Immunotherapy vs. Chemotherapy: Which treatment optimizes prognosis and quality of life for cancer patients?

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BACKGROUND

According to the American Cancer Society the risk of developing cancer for males is 43.31% and 37.81% for females in the United States. With risk rates like these it’s important to not only act preventatively but to research optimal treatments. Most cancers have been treated traditionally with chemotherapies but research has observed that although remission is a possibility with this treatment it can also be very harmful to the individual causing many adverse side effects. As the world of medicine continues to evolve and become more personalized, the science has lead researchers into the field of immuno-oncology.

Immuno-oncology is based on the concept that re-engineering the individual’s own immune system will then enable the body’s defense mechanisms to specifically attack cancerous cells while causing less harm to healthy cells. Immunotherapies may have the potential to improve the cancer patient’s quality of life while undergoing treatment. The prognosis of patients may also positively improve but more research needs to be conducted in order to truly uncover the path cancer treatment will follow in the future.

OBJECTIVES

- Compare severity of side effects between chemotherapy and immunotherapies in order to determine quality of life during the treatment process for cancer patients.
- Compare the prognosis rates of the different treatments.
- Compare the above findings to combination chemo-immunotherapies.

CONCLUSION

After conducting a narrative review of new and old literature it was concluded that much more research needs to be done in order to accurately gauge the difference in side effects between chemotherapy, immunotherapy and combination chemo-immunotherapy when treating cancer. Our research also showed that more attention needs to be put on what specific types of immunotherapies work best for each specific cancer. The prognosis of patients was also of concern, as no clear research was found making the comparison between these cancer treatments. It was concluded that to accurately examine quality of life during treatment and prognosis more attention needs to be placed on this field of research.