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Adding Docetaxel to Hormone Therapy Lengthens the Lives of Men with Metastatic Hormone-Sensitive Prostate Cancer [1]

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Results from a new study led by the National Cancer Institute suggest that adding chemotherapy with the drug docetaxel (Docefrez, Taxotere) to standard hormone therapy lengthens the lives of men newly diagnosed with metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer. Metastatic cancer is cancer that has spread to other parts of the body, and hormone-sensitive prostate cancer uses male hormones called androgens to grow. Hormone therapy, also called androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), lowers levels of androgens in the body, which helps to slow or stop cancer growth. However, it eventually stops working to control cancer growth for most men. This is usually when chemotherapy is given.

As part of this study, 790 men newly diagnosed with metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer received either ADT only or ADT with docetaxel. About two-thirds of the patients participating in the study had high-extent disease, which means that the cancer had spread to major organs and/or to multiple bones. When the disease worsened, men who received ADT plus docetaxel were given additional docetaxel, and men who received only ADT were given docetaxel for the first time.

Overall, researchers found that the men who initially received ADT and docetaxel lived about 14 months longer than those who initially received only ADT. They found that the difference was

even larger for men who had high-extent disease, with those who initially received ADT plus docetaxel living about 17 months longer than those who initially received ADT only. In addition, adding docetaxel earlier on kept the disease from worsening for longer. It took about 13 months longer for men who initially had ADT plus docetaxel to experience symptoms of the disease worsening or new areas of cancer spread when compared with men who initially received only ADT.

What this means for patients

“Hormone therapy has been a standard treatment for prostate cancer since the 1950s,” said lead study author Christopher Sweeney, MBBS, a medical oncologist at the Lank Center of Genitourinary Oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA. “This is the first study to identify a strategy that prolongs survival for men with newly-diagnosed metastatic prostate cancer. The benefit is substantial and warrants this being a new standard treatment for men who have high-extent disease and are able to have chemotherapy.”

Questions to ask your doctor

- What type of prostate cancer do I have? Is it hormone sensitive?
- Has it spread to other parts of my body? How does this affect my chance of recovery?
- What are my treatment options?
- What treatment do you recommend? Why?
- What are the next steps if the first treatment stops working?

For More Information

Guide to Prostate Cancer [2]

Hormone Therapy for Advanced Prostate Cancer [3]

When the First Treatment Doesn't Work [4]

Links
[1] http://www.cancer.net/adding-docetaxel-hormone-therapy-lengthens-lives-men-metastatic-hormone-sensitive-prostate-cancer
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/19562
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/29836
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/24739