Cancer.Net®

Oncologist-approved cancer information from the American Society of Clinical Oncology

PDF generated on May 27, 2016 from
http://www.cancer.net/new-drug-works-well-drug-docetaxel-advanced-lung-cancer

New Drug Works Well with the Drug Docetaxel for Advanced Lung Cancer [1]

ASCO Annual Meeting
June 3, 2013

The combination of docetaxel (Docefrez, Taxotere) and a new drug called ganetespib lengthens patients' lives when used as a second-line therapy for advanced lung cancer, according to a new, large study. Second-line therapy is treatment that is given after the first treatment stops working.

Ganetespib is a type of targeted therapy, a treatment that targets the cancer's specific genes, proteins, or the tissue environment that contributes to cancer growth and survival. Specifically, ganetespib blocks the function of heat shock protein (hsp) 90, a type of protein known as a "chaperone." Chaperone proteins help form other proteins, many of which drive the growth of cancer. If these specific proteins can't be built, they will not be available to help a cancer grow and spread. This is a promising new strategy for treating cancer because it allows the drug to shut down several different cancer-causing proteins at the same time.

The patients who participated in this study had the most common type of lung cancer, lung adenocarcinoma, that had worsened while receiving standard chemotherapy. After the disease worsened, 252 patients received either docetaxel plus ganetespib or only docetaxel. Researchers found that the patients who received both drugs lived about two months longer than those who received only docetaxel. Researchers also found that the patients whose disease did not get worse for six months or longer after diagnosis and initial treatment also showed a lower risk of death with the drug combination.

What this means for patients

“This is the first randomized study to show a treatment benefit for patients with a heat shock protein inhibitor,” said lead study author Suresh S. Ramalingam, MD, Professor of Medical Oncology at the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. “We hope that a similar recently started study will confirm our findings, as patients with this common form and stage of lung cancer urgently need more effective treatments.” Ganetespib is still being researched and currently only available in clinical trials. If you are interested in participating in a clinical trial, talk with your doctor for more information.

Dr. Ramalingam was a recipient of a Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO Career Development Award in 2006.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type and stage of lung cancer do I have? What does this mean?
- What is my prognosis (chance of recovery)?
- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to me?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What are my options if the first treatment doesn’t work?

For More Information

Guide to Lung Cancer [2]

When the First Treatment Doesn’t Work [3]

Clinical Trials [4]

Understanding Targeted Treatments [5]

Links
[1] http://www.cancer.net/new-drug-works-well-drug-docetaxel-advanced-lung-cancer
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/19148
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/24739
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/24863
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/24729