Patients' pretreatment quality of life can predict overall lung cancer survival

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Research published in the September 2009 issue of the *Journal of Thoracic Oncology* has found that an individual's quality of life prior to treatment can help predict the overall survival of patients with advanced stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

For those with advanced stage NSCLC, the median overall survival varies between six and 12 months, with approximately one-third of patients surviving past the one year mark.

To better understand the factors that predict the overall survival of patients with NSCLC, various research has been done in the past to determine whether or not pretreatment quality of life can help predict overall survival, but yielding conflicting results. To provide a more definitive answer on this question, Yingwei Qi, M.D., M.S., of the Mayo Clinic Rochester in Minnesota, and a team of researchers conducted a pooled analysis of research from six different clinical trials, representing 420 patients overall.

The researchers found that patients' self-assessment of their pretreatment quality of life, measured by the single-item Spitzer Uniscale, can alone predict overall survival, and that for those with a low score, the risk of death was twice as high as for those with high scores.

"This research shows conclusively that, even when we adjust for variables, how patients with advanced stage non-small cell lung cancer rate their quality of life with the Uniscale tool prior to treatment can

predict their overall survival rate," says Dr. Qi. "With the knowledge that quality of life is an independent prognostic factor, doctors will be better able to use this tool in patient assessment to provide more accurate prediction of overall survival."

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among both men and women in the United States, and NSCLC accounts for 80 percent of all lung cancer cases.

Source: International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer