

Invited Speaker Abstract

Official Language: English

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Title of Presentation

Impact of taste and smell training on taste disorders during chemotherapy: the TASTE trial

1. Abstract

Purpose: Two thirds of cancer patients report taste disorders during and after chemotherapy. Taste disorders impact on nutritional status which is highly relevant for treatment efficacy and overall prognosis. Improvement of taste disorder is of particular importance for cancer patients' outcomes, thus the TASTE trial was conducted to improve taste disorders with a taste and smell training.

Methods: In this trial patients undergoing chemotherapy were screened for taste disorders. Subsequently, patients were allocated based on the detection of taste disorders (≤ 8 taste strips points) to an intervention group with a taste and smell training at baseline and week 3-5 or were only followed up, if no taste disorder was detected (≥ 9 taste strips points) (non-intervention group). At baseline all patients received a nutritional counseling. The primary endpoint was the minimal clinically relevant improvement of taste strips score by 2 taste strips points in at least 50% of the patients with taste disorders.

Results: The trial included 62 patients (48 women (77%), 14 male (23%), age 54.5 ± 11.6 y) who had either gastrointestinal ($n=29$), breast ($n=31$) or lung cancer ($n=2$). Taste disorders were more frequent in gastrointestinal than in breast cancer patients. Out of 62 patients screened, 30 patients showed taste disorders. The primary endpoint was met with 92% ($n=23$ of 25) of the patients completing the intervention. In the intervention group the patients' taste significantly improved from baseline (median taste strips: 7.0 points) to week 12 (median taste strips: 10.0 points) ($p \leq 0.001$). Patients of the non-intervention group who completed the reassessment ($n=27$ of 32) experienced no change in taste perception in the 3 months follow up ($p = 0.897$).

Conclusions: Intensified nutritional counseling with taste and smell training may improve taste perception of patients undergoing chemotherapy. A confirmatory randomised trial is planned.

2. key references

"Impact of taste and smell training on taste disorders during chemotherapy – TASTE trial"
(submitted to Cancer Management and Research)

3. key messages