

Immunotherapy: an opportunity for clinical pharmacists

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Since its introduction in clinical practice, immunotherapy has represented a revolution in cancer care for patients, clinicians and pharmacists. Immune checkpoint inhibitors indeed, significantly increase overall survival and slow disease progression in several types of malignancies, representing a new treatment option for patients, a powerful weapon for oncologists, and a new approach to therapy management and collection of immune-related Adverse Events (irAEs) for clinical pharmacists. These latter are often part of the multidisciplinary team involved in the evaluation of appropriateness, especially for polytreated patients. Clinical pharmacists also play a crucial role in assessing pharmacological interactions with concomitant therapies, food intake, herbal and/or supplements, and in implementing patient-specific management of irAEs. Another aspect of fundamental importance is the promotion of patient's dedicated educational program to support immunotherapy safe, effectiveness and optimal use, especially in association therapies. In this context is important to increase patient, but also caregiver, awareness and involvement in irAEs early recognition and prompt management so as to prevent morbidity and, in some cases, mortality, thus optimizing patient adherence to therapy. An additional aspect that emerges as an opportunity for the clinical pharmacist is to implement research protocols, especially real-world study, to further investigate unique features of immunotherapeutic agents.