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New Drug Helps Men with Metastatic Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer Live Longer [1]

Genitourinary Cancers Symposium
January 31, 2012

A new clinical trial showed that the drug called radium-223 chloride (Ra-223), designed to treat bone metastases (cancer that has spread to the bone), helps men with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer live longer and slows the development of bone problems from the cancer. Castration-resistant prostate cancer is when the cancer continues to grow and spread without needing the male sex hormone testosterone.

In this study, men with worsening castration-resistant prostate cancer that had spread to the bone received either Ra-223 plus supportive care or a placebo [2] (inactive treatment) and supportive care. Supportive care is the treatment of side effects and symptoms from cancer and its treatment; it can include antibiotics to treat infections and pain management, as well as other treatments. For men with this type of prostate cancer, supportive care and treatment as part of a clinical trial are often the best options available.

Researchers found that the men who received Ra-223 lived about three months longer than the men taking the placebo. This is a significant improvement for men with this type of prostate cancer and, as a result, the study was ended early. In addition, the drug also helped the men participating in the study avoid bone problems from the cancer, such as bone breaks, for a longer time. For example, men who received Ra-223 developed bone problems about five months later than the men who received the placebo.

What this means for patients

?As recently as two years ago, we had very few options for patients with this particularly difficult form of advanced prostate cancer,? said lead author A. Oliver Sartor, MD, Laborde Professor of Cancer Research at the Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans and Medical Director of the Tulane Cancer Center. ?These findings will help us to increasingly individualize advanced prostate cancer treatment, with a new treatment that can extend our patient's lives.?

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of prostate cancer do I have? What is the stage?
- What is my prognosis (chance of recovery)?
- What are my treatment options?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What can be done to manage the side effects of cancer and its treatment?

For More Information

Guide to Prostate Cancer [3]

Palliative Care [4]

Advanced Cancer Care Planning [5]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/research-and-advocacy/research-summaries/new-drug-helps-men-metastatic-castration-resistant-prostate-cancer-live-longer
[2] http://dev-cancernet.asco.org/node/24390
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