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[Mistletoe extracts in the therapy of malignant, hematological and lymphatic diseases--a monocentric, retrospective analysis over 16 years]

[Article in German]

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OBJECTIVE: The aim of the present investigation was to investigate potentials risks of treatment with mistletoe extracts in patients with malignant haematological and lymphatic diseases consulting the Tumour Ambulance of the Community Hospital Herdecke and to evaluate the therapeutic experiences with this treatment. **PATIENTS AND METHODS:** All 700 patients with these diseases who had been counselled at the Tumour Ambulance of Community Hospital Herdecke since the foundation of the unit were included in a retrospective questionnaire study to collect information on the course of the disease and the survival time. Therapy with mistletoe extracts had been recommended to all patients. The treatment was carried out by the patient's physician outside the hospital. For inclusion into further analysis, information on survival time and mistletoe treatment had to be available. Survival times of patients who had actually received the recommended mistletoe treatment and of patients who had not received the recommended mistletoe treatment were compared (internal comparison). Furthermore, the results were compared to those of conventionally treated patients obtained from the literature (literature comparison). **RESULTS:** Of 237 patients for whom sufficient data was available, 14 had not been treated with a mistletoe extract. The median survival time was 9.18 years among patients who had received mistletoe compared to 7.54 years among those without. Before a statistical test was carried out, the equivalent distribution of diagnosis in the 2 groups was tested. Regarding this criterion, only 205 patients treated with mistletoe extract and 9 patients not treated with mistletoe extract could be included into the statistical tests of the median survival time. The median survival time was 11.4 years (mistletoe patients) and 8.6 years (patients without mistletoe therapy). The difference was not significant. There were no cases in which mistletoe treatment was associated with deterioration. The comparison with data from the literature yielded very similar survival times among patients not treated with mistletoe extract and those included in our study. **CONCLUSION:** No indications to risks of a mistletoe therapy on progress of the disease and the survival time could be found. Therefore,

no ethical reservations should be opposed to future prospective investigations of mistletoe therapy in patients with malignant haematological diseases. Copyright 2000 S. Karger GmbH, Freiburg.

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