

Final Toxicity Analysis of a Phase III study evaluating the role of Docetaxel in the adjuvant therapy of breast cancer patients with extensive lymph node involvement

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Background

Taxane based adjuvant chemotherapy has been established as standard treatment in node-positive breast cancer. However, toxicity concerns of combined anthracycline-taxane regimens have compromised its acceptance. We analyzed the toxicity of a sequential anthracycline-taxane chemotherapy compared to a conventional anthracycline regimen.

Patients and Methods

ADEBAR was a multicenter phase III trial (n=1502) to evaluate whether breast cancer (BC) pts with > 3 axillary lymph metastases benefit from a sequential anthracycline-docetaxel regimen (E90C-D: 4 cycles epirubicin [E] 90 mg/m² plus cyclophosphamide [C] 600 mg/m² q21 days followed by 4 cycles docetaxel [D] 100mg/m² q21 days) compared to dose-intensive anthracycline-containing polychemotherapy (FE120C: 6 cycles E 60 mg/m² d 1+8, 5-FU 500mg/m² d 1+8 and C 75 mg/m² d 1-14, q4 weeks). We present the final toxicity analysis.

Results

Complete toxicity data were available from 1,338 pts. Treatment was stopped prematurely in 3.7% of the pts in the E90C-D arm and in 8.0% in the FE120C arm due to toxicity (p=0.0009). Antibiotic treatment was given in 10.4% (E90C-D) vs. 19.7% (FE120C), G-CSF support in 39.2% vs 61.4 % and erythropoietin stimulation in 8.7% vs. 20.0%, respectively (p<0.0001).

Hematologic and non-hematological grade 3-4 toxicities are summarized in the table. In summary, haematological toxicity (leucopenia, infection thrombocytopenia, anemia) was significantly greater in the FE120C-arm. Skin toxicity, edema and vomiting occurred significantly more often in pts treated with E90C-D.

Conclusions

Different toxicity profiles given, overall toxicity of a sequential anthracycline-taxane regimen is not necessarily greater than that of an adequately dosed anthracycline chemotherapy, which needed to be interrupted more frequently due to toxicity.

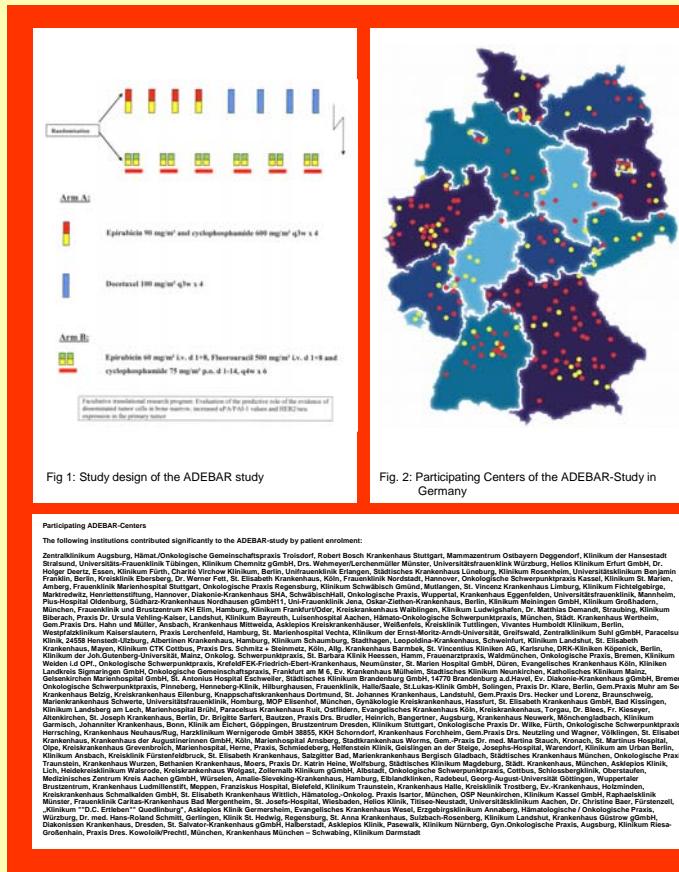


Fig 1: Study design of the ADEBAR study

Fig 2: Participating Centers of the ADEBAR-Study in Germany

Hematologic Toxicity

Tox. Event (NCI-grade 3 or 4)	Group	EC-DOC [%]	FEC [%]	Rel. risk EC-doc / FEC	p-value (Chi-square test)
Neutropenia	all	59.2	61.1	0.90	0.49
	Cycle 1-3	62.5	68.4	0.91	0.27
	Cycle 4-6	57.9	58.0	0.99	1.0
Anemia	all	2.7	15.4	0.18	<0.001
	Cycle 1-3	7.9	16.6	0.47	0.031
	Cycle 4-6	1.5	14.6	0.10	<0.001
Thrombocytopenia	all	2.0	23.9	0.08	<0.001
	Cycle 1-3	7.2	18.0	0.40	0.009
	Cycle 4-6	0.6	25.3	0.02	<0.001
Leukopenia	all	72.0	79.8	0.90	0.001
	Cycle 1-3	55.8	81.6	0.68	<0.001
	Cycle 4-6	76.9	79.2	0.97	0.43
Infections	all	9.4	15.5	0.61	0.001
	Cycle 1-3	15.3	29.2	0.52	0.004
	Cycle 4-6	7.8	9.6	0.82	0.36

Non-Hematologic Toxicity

Tox. Event (NCI-grade 3 or 4)	Group	EC-DOC [%]	FEC [%]	Rel. risk EC-doc / FEC	p-value (Chi-square test)
Nausea	all	5.1	4.6	1.11	0.70
	Cycle 1-3	6.4	8.5	0.75	0.39
	Cycle 4-6	3.8	2.8	1.37	0.52
Vomiting	all	6.2	2.8	2.22	0.003
	Cycle 1-3	12.9	5.6	2.32	0.014
	Cycle 4-6	1.5	1.9	0.82	0.79
Mucositis	all	8.9	8.6	1.03	0.92
	Cycle 1-3	6.0	10.8	0.55	0.16
	Cycle 4-6	9.6	7.8	1.24	0.36
Edema	all	2.6	0.3	8.29	0.0007
	Cycle 1-3	4.6	2.3	1.97	0.65
	Cycle 4-6	2.4	0	-	0.0001
Skin	all	4.2	0.8	5.46	0.0001
	Cycle 1-3	1.3	2.6	0.49	0.65
	Cycle 4-6	4.6	0.4	12.25	<0.0001
Diarrhoea	all	2.7	2.3	1.17	0.75
	Cycle 1-3	0.0	8.1	-	0.0061
	Cycle 4-6	3.1	0.9	3.26	0.0183

Supportive Treatment

Group	EC-DOC [%]	FEC [%]
i.v. antibiotic treatment	All	10.4
		19.7
G-CSF	All	39.2
		61.4
Erythropoietin	All	8.7
		20.0