Clinical Pharmacy Guide: Cancer Drug Treatment Assessment and Review

BC Cancer
Division of Pharmacy
Pharmacy Educators
Communities Oncology Network

BRITISH COLUMBIA CANCER
www.bccancer.bc.ca

Introduction
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This manual was originally published in 2003 in a bound format, which is now out of print. Please use this online version.

Pharmacy Guide to BC Cancer Chemotherapy Protocols – The Clinical Interpretation and Application of Treatment Protocol Summaries

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide recommendations to pharmacists in British Columbia for the clinical assessment and review of cancer drug treatment orders received within their practices. Cancer drug treatment involves drugs which inhibit or prevent the proliferation of cancers, including chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, immunotherapy, and targeted therapy. This applies to both oral and parenteral dosage forms. Oral chemotherapy can be as toxic as parenteral chemotherapy and therefore requires the same assessment and review process. It is hoped that pharmacists will use this guide to gain a better understanding of BC Cancer’s cancer drug treatment protocols and recommendations, thereby enhancing the quality of pharmaceutical care provided to their patients. Hospitals may need to adapt these guidelines based on the requirements of their patients and institutional policies.

These guidelines are based on the following BC Cancer Policies [Systemic Therapy – Policies and Procedures]:

1. III-10 Systemic Therapy Treatment Delivery Process
   This policy outlines the responsibilities of physicians, pharmacists, and nurses for the safe prescribing, preparation, dispensing and administration of cancer drugs.

2. III-40 Systemic Therapy Treatments
   This policy explains the rationale for the treatment protocols and defines terms used by the Provincial Systemic Therapy Program.

3. III-45 Compassionate Access Program

4. Regional policies and procedures used by the BC Cancer pharmacies.
Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this guide, the pharmacist should be able to:

- Interpret BC Cancer treatment protocols
- Determine the eligibility of a drug for reimbursement by BC Cancer
- Assess cancer drug treatment orders for suitability
- Interpret laboratory results and adjust doses accordingly
- Select appropriate drug delivery methods for cancer drugs
- Identify the toxicities of cancer drugs and discuss options to minimize toxicity
- Review a patient’s medication profile for possible interactions with cancer drugs
- Define the term “benefit status” and identify benefit and non-benefit supportive care medications

The guide begins by providing a didactic section with pertinent information used by the pharmacist to clinically assess cancer drug treatment orders. The pharmacist may further enhance his/her knowledge by working through case studies.