

Letter to the Editor

ASSESSMENT OF RESPONSE TO THERAPY IN ADVANCED BREAST CANCER
(an amendment)

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SIR.—In 1977, a project of the programme on clinical oncology of the UICC published a system of guide-lines recommended for use in clinical trials designed to assess the objective response of locally advanced or metastatic mammary cancer to treatment (Hayward *et al.*, 1977). Since then it has become apparent that the rules for defining duration of remission are not entirely clear. In particular, patients achieving a complete objective regression may have, additionally, a period when only in partial regression. The following amendments to the original publications have been agreed.

Categories of response

Objective regression.—(i) *Complete response.* The disappearance of all lesions determined by 2 observations not less than 4 weeks apart.

(ii) *Partial response.* 50% or more decrease in measurable lesions, and unequivocal improvement in evaluable but non-measurable lesions, with no new lesions developing; determined by 2 observations not less than 4 weeks apart.

No change and progressive disease.—These categories remain as defined previously.

Duration of response

It is recommended that: (1) The period of *overall response* be from the date of start of treatment to the date of first observation of progressive disease.

(2) The period of *complete response* be from the date complete response was first recorded to the date of first observation of progressive disease.

(3) In those patients who just achieve a

partial response, only the period of overall response should be recorded.

Thus, in patients achieving a complete objective remission the duration of this complete response should be distinguished from the longer overall response recorded in these cases.

REFERENCES

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