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1	Mitotane treatment in patients with metastatic testicular Leydig cell tumour associated							
2	with severe androgen excess							
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22 ABSTRACT

23 Mitotane (0,p'DDD) is established in the adjuvant and advanced stage treatment of adrenocortical 24 carcinoma and counteracts both tumour growth and tumour-related steroid production. Both the 25 adrenal glands and the gonads are steroidogenically active organs and share a common embryogenic 26 origin. Here we describe the effects of mitotane in two patients with metastatic Leydig cell tumour 27 (LCT) of the testes and associated severe androgen excess (serum testosterone 93 and 88 nmol/l, 28 respectively; male reference range 7-27 nmol/L). Both men suffered from severe restlessness, 29 insomnia and irritability, which they described as intolerable and disrupting normal life activities. 30 Urinary steroid profiling by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) confirmed excess 31 androgen production and revealed concurrent overproduction of glucocorticoids and glucocorticoid 32 precursors, which under physiological conditions are produced only by the adrenal glands but not by 33 the gonads. In a palliative approach, they were commenced on mitotane, which achieved swift control 34 of the hormone excess and the debilitating clinical symptoms, restoring normal quality of life. GC-MS 35 demonstrated normalization of steroid production and decreased 5α -reductase activity, resulting in 36 decreased androgen activation, and imaging demonstrated disease stabilization for 4-10 months. In 37 conclusion, mitotane can be highly effective in controlling steroid excess in metastatic LCTs, with 38 anti-tumour activity in some cases.

39 INTRODUCTION

40 Testicular Leydig cell tumours (LCTs) are rare stromal tumours, comprising 1-3% of all 41 testicular neoplasms (1, 2). LCTs result in precocious puberty in 10% of affected children due to 42 excess androgen secretion (3). Affected adult men most commonly present with a painless testicular 43 mass and significant androgen excess (4) and can also have tumour-related oestrogen excess, 44 manifesting with gynecomastia in 10-30% of cases (4-6). An estimated 10-15% of testicular LCTs 45 are malignant (3, 7), although the true proportion remains debated (6, 8). The primary approach to 46 malignant LCTs is surgical, usually involving orchidectomy, retroperitoneal lymph node dissection 47 and lifelong surveillance (9). LCT metastases are rare and are detected on average 10 years after 48 primary surgery (7), but therapeutic options are very limited, with no known role for radiotherapy and 49 lack of efficacy of cytotoxic chemotherapy (7, 9). Therefore, prognosis for this rare endocrine cancer 50 is poor, with an approximate median survival of two years (3, 4, 10).

During human fetal development, gonads and adrenal glands both derive from the urogenital 51 52 ridge and after separation they develop distinct steroidogenic features, with gonadal sex steroid 53 production and adrenal production of glucocorticoids, mineralocorticoids and adrenal androgen 54 precursors. Mitotane (o,p'DDD) is routinely used in the treatment of adrenocortical cancer, where it 55 has been shown to control adrenal steroid excess and, to a degree, tumour proliferation (11). Mitotane 56 also diminishes and rogen action by inhibiting 5α -reductase (12) and hence activation of testosterone 57 to 5α -dihydrotestosterone. Thus, we considered mitotane as a potentially useful drug in patients with 58 metastatic Leydig cell tumour, in particular in patients with tumour-associated androgen excess. Here 59 we describe the effects of mitotane treatment in two patients with metastatic LCT, leading to a 60 significant biochemical and clinical amelioration of the signs and symptoms of tumour-related steroid 61 excess, and in one of them also to radiological stabilization of previously rapid disease progression.

3

62 METHODS

Urinary steroid metabolome profiling at baseline and during mitotane treatment was carried
out by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry, utilizing selected-ion-monitoring analysis for
identification and quantification of 32 distinct steroid metabolites reflective of 24-h net steroid output,
as previously described (13). Serum steroid measurements were carried out in the routine clinical
biochemistry setting, using established and validated tandem mass spectrometry (androstenedione,
testosterone) and immunoassays (DHEAS, 17β-oestradiol), respectively.
We carried out immunohistochemistry for sterol-O-acyl transferase 1 (SOAT1) as described

- 70 previously (14), using antibodies against SOAT1 (1:1000; ab39327; Abcam). The intensity of staining
- 71 was scored as described by Sbiera et al (15).

72 CASE REPORTS

73 Case 1: A 51-year-old patient presented with severe restlessness, insomnia, impaired 74 concentration, increased aggressiveness, redness of the face and body hair growth, all gradually 75 developing over the last six months. Fifteen years previously, he had undergone an orchidectomy for 76 LCT and thirteen years later excision of a retroperitoneal mass, confirmed on histology as LCT 77 metastasis. Imaging revealed multiple lesions consistent with liver, lung and retroperitoneal 78 metastases. Immunohistochemistry of a tissue biopsy confirmed vimentin positive, inhibin negative 79 metastatic LCT. Serum testosterone was very high at 93nmol/L (normal male reference range 7-80 27nmol/L). Urinary steroid profiling by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) showed 81 increased androgen metabolite excretion (sum of androsterone and etiocholanolone 101,476µg/24h; 82 adult male reference range <8000µg/24h) as well as increased excretion of DHEA, metabolites of 83 pregnenolone, progesterone, 17-hydroxypregnenolone, 17-hydroxyprogesterone, and cortisol (230 84 $\mu g/24h$; normal <130) (Fig. 1A). Prognosis was assessed as poor and the patient declined 85 chemotherapy. However, he agreed to the initiation of mitotane treatment in an attempt to improve the 86 clinical signs and symptoms of tumour-related androgen excess that was significantly limiting his 87 quality of life. Mitotane dose was gradually titrated to 3g per day, with concurrent hydrocortisone

88	replacement (20mg tid). Within a few weeks, androgen excretion decreased from 101,476 to 12,827
89	μ g/24h, with evidence of significant inhibition of 5 α -reductase activity and normalization of other
90	steroids that were increased at baseline (Table 1). Plasma mitotane concentrations considered
91	therapeutic (anti-proliferative) in the context of adrenocortical carcinoma (14-20mg/L) (16) were
92	reached after 5 months of treatment (Suppl. Table 1). Follow-up imaging still showed progressive
93	disease at two months, but stable disease according to RECIST 1.1 criteria after six months of
94	mitotane treatment (Suppl. Fig. 1). Alongside the decrease in androgens, the patient reported a
95	significant improvement of his previously debilitating clinical signs and symptoms. He returned to
96	full-time work and enjoyed good quality of life. After 10 months of mitotane treatment, he died
97	suddenly of a suspected myocardial infarction; no post-mortem examination was carried out.

98 Case 2: A previously fit-and-well 59-year-old man presented with a right testicular mass and 99 underwent orchidectomy; histopathology revealed malignant LCT. Three years later he presented with 100 lower back pain and imaging showed a large retroperitoneal mass, confirmed as disease recurrence by 101 transcutaneous biopsy. He underwent laparoscopic removal of the mass together with retroperitoneal 102 lymph node dissection. One year later, follow-up imaging revealed disseminated metastases, 103 including liver, kidney and peritoneal deposits. He was unwell, with agitation, anxiety and insomnia. 104 Biochemical work-up showed increased serum testosterone (88.5 nmol/L, normal 7-27), oestradiol 105 (744 pmol/L, normal <156), and rostenedione (7.0 nmol/L, normal 0.8-3.1), and DHEAS (> 27 106 µmol/L, normal 0.91-6.76). GC-MS profiling showed increased steroid excretion including androgen 107 metabolites (69,108 μ g/24h, normal <8000) and cortisol (414 μ g/24h, normal <130) (Fig. 1A). He 108 rejected chemotherapy and agreed to palliative mitotane treatment with concurrent hydrocortisone 109 replacement; mitotane was administered employing the high-dose saturation regimen (Day 1 500mg 110 tds, Day 2 1000mg tds, and from day 3 onwards 1500 mg tds; therapeutic plasma mitotane levels 111 were reached after 4 months (Suppl. Table 1). Mitotane decreased serum androgen production within 112 four weeks. Six months after treatment initiation, plasma testosterone had decreased to 29.1 nmol/L 113 and oestradiol to 177 pmol/L, while androstenedione and DHEAS had normalized. Urinary steroid 114 profiling 4 months after initiation of miotane showed a decline in all previously raised steroid 115 metabolites and decreased 5α -reductase activity. This was paralleled by significant clinical 116 improvement in signs and symptoms, specifically reduced restlessness, aggressiveness and insomnia. 117 Imaging four months after initiation of mitotane revealed a mixed response, with regression of some 118 previous lesions but emergence of new metastatic deposits in lung and abdomen. The patient passed 119 away 12 months after his second recurrence, i.e. six months after the start of mitotane treatment.

120 DISCUSSION

Here we used mitotane, an established drug in adrenocortical carcinoma, in two patients with metastatic testicular LCT associated with severe androgen excess, clinically manifesting with severe restlessness, insomnia, irritability and impaired concentration. Both patients experienced significant improvement in signs and symptoms with mitotane therapy, swift normalization of steroid excess and some stabilization of radiologically quantified tumour load.

126 In a comprehensive PubMed search (search terms: Leydig cell tumour, malignant Leydig cell 127 tumour, metastatic Leydig cell tumour, mitotane, lysodren, and o,p'DDD) we identified eight cases of 128 LCT treated with mitotane (Table 2). Four patients received mitotane as second- or third-line 129 treatment for metastatic LCT for a very short time only (3 days to 8 weeks); none of them showed a 130 biochemical, clinical or radiological response. The remaining four cases received mitotane as first-line 131 treatment for metastatic LCT, with treatment duration varying between 10 weeks and 33 months 132 (Table 2). All four patients experienced significant radiological tumour response and reduction in 133 steroid excess during mitotane treatment. Azer and Braunstein (17) used mitotane to treat a patient 134 with metastatic LCT for six months, resulting in a dramatic response with complete remission of 135 multiple pulmonary metastases, which lasted three months prior to relapse. Radiological reduction in 136 tumour load for several months was observed in two cases (18, 19). Abelson et al (20) noted a 137 significant reduction in 17-ketosteroid excretion and clinical improvement in a metastatic LCT patient 138 treated with mitotane for 18 months, while his disseminated metastases progressed. Adding the 139 experience of our cases, mitotane can be considered a worthwhile palliative option in metastatic LCT, 140 particularly when the disease is associated with steroid excess.

141 During human fetal development, adrenals and gonads both arise from the urogenital ridge 142 and they both develop steroidogenic capacity, albeit with distinct features, i.e. sex steroid synthesis in 143 the gonads and glucocorticoid, mineralocorticoid and androgen precursor synthesis in the adrenal 144 glands. Benign testicular adrenal rest tumours, which are regularly found in men with congenital 145 adrenal hyperplasia, have been shown to display features of both adrenal and gonadal steroidogenesis 146 (21, 22). Using mass spectrometry, we observed that our two LCT patients showed not only androgen 147 excess, but also increased production of glucocorticoid precursors and cortisol, without clinical signs 148 of Cushing's syndrome. Two previous case reports in patients with malignant LCTs have described 149 ectopic production of steroids normally produced by the adrenal cortex, including cortisol and 150 aldosterone (23, 24). In our two cases, both androgen excess and glucocorticoid overproduction 151 responded well to mitotane treatment. Comprehensive steroid metabolome mapping by GC-MS has 152 been used successfully to differentiate malignant from benign adrenocortical tumours (13). It will be 153 useful to test in future studies whether steroid metabolome profiling would also help differentiate 154 benign from malignant LCT and could have a role in follow-up monitoring.

155 Recent studies have implicated sterol-A-acyl transferase 1 (SOAT1), previously also termed 156 ACAT-1 for Acyl-coenzyme A cholesterol acyltransferases, as a target of mitotane action (14). 157 SOAT1 is located in the endoplasmic reticulum and involved in intracellular esterification of free 158 cholesterol. John Achermann's group has shown that this enzyme operates downstream of SF-1 and is 159 important for regulation of adrenal steroidogenesis (25). A recent study (14) has provided evidence of 160 inhibition of SOAT1 by mitotane in an adrenocortical cell model, by demonstrating an increase in free 161 cholesterol, oxysterols and fatty acids after treatment with mitotane. We had access to formalin-fixed 162 paraffin-embedded tissue from the tumour recurrence in Patient 2 and used it for carrying out 163 immunohistochemistry for SOAT1 (Fig. 1B), which demonstrated predominantly high and moderate 164 expression, detected in 60% and 30% of the cells, respectively. Thus, it is likely that both the steroid-165 ameliorating and anti-proliferative effects of mitotane are mediated by SOAT not only in 166 adrenocortical carcinoma but also in LCT.

167 Based on our current findings, the use of mitotane in the palliative treatment of metastatic 168 LCTs of the testes appears feasible and useful, with effective control of tumour-related steroid excess 169 and possible beneficial effects on disease progression, a viable treatment option in a rare endocrine 170 cancer that is not responsive to cytotoxic chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

171 Declaration of interest: The authors have nothing to disclose.

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244

Figure Legend 245

246 Fig. 1:

247 Panel A, Steroid synthesis in the two patients with metastatic testicular Leydig cell tumour as 248 assessed by mass spectrometry-based 24-h urinary steroid profiling before initiation of mitotane 249 treatment (log scale; closed circles, patient 1; open triangles, patient 2). Box plots represent medians 250 and interquartile ranges from a group of 24 healthy male volunteers (age 40-60 years); whiskers 251 represent the full range.

- 252 Panel B, Immunohistochemical staining for Sterol-O-acyltransferaase 1 (SOAT1) using formalin-
- 253 fixed paraffin-embedded tissue from the recurrent tumour of patient 2, demonstrating high (60% of
- 254 cells) to moderate (30% of cells) expression of SOAT1 in the tumour tissue.

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Table 1: 24-h urine steroid metabolite excretion ($\mu g/24h$) in the two patients with metastatic Leydig Cell Tumour before (=baseline) and during mitotane treatment. The male reference range is derived from the 24-h urine steroid excretion observed in 24 healthy men aged 40-60 years. The numbers of the steroid metabolites relate to the numbers in Fig. 1A. The total glucocorticoid metabolites were calculated as the sum of metabolites 20, 22-25 and 27-30. n.m., not measured

		Median	Patient 1						Patient 2	
		(min-max) steroid			Mitotane					Mitotane
		excretion in	Baseline						Baseline	
		neartny men $(ug/24h)$		Month 1	Month 2	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9		Month 4
	Androgen and androgen preci	ursor metabolites		Woltun 1	Month 2	Monui 4	Monuro	Month 7		Wolten +
1	An depositorence		44 7 44	12 022	11.002	0.700	4 4 4 9	4.440	28 002	507
1	Androsterone	1,684 (477-5,915)	44,744	13,833	11,823	9,790	4,448	4,440	38,092	597
2	Etiocholonaolone	1,668 (404-3,393)	56,732	30,283	37,617	22,408	9,798	8,387	31,016	2,697
3	11β-hydroxy-androsterone	609 (131-2,302)	2,066	1,414	2318	301	169	174	13,351	643
4	Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)	202 (14-3,948)	1,939	1,034	434	294	194	311	47,344	359
5	16α-hydroxy-DHEA	269 (0-1,492)	4,404	9,179	4,098	3,510	2,533	6,250	23,569	1,126
6	5-pregnenetriol	181 (38-951)	1,558	2,574	2,484	2,600	1,575	2,483	20,891	1,053
7	5-pregnenediol	326 (64-801)	19.972	27,844	24,732	25,548	9,545	15,450	168,192	11,304
	Mineralocorticoids and miner	alocorticoid precurs	or metabolit	es						
	Tetrahydro-11-									22
8	deoxycorticosterone	94 (22-290)	445	195	162	188	29	128	308	22
0	5α-Tetrahydro-11-	107 (50, 260)	(0)	100	07	50	20	40	74	18
9	deoxycorticosterone	107 (30-300)	02	100	87	32	32	49	/4	19
10	Tetraydrocorticosterone	97 (24-258)	300	154	263	169	41	105	177	10
11	5a-Tetrahydrocorticosterone	193 (67-1,197)	130	261	489	0	0	0	90	0
12	3α , 5β -Tetrahydroaldosterone	30 (12-64)	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	13	28	293	25
13	Tetrahydrodeoxycorticosterone	13 (5-36)	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	93	343	216	37
	Glucocorticoid precursor met	abolites								

14	Pregnanediol	157 (32-336)	3,249	1,857	1,474	1,171	455	646	4,832	199
15	3α,5α-17-hydroxy- pregnanolone	14 (6-89)	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	13	18	809	8
16	17-hydroxypregnanolone	133 (41-537)	7,163	1,940	1,589	1,538	817	998	39,306	551
17	Pregnanetriol	576 (243-1,175)	9,562	5,701	4,295	4,366	2,128	2,677	28,349	1,495
18	Pregnanetriolone	13 (5-58)	20	2	0	3	5	0	1,822	10
19	Tetrahydro-11-deoxycortisol	61 (21-159)	594	525	690	492	314	911	116	322
	Glucocorticoid metabolites				-	-				
20	Cortisol	57 (22-224)	252	735	497	495	399	813	414	201
21	6β-hydroxy-cortisol	114 (63-504)	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	7,657	23,193	393	3,578
22	Tetrahydrocortisol	1.694 (772-4.534)	4,260	9,578	7,936	5,087	2,115	3,001	2,779	1,391
23	5α-Tetrahydrocortisol	1,408 (229-6,744)	477	344	161	114	37	66	702	40
24	α-cortol	319 (177-1,005)	1,665	2,566	1,880	1,256	524	831	597	286
25	β-cortol	513 (255-1,678)	957	378	306	207	108	153	467	60
26	11β-hydroxy-etiocholanolone	315 (23-899)	257	147	91	95	37	50	1092	89
27	Cortisone	92.5 (39-348)	198	400	389	286	309	480	671	102
28	Tetrahydrocortisone	3,333 (1,465-7,597)	3,978	2,391	2,113	1,564	763	1,124	5,597	807
29	α-cortolone	1.228 (605-2.599)	3,892	2,661	2,222	1,166	410	539	1,623	479
30	β-cortolone	696 (417-2,075)	1,110	300	303	216	108	213	1130	42
31	11-oxo-etiocholanolone	464 (74-997)	1,059	734	736	868	844	1,196	3,144	267
Total glucocorticoid metabolite excretion		9,66 (5,467-15,426)	16,789	19,353	15,807	10,391	4,773	7,220	13,980	3,408
Steroid ratios indicative of 5α- reductase:										
Androst	erone/Etiochaolanolone	1.13 (0.05-3.00)	0.79	0.46	0.31	0.44	0.45	0.53	1.23	0.22
5α-tetra	hydrocortisol/tetrahydrocortisol	0.92 (0.05-2.27)	0.11	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.25	0.03

Table 1: Previously reported cases of patients with widespread metastases from testicular Leydig cell carcinoma treated with mitotane, presented in the order of duration of treatment.

Reference	Patient age (years)	Length of mitotane treatment	Mitotane dose (plasma mitotane levels)	Gluco- corticoid replace- ment	Documented steroid excess	Patient outcome	Additional information whilst on mitotane therapy
Second- to thi	rd-line trea	atment (treat	ment duratio	on 3 days – S	8 weeks)		
Tamoney et al., Cancer 1969 (23)	64	3 days	10g/day (not done)	not reported	Increased urinary 17-ketosteroids, increased urinary estrogen	Died – no effect	First-line radiotherapy (40000 rads cobalt therapy); Died 3 days after commencing mitotane therapy
Grem et al., Cancer 1986 (4)	37	7 weeks	1.5g/day (not done)	not reported	Increased urinary 17-KS, increased serum testosterone, androstenedione, DHEAS	Survived another 5 years on alternative treatment (Lonidamine)	First-line therapy cisplatin; mitotane stopped after 7 weeks due to abdominal discomfort and increasing nausea
Davis et al., Cancer 1981 (24)	61	8 weeks	12g/day (not done)	not reported	Normal urinary 17- KS and 17-OHCS	Died 8 weeks after commencing mitotane	First line therapy cisplatin/vinblastin/bleomycin; Second line therapy cyclophosphamide/doxo- rubicin/vincristine); Was concurrently on chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Bertram et al., Cancer 1991 (25)	60	8 weeks	6-12g/day (not done)	Dexamet ha-sone 1mg/day	Normal 17-KS and 17-OHCS; normal serum E1, E2, Aldo	Died after 8 weeks from widespread metastatic disease	2 nd line therapy (1 st line doxorubicin); No response to mitotane			
First line treatment (treatment duration 10 weeks-33 months)										
Schwarzmann et al., 1989 (15)	59	10 weeks	9g/day (not done)	none	Increased serum testosterone, estradiol, aldosterone and cortisol	Died 6 months after commencing mitotane therapy	Reduction in abdominal tumor size and reduction in testosterone and estradiol to normal levels lasting 2 months. Treatment stopped on patient's wish following sudden deterioration and increase in tumor size.			
Azer&Braunst ein, Cancer 1981 (14)	63	6 months	4-14g/day during first four weeks, followed by 2.4g/day	Dexamet ha-sone 1 mg/day	Normal urinary 17- KS + 17-OHCS; normal serum aldosterone, testosterone, DHEAS, cortisol	Died after deterioration and continuing metastatic spread of disease. Clinical improvement with mitotane	Complete disappearance of pulmonary metastasis and clinical improvement after 14 weeks on mitotane. 3 months later pulmonary metastasis reappeared, mitotane was stopped and chemotherapy commenced.			
Abelson et al., Metabolism 1966 (17)	58	18 months	10g initially, then 4-6g/day (not done)	Dexamet ha-sone 0.375mg twice daily	Increased urinary 17-KS and estrogens	Died after clinical and biochemical improvement with mitotane but radiological progression	Believed to be clinically improving, with reduction in urinary 17- ketosteroids from 1462 to 100 mg/day			
Van der Hem et al., J Urol 1992 (16)	56	6 months + 27 months (9 months break in between)	4-10g/day (15-20 mg/L),	Cortisone acetate, no dose recorded	Normal urinary 17OHCS, An, Et, DHEA; normal serum T and DHEAS	Died – metastatic disease stabilized for 18 months on mitotane treatment before disease slowly deteriorated	decrease in retroperitoneal tumor, liver lesions, ascites along with stable disease for 18 months. Once disease deteriorated mitotane dose was escalated to 10g/day with no effect.			





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Supplemental Appendix

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Mitotane treatment in patients with metastatic testicular Leydig cell tumor associated with severe androgen excess

Suppl. Fig. 1: Computed tomography scans taken in Patient 1. **A**, Abdominal CT after two months of mitotane treatment showing metastatic Leydig cell tumor deposits, with heterogeneous omental masses and a large retroperitoneal mass. **B**, Abdominal CT after six months of mitotane treatment, demonstrating stable disease according to RECIST 1.1 criteria.



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Suppl. Table 1: Mitotane daily dose and plasma concentrations in the two Leydig cell tumor patients. Therapeutic range for plasma mitotane in adrenal cancer is accepted as 14-20 mg/L

	Pati	ent 1	Pati	ient 2		
Duration of mitotane treatment (months)	Mitotane Dose (g/d)	Plasma Mitotane (mg/L)	Mitotane Dose (g/d)	Plasma Mitotane (mg/L)		
1	1.5	4.0	4.5.	n.m.		
2	3	5.9	4.5	9.1		
4	3	9.1	4.5	14.2		
5	3	23.5	4.5	n.m.		
6	2	17.6				
7	3	9.2				

n.m., not measured.

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