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Combination of Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy Lengthens Lives of Patients With Anaplastic Oligodendroglial Tumors [1]

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A recent study by the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) shows that chemotherapy after radiation therapy slowed the growth of anaplastic oligodendroglial tumors (a type of brain tumor). It also lengthened the lives of patients with this type of tumor, especially for those whose tumor was missing specific genetic material in chromosomes 1 and 19 (called 1p/19q co-deletions). Currently, most patients with this disease receive either chemotherapy or radiation therapy, but not both.

In this study, 368 patients with newly diagnosed anaplastic oligodendroglial tumors who had not received treatment were given either radiation therapy alone or radiation therapy plus chemotherapy. Chemotherapy was given in six cycles or rounds with the drugs procarbazine (Matulane), lomustine (CeeNu), and vincristine (Vincasar).

For patients receiving the combination of chemotherapy and radiation therapy, the time it took for the disease to worsen was about two years, compared with a little over a year for patients receiving only radiation therapy. In addition, patients receiving the combination treatment lived with their disease for about a year longer than those who received only radiation therapy. About 80 patients in this study had a 1p/19q co-deletion. These patients who received radiation therapy and chemotherapy were about half as likely to die from the disease as those who

received radiation therapy.

What this means for patients

"From this study, it's clear that combining chemotherapy and radiation therapy can significantly improve survival for certain patients," explained lead author Martin Van Den Bent, MD, Professor of Neuro-Oncology at Erasmus MC - Daniel den Hoed Cancer Center in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. "Not only do we now have a better treatment - we also have a genetic marker that can help us determine which patients will benefit, allowing us to personalize treatment for this challenging disease."

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of brain tumor do I have? What does this mean?
- Will tests be done to find out if my tumor has any genetic changes?
- What is my prognosis (chance of recovery)?
- What are my treatment options?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- Will radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or a combination of these treatments be used?

For More Information

[Guide to Brain Tumors](#) [2]

[The Genetics of Cancer](#) [3]

[Facts About Personalized Cancer Medicine](#) [4]

Links

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