

Older patients with certain breast cancer subtype may not benefit from radiation therapy

April 2 2012

Local breast radiation therapy may not be necessary for women with the luminal A subtype of breast cancer, particularly those aged older than 60, according to study results presented at the AACR Annual Meeting 2012, held here March 31 – April 4.

“Local breast [radiation therapy](#), however, is still of benefit and is required for all the other breast cancer subtypes,” said Fei-Fei Liu, M.D., staff radiation oncologist at Princess Margaret Hospital, senior scientist at the Ontario Cancer Institute and professor at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The researchers performed molecular subtyping for estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR), Ki-67, HER2, epidermal growth factor receptor and cytokeratin 5/6 on 304 tumor blocks from 769 [women](#) with breast cancer. These women had participated in a randomized trial in which they were assigned to tamoxifen and whole-breast radiation therapy or to tamoxifen alone. Based on the immunohistochemistry results, researchers classified [patients](#) into six categories: luminal A, luminal B, luminal-HER2, HER2-enriched, basal-like or triple-negative phenotype-nonbasal. They followed the patients for a median of 10 years.

Women in the luminal A subgroup, defined as ER-positive, PR-positive, HER2-negative and low Ki-67 (

Citation: Older patients with certain breast cancer subtype may not benefit from radiation therapy (2012, April 2) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-older-patients-breast-cancer-subtype.html>

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