The update on the Aberdeen standard of care.

Combined-modality therapy with low-dose AC was 0.21%. Paclitaxel was associated with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) with a conditional probability of myeloid and lymphoid leukemia of 1.7% for epirubicin and 5-fluorouracil (5-FU). The probability of myeloid and lymphoid leukemia was 1.7% for epirubicin-containing regimens and 1.3% for AC. In a series of trials conducted by the NSABP, the rate of acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) and myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) with standard-dose AC was 0.21%. Paclitaxel does not appear to increase this risk. In a recent study there were 8 cases (0.5%) of MDS or AML among 1580 patients treated with AC and the same number in 1590 patients treated with AC and paclitaxel. The leukemia risk for docetaxel-based regimens has not yet been reported. Although treatment-related leukemia risk is an important issue for patients with early breast cancer and a good overall prognosis, patients with a high competing risk of death from breast cancer do not have the same risk of this complication. This point was exemplified by a randomized trial comparing CEF with intensified epirubicin and cyclophosphamide in patients with locally advanced breast cancer. In that trial, there were no reported cases of MDS or AML in the 224 patients who received CEF.

Joe Pater addresses the difficulty of writing guidelines when the sand is shifting with respect to inclusion criteria. We agree that those with isolated supraclavicular involvement (N3c disease) should be treated as having inoperable locally advanced disease. There is some rationale for including patients with clinically apparent internal mammary node (N3b) disease in that category as well. Patients who are found to have extensive lymph node involvement (more than 10) postoperatively should be treated with adjuvant and not primary chemotherapy.

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Correction

Because of an error during editing, incorrect information appeared in Table 1 of a recent article about the career choices of new medical students by Bruce Wright and associates. The number of male students at the University of Alberta was 67 (58%), rather than the number reported in the table. The corrected table appears in Table 3.

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DOI:10.1503/cmaj.1041117

Table 3: Student characteristics by university and year of entry; no. (and %) of students

| Characteristics          | U of C 2001 | UBC 2001 | U of C 2002 | UBC 2002 | U of A 2002 | Total 2002 |
|--------------------------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|------------|
|                          | n = 93†    | n = 100‡ | n = 95†    | n = 114‡ | n = 117‡   | n = 519    |
| Male                     | 42 (45)    | 43 (43)  | 41 (43)    | 50 (44)  | 67 (58)    | 243 (47)   |
| Female                   | 51 (55)    | 56 (56)  | 54 (57)    | 63 (56)  | 49 (42)    | 273 (53)   |
| Mean age, yr             | 24.9       | 24.3     | 24.1       | 24.6     | 23.1       | 24.2       |
| Population of community  |            |          |            |          |            |            |
| where high school was    |            |          |            |          |            |            |
| completed               |            |          |            |          |            |            |
| < 50 000                | 24 (26)    | 23 (23)  | 21 (22)    | 33 (29)  | 22 (19)    | 123 (24)   |
| 50 000–9999             | 9 (10)     | 15 (15)  | 5 (5)      | 23 (20)  | 21 (18)    | 73 (14)    |
| 100 000–500 000         | 13 (14)    | 16 (16)  | 11 (12)    | 18 (16)  | 8 (7)      | 66 (13)    |
| > 500 000              | 46 (49)    | 45 (45)  | 57 (60)    | 40 (35)  | 66 (56)    | 254 (49)   |

Notes: U of C = University of Calgary, UBC = University of British Columbia, U of A = University of Alberta.
*Unless otherwise indicated.
† Student did not indicate gender.
‡ Student did not indicate population of the community where high school was completed.
§ Student did not indicate gende.

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