

Merck KGaA suffers setback on cancer drug

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German pharmaceuticals maker Merck KGaA said Thursday that phase III clinical trials of its gastric cancer drug Erbitux had shown no benefits for patients.

The trials found that in combination with standard chemotherapy, [Erbitux](#) did not extend "the length of time that patients live without their disease getting worse," Merck KGaA said in a statement.

"We are disappointed that the ... trial did not show a benefit for patients with advanced gastric cancer when Erbitux was added to standard chemotherapy," said Florian Lordick, in charge of the clinical trials.

"Understandably, these results are disappointing for patients with advanced [gastric cancer](#), and as a company we will continue to invest in oncology research and development to find new treatments for these diseases," said Merck's head of drug development, Annalisa Jenkins.

The results would not alter the proven utility of Erbitux in its already approved indications for metastatic [colorectal cancer](#) and [head and neck cancer](#), Merck KGaA said.

The news hit Merck KGaA shares which were showing a loss of 0.38 percent at 79.65 euros in mid-morning trade on the Frankfurt stock exchange in a generally firmer market.

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