

Targeting cancer genetics has tripled survivorship in last 40 years

About 14.5 million people in the United States have outlasted cancer or lived with a malignancy for more than five years, according to a report by the American Association for Cancer Research. The progress reflects the use of new scientific tools that have allowed researchers to explore the genetic basis of cancer and target the molecular triggers that set it off or allow it to flourish.

Targeted cancer drugs approved between 1998 and 2001, including Roche Holding's Herceptin for breast cancer and Novartis' Gleevec for leukemia, helped ignite the genomic strategy that continues to pay dividends today, the report said. Since Aug. 1 of last year, regulators have cleared five new targeted treatments for cancer.

"There have been a mixture of successes and not-so-much successes, but the number of successes are growing rapidly when you look at all the new FDA-approved therapies," Jeffrey Engelman, an oncologist and spokesman for the cancer organization said. "It's a rather exciting time."

Increasingly, patients suffering from cancers such as leukemia are being splintered into smaller groups based on the specific genetics of their malignancies, rather than where the disease occurs.

Read the full, original story: [Genetics helping survivor tally triple from 40 years ago](#)