

Adding elesclomol to paclitaxel for advanced melanoma studied

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Lactate dehydrogenase levels may be predictive of success in treating chemotherapy-naïve patients with advanced melanoma with a combination of elesclomol plus paclitaxel, according to research published online Feb. 11 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

(HealthDay)—Lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) levels may be predictive of success in treating chemotherapy-naïve patients with advanced melanoma with a combination of elesclomol plus paclitaxel, according to research published online Feb. 11 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Steven J. O'Day, M.D., of the Los Angeles Skin Cancer Institute in Beverly Hills, Calif., and colleagues conducted a randomized, double-blind trial of paclitaxel 80 mg/m² alone or with elesclomol 213 mg/m² as treatment for 651 chemotherapy-naïve patients with advanced melanoma.

This study was ended prematurely due to a higher number of deaths in

patients treated with paclitaxel alone; therefore, its primary progression-free survival (PFS) end point was not met. The researchers found that paclitaxel-only treated patients tended to have higher LDH levels. However, subgroup analysis did find that median PFS was significantly improved in patients who received combination treatment and who had normal baseline LDH levels.

"In conclusion, the SYMMETRY study did not achieve its primary end point," the authors write. "Prespecified and exploratory analyses suggest that baseline LDH levels may predict treatment outcomes for elesclomol. Literature reports suggest that LDH may more broadly predict activity of other [anticancer agents](#) specific for metabolic states of [cancer cells](#)."

The study was supported by Synta Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of elesclomol; several authors disclosed [financial ties](#) to pharmaceutical companies, including Synta.

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