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Comparisons of Epoetin alfa and Darbepoetin alfa for anemic patients with cancer and chronic kidney disease

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PURPOSE: This study aimed to compare the patterns of use and effectiveness of therapy with epoetin alfa (EPO) and darbepoetin alfa (DARB) for anemia, and investigate which patient groups, cancer patients with chemotherapy and chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients with hemodialysis, have more responsiveness to these drugs.

METHODS: This study was a retrospective chart review of cancer patients and hemodialysis patients with anemia treated with EPO or DARB in two medical centers. Eligible patients were adults (≥ 8 years) with baseline Hb $\leq 1\text{g/dL}$. Effectiveness was measured as the hemoglobin (Hb) level increase from the baseline ($\geq 1\text{g/dL}$). Administration frequency was 2-3 times per week in EPO and once weekly in DARB.

Results: Mean baseline Hb were similar in EPO and DARB groups. Mean weekly doses of EPO and DARB were 19,014.7U (n = 64) and 68.7 μg (n = 64), respectively; Dose only ratio was of EPO and DARB was 276.8 : 1. The results showed Hb increase and Hb response ($\geq 1\text{g/dL}$ increase) rate in EPO was higher than that in DARB. Hb increase and response rate in hemodialysis patients (n = 63) were higher than those in cancer patients (n = 65). (p < 0.05) In cancer patients, Hb increase in female was higher, while in hemodialysis patients, Hb increase in male was much higher. (p < 0.05)

CONCLUSION: EPO treated patients had a greater mean changes in Hb from baseline and Hb responses than DARB, even though it was not a statistically significant. Hb increase and response in hemodialysis patients were much higher than those in cancer patients.