

Chemotherapy plus targeted therapies shows improved survival in advance-stage lung cancer patients

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The combination of traditional chemotherapy agents with targeted therapies called monoclonal antibodies showed no safety concerns and improved survival in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer according to a study presented at the 2008 Chicago Multidisciplinary Symposium in Thoracic Oncology.

The combination of bevacizumab and chemotherapy has been shown to increase the survival of patients with incurable non-small cell lung cancer. cetuximab has recently demonstrated improved survival when given in combination with platinum based chemotherapy. Based on this information, researchers from M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center and the Cancer Research and Biostatistical Clinical Trials Consortium (CRAB), both in Seattle, the Cancer Center of Kansas in Wichita, Kan., Central Illinois CCOP in Springfield, Ill., the University of Kansas in Kansas City, Kan., and U.C. Davis Cancer Center in Sacramento, all part of the South West Oncology Group, sought to investigate the safety and efficacy of the combination of the four drugs in this multi-center phase II clinical trial.

This study, the first reported study of these two targeted therapies (bevacizumab and cetuximab) with chemotherapy (carboplatin and paclitaxel), combined the four drugs as first-line therapy in advanced lung cancer patients. The goal of this study was to assess the safety of the four drug regimen. No safety concerns were seen when compared with

other treatments. Additionally, in the 104 patients evaluated between August 2006 and September 2007, improved survival was observed.

"The combination of multiple targeted therapies in addition to chemotherapy may be the future of treatment in lung cancer," said Edward Kim, M.D., lead author of the study and an assistant professor in the department of thoracic/head and neck medical oncology at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. "Blocking more key cancer pathways such as the epidermal growth factor receptor and vascular endothelial growth factor may lead to improved cancer control."

Source: American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology

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