

Criteria for Determining Appropriateness of Palliative Radiation/Chemotherapy

Radiation/chemotherapy that does not affect tumor growth will generally not improve physical symptoms caused by the tumor.

Information needed from the consulting oncologist to help a patient decide on the value of chemotherapy in advanced cancer:

1. What is the response rate of the proposed radiation/chemotherapy?
(Response rate data quoted to patients comes from clinical trials using good performance status and highly monitored patients; in general, the response rates for patients outside of clinical trials can be expected to be lower.)
2. What is the median duration of response of the proposed regimen?
3. What is the potential treatment burden?
4. How long must treatment be continued to determine effect?

From: Weissman, D. Fast Fact and Concepts #14: Palliative Chemotherapy, June 2000. End-of-Life Physician Education Resource Center.

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