21. Thirty-five patients had diffuse-type histology (67.3%). Seventeen patients (32.7%) had intestinal type. Among 52 patients, the best response rates were 28.8% (complete response [CR]/ partial response [PR]/stable disease [SD]/progressive disease [PD]: 0/15/19/18). Of 31 patients treated with the S-1-based regimen (S-1 alone or S-1/cisplatin [CDDP]) assessable for response, we observed 14 PR (45.2%), 11 patients (35.5%) with SD, and six patients (19.4%) with PD during treatment. The overall response rate was 45.2%. On the other hand, of 21 patients treated with the weekly paclitaxel regimen assessable for response, we observed one PR (4.8%), eight patients (38.1%) with SD, and 12 patients (57.1%) with progression of disease during treatment, for an overall response rate (RR) of 4.8% (Table 2).

Table 1. Patient demographics

Demographic	Number or median (range)
Median age (range)	62 (24–78)
Male/female	44/8
PS: 0/1/2	39/12/1
S1-based/PAC regimen	31/21
Line: 1st/2nd	34/18
Histopathology: diffuse/intestinal type	35/17
Primary tumor: +/-	33/19
Sites of metastasis: +/-	
Liver	24/28
Lung	3/49
Bone	1/51
Peritoneum	22/30
Lymph node	37/15

Table 2 Objective response

rubic L.	objective response	
	S1-based regimen (31)	PAC (21)
	S1 alone (5), S1/CDDP (26)	Weekly PAC (21)
	1st line (31)	1st line (3), 2nd line (18)
CR	0	0
PR	14	1
SD	11	8
PD	6	12

CDDP, cisplatin; CR, complete response; PAC, paclitaxel; PD, progressive disease; PR, partial response; SD, stable disease.

Stratification according to CTC levels. To select a level of circulating tumor cells that most clearly distinguished patients with a response of chemotherapy, thresholds of 1 to 88 cells for 2week point were systematically correlated with PFS for 26 of the 30 patients in the training set. The median PFS among patients with levels above or below each threshold differed at the level of one circulating tumor cell per 7.5 mL of blood, and reached a plateau at approximately four cells per 7.5 mL of blood. At the latter level, the Cox proportional hazards ratio signifying the difference between slow and rapid progression of disease also reached a plateau. Thus, a cut-off of four circulating tumor cells per 7.5 mL of blood was chosen to distinguish patients. (12) The Kaplan–Meier circulating tumor-cell counts were available at a 2-week point for 26 of the thirty patients in the training set and for 21 of the 22 patients in the validation set. Neither PFS nor OS was significantly different in the two sets (data not shown). Because the two sets of data were nearly identical, they were combined for the estimation of PFS and OS for the entire population.

CTCs and imaging to assess response to therapy. Thirty-four (65.4%) of 52 patients were classified as having non-progressive disease (non-PD), with 24 of these patients (46.2%) having <4 CTCs and 10 patients (19.2%) having ≥4 CTCs before the initiation of therapy. Ten (19.2%) of 52 patients were classified as having PD, with 11 of these patients (21.2%) having <4 CTCs and seven patients (13.4%) having ≥4 CTCs before the initiation of therapy. The difference between the clinical responses and CTC levels were not significant. In contrast, 33 (64.7%) of 51 patients were classified as having non-PD, with 33 of these patients (64.7%) having <4 CTCs and no patients (0%) having ≥4 CTCs at 2 weeks. Eighteen (35.3%) of 51 patients were classified as having PD, with 11 of these patients (21.6%) having <4 CTCs and seven patients (13.7%) having ≥4 CTCs at 2 weeks. The difference between the clinical responses and CTC levels was highly significant. (P = 0.001, Fisher's exact test). Thirtytwo (64%) of 48 patients were classified as having non-PD, with 31 of these patients (64.6%) having <4 CTCs and one patient (2.0%) having ≥4 CTCs at 4 weeks. Sixteen (33.3%) of 48 patients were classified as having PD, with eight of these patients (16.7%) having <4 CTCs and eight patients (16.7%) having ≥4 CTCs at 4 weeks. The difference between the clinical responses and CTC levels were highly significant (P < 0.001, Fisher's exact test) (Table 3).

Analysis of PFS according to CTC level. Figure 1 shows the Kaplan–Meier plots for prediction of PFS using the baseline CTC counts (Fig. 1a), at 2 weeks (Fig. 1b), and at 4 weeks (Fig. 1c). Seventeen of the patients (32.7%) had ≥4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. These patients had no significantly different PFS compared with that of patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median PFS (1.4 months; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.2–1.6) than the median PFS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (4.9 months; 95% CI, 4.0–5.8) (P<0.001) (Fig. 1b). Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median

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Table 3. CTCs and correlation with response assessment by imaging

	Non-PD				PD			
	No. of patients	CTCs <4 (%)	CTCs ≥4 (%)	No. of patients	CTCs <4 (%)	CTCs ≥4 (%)	P-values	
Baseline	34	24 (46.2)	10 (19.2)	18	11 (21.2)	7 (13.4)	0.544	
2 week	33	33 (64.7)	0 (0)	18	11 (21.6)	7 (13.7)	0.001	
4 week	32	31 (64.6)	1 (2.0)	16	8 (16.7)	8 (16.7)	< 0.001	

CTCs, circulating tumor cells; PD, progressive disease.

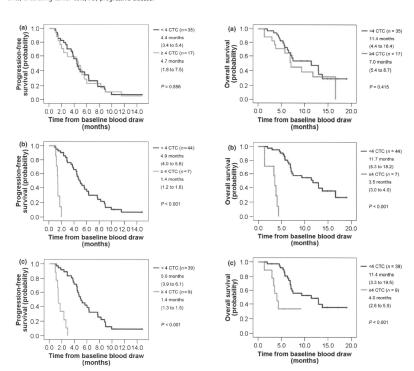


Fig. 1. Kaplan–Meier plots of progression-free survival (PFS) in advanced gastric cancer patients with less than four circulating tumor cells (CTCs) or  $\geq$ 4 CTCs at baseline (a), 2 weeks (b), and 4 weeks (c).

Fig. 2. Kaplan–Meier plots of overall survival (OS) in advanced gastric cancer patients with less than four circulating tumor cells (CTCs) or  $\geq$ 4 CTCs at baseline (a), 2 weeks (b), and 4 weeks (c).

PFS (1.4 months; 95% CI, 1.3–1.5) than the median PFS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (5.0 months; 95% CI, 3.9–6.1) (P < 0.001) (Fig. 1c). With the S-1-based regimen, 10 patients had ≥4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. These patients had no significantly different PFS compared with 21 patients with <4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median PFS (1.2 months) than the

median PFS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (6.0 months; 95% CI, 4.3–7.7) (P < 0.001). Patients with 24 CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median PFS (2.3 months; 95% CI, 0.7–3.9) than the median PFS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (6.3 months; 95% CI, 3.0–3.0) (P <0.001). With the paclitaxel regimen, seven patients had 24 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. These patients had no significantly different PFS compared with 14

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Cancer Sci | April 2010 | vol. 101 | no. 4 | 1069 © 2010 Japanese Cancer Association patients with <4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. Patients with 24 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median PFS (1.4 months; 95% CI, 1.4–1.5) than the median PFS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (4.3 months; 95% CI, 3.5–5.2) (P < 0.001). Patients with 24 CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median PFS (1.4 months; 95% CI, 1.0–1.8) than the median PFS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (4.4 months; 95% CI, 3.6–5.3) (P < 0.001).

Analysis of OS according to CTC level. Figure 2 shows the Kaplan-Meier plots for prediction of OS using baseline CTC counts (Fig. 2a), at 2 weeks (Fig. 2b), and at 4 weeks (Fig. 2c). Seventeen of the patients (32.7%) with ≥4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline had no significant different OS compared with patients with <4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median OS (3.5 months; 95% CI, 3.0-4.0) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (11.7 months; 95% CI, 5.3-18.2) (P < 0.001) (Fig. 2b). Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median OS (4.0 months; 95% CI, 2.6-5.5) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (11.4 months; 95% CI, 3.3-19.5) (P=0.001) (Fig. 2c). With the S-1 based regimen, 10 patients had  $\geq$ 4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. These patients had no significant different OS compared with 21 patients with <4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median OS (1.3 months) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (13.8 months; 95% CI, 9.4–18.2) (P < 0.001). Patients with  $\geq 4$  CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median OS (4.0 months; 95% CI, 2.3-5.7) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (>11.7 months) (P = 0.031). With the paclitaxel regimen, seven patients had  $\ge 4$  CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. These patients had no significant different OS compared with 14 patients with <4 CTCs per 7.5 mL of blood at baseline. Patients with ≥4 CTCs at the 2-week point had a shorter median OS (3.5 months; 95% CI, 3.1–4.0) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 2 weeks (6.5 months; 95% CI, 5.9–7.2) (P < 0.001). Patients with  $\geq$ 4 CTCs at the 4-week point had a shorter median OS (3.5 months; 95% CI, 2.3–4.7) than the median OS of <4 CTCs at 4 weeks (6.5 months; 95% CI, 5.5–7.5) (P = 0.013).

Univariate and multivariate analysis of predictors of PFS and Os. Univariate and multivariate Cox proportional hazards regression was performed to assess the association between factors of interest and PFS or OS. In univariate analysis, PS, treatment regimen, line of chemotherapy, and CTC levels (cut-off, 4) at 2 and 4 weeks predicted PFS and OS (Table 4). In order to evaluate the independent predictive effect of chemotherapy, multivariate Cox regression analysis was carried out (Table 5). CTC levels at 2 and 4 weeks were the strongest predictors.

#### Discussion

The CellSearch system is designed to enrich and enumerate CTCs from peripheral blood. Furthermore, it is the first system to validate the clinical use of CTCs in patients with advanced gastric cancer. Our results show that the system is a suitable tool for assessment of CTCs in these patients, enabling reliable detection of CTCs in whole blood.

Approaches for isolation of CTCs in a research setting range from enrichment of tumor cells using density-gradient centrifugation (13-15) and flow cytometry (16.77) CTC number as quantified by the CellSearch methodology (18-21) has been shown to have prognostic significance, and post-therapy decreases and increases in CTC number are associated with a superior and inferior survival, respectively, in patients with breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer. In this study, a finding of <4 CTCs in 7.5 mL of peripheral blood at 2 and 4 weeks after initiation of chemotherapy was associated with significantly longer PFS and OS as compared with these patients with ≥4 CTCs in 7.5 mL of peripheral blood. The results of this analysis demonstrated that the presence of four or more CTCs in 7.5 mL of blood before initiation of chemotherapy is not associated with PFS and OS. But the levels of CTCs at 2 and 4 weeks after initiation of chemotherapy are predictive of treatment efficacy, PFS,

Table 4. Univariate Cox regression analysis of independent parameters for prediction of PFS and OS

Parameter			PFS				OS			
	No. of patients	HR	95% CI	P-values	χ²	HR	95% CI	P-values	χ²	
ECOG, 2 vs 1 vs 0	52	1.817	1.010-3.268	0.046	0.042	2.795	1.416-5.516	0.003	0.002	
Treatment regimen	52	0.422	0.225-0.792	0.007	0.006	0.239	0.106-0.538	0.001	< 0.001	
Line of therapy	52	3.155	1.577-6.311	0.001	0.001	4.527	2.031-10.088	< 0.001	< 0.001	
CTCs at the 2nd week	51	22.633	6.214-82.429	< 0.001	< 0.001	42.796	8.382-218.515	< 0.001	< 0.001	
CTCs at the 4th week	48	15.947	5.380-47.271	< 0.001	< 0.001	4.699	1.751-12.609	0.002	0.001	

Cl, confidence interval; CTCs, circulating tumor cells; ECOG, Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group; HR, hazard ratio; OS, overall survival; PFS, progression-free survival.

Table 5. Multivariate Cox regression analysis for prediction of PFS and OS

	PFS			OS				
Parameter	No. of patients	HR	95% CI	P-values	No. of patients	HR	95% CI	P-values
No. of patients	51				51			
Line of therapy, 1st vs 2nd		0.463	0.219-0.977	0.043		0.307	0.129-0.731	0.008
Lymph node metastasis		0.458	0.214-0.980	0.044				
CTCs at the 2nd week		0.049	0.012-0.199	< 0.001		0.037	0.007-0.191	< 0.001
Model $\gamma^2$			< 0.001				< 0.001	
No. of patients	48				48			
Line of therapy, 1st vs 2nd		0.412	0.192-0.880	0.022		0.217	0.089-0.504	< 0.001
CTCs at the 4th week		0.082	0.027-0.224	< 0.001		0.216	0.077-0.607	0.004
Model χ <sup>2</sup>			<0.001				<0.001	

CI, confidence interval; CTCs, circulating tumor cells; HR, hazard ratio; OS, overall survival; PFS, progression-free survival.

and OS. The presence of at least four CTCs at 2 and 4 weeks is a strong independent prognostic factor for inferior PFS and OS. These data demonstrate that CTC measurement may be a useful biomarker for monitoring response to therapy in AGC.

Outcomes are extremely poor in patients with ≥4 CTCs at 2 and 4 weeks, with the median OS ranging from 2 to 5 months. These data suggest the value of this technology in the identification of chemotherapy-resistant patients who could benefit from early treatment change and/or more investigational. Further study should prospectively address whether a change of treatment based on ≥4 CTCs at 2 or 4 weeks after initiation of chemotherapy early in the course of treatment will result in improvement in OS. CTC levels drawn at 2 and 4 weeks, before typical imaging intervals, may have the potential to suggest treatment choices and spare unnecessary toxicity by suggesting that an early change in therapy is warranted. Because the CellSearch system has not been approved in Japan, the price of one sample costs about ¥80 000 as in the case of the extra laboratory in the clinical trial. Several prospective trials led to the FDA approval of CTC counts for monitoring of patients with breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer. We expect CTC counts

for monitoring of patients with gastric, breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer to be approved in Japan.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the independent predictive value of CTCs for patients initiating chemotherapy for AGC. The data obtained in this clinical trial of the CellSearch system were for enumeration of CTCs in AGC. Our study was not designed to assess whether a change in therapy based on ≥4 CTCs is beneficial. However, clinical trials to explore this hypothesis are warranted.

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### Disclosure Statement

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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# Phase I study of inotuzumab ozogamicin (CMC-544) in Japanese patients with follicular lymphoma pretreated with rituximab-based therapy

Michinori Ogura,<sup>1,5</sup> Kensei Tobinai,<sup>2</sup> Kiyohiko Hatake,<sup>3</sup> Toshiki Uchida,<sup>1</sup> Masanobu Kasai,<sup>1</sup> Takashi Oyama,<sup>1</sup> Tatsuya Suzuki,<sup>1</sup> Yukio Kobayashi,<sup>2</sup> Takashi Watanabe,<sup>2</sup> Teruhisa Azuma,<sup>2</sup> Masakazu Mori,<sup>2</sup> Yasuhito Terui,<sup>3</sup> Masahiro Yokoyama,<sup>3</sup> Yuko Mishima,<sup>3</sup> Shunji Takahashi,<sup>3</sup> Chiho Ono<sup>4</sup> and Junko Ohata<sup>4</sup>

Department of Hematology and Oncology, Nagoya Daini Red Cross Hospital, Nagoya; <sup>2</sup>Hematology and Stem Cell Transplantation Division, National Cancer Center Hospital, Tokyo; <sup>3</sup>Department of Hematology, Cancer Institute Hospital, Tokyo; <sup>4</sup>Medical Research, Wyeth Research, Tokyo, Japan

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Inotuzumab ozogamicin (CMC-544), an antibody-targeted chemotherapeutic agent composed of an anti-CD22 antibody conjugated to calicheamicin, a potent cytotoxic antibiotic, specifically targets the CD22 antigen present in >90% of B-lymphoid malignancies, rendering it useful for treating patients with B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma (B-NHL). This phase I study evaluated the safety, tolerability, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics of inotuzumab ozogamicin in Japanese patients. Eligible patients had relapsed or refractory CD22-positive B-NHL without major organ dysfunction. Inotuzumab ozogamicin was administered intravenously once every 28 days (dose escalation: 1.3 and 1.8 mg/m2). All 13 patients had follicular lymphoma, were previously treated with . ≥1 rituximab-alone or rituximab-containing chemotherapy, and were enrolled into two dose cohorts (1.3 mg/m², three patients; 1.8 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, 10 patients). No patient had dose-limiting toxicities, and the maximum tolerated dose, previously determined in non-Japanese patients (1.8 mg/m2), was confirmed. Drug-related adverse events (AEs) included thrombocytopenia (100%), leukopenia (92%), lymphopenia (85%), neutropenia (85%), elevated AST (85%), anorexia (85%), and nausea (77%). Grade 3/4 drug-related AEs in ≥15% patients were thrombocytopenia (54%), lymphopenia (31%), neutropenia (31%), and leukopenia (15%). The AUC and  $C_{max}$  of inotuzumab ozogamicin increased dose-dependently with pharmacokinetic profiles similar to non-Japanese. Seven patients had complete response (CR, 54%) including unconfirmed CR, four patients had partial response (31%), and two patients had stable disease (15%). The overall response rate was 85% (11/13). Inotuzumab ozogamicin was well tolerated at doses up to 1.8 mg/m<sup>2</sup> and showed preliminary evidence of activity in relapsed or refractory follicular lymphoma pretreated with rituximab-containing therapy, warranting further investigations. This trial was registered in ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT00717925). (Cancer Sci 2010; 101; 1840-1845)

he successful use of monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) in the treatment of human diseases has been growing steadily in the past decade. Rituximab, a human-mouse chimeric anti-CD20, unconjugated antibody, was approved in 1997 in the USA as the first mAb for antilymphoma therapy. It is now most commonly used in combination with chemotherapy for first and subsequent lines of therapy in B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma (B-NHL), such as diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) and follicular lymphoma (FL).(1-However, a subgroup of patients does not respond, and early relapses occur in patients with initial response, thus indicating rituximab resistance. This indicates a clear unmet need to

explore alternative antibodies non-cross resistant to rituximab as a therapy for B-NHL. One alternative is inotuzumab ozogamicin (CMC-544), an antibody-targeted chemotherapy agent that specifically targets CD22. Inotuzumab ozogamicin is composed of a recombinant engineered humanized IgG4 anti-CD22 antibody G544 conjugated to calicheamicin, a potent cytotoxic antibiotic derivative.<sup>(7)</sup>

CD22 is a potential therapeutic target for B-NHL because it is expressed in >90% of B-NHL cells. (8) In addition, CD22 is expressed in mature B cells, but not in their precursor or memory B cells, which may potentially minimize the adverse effect of CD22-targeted treatment on long-term immune function. Moreover, when antibodies bind to the CD22 antigen, the antigen is internalized, that is it is not shed into the extracellular

Both inotuzumab ozogamicin and unconjugated calicheamicin showed potent cytotoxic activity *in vitro* against CD22-positive B cells in preclinical studies. (7) In addition, the unconjugated form of inotuzumab ozogamicin, G544, did not demonstrate any antitumor activity in preclinical studies. (7) Inotuzumab ozogamicin inhibited the growth and the establishment of B-cell lymphomas and induced the regression of large B-cell lymphomas in mouse xenograft models. Furthermore, in preclinical models of disseminated B-NHL in which rituximab was ineffective, treatment with inotuzumab ozogamicin lead to a significant tumor regression and an improvement in survival.<sup>(10)</sup> This potent cytotoxic activity in preclinical murine models of B-cell lymphomas in which rituximab had failed as a therapeutic agent<sup>(1,f)</sup> establishes support for the clinical investigation of inotuzumab ozogamicin for the treatment of CD22-positive B-NHL.

A phase I dose escalation study was previously conducted in the USA and the European Union in patients with relapsed or refractory B-NHL (both FL and DLBCL). (12) In this study, intravenous administration of the drug demonstrated clinical activity in patients with relapsed or refractory B-NHL with clinically manageable thrombocytopenia as the main toxicity. The maximum tolerated dose (MTD) in this non-Japanese patient population was determined to be 1.8 mg/m<sup>2</sup> once every

The objectives of the present study were to assess the safety, toleralility, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics of inotuzumab ozogamicin in Japanese patients with relapsed or refractory B-NHL who had received prior treatment with rituximab.

To whom correspondence should be addressed.

E-mail: mi-ogura@naa.att.ne.jp

Tresent affiliations: Teruhisa Azuma, Internal Medicine, Tenri Hospital, Tenri,

Junko Ohata, Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan.

### Materials and Methods

Study design. The present trial was an open-label multicenter phase I study in which inotuzumab ozogamicin was administered intravenously (IV) as a single agent to patients with CD22-positive B-NHL once every 28 days (±2 days, 1 cycle) for at least four doses provided that the drug was well tolerated with no evidence of progressive disease (PD). The protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board of each participating institution, and it conformed to the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki in 1995 (as revised in Tokyo, 2004). All the patients gave written informed consent.

Patients. Patients were eligible for enrollment if they had a diagnosis of CD22-positive B-NHL, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) classification, version 3. Patients were included if they had progressed after at least one prior chemotherapy regimen for indolent B-NHL, or after one or two chemotherapy regiments, which included anthracyline or anthraquinone for aggressive B-NHL. Other inclusion criteria were age ≥20 and <75 years, a performance status of one or better on the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Scale, life expectancy  $\ge 12$  weeks, an absolute neutrophil count (ANC)  $\ge 1.5 \times 10^9/L$  and platelet count  $\ge 100 \times 10^9/L$ , serum creatinine ≤1.5 × upper limit of normal (ULN), urine protein-to-creatinine ratio of ≤0.2, total bilirubin ≤1.5 × ULN, aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and alanine aminotransferase (ALT) ≤2.5 × ULN, and at least one measurable lesion ≥1.5 cm in at least one dimension by computer tomography (CT) at inclusion, in an area of no prior radiation therapy, or clear progression in an area that had been previously irradiated.

Dose escalation and toxicity criteria. Dose escalation decisions were based on the toxicities observed in the first 28 days after the administration of the first dose. Patients (three and 10 patients per cohort) could receive more than the four planned doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin if they experienced at least stable disease and tolerated treatment. The starting dose was 1.3 mg/m<sup>2</sup> administered IV once every 28 days, and dose escalation was performed up to the MTD of 1.8 mg/m2 administered IV once every 28 days. Both the starting dose and the MTD were based on information from a previous clinical trial. (12) The dose escalation in subsequent cohorts was based on the toxicity assessed in the first 28 days after the first dose. Dose escalation continued until three or more patients in a cohort experienced a

dose-limiting toxicity (DLT).

A DLT was defined as any of the following that were at least possibly related to inotuzumab ozogamicin during the first 28 days after the first dose: any grade 3 or 4 (National Cancer Institute Common Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events [NCI CTC], version 3.0) nonhematologic toxicity (except grade 3 alopecia, nausea, or vomiting unless the patient was receiving optimal medical therapy); febrile neutropenia (grade 4 ANC ≥3-day duration and temperature ≥38.0°C); grade 4 ANC ≥7-day duration; grade 4 thrombocytopenia ≥3-day duration, or any bleeding episode requiring platelet transfusion; or delayed recovery (to grade 1 or baseline, except alopecia or grade 2 nausea or vomiting unless the patient was receiving optimal medical therapy) from a toxicity related to inotuzumab ozogamicin that delayed the initiation of the next dose by more than 3 weeks. Patients who experienced a DLT had the subsequent doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin reduced by one dose level, the maximum allowed dose reduction per patient. Patients who experienced toxicities other than DLTs could receive additional doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin at the same dose if they met the following criteria: recoveries to ≤grade 1 (nonhematologic), or baseline toxicity except alopecia; ANC ≥1.5 × 10<sup>9</sup>/L; platelet count ≥75 × 10<sup>9</sup>/L; serum creatinine ≤1.5 × ULN, and urine protein-to-creatinine ratio of ≤0.2. The maximum number of doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin was 8 for 1.3 mg/m<sup>2</sup> and 7 for 1.8 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

Pharmacokinetics. Timed blood samples for pharmacokinetic analysis were collected for cycles 1-3 at 0 (pre-dose), 1, 4 (cycles 1 and 3 only), 24, 48, 120, 168, 216, 336, and 504 h relative to the start of infusion for each dosing period and at predose only for cycle 4. If the patient received four doses, then the sample had to be drawn before cycle 5. The serum concentrations of inotuzumab ozogamicin and total calicheamicin were determined using a validated enzyme-linked immunosorbent

The noncompartmental pharmacokinetic parameters of inotuzumab ozogamicin and total calicheamicin were estimated using the WinNonlin (version 4.1) program. The parameters which were determined included the following: end-of-infusion peak concentration (Cmax), area under the concentration-time curve (AUC), clearance (CL), apparent steady-state volume of distribution (Vss), and the terminal-phase elimination half-life

Safety. An AE was considered to be treatment emergent if its onset occurred between the first and the last dose, plus a lag of 28 days provided the following criteria were met: (i) the AE was not present before the start of the first dose and did not occur in the patient as a chronic condition; (ii) the AE was present before the start of the first dose or was part of the patient's medical history, but the severity or frequency increased after the start of the first dose.

Efficacy. Patients were evaluable for efficacy if they received ≥2 doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin, had a baseline tumor CT scan and had undergone at least one tumor assessment for response after baseline assessment. In addition, patients with documented PD prior to receiving two doses of inotuzumab ozogamicin were considered evaluable for efficacy. Tumor response was assessed according to the International Workshop Response Criteria for Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. (14) The overall response rate (ORR) was defined as the percentage of patients meeting the criteria for complete response (CR), unconfirmed complete response (CRu), or partial response (PR). Stable disease (SD) was measured from the start of the treatment until the criteria for PD were met, taking as the reference the smallest measurements recorded since the initiation of treatment.

Statistical analysis. The sample size for this study was determined by clinical rather than statistical considerations. The probabilities of detecting at least one AE of grade ≥3 with six patients receiving inotuzumab ozogamicin were 0.469, 0.822, and 0.984 when the true rates were 0.10, 0.25, and 0.50, respectively. The probabilities of detecting at least one such event in 10 patients receiving treatment were 0.651, 0.944, and 0.999, respectively.

With cohort sizes of three to six patients, if the true underlying rates of DLT were 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, and 0.5, there would be a 0.985, 0.905, 0.754, 0.558, and 0.359 chance, respectively, of escalating to the next full dose. The ORR was estimated using an exact confidence interval (CI) approach.

Patients. From March 2007 to July 2008, a total of 13 patients were enrolled in the study; three patients enrolled in the 1.3 mg/m<sup>2</sup> dose cohort and 10 patients in the 1.8 mg/m<sup>2</sup> dose cohort. The summary of demographic and other baseline characteristics for all patients is presented in Table 1. There were seven males and six females, all with a median age of 49 years (range, 43-72 years). All 13 patients had FL. The median number of prior treatment regimens was 1 (range, 1-13). All 13 patients had previous rituximab treatment (monotherapy or in combination with chemotherapy). Patients were categorized in low (38.5%), intermediate (42%), and high (15%) risk groups according to Follicular Lymphoma International Prognostic Index (FLIPI). (15)

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Table 1. Demographic and baseline characteristics, safety population

	Inotuzum	ab ozogamicin	treatment
Characteristics	1.3 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (n = 3)	1.8 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (n = 10)	Total (n = 13)
Median age, years (range)	57 (51–66)	48 (43-72)	49 (43–72)
Sex, n (%)			
Female	2 (67)	4 (40)	6 (46)
Male	1 (33)	6 (60)	7 (54)
ECOG performance status, n	(%)		
0	3 (100)	10 (100)	13 (100)
Primary diagnosis, n (%)			
Follicular lymphoma	3 (100)	10 (100)	13 (100)
FLIPI risk groups, n (%)			
Low	2 (67)	3 (30)	5 (39)
Intermediate	1 (33)	5 (50)	6 (46)
High	0	2 (20)	2 (15)
Number of prior chemo-/im	munotherapy r	egimens, n (%)	
1	2 (67)	6 (60)	8 (62)
2	0	0	0
3	0	1 (10)	1 (8)
≥4	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)

ECOG, Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group; FLIPI, Follicular Lymphoma International Prognostic Index.

Safety. In dose escalation, no patients had DLTs, and the MTD previously determined in non-Japanese patients (I.8 mg/m²) was confirmed for Japanese patients in this study. The most common drug-related AEs were thrombocytopenia (100% patients); leukopenia (92%); neutropenia, elevated AST, anorexia, and lymphopenia (85%, each); elevated blood fibrinogen (69%); nausea (77%); elevated ALT, elevated alkaline phosphatase, and decreased hemoglobin (54%, each); malaise, elevated blood bilirubin, and headache (46%, each; Table 2(a)).

A summary of drug-related grade 3 or higher AEs is shown in Table 2(b). At least one drug-related grade ≥3 AEs was reported in nine of the 13 (69%) patients. Drug-related grade ≥3 AEs were thrombocytopenia (7 patients, 54%), lymphopenia and neutropenia (4, 31% each), leukopenia (2, 15%), and elevated blood bilirubin and hypokalemia (1, 8% each). Although neither lymphopenia nor leukopenia was reported for the 1.3 mg/m² cohort, the overall incidence of drug-related grade ≥3 AEs was comparable between the two cohorts. There were no patients who died during the study.

A total of four patients experienced dose delays, one (33%) patient in the 1.3 mg/m² cohort and three (30%) patients in the 1.8 mg/m² cohort (Table 3). Each had one delay. The AEs leading to dose delays were neutropenia (3 patients, 23%) and thrombocytopenia (2, 15%). Two (20%) patients in the 1.8 mg/m² cohort had one dose reduction (Table 4). Adverse events (AEs) leading to the dose reduction were thrombocytopenia and pleural effusion (1 patient, 8% each). There were no dose reductions in the 1.3 mg/m² cohort.

Seven patients discontinued treatment due to AEs: one patient because of grade 2 rash, one patient because of grade 2 urticaria, and five patients because of AEs that required treatment delays of >3 weeks (two patients with prolonged thrombocytopenia, one patient with prolonged thrombocytopenia and neutropenia, one patient with neutropenia and elevated alkaline phosphatase, and one patient with prolonged neutropenia and elevated total bilirubin).

Pharmacokinetics. Pharmacokinetic data after the first dosing were obtained for all 13 patients. The two patients who received 1.8 mg/m² inottzumab ozogamicin and had a dose reduction after cycle 1 were excluded from pharmacokinetic assessments for cycle 2 and thereafter. The mean ± SD serum concentrations of inottzumab ozogamicin and total calicheamicin versus time

Table 2. Inotuzumab ozogamicin-related adverse events, (a) all grades in  $\geq$ 4 patients (b) grades  $\geq$ 3

	Inotuzumab	ozogamicin 1	treatment
Adverse event, n (%)	1.3 mg/m <sup>2</sup>	1.8 mg/m <sup>2</sup>	Total
	(n = 3)	(n = 10)	(n = 13)
(a) all grades in ≥4 patients			
Thrombocytopenia	3 (100)	10 (100)	13 (100)
Leukopenia	3 (100)	9 (90)	12 (92)
Lymphopenia	3 (100)	8 (80)	11 (85)
Neutropenia	3 (100)	8 (80)	11 (85)
Aspartate aminotransferase	3 (100)	8 (80)	11 (85)
increased			
Anorexia	3 (100)	8 (80)	11 (85)
Nausea	3 (100)	7 (70)	10 (77)
Blood fibrinogen increased	2 (67)	7 (70)	9 (69)
Alanine aminotransferase	1 (33)	6 (60)	7 (54)
increased			
Blood alkaline phosphatase	1 (33)	6 (60)	7 (54)
increased			
Hemoglobin decreased	1 (33)	6 (60)	7 (54)
Malaise	3 (100)	3 (30)	6 (46)
Blood bilirubin increased	2 (67)	4 (40)	6 (46)
Headache	2 (67)	4 (40)	6 (46)
Constipation	1 (33)	4 (40)	5 (39)
Influenza	1 (33)	4 (40)	5 (39)
Blood lactate dehydrogenase increased	2 (67)	3 (30)	5 (39)
Fibrin D dimer increased	0	5 (50)	5 (39)
Hyperglycemia	1 (33)	4 (40)	5 (39)
Stomach discomfort	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)
Fatigue	0	4 (40)	4 (31)
Hypercholesterolemia	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)
Hypokalemia	2 (67)	2 (20)	4 (31)
Somnolence	2 (67)	2 (20)	4 (31)
Epistaxis	0	4 (40)	4 (31)
Rash	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)
(b) grades ≥3			
Thrombocytopenia	2 (67)	5 (50)	7 (54)
Lymphopenia	0	4 (40)	4 (31)
Neutropenia	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)
Leukopenia	0	2 (20)	2 (15)
Blood bilirubin increased	1 (33)	0	1 (8)
Hypokalemia	1 (33)	0	1 (8)

Table 3. Number (%) of patients reporting adverse events leading to dose delays, safety population

	Inotuzumab ozogamicin treatment					
Parameter, n (%)	1.3 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (n = 3)	1.8 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (n = 10)	Total (n = 13)			
No. of patients with dose delay	rs					
No dose delays	2 (67)	7 (70)	9 (69)			
One or more dose delays	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)			
No. of dose delays per patient*						
One	1 (100)	3 (100)	4 (31)			
Any adverse event leading to	1 (33)	3 (30)	4 (31)			
dose delay†						
Neutropenia	1 (33)	2 (20)	3 (23)			
Thrombocytopenia	1 (33)	1 (10)	2 (15)			

<sup>\*</sup>Percentages are based on number of patients with ≥1 inotuzumab ozogamicin dose delay in each treatment group. †Totals at a higher level are not necessarily the sum of those at the lower levels since a patient was able to report two or more different adverse events within the higher level category.