

Letter to the Editor

A comment about the use of Boswellia-based cream for prevention of adjuvant radiotherapy skin damage in mammary carcinoma

Dear Editor,

The most frequent complication of breast conserving approach is radiodermatitis. It represents a local untoward side effect that can delay or halt the radiotherapy, besides causing a distress to the woman. The possible consequence is an uncorrected approach with an increase of ipsilateral breast recurrence¹, also in older breast cancer patients².

An agent, that could be applied topically during radiotherapy to prevent and to treat toxicity without negative side effects, could be an important advantage in breast cancer patients³. A substance with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects could protect skin against free radical-induced damages.

The recent report by the Togni's group have shown that a Boswellia-based cream reduces use of topical corticosteroids and is able to reduce the grade of erythema and the skin superficial symptoms, being well tolerated by the patients⁴.

It is very important to improve compliance to a standard therapy, until it will be possible to identify patients who will benefit from therapy, excluding patients at high risk of severe toxicity⁵.

This study introduce a very interesting approach to evaluate objectively erythema: computer-assisted analysis of breast area.

In all previous studies, a clinician's direct evaluation using a visual scale or other technique remains the gold standard to assess erythema. However, no report is been published of agreement between clinicians for grading radiation erythema severity; therefore, outcome measures used in clinical studies can be unreliable or imprecise.

A computer assisted analysis can provide an objective and reproducible measurement of breast redness, only if a standardized procedure to obtain breast photographs is applied.

This method, implemented and refined, can deliver an outcome measure to standardize diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of skin radiation toxicity. Only a validated and reproducible assessment can deliver development of preventive or therapeutic agents.

Conflict of Interest

The Authors declare that there are no conflict of interests.

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F. Fiorica

Department of Radiation Oncology, University Hospital "S. Anna", Ferrara, Italy