

Axillary pCR linked to improved breast cancer survival

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(HealthDay)—For women with breast cancer treated with primary

systemic chemotherapy (PST), achieving axillary pathologic complete response (pCR) is associated with improved survival, according to a study published online Dec. 30 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Sarah S. Mougalian, M.D., from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, and colleagues examined the long-term effect of axillary pCR on relapse-free survival (RFS) and overall survival (OS) among women who received a diagnosis of [breast cancer](#) stages II to III. Participants had cytologically confirmed axillary metastases and were treated with PST. Data were included for 1,600 women, of whom 28.4 percent achieved axillary pCR.

The researchers found that [patients](#) who achieved axillary pCR were more likely to have human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2)-positive and triple-negative disease, pCR in the breast, and high-grade tumors (all P disease, respectively; the corresponding 10-year RFS rates were 89 and 44 percent.

"Axillary pCR was associated with improved 10-year OS and RFS," the authors write.

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