Cancer-related fatigue, the role of adrenal suppression and steroids: reply to the comments of Eren et al.

Sriram Yennurajalingam · Eduardo Bruera

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We like to thank Eren et al. [1] for their thoughtful comments regarding our recent paper [2] titled “Reduction of cancer-related fatigue with dexamethasone: a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial in patients with advanced cancer.”

The mechanism of cancer-related fatigue in advanced cancer is usually complex and multifactorial [3]. The authors claim that in some cases, cancer-related fatigue may be due to iatrogenic effect in which adrenergic insufficiency induced by antiemetic doses of corticosteroids may have causative role. This is an interesting hypothesis that needs to be tested. However, it is important to know that cancer-related fatigue occurs in high frequency and severity in cancer patients who have not received corticosteroids. The use of an extremely low dose of corticosteroids has not been tested and may not be beneficial in reducing fatigue in such patients [3–5]. More research is necessary to determine the long-term safety and efficacy of dexamethasone for cancer-related fatigue.

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S. Yennurajalingam · E. Bruera
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston,
USA

S. Yennurajalingam (✉) · E. Bruera
Department of Palliative Care & Rehabilitation Medicine, UT MD
Anderson Cancer Center, Unit 1414, 1515 Holcombe Blvd.,
Houston, TX 77030, USA
e-mail: syennu@mdanderson.org