

Dexamethasone beats placebo for cancer-related fatigue

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(HealthDay)—For patients with advanced cancer, dexamethasone is better than placebo for reducing cancer-related fatigue (CRF), according to a study published online July 29 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Sriram Yennurajalingam, M.D., from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, and colleagues conducted a double-blind, placebo-controlled study to compare the effect of [dexamethasone](#) and placebo on CRF. Patients with three or more CRF symptoms of 4 of 10 on the Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS) were randomized to receive dexamethasone (43 patients) or placebo (41 patients) orally twice per day for 14 days.

The researchers found that the mean improvement in the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness-Fatigue (FACIT-F) subscale was significantly higher in the dexamethasone group than the [placebo group](#) at day 15. The dexamethasone group also experienced a significantly greater improvement in the FACIT-F total quality-of-life scores. At day 15, the mean differences in the ESAS [physical distress](#) score were significantly better for the dexamethasone group, but there was no difference in ESAS overall symptom distress or psychological distress score. Adverse event frequency did not differ significantly between the groups.

"In conclusion, we found dexamethasone to be more effective than placebo in reducing CRF in patients with advanced cancer," the authors write. "There was a significant improvement in quality of life, physical well-being, and physical distress. Larger long-term efficacy and safety studies are needed."

One author disclosed [financial ties](#) to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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