

Multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of bone metastases: Osteo-Oncology Center, a new organizational model

Toni Ibrahim, Emanuela Flamini, Laura Fabbri, Patrizia Serra, Laura Mercatali, Rossana Ricci, Emanuele Sacanna, Maria Cristina Falasconi, Roberto Casadei, Riccardo Galassi, Massimo Giannini, Oscar Bazzocchi, Filippo Calzolari, Roberta Nunziatini, Michele Gaudio, Marco Maltoni, and Dino Amadori

Osteo-Oncology Center, Istituto Romagnolo Scientifico per lo Studio e la Cura dei Tumori (IRST), Meldola, Italy

ABSTRACT

Aims and background. Bone metastases are responsible for high morbidity in cancer patients. The frequency of pain and other serious complications associated with such metastases depends on the site and type of lesions and preventive therapy. The present paper aims to inform the scientific community about a new organizational health care model specifically designed for patients with bone metastases, in the hope of stimulating the creation of similar initiatives whose goals are to decrease the high morbidity of this pathology, reduce the frequency of complications, limit psychophysical distress of patients, and improve quality of life.

Methods. In January 2005, an Osteo-Oncology Center was opened in our institute to provide multidisciplinary care (19 specialists involved) for patients with bone metastases, to train physicians, and to conduct research in the field.

Results. In its first three years of activity, 601 multidisciplinary team consultations were made and a total of 425 patients were seen. The most frequent primary tumor site was the lung in males and the breast in females. Upon presentation at the Center, 79% of patients reported experiencing a level of pain (median pain intensity, 3.69) that interfered with normal daily activities. An anonymous questionnaire was also completed on the quality of the service provided: 75% of patients were very satisfied, 23% were satisfied, 1% responded "I don't know", and only 1% expressed dissatisfaction.

Conclusions. Our preliminary results confirm the usefulness of a multidisciplinary center for the management of patients with bone metastases, especially in terms of decreasing psychophysical suffering.

Key words: bone metastases, multidisciplinary treatment, osteo-oncology, quality of life.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank Gráinne Tierney for editing the manuscript and Alessandra Pizzigati for invaluable administrative assistance. Supported by the Istituto Scientifico Romagnolo per lo Studio e la Cura dei Tumori (IRST), Meldola, Italy.

Correspondence to: Dino Amadori MD, IRST, via Piero Maroncelli 40, 47014 Meldola (FC), Italy.
Tel 39-0543-739252;
fax 39-0543-739249;
e-mail g.tierney@irst.emr.it

Received November 18, 2008;
accepted January 13, 2009.