

## SABCS: Novel breast CA drugs show promise in early trials

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(HealthDay)—Two preliminary studies into medications under development may offer some hope for women with advanced breast cancer. The findings are scheduled for presentation Wednesday at the annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, held from Dec. 9 to 13 in San Antonio.

For one study, Ian Krop, M.D., Ph.D., director of clinical research with the Breast Oncology Center at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, and colleagues randomly assigned [postmenopausal women](#) with [metastatic cancer](#) to fulvestrant with a placebo (79 patients) or fulvestrant with the experimental drug pictilisib (89 patients). The drug combination appeared to only help women whose cancer was both estrogen-receptor-positive and progesterone-receptor-positive. They

didn't develop worsening symptoms for 7.2 months on average, compared to 3.7 months for the other patients.

The research represents the second phase of three required before medications can receive approval in the United States. "Further work is needed to figure out exactly who would benefit from drugs like this and exactly how they'd use these drugs," Krop told *HealthDay*. "These data would suggest that we should continue to try to develop these drugs and become smarter about which women should use these drugs." Krop said that side effects included diarrhea, rash, and mild nausea. According to the research team, these are typical for treatment with pictilisib alone.

The other study focused on triple-negative [breast cancer](#). In this small study, researchers said just 18 percent of 32 patients, all with cancer that had spread, responded to treatment with pembrolizumab. It's too early to estimate the length of response since the study—still in the first phase of research for U.S. approval—is continuing. Several patients experienced serious side effects thought to be drug-related, and one died.

The first study was funded by Genentech, the manufacturer of pictilisib. The second study is funded by Merck, the manufacturer of pembrolizumab.

**More information:** [Press Release 1](#)  
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