

New anticancer drugs up costs and life expectancy considerably

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(HealthDay)—New anticancer drugs, which increase costs considerably,

are associated with large gains in life expectancy, according to research published in the September issue of *Health Affairs*.

Given the high [costs](#) of new anticancer medications, David H. Howard, Ph.D., from Emory University in Atlanta, and colleagues examined whether these drugs offer value. Data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results-Medicare database were used to assess the value of new cancer treatments in routine clinical practice for metastatic breast, lung, or kidney cancer, or [chronic myeloid leukemia](#) in 1996 to 2000 and 2007 to 2011.

The researchers observed large increases in [medical costs](#), and these correlated with large gains in life expectancy. Lifetime costs, including costs for outpatient and inpatient care increased by \$72,000 for patients with breast cancer who received physician-administered drugs; for these patients, life expectancy increased by 13 months. Patients who did not receive these drugs had much smaller changes in [life expectancy](#) and costs.

"Our results highlight the importance of considering outcomes and overall costs in routine practice when assessing the value of anticancer drugs as a group," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed being employed by Pfizer, which provided funding for the study.

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