

Malignant mesothelioma in 2004: how advanced technology and new drugs are changing the perspectives of mesothelioma patients. Highlights from the VIIth Meeting of the International Mesothelioma Interest Group

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KEY WORDS

IMIG; GIME; malignant mesothelioma

SUMMARY

Malignant mesothelioma (MMe) is a seemingly uncommon tumour whose incidence has in fact increased steadily and progressively over the last 30 years. Indeed, an actual "epidemic" is expected in the next 20 years, with over 1300 new cases a year till 2020 at least. Despite unquestionable improvement in the diagnostic methods at our disposal and the availability of new treatment strategies, the prognosis of MMe patients remains dramatically poor. For all the above reasons, translational research is the key to success; indeed, ever increasing knowledge of the molecular mechanisms underlying MMe pathogenesis could lead (and is actually leading) to new, hopefully more active, treatment options. To foster discussion among investigators working in this field, and to exchange different viewpoints concerning the newest advances in MMe pathogenesis and treatment, the VII International Mesothelioma Interest Group (IMIG) meeting was held in Brescia (Italy) between 24 and 26 June 2004 in cooperation with the Italian Group for the Study and Therapy of MMe (GIME). The aim of this report is to summarize the most significant advances in the different disciplines applied to MMe presented and discussed during the IMIG meeting and how these advances will be changing the perspective of patients with MMe.