

Targeted Drug Outperforms Chemotherapy for Patients with Hard-to-Treat Lung Cancer

Zegfrovy extended survival and showed greater antitumor activity than standard chemotherapy.

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- Sunvozertinib is an oral pill targeting specific forms of mutant EGFR, made by Dizal Pharmaceutical.
- Phase III WU-KONG28 trial evaluated sunvozertinib in patients with advanced lung cancers and specific mutations in EGFR.
- Study showed the drug extended lives and had more antitumor activity compared to chemotherapy.
- Sunvozertinib received accelerated FDA approval for these patients in 2023.

ABSTRACT [LBA8500](#)

CHICAGO, MAY 29, 2026 —The targeted therapy sunvozertinib [Zegfrovy] was more effective than standard platinum-based chemotherapy as a first-line treatment for patients with advanced non-small cell [lung cancer](#) (NSCLC) driven by EGFR exon 20 insertion mutations (EGFR exon20ins), according to new research from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Results from the Phase III WU-KONG28 trial revealed that sunvozertinib significantly extended progression-free survival, or the time patients lived without their disease worsening, to more than 10 months, compared to 7.5 months with chemotherapy alone. The treatment also shrank tumors in 58.9% of patients receiving sunvozertinib, compared with 31.1% on chemotherapy.

The findings were presented [May 28] at the [2026 American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\) Annual Meeting](#) by lead author [John Heymach, MD, PhD](#), chair of [Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology](#) and published concurrently in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#).

“For years, patients with lung cancer harboring EGFR exon 20 insertion mutations have faced poor outcomes because available treatments simply didn’t work well, or have substantial toxicities,” Heymach said. “These results show that sunvozertinib can control the disease longer and shrink

tumors more often than chemotherapy, offering a new, much-needed option for those starting treatment.”

What is sunvozertinib and how can it benefit patients?

EGFR exon20ins mutations occur in a small group of patients with NSCLC, and these cancers are especially difficult to treat because they do not respond well to earlier generations of targeted therapies. Sunvozertinib is a next-generation EGFR inhibitor designed specifically to block the abnormal signaling caused by these exon20ins mutations.

Sunvozertinib also is taken as an oral pill, which can make treatment more convenient for patients and reduce the amount of time needed in the clinic or hospital.

In August 2023, sunvozertinib was granted accelerated approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for patients with advanced NSCLC with EGFR exon20ins who had previously been treated with platinum-based chemotherapy.

What are other key findings of the WU-KONG28 study?

The international trial enrolled 324 patients who were randomly assigned to receive either sunvozertinib once daily or standard chemotherapy with carboplatin and pemetrexed, followed by pemetrexed maintenance. Patients receiving chemotherapy were allowed to switch to sunvozertinib if their cancer progressed.

Responses lasted a median of 11.2 months with sunvozertinib versus 7.1 months with chemotherapy. Side effects were consistent with earlier studies. Only 7.4% of patients stopped treatment due to drug-related side effects, and no treatment-related deaths occurred.

Limitations of the study include that the overall survival results aren’t detailed yet. Also, because most patients on chemotherapy switched to sunvozertinib once their cancer progressed, it makes long-term comparisons between the two groups difficult.

More information on all UT MD Anderson ASCO Annual Meeting content can be found at MDAnderson.org/ASCO.

This study was funded by Dizal Pharmaceutical. A full list of collaborating authors and their disclosures can be found with the paper in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#).

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