

## Cancer Advances: Study Suggests PET Scanning Might Help Doctors Develop More Effective Treatment Plans for Lung Cancer

From the April 1, 2003 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* [Read the Study](#) [1] To determine whether the initial course of treatment for lung cancer has been successful, doctors often rely on a technique called CT scanning. This technique uses x-rays to produce a three-dimensional image of the lungs. While CT scans are often helpful, the results of the scans are not always clear. Recently, however, a more advanced scanning technique has become available that may help overcome this problem. The technique is called positron emission tomography, or PET scanning. PET works much differently than CT scanning, by creating computerized images of chemical changes that take place in tissue. In a recent study led by Dr. Michael Mac Manus of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute in Melbourne, Australia, PET scans were more accurate than CT scans at determining whether initial treatment with radiation and chemotherapy was successful among lung cancer patients. PET scanning also led to more accurate predictions of survival following the initial therapy. **What Does This Mean For Patients?** According to Dr. Mac Manus, PET scanning might allow doctors to make better-informed decisions about whether their patients should receive additional therapy after their planned course of treatment. However, he pointed out that more research is needed to find out exactly how PET scans should be used, and to determine what kinds of therapy should be provided if the initial treatment is not successful. He also noted that CT scans remain useful for many patients, and that PET scans may not be appropriate for everyone. Patients should discuss these and other options with their physician.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.jco.org/cgi/content/abstract/21/7/1285>