

Major clinical breast cancer study begins

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U.S. medical researchers have found combining two drugs targeted against HER2-positive breast cancer might offer more benefit than just using one.

Dr. Edith Perez, director of the Mayo Clinic's Jacksonville, Fla., Breast Clinic., is leading a national trial with 109 participants that will look at the safety and benefit of adding lapatinib (Tykerb) to trastuzumab (Herceptin) for the treatment of early stage HER2-positive breast cancer.

The study -- the first major clinical research of its kind -- started March 16 with patient recruitment.

"Worldwide, no more than 100 patients have been tested with this combination treatment, so we are pleased that we now offer a comprehensive study in the United States to assess the possible benefit of this therapy," said Perez.

She will lead a consortium of 35 investigators who will enroll 109 participants at up to 100 different cancer treatment centers across the nation.

"We are finding that the best way to treat a cancer is to understand the biological characteristics of the cancer and then use therapies directed at those specific biological or molecular abnormalities," she added.

Information about the study is available at

clinicaltrials.mayo.edu.

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