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ASIA EDITION

ESMO Asia 2025 highlights urgent medical need in platinum-resistant advanced ovarian cancer

December 5, 2025 | News

Ovarian cancer remains an unmet medical need, and experts call for new strategies to define and treat platinum resistance in patients with advanced ovarian cancer



At an AbbVie-sponsored symposium at the ESMO Asia Congress 2025, experts gathered to address platinum resistance in advanced ovarian cancer with Antibody Drug Conjugates (ADCs). The discussion underscored the pressing need to rethink traditional definitions of platinum resistance and explore new strategies to treat one of the most persistent and challenging treatment obstacles so as to improve patient outcomes.

"Platinum-resistant advanced ovarian cancer remains a significant unmet medical need in Singapore and around the world," said Clinical Assistant Professor Chan Junjie Jack, Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology, National Cancer Centre Singapore, and Chair of the AbbVie-sponsored symposium. "It is a challenging form of the disease with poor prognosis, and there is an urgent need for effective and tolerable treatments that address the unique clinical challenges faced by this group of patients."

In Singapore, ovarian cancer is the 5th most common cancer and the 6th most common cause of death from cancer in women. In 2022, Singapore had approximately 325,000 new cases of ovarian cancer and roughly 207,000 deaths. The number of women dying from ovarian cancer each year is projected to be about 351,000 by 2050. The duration of therapeutic benefit continues to decrease with multiple lines of therapy and relapses.

The AbbVie-sponsored symposium also addressed evolving perspectives on platinum eligibility. Treatment options once the ovarian cancer becomes platinum ineligible are limited and associated with modest efficacy and tolerability challenges. Most patients present with late-stage disease and typically undergo surgery followed by platinum-based chemotherapy. Unfortunately, 70% of women with ovarian cancer will eventually develop resistance to standard chemotherapy. Until recently, there had been no new innovations and the limited treatment options that existed impacted patients' quality of life because of symptoms such as nausea, fatigue and hair loss.

The role of ADCs in platinum-resistance advanced ovarian cancer was also discussed at the AbbVie-sponsored symposium. Perspectives on platinum eligibility are changing and novel approaches to treatment are needed to fill the gap. The development of ADCs seeks to expand the therapeutic window in platinum-resistant ovarian cancer. Several ADCs are in late-stage development and may increase treatment options in future. Novel therapies to combat acquired resistance, improve efficacy while increasing tolerability and focusing on more specific populations may improve outcomes.

"Ovarian cancer can be devastating and when cancer cells stop responding to chemotherapy, patients may feel hopeless about their journey. The data presented today reinforces the importance of new therapies for platinum-resistant ovarian cancer" said Kenneth Sim, MD, Director, ASEAN oncology medical affairs, AbbVie. "We remain steadfast in our commitment to bringing forward innovative therapies that improve the lives of patients with difficult-to-treat cancers."