

Greater representation of elderly patients in Phase III trials are needed

February 22 2013

The median age of patients diagnosed with advanced non–small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) has steadily increased over the recent years and is presently 70 years. Despite this, the elderly are significantly underrepresented in clinical trials. A recent study published in the March 2013 issue of the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer's (IASLC) *Journal of Thoracic Oncology*, investigated the degree to which exclusion or underrepresentation of elderly occurs in practice-changing clinical trials in advanced NSCLC. Researchers conclude that greater representation of elderly patients in phase III trials is required to better define evidence-based paradigms in the increasingly elderly NSCLC population.

Researchers did an extensive literature search, included articles for review if they were phase III, involved [systemic therapy](#) alone, studied advanced NSCLC and were conducted between 1980 and 2010. A total of 248 studies were identified and their full text reviewed by the authors.

Among the 100 most cited trials, 33 percent excluded elderly patients in their trial design. The average reported median patient age in those trials was 60.9 years.

The authors "have clearly demonstrated that a significant proportion of highly cited phase III clinical trials in advanced NSCLC overtly exclude elderly patients." They recommend that a greater emphasis be placed on recruiting clinical trial patients with age demographics that better represent the median age of the advanced [NSCLC](#) population.

Provided by International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

Citation: Greater representation of elderly patients in Phase III trials are needed (2013, February 22) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-02-greater-representation-elderly-patients-phase.html>

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