

Comment



Expression of concern—validation of gene signatures that predict the response of breast cancer to neoadjuvant chemotherapy: a substudy of the EORTC 10994/BIG 00-01 clinical trial

On July 21 and 22, 2010, *The Lancet Oncology* was contacted by Richard Iggo and Hervé Bonnefoi on behalf of the 15 European co-authors of an article we published in December, 2007.¹ The authors expressed grave concerns about the validity of their report in light of evolving events. Their worries had arisen because statisticians from the MD Anderson Cancer Center, TX, USA, had questioned the methodology used to generate the response predictions. Repeated attempts by Iggo and colleagues to contact their co-authors at Duke University, NC, USA, who had been responsible for the statistical analyses in the report, had been ignored. In addition, a large group of scientists wrote on July 19, 2010, to Harold Varmus, director of the National Cancer Institute, MD, USA, also expressing concerns about the validity of the prediction models and calling for three ongoing clinical trials to be suspended until “a fully independent review is conducted of both the clinical trials and of the evidence and predictive models being used to make cancer treatment decisions”. Furthermore, a news story² in the *New York Times* of July 20, 2010,

noted the suspension of Anil Potti (one of the article’s co-authors) from Duke University School of Medicine on the grounds that he had falsely claimed to be a Rhodes scholar. The editors of *The Lancet Oncology* are now in the process of ascertaining the validity of these claims. However, pending investigation and clarification, we now issue an expression of concern about the article by Bonnefoi and colleagues.¹ The 15 European co-authors have been informed and concur with this notice. The four co-authors from Duke University have been contacted separately. As and when further information becomes available to us we will pass this on to readers directly.

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- 1 Bonnefoi H, Potti A, Delorenzi M, et al. Validation of gene signatures that predict the response of breast cancer to neoadjuvant chemotherapy: a substudy of the EORTC 10994/BIG 00-01 clinical trial. *Lancet Oncol* 2007; **8**: 1071–78.
- 2 Singer N. Duke suspends researcher and halts cancer studies. *New York Times*, July 20, 2010: <http://prescriptions.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/07/20/duke-suspends-researcher-halts-cancer-studies> (accessed July 23, 2010).