**Detailed treatment protocols for NPC patients**

(i) Radiotherapy

All patients in this study received intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) to targets located by CT. The irradiation doses were as follows. The total dose to the planning target volume (PTV) in the primary tumor area (GTVnx) was 70-74 Gy, that to the neck metastatic lymph node area (GTVnd) was 66-70 Gy, that to the high-risk clinical target volume (CTV1) was 60-62 Gy, and that to the low-risk clinical target volume (CTV2) was 50-56 Gy. The total dose was divided into 28 and 33 applications delivered once per day, 5 days per week, at a single dose of 2.12-2.24 Gy.

(ii) Chemotherapy

All chemotherapy regimens were cisplatin-based combination regimens and a complete cycle was administered every 3 weeks. The induction chemotherapy regimen (1 or 2 cycles) and adjuvant chemotherapy regimen (1-4 cycles) included TP (docetaxel 60 mg/m2/d or paclitaxel 135 mg/m2/d on day 1 and cisplatin 25 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 3), TPF (docetaxel 60 mg/m2/d or paclitaxel 135 mg/m2/d on day 1, cisplatin 25 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 3, and 5-fluorouracil 600 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 5), and PF (cisplatin 25 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 3 and 5-fluorouracil 600 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 5). The concurrent chemotherapy regimens (1 or 2 cycles) included cisplatin monotherapy (once every three weeks, 25 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 3) and TP (docetaxel 60 mg/m2/d or paclitaxel 135 mg/m2/d on day 1 and cisplatin 25 mg/m2/d on days 1 to 3).