Adding rituximab to chemo ups event-free survival in ALL

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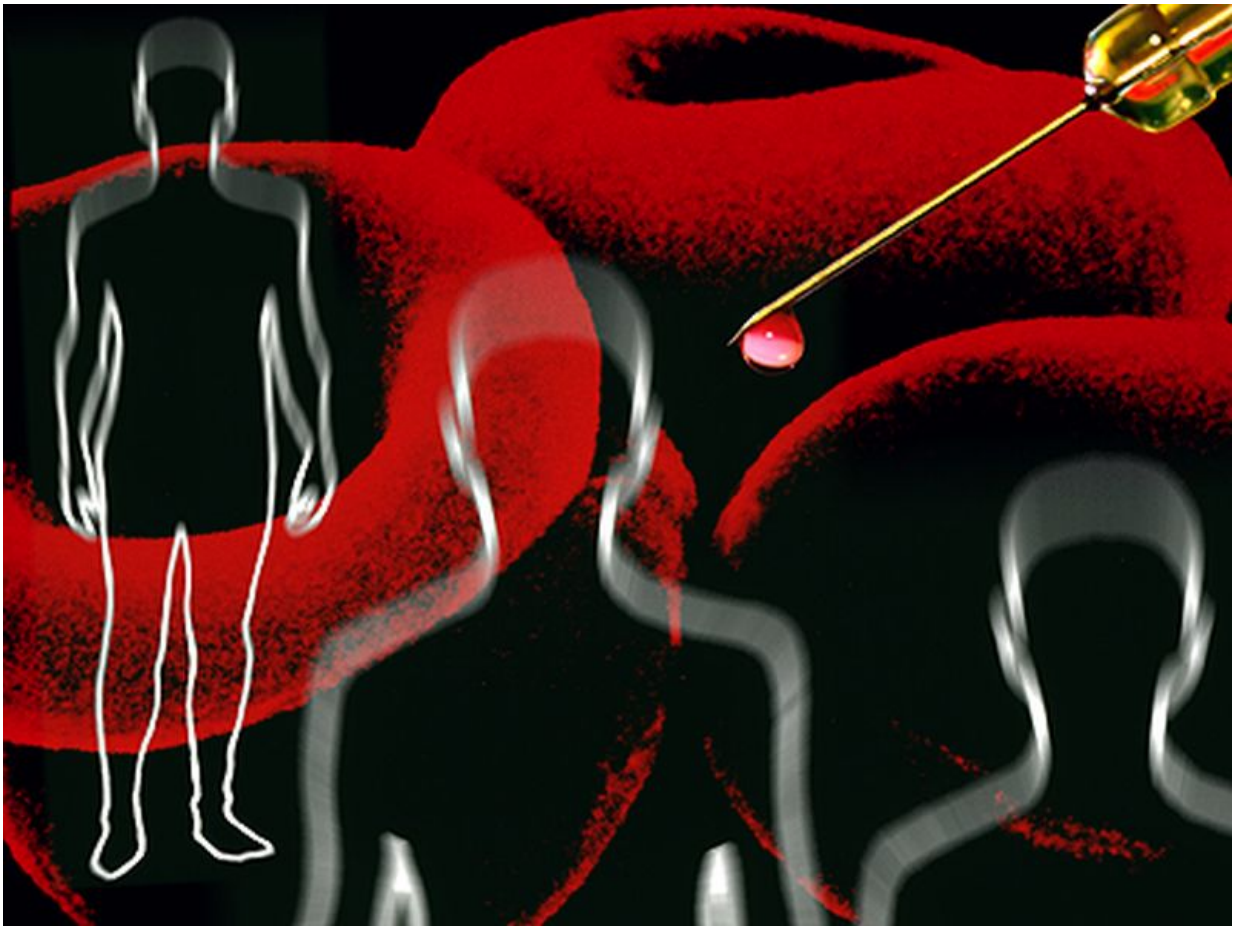

(HealthDay)—For young adults with acute lymphoblastic leukemia

(ALL), adding rituximab to chemotherapy is associated with increased event-free survival, according to a study published in the Sept. 15 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Sébastien Maury, M.D., Ph.D., from the Hôpital Henri Mondor in Paris, and colleagues randomized 209 adults aged 18 to 59 years with CD20-positive, Philadelphia chromosome (Ph)-negative ALL to chemotherapy with (105 patients) or without rituximab (104 patients). Rituximab was given during all treatment phases (16 to 18 infusions).

The researchers found that event-free survival was longer in the rituximab group than the control group (hazard ratio, 0.66; P = 0.04) after a median follow-up of 30 months, with estimated two-year event-free survival rates of 65 and 52 percent, respectively. In multivariate analysis, treatment with rituximab remained associated with longer event-free survival. There was no significant between-group difference noted in the overall incidence rate of severe adverse events; the rituximab group had fewer allergic reactions to asparaginase.

"Adding rituximab to the ALL chemotherapy protocol improved the outcome for younger adults with CD20-positive, Ph-negative ALL," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to biopharmaceutical companies, including Genentech, the manufacturer of rituximab.

More information: Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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