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CANCER NEWS MAIN

Aspirin may increase prostate cancer survival

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ATLANTA – Oct. 4, 2004 – Men with prostate cancer might survive longer by regularly taking aspirin, a new study suggests.

While there have been other studies showing regular use of aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) seems to reduce the risk of developing various cancers, including prostate cancer, this is one of the first to suggest that such drugs may help men with prostate cancer live longer.

The study led by Dr. K Khanh H. Nguyen, a radiation oncologist at Fox Chase Cancer Center was presented today at the 46th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO).

"Pretreatment NSAID use was associated with significant delays in distant metastases, decreased rates of second cancers and improvement in overall survival," lead author Nguyen said in a news release. "Our data suggest a potential benefit of NSAIDs in managing prostate cancer."

The Fox Chase study involved 1,206 men who had definitive radiation therapy for localized prostate cancer. The researchers compared long-term treatment outcomes of 232 patients who had used NSAIDs regularly before treatment with the outcomes of the 974 men with no history of regular NSAID use. Other characteristics, such as smoking, were balanced between the two groups. The follow-up period averaged more than four and a half years.

After taking into account other variables such as age, Gleason score and radiation dose, the use of anti-inflammatory drugs remained a predictor for improved overall survival.

Laboratory studies have suggested that by inhibiting the COX-1 and COX-2 enzymes, NSAIDs may enhance programmed cell death (apoptosis) and inhibit the development of blood vessels (angiogenesis) that feed a tumor. The Fox Chase researchers concluded that inhibiting these COX enzymes holds promise in prostate cancer treatment and warrants further studies.

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