



Dear Fellow Oncologist:

In May 2007, *The Oncologist* published an article entitled “*Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR) Inhibitor–Associated Cutaneous Toxicities: An Evolving Paradigm in Clinical Management.*” This important article is freely available online at [www.TheOncologist.com](http://www.TheOncologist.com). We have enclosed a reprint along with a patient brochure, wall chart, and order form for free additional materials.

This peer-accepted paper presents the first recommendations on the prevention and treatment of skin reactions to targeted drugs in the category of *Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor Inhibitors* (EGFRIs). These guidelines were developed at an international multidisciplinary meeting that included medical oncologists, dermatologists, nurses, and pharmacists.

As we know, treatments with EGFRIs have been shown to improve survival in patients with several types of cancer. The drugs — including erlotinib (*Tarceva*®), cetuximab (*Erbix*®), panitumumab (*Vectibix*™), and lapatinib (*Tykerb*®) — work by interfering with cell-signaling abnormalities that contribute to cancer development and growth.

The EGFRIs also often carry a risk of skin reactions: more than half of treated patients have some type of skin toxicity, most commonly an acne-like rash. Although the mechanism is imperfectly understood, the reactions most likely occur because the receptor(s) blocked by the drugs also performs key functions in normal skin.

Until recently, there were no strong scientific data to guide the treatment of skin reactions to EGFRIs. To address this issue, the authors propose a simple algorithm for classification and treatment of skin reactions. When used, this should hopefully reduce the number of serious (*i.e.*, grade 2 or greater) skin toxicities.

According to Dr. Mario E. Lacouture, head of the Cancer Skin Care Program and SERIES (Skin and Eye Reactions to Inhibitors of EGFR and Kinases) Clinic in the Department of Dermatology at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, “Currently, many patients with skin reactions to EGFRIs receive no treatment until they have a severe rash, when their dosage has to be decreased. The new classification and treatment guidelines will encourage earlier intervention, hopefully avoiding the need for dose reductions.”

This special package includes a wall chart showing the algorithm (derived from the peer-accepted publication), specifically designed to be placed in your office.\* In addition, the patient brochure, authored by Dr. Lacouture, is offered as something you might give to your patients and/or to their loved ones and caregivers. It will help instruct them on the care and treatment of skin reactions. If you would like additional copies of this special package or patient brochure, please complete the enclosed order form, and *The Oncologist* will send them to you without any charge.

We have prepared this packet in the hopes that you find it helpful in your practice. Please let me know if you find it useful. We are always grateful for your constructive suggestions on how we may make the Journal more supportive of you as you care for your cancer patients.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Chabner, MD  
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Chief Medical Officer  
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Enclosures: Reprint, Wall Chart, Patient’s Brochure, Order Form

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