# High EGFR expression a predictor for improved survival with cetuximab plus chemotherapy

July 5 2011

High epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) expression was a good predictor of which lung cancer patients would survive longer when cetuximab (Erbitux) was added to first-line chemotherapy, according to research presented at the 14th World Conference on Lung Cancer in Amsterdam, hosted by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC).

"The new analysis of the Phase III FLEX study has allowed us to identify which non-small cell lung cancer patients are most likely to benefit from treatment with Erbitux in the first-line setting," said principal investigator Dr. Robert Pirker of the Medical University of Vienna in Austria. "By demonstrating that high EGFR expression is the first predictive biomarker for improved overall survival in advanced NSCLC, we have taken a major step towards a more personalized approach in this difficult-to-treat disease."

Based on a new analysis of all FLEX patients (1,121 out of 1,125 FLEX study patients), researchers found that patients with high tumor EGFR expression (200 and above on a scale of 0-300) consistently benefited from the addition of cetuximab to chemotherapy regardless of histology. Within this group, overall survival averaged 12 months, compared with 9.6 months for patients receiving chemotherapy alone.

In patients with low EGFR expression, no difference in overall survival

was seen between patients receiving chemotherapy plus cetuximab, compared to those receiving chemotherapy alone.

Provided by International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer