

U-M STUDY FINDS LYMPHOMA DRUG EFFECTIVE OVER LONG TERM

Eight years after being treated with a new drug for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, 86 percent of patients were still alive and half had not had a relapse of their disease, according to researchers from the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. The patients had follicular lymphoma, a type of cancer that is not considered curable using traditional treatments. Even if patients initially respond to treatment, the disease almost always returns and becomes more difficult to treat.

The study followed 76 patients who received the drug Bexxar as their first treatment for the disease. Ninety-five percent of the patients saw their tumors shrink from the treatment, and three-quarters of patients went into complete remission. Patients were followed for a median of eight years, and nearly two-thirds have remained in complete remission.

"For years we have known radioimmunotherapy

such as Bexxar is one of the most effective treatments for patients with relapsed follicular lymphoma. These data show Bexxar is particularly effective when used as a front-line treatment," says Mark Kaminski, M.D., director of the Cancer Center's Adult Hematology Clinic, who recently presented the results at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting. "These results compare quite favorably with those achieved with state-of-the-art chemotherapy regimens that take months to deliver. But Bexxar is given as a single treatment, completed within one week, which makes it an extremely convenient regimen for patients."

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, the nation's sixth leading cause of cancer death, is a cancer of the lymph system, which is part of the immune system. Follicular lymphoma is the second most common type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.



Mark Kaminski, M.D., recently presented findings demonstrating the long-term effectiveness of Bexxar, a lymphoma drug.



A patient who was among the first to participate in studies of this drug was featured in a recent *Thrive* story about clinical trials. Visit mcancer.org/thrive to view the story or to learn more about Bexxar.

FRUITS, VEGETABLES STILL MAY PLAY ROLE IN PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER RECURRENCE, DESPITE RECENT STUDY

A recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that a diet including far more than the recommended serving of five fruits and vegetables per day showed no benefit in preventing breast cancer recurrence. However, Zora Djuric, Ph.D., a professor of family medicine at the U-M Cancer Center, still believes that health foods can play a significant role in reducing risk.

"This study doesn't mean you can eat fast food," she said. "The women in the study, on average, were already eating seven servings of fruits and vegetables per day. It makes you wonder what additional benefit there is for increasing that even further."

The study involved 3,000 women who had been successfully treated for early stage breast cancer. Half were assigned to a diet that included 12 servings of fruits and vegetables and a reduced fat intake, while the other half were provided educational materials about the government's 5-A-Day guidelines. Researchers saw no difference in the recurrence rate between the two groups.

However, the study showed a 43 percent decrease in cancer recurrence among women who had high levels

of carotenoids—vitamin-like compounds found in fruits and vegetables—in their blood when they enrolled in the study. Recurrence was also decreased among women who both ate at least five servings of fruits and vegetables and also exercised moderately at least six days a week for 30 minutes before joining the study.

"It may be that what you do your whole life is more important than what you do for a short while," Djuric said. She added that breast cancer survivors are also at risk for cardiovascular disease, a risk that can be lessened through healthy eating.



Zora Djuric, Ph.D., is researching whether a Mediterranean diet will have an impact in preventing colon cancer. The study will look at adults who have had colon polyps, colon cancer or a family history of colon cancer. For more information, dial **800-742-2300, ext. 6504** or visit mcancer.org/thrive.

