

Drug designed to treat metastatic pancreatic cancer may help extend life

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Axial CT image with i.v. contrast. Macrocystic adenocarcinoma of the pancreatic head. Credit: public domain

A drug developed by researchers at the Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University that targets enzymes involved in the development of pancreatic cancer cells is showing promise for improved

treatment of metastatic pancreatic cancer. The drug, called CPI-613 (known as Devimistat), is being combined with the standard chemotherapy regimen (FOLFIRINOX) to treat pancreatic cancer. The Stony Brook Cancer Center has opened a clinical trial with this drug combination to treat patients with metastatic disease.

The phase three clinical trial, approved by the Food and Drug administration and sponsored by Rafael Pharmaceuticals, combines CPI-613 with FOLFIRINOX. A previous phase one study showed a median overall patient survival of 20 months with the drug combination, compared to 11 months when treated with chemotherapy alone. That same study showed a tumor response rate—or tumor reduction—of 61 percent with the combination treatment, compared to nearly 32 percent with the standard regimen.

"This additional option for patients with metastatic [pancreatic cancer](#) offers hope to significantly reduce their tumors and a way to potentially better control metastatic disease," says Minsig Choi, MD, Principal Investigator of the clinical trial and a medical oncologist on Stony Brook Cancer Center's Gastroenterology Oncology Team.

CPI-613 is designed to treat the mitochondrial tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle, the process that produces energy for the tumor cells to survive and multiply. When CPI-613 attacks the TCA cycle it also increases the sensitivity of cancer cells to [chemotherapeutic drugs](#), thus making it more effective in reducing tumors and less susceptible to chemotherapy resistance.

Provided by Stony Brook University

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