

■ **The antineoplastic regimen etoposide, calcium folinate [leucovorin] and fluorouracil (ELF) is too costly** in the treatment of gastric cancer, according to Norwegian-based researchers. Their study involved 26 patients with advanced gastric cancer, 17 of whom received standard therapy with fluorouracil, adriamycin and mitomycin (FAM) and 9 of whom received ELF - a newer, less toxic regimen. The median rate of survival after commencing antineoplastic therapy was 5 and 6 months in the FAM and ELF groups, respectively, while total treatment costs were £2578 and £12 834. From oncologists' quality-of-life estimates, the researchers calculated quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs) for the 2 regimens of 0.2917 and 0.39, respectively. Therefore, the incremental cost/QALY associated with the use of ELF was £104 334.

Norum J, et al. Chemotherapy in gastric cancer: an economic evaluation of the FAM (5-fluorouracil, adriamycin, mitomycin C) versus ELF (etoposide, leucovorin, 5-fluorouracil) regimens. *Journal of Chemotherapy* 7: 455-459, Oct 1995

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