

Cognitive function drug proves beneficial for patients with brain cancer

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(Medical Xpress)—Whole-brain radiotherapy (WBRT) proves to be a positive therapeutic and survival tool in the treatment of brain tumors in adults, but the effect of WBRT on long-term brain function and performance is a major concern. Because of this, researchers at Emory's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing and the Winship Cancer Institute conducted a study that highlighted positive outcomes in long-term cognitive function due to the use of the cognitive drug Memantine.

Deborah Watkins-Bruner, PhD, RN, professor at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing and associate director of cancer outcomes at Winship Cancer Institute at Emory, was part of a team of researchers who selected 508 eligible adult WBRT patients diagnosed with brain cancer. Participants were randomly selected to receive placebo or Memantine within three days of their initial WBRT and for 24 weeks in graduated doses.

A series of cognitive function tests was performed after the start of the study drug for 54 weeks. All patients underwent neurologic exams, history and physical exams, performance status, brain MRI and CT and other neuropsychological evaluations and assessments.

"We were pleased that the preliminary results showed better cognitive function over time in those who took Memantine," explains Watkins-Bruner. "We specifically saw a delay in the time of [cognitive decline](#) and reductions in the rates of memory loss, executive function and processing-speed declines. Further exploration through ongoing trials

will answer some of the questions that remain, but I believe that this is a very positive step in the prevention of [cognitive dysfunction](#)."

Complete findings of the study are available in *Neuro-Oncology*.

More information: [neuro-oncology.oxfordjournals. ... 7f-a2a7-33eaf1aa6635](#)

Provided by Emory University

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