

Study of potential new treatment for mesothelioma open to patients

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The Baylor College of Medicine Mesothelioma Treatment Center at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center has begun enrolling patients in a clinical research study looking at an investigational drug in patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma who have started on chemotherapy or whose cancer has progressed after initial chemotherapy.

Pleural mesothelioma is a rare and aggressive [cancer](#) that develops in the pleura, a thin layer of tissue that surrounds the lungs. The most common cause of malignant pleural mesothelioma is exposure to industrial pollutants, predominantly asbestos, a fiber-like material that was used in some industries before its toxic qualities were understood. This disease affects people who were exposed to asbestos in the workplace and their family members.

"The disease is particularly challenging because by the time it's detected – often 20 to 40 years after exposure to the cancer-causing asbestos – the disease can be very advanced," said Dr. David Sugarbaker, professor of surgery, chief of the division of thoracic surgery and director of the Mesothelioma Treatment Center and Lung Institute at Baylor.

"Currently, available treatment options are limited for patients whose mesothelioma has progressed or does not respond after initial anticancer treatment, so clinical research is highly important in helping advance our understanding of how to treat it."

The purpose of this Phase II clinical study is to assess the safety and effectiveness of an investigational cancer drug versus a commonly used

medication in people with [malignant pleural mesothelioma](#) that has advanced and/or metastasized and that is refractory (stopped responding or did not respond to previous [treatment](#)). This [investigational drug](#) binds to a protein called mesothelin, which can be found on the surface of some cancer cells, and releases chemotherapy to the tumor to try to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells.

The investigational drug is currently only available through [clinical research](#) studies such as this one.

More information: Details about this clinical study can be found online: [clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NC ... ab+ravtansine&rank=4](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NC...ab+ravtansine&rank=4)

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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