

Study suggests that maintaining normal vitamin D levels may benefit patients with advanced skin cancer

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New research indicates that for patients with advanced skin cancer, it may be important to maintain normal vitamin D levels when receiving

immunotherapy medications called immune checkpoint inhibitors. The findings are published by Wiley online in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

Vitamin D has many effects on the body, including regulation of the immune system. To see whether levels of vitamin D might impact the effectiveness of immune checkpoint inhibitors, investigators analyzed the blood of 200 patients with advanced melanoma both before and every 12 weeks during immunotherapy treatment.

A favorable response rate to immune checkpoint inhibitors was observed in 56.0% of patients in the group with normal baseline vitamin D levels or normal levels obtained with vitamin D supplementation, compared with 36.2% in the group with low vitamin D levels without supplementation. Progression-free survival—the time from treatment initiation until [cancer progression](#)—in these groups was 11.25 and 5.75 months, respectively.

"Of course, vitamin D is not itself an [anti-cancer drug](#), but its normal serum level is needed for the proper functioning of the immune system, including the response that [anti-cancer drugs](#) like immune checkpoint inhibitors affect," said lead author Łukasz Galus, MD, of Poznan University of Medical Sciences, in Poland. "In our opinion, after appropriately randomized confirmation of our results, the assessment of vitamin D levels and its supplementation could be considered in the management of melanoma."

More information: Vitamin D supplementation increases objective response rate and prolongs progression-free time in advanced melanoma patients undergoing anti-PD1 therapy, *Cancer* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/cncr.34718](#)

Provided by Wiley

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