



spotlight on health

Managing Anemia Associated With Chemotherapy Treatment

(NAPSA)—This year, an estimated 1.3 million cancer patients will undergo chemotherapy and more than two-thirds of these patients will develop anemia, a low red blood cell count. Anemia is one of the most common side effects of chemotherapy and can negatively affect patients and impact their daily activities.

“Chemotherapy attacks fast-growing cancer cells, but it can also kill normal cells like red blood cells that transport oxygen from the lungs to the body’s muscles,” said Dr. Ralph Boccia, director of clinical research, Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, Bethesda, Md. “As a result, the body’s tissues are starved of oxygen, making a patient feel short of breath, very weak, faint and tired.”

More than half of chemotherapy patients report that fatigue, a common symptom of anemia, affects their daily lives more than any other side effect, including nausea, pain and depression. Further, anemia is often undertreated, despite the availability of treatments for more than a decade.

Typically, anemia treatment takes more than two hours per visit. Now, there is a treatment option that provides added convenience from current weekly dosing. Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved every-three-week starting dosing of 500 mcg of Aranesp® (darbepoetin alfa) for the treatment of chemotherapy-induced anemia in patients with certain types of cancer. This allows physicians to synchronize anemia treatment with most chemotherapy schedules, increasing convenience for patients and caregivers by reducing the number of clinic visits and injections for anemia treatment.

“Receiving anemia treatment every three weeks on the same schedule as my chemotherapy was convenient for me and my family,” said Danielle Mannix,

Most commonly reported side effects of anemia:

- Fatigue
- Trouble breathing
- Rapid heartbeat
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Light-headedness
- Inability to concentrate
- Headache
- Inability to stay warm
- Loss of sex drive
- Pale skin

Impact*

A large cross-sectional study of more than 12,000 cancer patients from nearly 450 patient oncology sites in the United States found:

- The average time required for an anemia treatment visit was 2 hours and 16 minutes for patients and 2 hours and 48 minutes for caregivers.
- Patients reported having to cancel, alter or postpone paid time at work (24 percent), time with friends and family (60 percent), hobbies (50 percent) and vacation (49 percent) because of office visits.
- Eighty-one percent of patients reported needing help with transportation; 17 percent with coverage at work; and 79 percent with running errands because of clinic visits.

*Community Oncologist 2004



who suffered from anemia. “We had fewer visits to the doctor for anemia treatments, which gave me more time for my regular daily activities.”

Aranesp is contraindicated in patients with uncontrolled hypertension. Erythropoietic therapies may increase the risk of thrombotic events and other serious events.

If you would like more information or if you or someone you know may be suffering from chemotherapy-induced anemia, visit www.aranesp.com or speak with your health care professional for more information on available treatments.