

Can aspirin help tackle some cancers?

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Low-dose aspirin may improve survival odds for patients battling head/neck and lung cancer, two new studies suggest.

The first reviewed data on 460 patients with head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC) or early stage non-small cell [lung cancer](#) (NSCLC).

That study concluded that taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug such as [low-dose aspirin](#), along with standard radiation therapy or chemotherapy, increased five-year survival by 8%.

The second study focused on 164 patients who underwent a precise, high-dose form of radiation for NSCLC. Of those, 57% who also took aspirin reached the two-year survival mark, compared to 48% of others.

Both studies were led by Dr. Anurag Singh, a professor of oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y.

Both studies were presented earlier this month at the annual meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiation Oncology in Chicago. Research presented at meetings is typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

"We were especially interested to see that these patients lived longer even though the anti-inflammatory drugs did not seem to have an impact on the effectiveness of cancer treatment," said a co-author of the first study, Dr. Austin Iovoli, who is serving a residency at Roswell Park's Department of Supportive Care.

Dr. Gregory Hermann, a [resident physician](#) at Roswell Park, was part of the second study team.

"These studies provide further support for a growing body of literature that demonstrates a benefit for use of non-steroidal [anti-inflammatory drugs](#), such as aspirin, by cancer patients," he added in a cancer center news release.

"Although [clinical trials](#) are needed to make a definitive recommendation, we encourage patients to have a discussion with their doctor regarding the risks and potential benefits of aspirin use," he said.

More information: There's more about aspirin and cancer at [Cancer Research UK](#).

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