



Ljiljana VUČKOVIĆ-DEKIĆ

INSTITUTE FOR ONCOLOGY AND RADIOLOGY OF SERBIA,
BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

Sir,

In this volume, I have reported about the multiple authorship in three oncologic journals, including *Archive of Oncology*. Recently, the multiauthorship has attracted much attention of scientologists. This is mainly due to the fact that authorship is abused: in papers with seven and more authors, at least one authorship is undeserved (1). This interesting aspect is disregarded in my analysis, since I cannot assess the relevant data.

The multiple authorship of articles is now the norm (2). Some journals calculated that, during forty years (1950-1988), the number of authorships has increased exponentially, while there was only a linear increase of the number of papers published at the same time (3). The real problem in such situation is the irresponsible

Address correspondence to:

Dr Ljiljana Vučković-Dekić, Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia, Pasterova 14, POB 228, 11000 Belgrade, Yugoslavia

The manuscript was received: 25. 04. 2000.

Accepted for publication: 08. 05. 2000.

Robert SCHAEFER

FLEISHMAN-HILLARD GERMANY GMBH, INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS, FRANFURKT AM MAIN, GERMANY

Dear Editor in Chief,

The rule of oxygen in cancer therapy is the pivot of the Symposium "Evolving issues in oncology: What is the optimal hemoglobin level?" held in Seville, Spain from September 7-9, 2000 and attended by more than 800 world-renowned oncologist. The most vital issues of this educational event are new findings of how oxygen can improve cancer patients' quality of life and their therapy outcomes.

Almost 80% of cancer patients suffer from fatigue, chronic tiredness and exhaustion, frequently related to anemia and caused either by the tumor itself or its treatment.

Unfortunately, patients are rarely treated for fatigue. Managing anemia, e.g. by providing erythropoietin, can alleviate this symptom and the person affected can experience more

Address correspondence to:

Mr Robert Schaefer, Fleishman-Hillard Germany GmbH, International Communications, Hanauer Landstrasse 182c, D-60314 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

The manuscript was received: 07. 09. 2000.

Accepted for publication: 08. 09. 2000.

Multiauthorship - what is it, and does it matter?

authorship, rather than multiauthorship (4). A later study (1) showed that these two problems were closely related: the percentage of authors contributing only 5% or less increases from 5% in the papers with two authors to 100% in those signed by the seven and more authors.

Since the percentage of undeserved, and therefore irresponsible, authorship is directly proportional to the number of coauthors (1), several journals of high reputation formally described the criteria for authorship and responsibility and made them known in their Instructions to the Authors. These criteria are clearly defined in so-called Vancouver rules (5); however, although these rules are widely accepted and incorporated in editorial policy of all international journals, most authors are unaware of them (6,7). The irresponsible (honorary, gratuitous) authorship is now considered highly unethical and therefore inadmissible; that is the reason the Editorial boards of scientific journals should make it clear by incorporating them in their guidelines for authors, and by request for coauthors to sign a statement that the manuscript has been read and approved by all of them. The *Archive of Oncology* had already done the latter; I feel it should be highly desirable also to reprint the Vancouver rules in extenso in some future issue of the *Archives of*

Oncology. The journal *Srpski arhiv* has published the translated rules (8), which was welcomed by the large audience.

REFERENCES

1. Slone RM. Coauthors' contributions to major papers published in the *AJR*: frequency of undeserved coauthorship. *Amer J Radiol* 1996;167:571-79.
2. Gaeta TJ. Authorship: "Law" and order. *Acad Emerg Med* 1999;6:297-301.
3. Chew FS. Coauthorship in radiology journals. *Amer J Radiol* 1988;150:23-6.
4. Huth EJ. Guidelines on authorship of medical papers. *Ann Intern Med* 1986;104:269-74.
5. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *J Amer Med Assoc* 1997;277:927-34.
6. Hoen WP, Walvoort HC, Overbeke JPM. What are the factors determining authorship and the order of the authors' names? A study among authors of the Netherlands *Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* (Dutch Journal of Medicine). *J Amer Med Assoc* 1998;280:217-8.
7. Vučković-Dekić Lj. Da li je autorstvo na značajnoj prekretnici? (*Pismo uredništvu*) *Kontakt* 1999;7:33.
8. Internacionalni komitet urednika biomedicinskih časopisa. Jednoobrazni zahtevi za rukopise koji se podnose medicinskim časopisima. *Srpski Arhiv* 1999;127:89-9.

Oxygen and cancer - how do they fit together?

quality of life. Current studies suggest increasing the supply of oxygen also significantly improves the therapy results of a number of tumor entities. The significance of the topic is also underlined by the fact that this symposium has been accredited for Continuing Medical Education by the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO).

Please find attached a copy of the related press release. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We would be happy if you see a chance to cover the news in your media and most grateful if you send us a copy of this article.

Oxygen and cancer-how do they fit together?

An educational symposium on improving quality of life and treatment of cancer patients

Seville, September 7th 2000 - The presence of oxygen is essential for the life of most organisms including the human being, as it is required to metabolize sugar into energy. Lack of oxygen can lead to the development of organic dysfunctions resulting in severe diseases, seen in patients suffering cardiac problems. Another disease where insufficient oxygen supply is common but receives less recognition is cancer. An exciting educational symposium

is now taking place in Seville, Spain, from September 7-9 2000. more than 800 world-renowned oncologists will attend to discuss the existing links between oxygen and cancer and give a comprehensive overview. Due to the importance of the topic, this symposium has been accredited for Continuing Medical Education by the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO).

One of the main topics of the symposium is the fatigue syndrome resulting from tumor- or therapy-induced anemia. Nearly 80 percent of all cancer patients suffer from fatigue symptoms which can be physical (tiredness, lack of energy, weakness) but also psychological (depression, cognitive dysfunctions)(1,2). "It is possible to help many of these patients by increasing their hemoglobin levels via blood transfusions or by using hematopoietic growth factors like erythropoietin", says Dr. Peter Harper, Consultant Physician and Medical Oncologist, Guy's & St. Thomas' Hospital, London, and co-chairman of the symposium, "but in contrast to the patients, many physicians don't realize fatigue as a real problem. It is therefore imperative to make doctors more aware of what fatigue means to their patients".

The fatigue problem becomes even more prominent with the use of dose-intensified chemotherapy regimes which improve therapy results, but can also lead to severe damage of



erythrocyte production. As shown in several studies, this problem can be successfully circumvented by the preventional application of erythropoietin (3,4). The use of this substance was therefore integrated into the design of a number of new clinical trials, for example on lung and breast cancer.

Another reason for correcting anemia with erythropoietin is the possible improvement of therapy outcome by increasing the oxygenation status of tumors via improved hemoglobin levels. It has been known for many years that hypoxic tumor areas are more resistant against radiation compared to well oxygenated parts of the tumor (5).

Additionally, it could be shown for some types of tumors (e.g. head and neck tumors, cervical cancer) that low hemoglobin levels are a negative prognostic factor (6,7). "The improvement of cancer therapy by supplying the tumor with more oxygen is an interesting new approach in oncology", says Prof. Mario Dicato, oncologist, Centre Hospitalier de Luxemburg, and co-chairman of the symposium. "The first preliminary results are encouraging, but there is still a lot of work to be done".

The symposium is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Ortho Biotech and Janssen-Cilag.

REFERENCES

1. Vogeizang NJ et al. *Semin Hematol* 1997;34:4-12.
2. Curt GA. *The Oncologist* 2000;5:9-12.
3. Del Mastro L et al. *J Clin Oncol* 1997;15:2715-21.
4. Dunphy FR et al. *Cancer* 1999; 86:1362-67.
5. Grau C. Overgaard J. In: Molls M, Vaupel P, eds. *Blood Perfusion and Microenvironment of Human Tumors*. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1998.
6. Glaser C et al. *Proc of ASCO* 1999;Vol. 18. Abstract 1543.
7. Grogan M et al. The importance of hemoglobin levels during radiotherapy for carcinoma of the cervix. *Cancer* 1999;86:1528-36.

Rajko IGIĆ

COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL, DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY, CHICAGO, IL, USA

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

It is my belief that many readers would gladly read the article "A Languid Sort of Suicide" by Mario Vargas Llosa, a Peruvian

Address correspondence to:

Prof. Dr. Rajko Igić, Cook County Hospital, Department of Anesthesiology, Room 427 DX, 637 S. Wood Street, Chicago, IL 60612 3789, USA

The manuscript was received: 17. 09. 2000.

Accepted for publication: 22. 09. 2000..

novelist, published in a longer form in the *The New York Times*, September 1, 2000.

"The obligation of the state, in a democratic society, is to make citizens aware that tobacco is harmful, so that they can decide with adequate knowledge whether to smoke. This, indeed, is what is happening in most Western countries. If a person in the United States, France, Spain or Italy smokes, it is not out of ignorance of what this means for health, but because he does not wish to know, or does not care.

Commit suicide by degrees is a choice that ought to figure on the list of basic human rights. This is the only possible approach if we wish to

preserve the freedom of the individual, which must include the freedom to opt not only for what is beneficial to him, but also for what harms or injures.

And so, though at first sight, the decision of juries to impose astronomical penalties on the tobacco companies may seem a progressive measure, it is not so. What sort of freedom would it be that allowed us only to choose what is good for us?"

Passage from the article

We would like to present to you the first promising results available at the Ortho Biotech/Janssen-Cilag medical media briefing:

NEW ASPECTS FOR THE USE OF ERYTHROPOIETIN IN ONCOLOGY

in 25th Congress of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)
CCH Hamburg, Germany, October 13, 2000

* * *

We would also like to draw your attention to the adjacent

SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM OF OXYGEN, HEMOGLOBIN AND TUMOR TREATMENT

Radisson SAS, Hamburg, Germany, October 13, 2000