

Anti-estrogen medication reduces risk of dying from lung cancer

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A new study has found that tamoxifen, an anti-estrogen breast cancer medication, may reduce an individual's risk of death from lung cancer. Published early online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, the study supports the hypothesis that there is a hormonal influence on lung cancer and that estrogen levels play a role in lung cancer patients' prognosis.

Previous research suggests that menopausal hormone therapy increases women's risk of dying from lung cancer. If this is true, the use of anti-estrogens should have the opposite effect. Elisabetta Rapiti, MD, of the Geneva Cancer Registry led a study that compared lung cancer incidence and mortality among [breast cancer](#) patients who were and were not treated with anti-estrogen therapy. The study included all 6,655 women diagnosed with breast cancer between 1980 and 2003 and registered at the Geneva Cancer Registry. Among these women, 46 percent (3,066) received anti-estrogens. All women were followed for occurrence and death from lung cancer until December 2007.

The investigators found that 40 women in the study developed lung cancer. Incidences of lung cancer was not significantly different between breast cancer patients who were and were not treated with anti-estrogens compared with the general population; however, fewer women taking anti-estrogens died from lung cancer than expected. Specifically, there were 87 percent fewer cases of death due to lung cancer in the anti-estrogen group than in the general population.

"Our results support the hypothesis that there is a hormonal influence on lung cancer which has been suggested by findings such as the presence of estrogen and [progesterone](#) receptors in a substantial proportion of lung cancers," said Dr. Rapiti. "If prospective studies confirm our results and find that anti-estrogen agents improve [lung cancer](#) outcomes, this could have substantial implications for clinical practice," she added.

Provided by Wiley

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