

Second round of gefitinib may be promising lung cancer therapy

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Patients with non-small cell lung cancer in whom treatment with gefitinib is ineffective often have limited options, but results of a new study suggest that retreating patients with the same drug could have a beneficial effect.

"The key may be in tumor heterogeneity," said In-Jae Oh, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in Chonnam National University Hwasun Hospital in the Republic of Korea. "That is, within a tumor, some [cells](#) are independent of epidermal growth factor receptor and those will fail to respond, but we can continue to target the other cells that have become addicted to epidermal [growth factor receptor](#)."

For the current study, presented at the AACR-IASLC Joint Conference on Molecular Origins in [Lung Cancer](#), which was held here from Jan. 11-14, 2010, Oh and colleagues evaluated 15 patients who were retreated with gefitinib after more than one cycle of chemotherapy for advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer.

Among the six patients who had showed partial response with initial gefitinib treatment, two patients showed an additional partial response and three patients continued to show stable disease.

Among the nine patients who showed stable disease with the initial gefitinib treatment, two patients showed partial response and three patients showed stable disease. The overall disease control rate was 66.7 percent.

"After failure with gefitinib and subsequent chemotherapy, we can try gefitinib again especially for the patients who had previously responded to gefitinib. This strategy will keep some patients from the toxicities of [chemotherapy](#) and help maintain the quality of life for several months," said Oh.

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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