

Commonly Used Terms and Benchmarks in Clinical Studies



ADJUVANT THERAPY

An anticancer therapy that is administered after surgery to eradicate as many residual cancer cells as possible.

COMPLETE RESPONSE

Absence of cancer detectable by any available methods, such as imaging.

DURATION OF RESPONSE

Time from documentation of disease response to disease progression.

MEDIAN

A statistics term. The middle value in a set of measurements. For example, the length of time from either the date of cancer diagnosis or the start of treatment that half of the patients in a group of patients diagnosed with the disease are still alive.

NEOADJUVANT THERAPY

An anticancer therapy that is administered before surgery to reduce the tumor size.

OBJECTIVE RESPONSE RATE

Percentage of patients whose disease decreases (partial response) and/or disappears (complete response) after treatment.

OVERALL RESPONSE RATE

Proportion of patients with reduction in disease burden of a predefined amount.

OVERALL SURVIVAL

Time from start of the clinical study until death from any cause.

PLACEBO

A substance that has no therapeutic effect and is used as a control (i.e., comparison group) when testing new drugs.

PROGRESSION-FREE SURVIVAL

Time from start of the clinical study until disease progression or death.

RECURRENT OR RELAPSED CANCER

Cancer that has come back or recurred, usually after a period of time during which the cancer could not be detected.

REFRACTORY DISEASE

Cancer that does not respond to treatment. Also called resistant cancer.

RESPONSE RATE

Measurement of disease size, usually using a scan or X-ray. Typically reflected as the percentage of patients whose cancer shrinks or disappears after treatment.

STANDARD OF CARE

Treatment that is accepted by medical experts as a proper treatment for a certain type of cancer and that is widely used by health care professionals. Also called best practice, standard medical care, and standard therapy. In some randomized trials testing a new treatment, the comparison group is the standard of care treatment.

SYSTEMIC THERAPY

Any type of cancer treatment that targets the entire body, for example, chemotherapy.