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The Drug Everolimus May Be a Treatment Option For People With Rare Neuroendocrine Tumors

In a new analysis of results from a previous study, researchers found that certain factors predict whether an advanced neuroendocrine tumor will worsen. Based on these factors, the drug everolimus (Afinitor) combined with octreotide (Sandostatin) may be a more effective treatment than previously thought. A neuroendocrine tumor begins in the hormone-producing cells of the body's neuroendocrine system, which is a cross between hormone-producing cells and nerve cells.

The original study showed that the drug everolimus combined with octreotide stopped tumor growth for longer than octreotide alone and decreased the risk of the tumor worsening by 23%. In the re-analysis, researchers identified the factors that were associated with a greater chance of the neuroendocrine tumor worsening, which included a tumor that has spread to the bone, a tumor that began in the lung, and high levels of a substance called chromogranin A in the blood. Researchers used these factors to re-examine the results of the original study. They found that everolimus combined with octreotide decreased the risk of the tumor worsening by 38% in the new analysis.

What this means for patients

?We have identified important factors that can help doctors to better determine the optimal treatment for patients with neuroendocrine tumors,? said lead author James Yao, MD [1], Assistant Professor and Deputy Chair of Gastrointestinal Oncology at the University of Texas' MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and 2003 recipient of a Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO Career Development Award. This test is still being studied and is currently only available in clinical trials.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of neuroendocrine tumor do I have?
- What is the stage? What does this mean?
- What are my treatment options?
- Which treatment plan do you recommend?
- Is everolimus an option?
- What clinical trials are open to me?

For More Information

Guide to Neuroendocrine Tumor [2]

Understanding Chemotherapy [3]

Links:
[1] http://www.conquercancerfoundation.org/foundation/What%27s+New/Grantee+James+Yao+highlighted+at+GI+Symp
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/19437
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/24723