Afatinib Therapy

Practical management of adverse events with an oral agent for non-small cell lung cancer treatment

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BACKGROUND: Afatinib is an oral, irreversible ErbB family blocker indicated for first-line treatment of metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) in patients with non-resistant epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) mutations. Afatinib is also approved for the treatment of metastatic squamous NSCLC following progression on platinum-based chemotherapy. Common afatinib-associated toxicities include gastrointestinal and dermatologic events, which can be dose limiting.

OBJECTIVES: In this review, the authors describe clinical trial experiences with afatinib, as well as best practices and practical approaches to the management of afatinib-associated adverse events in EGFR mutation-positive NSCLC.

METHODS: Safety and tolerability data from phase 3 trials of afatinib were reviewed, together with real-life experiences from the authors’ clinical practices.

FINDINGS: Patient education, combined with early assessment and effective management of afatinib-related adverse events as well as dose-reduction strategies, allows patients to continue treatment and maximize the clinical benefits of afatinib.

KEYWORDS
afatinib; non-small cell lung cancer; adverse events; dose reduction

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