Roman Perez-Soler, M.D.

Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care

Breakthrough Chemotherapy Agents Bring New Hope in Treating Lung Cancer

Lung cancer continues to be the No. 1 cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care unites some of the nation's finest and most experienced surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and interventional pulmonologists to form a highly skilled multidisciplinary team of experts. Incorporating science and medicine, the team collaborates on each lung cancer case to develop a customized and effective cancer treatment strategy.

Breakthrough Chemotherapy Agents

Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care and its research partner, the National Cancer Institute-designated Albert Einstein Cancer Center, work collaboratively to continue to give patients access to the most advanced expertise, technologies and treatment options in the field of lung cancer.

In addition to offering the most advanced surgical and radiation therapy approaches, the Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care is leading in the effort to introduce chemotherapeutic agents that maximize effectiveness while reducing negative side effects.

Roman Perez-Soler, M.D., Chairman and Chief of the Department of Oncology, Montefiore Medical Center, Gutman Professor of Medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Associate Director for Clinical Research and Co-Leader of the Experimental Therapeutics Program at Albert Einstein Cancer Center, is internationally recognized for his work in developing advances in cancer detection and treatment. By employing a variety of chemotherapeutic drugs that can be used alone or in combination with other courses of treatment, Dr. Perez-Soler and his staff are focused on slowing tumor growth and the spread of metastatic lung cancer, reducing pain and prolonging patients' lives.

"We are very committed to developing and utilizing new therapies that are absent the difficult side effects associated with commonly used chemotherapies," says Dr. Perez-Soler. "Lung cancer is a complex disease to treat and is one of the most challenging cancers for patients. Our efforts to better understand the disease, its causes and varying effects on different patients help us to effectively personalize and target therapies."

Targeted Molecular Therapy

The treatment of cancer is currently undergoing a dramatic shift not seen since the advent of chemotherapy. Spurred by advances in the study of genetics and molecular biology, this new approach, called targeted molecular therapy, will change the way cancer is diagnosed and treated. The molecules and pathways currently targeted by this revolutionary treatment approach are those that provide the cancer cell with the ability to divide continuously, resist cell death, invade surrounding tissues and metastasize to distant sites. The treatment approach has limited or nonexistent side effects on normal cells of the body, and it can also complement other existing cancer therapies. Targeted molecular therapy could provide promising results for people with advanced lung cancer.

"Crizotinib, an experimental drug not yet approved by the FDA, is proving effective in treating the lung cancers of some patients whose tumors carry a certain genetic mutation and has the potential to be a game-changer in the treatment of lung cancer," says Dr. Perez-Soler. "Researchers have identified a small group of patients who, because of a very specific genetic abnormality, are extremely sensitive to these targeted treatments and as a result of that can benefit from this drug without toxicity. It's very encouraging, and Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care will start clinical trials on this new drug in one or two years."

For more information about the complete offerings of the Lung Cancer Program at Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care, please visit www.montefiore.org/services/coe/cancer/lung. ■