

ASCO report highlights progress against cancer in last year

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(HealthDay)—Progress against cancer is described in the ninth annual report of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, published online Dec. 10 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

In a report featuring 76 studies, Jyoti D. Patel, M.D., from Northwestern University in Chicago, and colleagues reviewed research published or presented over the last year (October 2012 to September 2013) to describe clinical cancer advances. The authors note that about 1.6 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed this year in the United States, and that although overall cancer-related death rates continue to decline, cancer remains the second most common cause of death.

According to the authors, cancer genomics is increasingly being used to make treatment decisions and personalize therapy approaches. Modern genomic technology, including findings from The Cancer Genome Atlas

research network, is also accelerating development of new targeted therapies. Noting the benefits of screening, two reports described new cancer screening models, which can reduce screening disparities and improve outcomes. Several studies discussed immunotherapy approaches, including drugs that block the programmed [cell death 1/programmed cell death 1 ligand 1 pathway](#) and an approach involving reinfusion of genetically engineered autologous T cells. Nine new anticancer drugs were approved in the last year, and indications were expanded for six existing anticancer agents. New U.S. Food and Drug Administration breakthrough therapy designation is expected to accelerate development of new treatments.

"Preserving our nation's investment in [cancer research](#) is absolutely necessary to maintain and increase the momentum that brings new and improved treatments to the growing numbers of people with cancer," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

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