Reclassifying HER2-equivocal disease

Steven Sorscher¹

Received: 11 October 2017 / Accepted: 16 October 2017 / Published online: 23 October 2017
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2017

To the Editor,

Based on repeat HER2 testing of a large series of invasive breast cancer cases, Xu et al. nicely demonstrated that significantly more tumors will be defined as HER2-positive based on the 2013 American Society of Clinical Oncology/College of American Pathologists (ASCO/CAP) guidelines compared to how those tumors would have been classified based on the 2007 ASCO/CAP guidelines [1].

The authors conclude that “Repeat HER2 testing clarifies HER2 status in about 50% of initial HER2 equivocal cases.” I do not believe “reclassification” should be conflated with “clarification.” Clarifying would imply that patients with tumors defined as HER2-positive based solely on one of the 2013 ASCO/CAP expanded definitions would have a significant potential of benefitting from anti-HER2 therapy, as do patients with tumors defined as HER2-positive based on the 2007 ASCO/CAP guidelines.

Reclassifying particular tumors as HER2-positive is not a clarification of status, but rather a change in status. As the authors acknowledge, the benefit of anti-HER2 therapy

for patients with tumors defined as HER2- positive based solely on one of the 2013 ASCO/CAP expanded definitions remains unknown. Clinical trials are needed to determine the efficacy of anti-HER2 therapy for patients with tumors classified as HER2-positive based solely on the 2013 ASCO/SEP guidelines.

Steven Sorscher

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest There are no relevant conflicts of interest associated with this letter.

Reference

1. Xu F-P, Wang K, Xu J, Chen J, Zhang Y-F, Wu H-M, Zhang M-H, Long X-X, Luo X-L, Zhang K-P, Lin D-Y, Liu Y-H (2017) Impact of repeat HER2 testing after initial equivocal HER2 FISH results using 2013 ASCO/CAP guidelines. *Breast Cancer Res Treat.* doi:[10.1007/s10549-017-4479-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10549-017-4479-y)

✉ Steven Sorscher
ssorsche@wakehealth.edu

¹ Oncology Division, Wake Forest School of Medicine,
Winston-Salem, NC 27104, USA