BC Cancer Agency
CARE & RESEARCH

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR WOMEN WITH EARLY STAGE BREAST CANCER IN BC

In Letrozole therapy decision-making, it may be useful to consider the observed outcomes in women who had completed 5 years of tamoxifen without further therapy.

The BCCA Breast Cancer Outcomes Unit identified 1086 women aged 45+ with ER-positive early invasive breast cancer treated with tamoxifen between 1989 and 1994 and who had completed 5 years of tamoxifen. All patients were free of recurrence at the 5th anniversary from diagnosis.

RISK OF BREAST CANCER MORTALITY OR EVENT (A LOCAL, REGIONAL OR DISTANT RECURRENCE OR 2ND PRIMARY BREAST CANCER) AT 6-10 YEARS AFTER DIAGNOSIS IF DISEASE-FREE AFTER 5 YEARS OF TAMOXIFEN

PATHOLOGIC TMN STAGE	N	% BREAST CANCER MORTALITY AT 6-10 YRS	% BREAST CANCER 'EVENT' AT 6-10 YRS
N0	418	4	10
1-3 N+	380	9	15
4-9 N+	109	22	30
T1 (≤ 2cm)	561	5	12
T2 (2.1-5cm)	392	12	19
T1N0	252	2	10
T2N0	154	7	11

SUMMARY: Nodal status (N0, 1-3 N+, 4-9 N+) was the strongest predictor of mortality in the second 5 years after diagnosis in patients completing adjuvant tamoxifen therapy. At 6-10 yrs, **Mortality** risks approximately **5%, 10%, and 20%** and **Event** risks approximately **10%, 15%, and 30%** were observed in patients with pathologic N0, 1-3 N+ and 4-9 N+ disease respectively.

INTERPRETATION:
After 5 years of tamoxifen, Letrozole may:

- reduce the above risks by 40%
- be associated with a 1% risk of osteoporotic fracture if given for 3 years and approximately 2% if given for 5 years.

Women with low grade **T1N0** breast cancer should NOT routinely receive Letrozole since the overall benefit is small.

Women with **node-positive** breast cancer have a ≥10% risk of mortality in the 5 years after a course of tamoxifen and SHOULD be offered Letrozole.

In women with **T2N0** breast cancer, Letrozole is reasonable therapy. The benefits and risks of Letrozole need to be carefully weighed considering the individual's risk of osteoporosis, her preferences to avoid further treatment and her concern about breast cancer recurrence.

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