

Glossary

Adjuvant therapy

Treatment administered in combination with a primary treatment, usually surgery, to assist in the removal of cancer.

Angiogenesis

The formation of new blood vessels.

Angiogenesis inhibitor

A therapeutic substance that may prevent the formation of blood vessels. In anti-cancer therapy, an angiogenesis inhibitor may prevent the growth of blood vessels from surrounding tissue to a solid tumor.

Anti-angiogenesis

Prevention of the growth of new blood vessels.

Breast cancer

Cancer that forms in tissues of the breast.

Cell cycle inhibitor

Potential anti-cancer agent that interferes with the cell division process.

Cell proliferation

An increase in the number of cells as a result of cell growth and cell division.

Chemotherapy

The use of chemicals to treat or control cancer.

Clinical trial

A scientific study in which drugs, or combinations of drugs, are evaluated in humans. There are three main types, or Phases, of clinical trials.

Colorectal or colon cancer

Cancer that forms in the tissues of the colon, the longest part of the large intestine.

Cytokine

A protein that stimulates white blood cells to search and destroy bacteria, virally infected cells, and cancer cells.

Disease progression

Cancer that continues to grow or spread.

Efficacy

How well a drug treats an illness.

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)

The most common type of liver cancer.

Interleukin-2 (IL-2)

A protein in the human body that stimulates the immune system to do a variety of things, including the production of cancer-destroying white blood cells.

JAK2 (janus kinase 2) inhibitor

A potential anti-cancer agent that may play a role in targeting cell proliferation and in the treatment of solid tumors and other diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis or psoriasis.

Kinase

An enzyme that plays a major role in transmitting the chemical signals required for critical cellular processes.

Malignant

Cancerous.

Melanoma

A form of cancer that begins in the cells that make the pigment melanin, most commonly found in the skin, but can also begin in other pigmented tissues, such as in the eye or in the intestines.

Metastasis, metastases, metastasize

Metastases, the plural form of the word metastasis, are cancerous cells that have detached from the original tumor, and had metastasized (spread) to other locations in the body, forming new tumors in those places.

Mutation

A change in a gene that can occur randomly or that can be deliberately caused in the laboratory by scientists.

Neo-adjuvant therapy

Therapy given before definitive treatment (i.e. before surgery) to optimize the curative potential of surgery.

Nexavar

A novel, oral multiple kinase inhibitor that targets proteins involved in both tumor cell proliferation and angiogenesis

Non-small cell lung cancer

A group of lung cancers that includes squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma and large cell carcinoma among others.

Ovarian cancer

Cancer that forms in tissues of the ovary, the female reproductive gland.

Ovarian epithelial cancer

Cancer that occurs in the cells on the surface of the ovary, the female reproductive gland.

Overall response rate

The percentage of patients who had complete response (100% tumor shrinkage) to a treatment plus the percentage of patients who reach a defined degree of tumor shrinkage on drug treatment compared to the size of their tumors before treatment. Two different standard definition criteria are the WHO and RECIST criteria.

Overall survival rate

The percentage of people in a study or treatment group who are alive for a certain period of time after they are treated for a disease, such as cancer.

Pathway

A system of proteins that work together. For example, a pathway could include protein A which sends a signal to protein B, which sends a signal to protein C, and so on until a biological effect occurs.

Phase I

A clinical trial that usually tests a new treatment in a small number of patients in order to determine the safety and appropriate dose of the new treatment.

Phase 2

A clinical trial that usually tests a new treatment in a small number of patients who have the illness that the drug is designed to treat. Phase II trials measure efficacy as well as safety.

Phase 3

A clinical trial that definitively tests a new treatment, usually in a large number of patients who have the illness that the drug is designed to treat. Phase 3 trials measure efficacy as well as safety as compared to the standard of care.

Placebo

An inactive treatment that looks the same as, and is administered the same way as, an active treatment being tested to compare the effects of the active treatment to the effects of the placebo on human subjects.

Placebo-controlled

A clinical study in which some patients receive a placebo.

Primary myelofibrosis

A progressive, chronic disease in which the bone marrow is replaced by fibrous tissue. Also called agnogenic myeloid metaplasia, chronic idiopathic myelofibrosis, idiopathic myelofibrosis, and myelosclerosis with myeloid metaplasia.

Progression

Worsening of a cancer. The opposite of regression.

Progression Free Survival

The length of time during and after treatment in which a patient is living with a disease that does not get worse.

Receptor

A molecule on the surface of a cell. Most receptors are types of proteins.

Regimen

A treatment plan, sometimes called "protocol." A chemotherapy regimen for a cancer patient describes the type of drug, the doses, how the treatment is administered, and how often the treatment is administered to the patient.

Regression

Reduction in the size of a tumor. The opposite of progression. Regression can be partial or it can be complete (meaning that the tumor completely disappears from a particular place in the body).

Renal Cell Carcinoma (RCC)

The most common type of kidney cancer.

Systemic

Throughout the body, as opposed to "local." A drug administered systemically travels throughout the whole body via the bloodstream.

Therapeutic

Something that treats disease or injury.

Therapy (therapies)

Treatment(s).

Thymidylate synthase inhibitor

An anti-cancer agent which inhibits the enzyme Thymidylate synthase and prevents tumor cell growth. High levels of thymidylate synthase may be involved in how certain types of cancer form and respond to treatment.

Toxicity

The quality of being toxic or poisonous, causing damage to liver, kidneys, heart, or other organs. Another name for some types of side effects.

Tumor

An abnormal growth. A malignant tumor is a cancer that can spread to other parts of the body; a benign tumor is not cancerous and does not spread to other parts of the body.

Well-tolerated

A way to describe a treatment that has few or no serious side effects.

Sources include the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society.