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What is the incidence of febrile neutropenia (FN) in patients receiving chemotherapy?

Hi, my name is Donald Harvey. I am Director of Phase I Clinical Trial Section at the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University in Atlanta Georgia and an assistant professor in the Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology. As part of my practice within the Phase I program and in general and as a pharmacist in chemotherapy, I am often asked what the incidence of febrile neutropenia is in patients who are receiving chemotherapy. The incidence really depends a great deal on the malignancy being treated. For example, patients with acute myeloid leukemia, almost 100% of those patients will have neutropenic fever during the course of their induction treatment, for example. However, patients with lung cancer or colon cancer, the incidence is really defined by the type and intensity of chemotherapy that they receive. Frequently, the goal in hematologic malignancies is cure, and that may or may not be the case in solid tumor malignancy such that the intensity of chemotherapy may be less, and we may want to look more at dose reduction in those patients rather than trying to maximize chemotherapy dose delivered. So the incidence of febrile neutropenia is really dependent upon the disease as well as the chemotherapy being administered. Anything that causes a greater than or equal to 20% incidence of neutropenic fever in patients receiving chemotherapy should be treated as primary prophylaxis intervention.