

Marine sponge drug extends breast cancer survival: study

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A new agent derived from a marine sponge can extend the survival rates of women with locally recurrent or metastatic breast cancer who already received extensive standard therapy, a new study unveiled Sunday found.

The synthetic component called eribulin mesylate mimics a component found naturally in sponges and can prevent cell division, which causes cells to self-destruct, said study authors who presented their findings at the annual American Society of Clinical [Oncology](#) conference in Chicago.

In a randomized international trial, British researchers assessed the survival rates of 762 patients, treated either with eribulin or another therapy, almost always [chemotherapy](#), and found the new therapy extended median overall survival by about 2.5 months.

"Until now, there hasn't been a standard treatment for women with such advanced [breast cancer](#). For those who have already received all of the recognized treatments, these are promising results," said lead study author Christopher Twelves.

"These findings may establish eribulin as a new, effective option for [women](#) with heavily pre-treated metastatic breast cancer," said Twelves, head of the Clinical Cancer Research Groups at the Leeds Institute of Molecular Medicine in Britain.

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