

“TEMOPORFIN-MEDIATED PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY FOR HEAD AND NECK CANCER. A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF A NEW THERAPEUTIC APPROACH”

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Temoporfin (Foscan) mediated photodynamic therapy is an alternative palliative treatment option for recurrent tumors of the head and neck. Is a minimally invasive technique which can be repeated in the same site and easily performed also under local anesthesia. Foscan is administered by intravenous injection and, after a drug-light interval of 4 days, the target area is illuminated with non-thermal laser light at a wavelength of 652 nm. Activation of the photosensitizer by the laser light creates reactive oxygen species causing cell damage and necrosis of the target tissue. The dead tissue is shed over a period of several weeks and a new epithelium is established over the underlying undamaged normal tissue. A photosensitivity of about three weeks is the major collateral effect of the treatment. Chemotherapy, ionising radiation or surgery does not preclude the use of PDT and all these approaches can be used in a patient before or after he has received PDT. Functional and cosmetic results are excellent, without impact on the patients' performance status. Temoporfin-PDT seems to be very useful, also with a curative intention, in pretreated patients with small local recurrences or second primary tumors, especially in those with poor Karnofsky index contraindicating demolitive surgery under general anesthesia. We present now the preliminary results of 15 cases treated in the last two years in the ENT Departments of the Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria Careggi di Firenze and of the Fatebenefratelli Hospital in Rome. Nevertheless the short follow-up and the heterogeneity of the treated cases, our preliminary results are encouraging and suggest us to enlarge the casistic, following the experience published of several clinical studies in which an overall complete response rate of about 87,8% is reported.