Our study underpinned the safety and feasibility of high-dose mistletoe infusion in children with advanced stages of cancer and showed noteworthy antineoplastic effects, which should be verified in a prospective clinical phase II/III-study” Zuzak et al (2018).

Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Long-term survival of children with cancer has reached rates of up to 80%. Nevertheless, continued research devoted to further improvement of survival rates especially for patients with high-risk illnesses is necessary. Recent studies have shown direct positive effects on tumor reduction through Viscum album (mistletoe) extracts in adults, mainly as a result of higher dosage treatment and intravenous or intratumoral application.

PATIENTS AND METHOD: A retrospective analysis of data was carried out of all oncological, pediatric patients treated with intravenous high-dose mistletoe therapy for a period of two years (11/2013-11/2015).

RESULTS: A total of ten non-coherent cases were examined, all suffering from advanced and/or relapsed forms of cancer (leukemia, neuroblastoma, nephroblastoma, osteosarcoma, lymphoma, anaplastic astrocytoma, atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumor and soft tissue sarcoma). Patients were treated for an average period of 48 days with a mean survival rate of 130 days after beginning the mistletoe therapy. Partial remission was observed in four and a slowed disease progression was monitored in two patients. However, unrestricted
progression of disease was documented in two other patients. Patients showed side effects including fever as well as fatigue and in some cases systemic inflammatory reactions with transient organ impairment occurred.

CONCLUSION: Our study underpinned the safety and feasibility of high-dose mistletoe infusion in children with advanced stages of cancer and showed noteworthy antineoplastic effects, which should be verified in a prospective clinical phase II/III-study. Because of possible side effects, the treatment should be implemented only in an in-patient setting in experienced pediatric oncology centers.

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