

Symposium Highlights

The First International Conference on Lung Cancer Prevention and Treatment

(Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait, November 13-15, 2000)

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The First International Conference on Lung Cancer-Prevention and Treatment was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait, from November 13-15, 2000. The conference was organized by the Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention in cooperation with the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) Geneva and sponsored by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), Ministry of Public Health, Kuwait Airways and Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS). The conference was widely advertised on the website of UICC. Additional information, and advertisements appeared in the local dailies. The local radio and television stations broadcasted interviews and discussions on the theme and the importance of the conference for the general public.

Speakers/Participants:

The following international speakers were invited:

1. Dr. Albert Hirsch (UICC representative), France
2. Dr. Stephen Lam, Canada
3. Dr. Alan G. Casson, Canada
4. Dr. Zednek Mechl, Czech Republic
5. Dr. Jameel Ahmed, Bahrain

A number of experts from the Gulf, France, Egypt, Malaysia, Jordan, Iran, Canada, Czech Republic and the Indian subcontinent shared their knowledge and experience in lung cancer disease and discussed its causes, prevention and treatment. Nine experts from the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University and Ministry of Public Health presented their work in various scientific sessions. Approximately 100 participants registered for the conference including academicians, practicing physicians and cancer specialists.

Scientific Program:

The scientific program was divided into nine sessions. At the end of each session, a comprehensive panel discussion was held on the topics covered by the speakers. A lung cancer protocol workshop was held at the end of the 9th session comprising of Drs. Khaled A. Al-Saleh, Adnan Abul, Nasser Behbehani, Shafeeka Al-Awadi and Adel Khader Ayed.

Synopsis of Scientific Sessions:

Dr. Khaled A. Al-Saleh, head of Lung, Head & Neck Cancer Unit, Kuwait Cancer Control Centre presented an overview of spinal cord compression in non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). He stressed that spinal cord compression is one of the most important emerging situations in the cancer field and urgent treatment either by surgery and/or radiotherapy may prevent neurological deficit from spinal cord compression. He further presented detailed data to compare the result between surgery and radiotherapy in the management of spinal cord compression.

Dr. Nasser Behbehani from the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University outlined the comparison between young and old patients with bronchogenic carcinoma, their clinical characteristics, histological type, and stage at diagnosis. He concluded that smoking remains the major risk factor for lung cancer in both young and old patients.

Dr. Shahadat Hossein from Bangladesh outlined an analysis of a multi-component smoking cessation programme as experienced at the Bangladesh Cancer Society.

Dr. Shafeeka Al-Awadi highlighted the controversies in the management of stage III Alung cancer. The management of stage III locally advanced non-small-cell lung cancer was reviewed.

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She concluded that there is now abundant data to favor the use of combined modality treatment. The trials are on going. Cisplatin remains the golden chemotherapy for treatment and added that she favored combination with Gemzar or Taxol.

Dr. Adel Khader Ayed from the Chest Hospital presented a lecture about staging of non-small cell lung cancer. He highlighted the clinical importance and the roll of management in each stage.

Dr. Shahzad Sharifzadeh from Iran spoke on missrate of lung cancer on the chest radiograph and how it affects the delay in diagnosing the disease.

Dr. Omar Kasule from Malaysia presented a paper on change of knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) regarding lung cancer prevention after an intervention program in secondary school students. He recommended that cancer education modules should be introduced in secondary school level before the teenagers learn risky behavior that is more difficult to change after.

Dr. Jameel Ahmed from Salmaniya Medical Centre, State of Bahrain, presented a study on lung cancer treatment mechanism carried out in Bahrain.

Dr. Wajeeh Al-Husseini from the Arab Republic of Egypt presented a paper on the use of laser therapy in malignant tracheobronchial lesions.

Dr. Mechl Zednek from Czech Republic presented a paper on new perspectives in the chemotherapy of NSCLC and highlighted the role of cisplatin in the therapy of NSCLC and various use of other new drugs activity in the therapy as well. He summarized that the contribution on new drugs in the therapy of advanced NSCLC is significant. The prognosis for the majority of patients with advanced NSCLC remains poor and more effective therapeutic approaches are needed. New focuses on optimal use of new, more active cytotoxic agents as well as targeting of important biological entities are coming but the new drugs demonstrated unequivocally better results than cisplatin or cisplatin-based combination. Currently, there is no clear standard chemotherapy for advanced disease and he recommend the standard combination of paclitaxel + carboplatin or the three drug combination i.e. paclitaxel-gemcitabin-cisplatin.

Dr. Saleh Lyri of Kuwait highlighted the interaction between physiological and psychological factors in lung cancer.

Dr. Stephen Lam from the University of British Columbia, Canada, presented the following research papers: (1) Early detection of lung cancer, (2) Primary and secondary prevention of lung cancer, (3) Endobronchial therapy in the management of lung

cancer and (4) Lung cancer revisited: New opportunities with new technologies.

Professor Albert Hirsch, representative of the International Union Against Cancer (UICC), Geneva, Switzerland (based in France) and keynote speaker spoke on Tobacco Control in France – Ten years after the Adoption of the Evin Law.

Finally, a lung cancer protocol workshop was held comprising Drs. Khaled A. Al-Saleh, Adnan Abul, Nasser Behbehani, Shafeeka Al-Awadi and Adel Khader Ayed.

The above conference was successful with full participation by all those present.

Recommendations:

1. Lung cancer is still far behind in achieving complete cure. Public awareness of the hazards of cigarette smoking is the most effective preventive measure and this should be undertaken vigorously.
2. We recommend that the school curriculum should include subjects related to cancer prevention, so that the young children are well educated of the dangers of smoking.
3. Exchange of information with different centers/associations around the world and update the registry of lung cancer may highlight the problems. Quality of life is showing more important attention in management of cancer and cancer therapy doctors should give patients more attention.
4. Group support plays an important role and should be encouraged particularly from psychiatry and spiritual point of view.
5. Group management is achieving the best results in treatment of lung cancer.
6. Hospices are essential services for taking care of terminally ill cancer patients.
7. The NGO's effort plays an important part in preventing lung cancer and supporting research.

Conclusion:

Lung cancer is the most challenging area of cancer and the cure rate has not shown much improvement over the past few decades. More international meetings should be hosted and research should be encouraged, particularly international efforts. Cooperation as a means to find causative agents of lung cancer (initiation or promotion) or to follow the most effective and updated protocol to give best response in the form of control and quality of life is essential.