

Immunotherapy Improves Long-Term Survival

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Long-term data show that about half of metastatic melanoma patients treated with two immune checkpoint inhibitors survived cancer-free for at least a decade. In 2011, the median survival time for people with advanced melanoma was just over six months, but the emergence of immunotherapy has gradually increased survival.

The Phase III CheckMate 067 trial followed 945 patients in 21 countries. The researchers previously reported that a combination of Opdivo (nivolumab) and Yervoy (ipilimumab) dramatically improved outcomes, with increased survival at three, five and 6.5 years. Now, they have shown that patients without cancer progression at three years have a high likelihood of remaining alive and disease-free at 10 years. What's more, the 10-year analysis found no concerning signals of long-term toxicity.

Other studies presented at this year's European Society for Medical Oncology Congress add to the good news. Researchers reported improved long-term survival for women with early stage triple-negative breast cancer treated with Keytruda (pembrolizumab) before and after surgery and for patients with muscle-invasive bladder cancer who received Imfinzi (durvalumab).

"The main message from all of these studies is that immunotherapy continues to keep its promise and hope of long-term survival for many patients with different types of cancer," says Alessandra Curioni-Fontecedro, MD, of Hospital of Fribourg in Switzerland.
