New Cancer Management Guidelines for Care of People with Kaposi Sarcoma

Brand-new information from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network maps out best practices for treating patients with the AIDS-related cancer.

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The National Comprehensive Cancer Network® has created a new resource for patients living with HIV who develop AIDS-related Kaposi sarcoma. This newly-released NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) brings the total library to 68 NCCN Guidelines®. Additional NCCN Guidelines, devoted to overall cancer care for people living with HIV, will be released in early 2018.

"These new NCCN Guidelines for AIDS-related Kaposi sarcoma are a first step to ensuring that people living with HIV receive appropriate and equitable cancer treatment," said Gita Suneja, MD, Duke Cancer Institute. Dr. Suneja is Co-Chair of the NCCN Guidelines Panel for AIDS-Related Kaposi Sarcoma. "NCCN recognizes the urgent need for cancer management guidelines in this special population of patients. The Guidelines Panel is comprised of experts from NCCN Member Institutions across the United States, including oncologists, HIV specialists, pharmacists, and patient advocates. In compiling these Guidelines, we learned a tremendous amount from each other and hope this will benefit clinicians and, most-importantly, patients living with HIV."

The incidence of AIDS-related Kaposi sarcoma in people living with HIV has fallen dramatically in the United States in recent years thanks to advancements in HIV treatments.[1] It is considered an AIDS-defining illness and was famously featured in the movie Philadelphia. The disease can be limited to skin lesions, which tend to respond well to treatment, but when more advanced it can be difficult to treat. There are also other types of Kaposi sarcoma that affect HIV-negative individuals; treatment recommendations for those cancers will be included in future updates of these guidelines.

NCCN Guidelines Panel Co-Chair Erin Reid, MD, of UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center further explained: "The NCCN Guidelines for AIDS-Related Kaposi Sarcoma fill an important gap in guidance for care of this rare but important malignancy. Although incidences have decreased, the disease remains one of the most common cancers occurring in persons living with HIV—not only in patients with newly diagnosed HIV infection or inadequate suppression of HIV, but also in people who otherwise appear to have maximum viral suppression and 'normal' CD4+ T cell counts."

NCCN made the decision to create a panel devoted to AIDS-related Kaposi sarcoma while working with the African Cancer Coalition, American Cancer Society, and Clinton Health Access Initiative to create the NCCN Harmonized Guidelines™ for Sub-Saharan Africa.

“While the medical community has made monumental strides toward reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS, there are still more than a million people living with HIV in the United States today,”[2] explained Robert W. Carlson, MD, chief executive officer, NCCN. “That patient population is then diagnosed with cancer at a 50-percent higher rate than people in the general population.[3] Our work with the African Cancer Coalition began as a way to help them with some of the particular health issues in their home countries. In the end, it also resulted in us finding new ways to expand our library of Guidelines for patients here at home.”

Source: National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Follow NCCN on Twitter @NCCNnews and Facebook at National.Comprehensive.Cancer.Network.

1. Robbins HA, Shiels MS, Pfeiffer RM, Engels EA. Epidemiologic contributions to recent cancer trends among HIV-infected people in the United States. AIDS 2014;28:881-890. Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24300545.↩

2. U.S. Statistics. HIV.gov; 2017. Available at https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics.↩

3. Robbins HA, Pfeiffer RM, Shiels MS, et al. Excess cancers among HIV-infected people in the United States. J Natl Cancer Inst 2015;107. Available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25663691.↩

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