COVID-19 Second Wave—The Tsunami and the Collapsing Indian Health Care Scene. Is Bevacizumab Strong Enough to Hold Fort

Sumant Gupta¹ Neha Gupta² Faran Naim² Arvind Minz³

¹Department of Medical Oncology, Sarvodaya Cancer Institute, Faridabad, Haryana, India

²Department of Oncology, Sarvodaya Cancer Institute, Faridabad, Haryana, India

³Department of Internal Medicine, Sarvodaya Cancer Institute, Faridabad, Haryana, India

Address for correspondence Neha Gupta, Department of Oncology, Sarvodaya Cancer Institute, Sector 8, Faridabad 121006, Haryana, India (e-mail: drnehaguptagarg@gmail.com).

Dr Sumant Gupta

South Asian J Cancer 2021;10:48.

COVID-19 or Coronavirus disease 2019 is a worldwide ongoing pandemic devastating the whole world, and we are at present facing the second wave which is hitting us like a tsunami.¹ Although 90 percent of patients recover with home isolation but less than 10 percent of patients are afflicted with severe dyspnea caused by inflammatory pulmonary effusion or edema, leading to severe COVID-19, which further instigates pulmonary and systemic hypoxia.^{2,3}

Bevacizumab has been used in clinical oncotherapy since 2004, with considerable reliability and safety. Taken together, we designed this trial to investigate the clinical benefits of bevacizumab plus standard care for treating patients with severe COVID-19.

In a recent article in *Nature*, bevacizumab's role has been extrapolated in severe COVID-19. Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) supposedly creates hypoxia in lung tissues. Bevacizumab, through its vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) antibody expression, increases tissue permeability and reduces hypoxia.⁴ It is being used as a substitute for the scarcely available drug, tocilizumab, with proposed equal efficacy in a small phase III article from Bangladesh.⁵

Keeping these observations in mind, we retrospectively analyzed our 28 patients being treated on bevacizumab during the last 2 months to see the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on these patients, and assess the severity of the disease. The patients were called over the telephone to ascertain their well-being. A simple questionnaire was distributed to determine whether they had COVID, and if yes, whether they had hospitalization/ICU care or whether any patient succumbed to the disease.

On evaluation, out of the 28 patients interviewed, only 6 had COVID-19 infection, 4 had home isolation and were more or less asymptomatic, and 2 were admitted in the ward

with mild disease. None of the patients had severe disease or died.

Although the sample size is very small, and the hypothesis is premature, but it raises a pertinent question as to whether the drug also has a protective role in the pandemic!

COVID-19 or Coronavirus disease 2019 is a worldwide ongoing pandemic devastating the whole world, and we are at present facing the second wave which is hitting us like a tsunami.¹ Although 90 percent of patients recover with home isolation but less than 10 percent of patients are afflicted with severe dyspnea caused by inflammatory pulmonary effusion or edema, leading to severe COVID-19, which further instigates pulmonary and systemic hypoxia.^{2,3}

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

References

- 1 Parikh P. COVID-19 Pandemic: Contrast Between SAARC Countries and Western World. 2020. Available at: https://www.m3india.in/contents/editor_pick/136721/covid-19-pandemic-contrast-between-saarc. Accessed on April 12, 2020
- 2 Bhatraju PK, Ghassemieh BJ, Nichols M, et al. Covid-19 in critically ill patients in the Seattle region - case series. *N Engl J Med* 2020;382(21):2012–2022
- 3 Huang C, Wang Y, Li X, et al. Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *Lancet* 2020;395(10223):497–506
- 4 Jiaojiao Pang, Feng Xu. Efficacy and tolerability of bevacizumab in patients with severe Covid-19
- 5 Islam MA, Mazumder MA, Akhter N, et al. Extraordinary survival benefits of severe and critical patients with COVID-19 by immunomodulators: the outcome of a clinical trial in Bangladesh. *Euroasian J Hepatogastroenterol* 2020;10(2):68–75

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0041-1733319> ISSN 2278-330X

How to cite this article: Gupta S, Gupta N, Naim F, et al. COVID-19 Second Wave—The Tsunami and the Collapsing Indian Health Care Scene. Is Bevacizumab Strong Enough to Hold Fort South Asian J Cancer 2021;10(1):48.

© 2021. MedIntel Services Pvt Ltd.

This is an open access article published by Thieme under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonDerivative-NonCommercial-License, permitting copying and reproduction so long as the original work is given appropriate credit. Contents may not be used for commercial purposes, or adapted, remixed, transformed or built upon. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Thieme Medical and Scientific Publishers Private Ltd A-12, Second Floor, Sector -2, NOIDA -201301, India