

Personalized treatment for early lung cancer

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Cancer vaccines and targeted therapies are beginning to offer new treatment options following surgery for patients with early stages of lung cancer, experts said at the first European Multidisciplinary Conference in Thoracic Oncology (EMCTO) in Lugano, Switzerland (1-3 May 2009).

"Personalizing therapy is the key strategy for longer and better survival in [lung cancer](#)," said Prof Paris Kosmidis, head of the second Medical Oncology Department at Hygeia Hospital in Athens, Greece. "This is particularly important for early stage disease when following surgery, decisions about preventive therapy are based on specific prognostic and predictive factors."

Prof Walter Weder, head of thoracic surgery at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, adds: "At the meeting, several research groups will present data from new and ongoing studies that show how existing treatments might be combined with targeted therapies and new cancer vaccines. We hope that these new treatments will provide further progress."

In one poster presentation at the meeting, researchers describe the results of a study that sought to identify which patients are likely to benefit from an immune-boosting vaccine designed to help the immune system recognize MAGE-A3, a protein that is expressed on about 30% of lung cancers.

Studies have shown that the treatment can help patients avoid or delay

[cancer](#) recurrence after surgery. At the conference, researchers will describe a gene signature that might predict which patients will benefit from the treatment.

"Because the benefits of vaccination will be limited to a subgroup of patients, strategies to define these patients by means of biomarkers such as a [genetic signature](#) are of major clinical relevance, as only these [patients](#) might be candidates for vaccination in the future." A larger, phase III, trial of the vaccine is now underway.

The European Multidisciplinary Conference on Thoracic Oncology is organized by the European Society for [Medical Oncology](#) (ESMO), the European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO), the European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS) and the European Respiratory Society (ERS).

Source: European Society for Medical Oncology

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