

MULTICENTER COHORT STUDY

## Mistletoe Improves Tolerability Of Breast Cancer Treatment

EXETER, ENGLAND — Adjuvant treatment with mistletoe extract can increase the tolerability of conventional cancer treatment, improve patient quality of life, and lengthen tumor-free survival, Dr. Paul R. Bock reported.

In a multicenter, parallel-group, cohort study that included 1,442 patients who initially underwent surgery for early-stage breast cancer, 16% of the 710 patients who received subcutaneous injections of the proprietary formulation Iscador experienced adverse events related to their radiation, chemotherapy, or hormone treatment, compared with 54% of the 732 treated with conventional modalities alone, Dr. Bock said.

"This was a huge difference," he said at a symposium on alternative and complementary therapies which was sponsored by the universities of Exeter and Plymouth.

With a median follow-up of longer than 5 years, significant reductions were seen for the gastrointestinal, central nervous system, and skin and mucosal membrane adverse effects that typically occur with radiation and chemotherapy, Dr. Bock, of the Institute for Applied Medicine and Medical Statistics in Basel, Switzerland, reported at the meeting.

The treatment group was also superior with respect to disease symptom relief, improvement in Karnofsky index, and tumor-free survival, with an adjusted hazard ratio of 0.2, Dr. Bock said.

No significant differences were seen in the time to occurrence of metastases, however, he said.

Among patients treated with Iscador, 0.8% experienced mild systemic effects related to the injections and 17.3% reported local reactions, he said.

—Nancy Walsh