MedicalXpress

Portrazza approved for advanced lung cancer

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(HealthDay)—Portrazza (necitumumab), in combination with two other chemotherapy drugs, has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat advanced squamous non-small cell lung cancer, the agency said Tuesday in a news release.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. More than 221,000 cases are expected to be diagnosed in the U.S. this year, and more than 158,000 people are projected to die from the disease, the FDA said.

Portrazza, approved for people who haven't had a previous therapy for squamous NSCLC, is designed to block a protein that's frequently found on such tumors, the agency explained.

The drug was evaluated in combination with two other drugs, gemcitabine and cisplatin. Those who took the three-drug combination lived for an average of 11.5 months, compared to 9.9 months among those who took the other two drugs without Portrazza.

Portrazza's most common side effects include skin rash and magnesium deficiency. The drug's label includes a boxed warning that the latter can cause deadly complications on its own, including seizures and irregular heartbeat, the FDA said.

Portrazza is marketed by Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly.

More information: The FDA has more about this approval.