

LOCAL TOXICITY OF ANTITUMOR
CHEMOTHERAPY: A STUDY OF
POSSIBLE ANTIDOTES

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Skin necrosis is a potential complication following inadvertent extravasation of many drugs used in cancer chemotherapy. Several experimental studies and a few clinical reports suggest that conservative treatment with local antidotes may be useful after extravasations to prevent or reduce the subsequent ulcerations. Based on the more convincing literature data, we have designed a schedule of immediate local treatment and evaluated its effectiveness, tolerability and feasibility. Topical (99.9% dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) + ice packs were employed in 52 patients (pts) after extravasations of anthracyclines or antitumor antibiotics. Hyaluronidase infiltrations were used in 10 pts after extravasations of vinca alkaloids. The results are extremely encouraging: only one pt in this case series suffered an ulceration, probably due to a 'recall phenomenon' during further exposure to the same drug (epidoxorubicin) previously extravasated. Patients' and nurses' compliance with the schedule was very good, also due to the lack of significant side effects. Delayed treatment was less successful in other pts who could not be seen immediately after the extravasation.