

Study reveal unexpected findings

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Research on a deadly form of brain cancer co-authored by a physician at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center has been published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The three-year research project led locally by David Brachman, M.D., revealed that a 'promising' drug therapy failed to improve survival among patients with newly diagnosed glioblastoma.

"The results of this study are counter to most expectations," said Dr. Brachman, Director of Radiation Oncology at Barrow and St. Joseph's. "Bevacizuman had been shown in earlier studies to be an effective drug in the treatment of patients with recurrent disease. But, on newly diagnosed patients, it did not, in fact, prolong survival."

The randomized, double-blind placebo controlled trial of 621 adults was funded by the National Cancer Institute and the drug manufacturer Genentech from 2009 to 2012. Glioblastoma is the most common primary [malignant brain tumor](#) in adults. Few patients survive beyond five years. "This is a deadly disease and there have been very few new therapy choices for patients in the last 20 years. That is why we were so hopeful about this trial," said Dr. Brachman.

Dr. Brachman says that the results of the trial will be disappointing to many patients desperate for a new therapy. "Because this was a unique trial and since it was a very large study done in a double blind, placebo controlled manner, it is quite definite."

Bevacizuman, which is currently an extremely expensive drug, has been

shown to be effective in other diseases, including ovarian cancer. The study titled "A Randomized Trial of Bevacizumab for Newly Diagnosed Glioblastoma" was published online February 20 in the *Journal*.

Provided by St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

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