

Pharmaceutical companies join forces to advance precision medicine in cancer treatment

The National Cancer Institute is launching a major trial in which it will play matchmaker between 1,000 advanced cancer patients and the growing cadre of drugs that can target tumors by their genetic mutations, not just where they occur in the body.

The study, called NCI-Match, seeks to advance the emerging field of precision medicine by helping to spur development of drugs that precisely target mutations linked to tumor growth. At least 10 pharmaceutical companies will provide a total of more than 20 treatments to be tested—all under the structure of a single study.

Increasing knowledge about the genetic causes of disease is prompting intense interest in the concept of precision medicine. In January, President Barack Obama proposed a \$215 million initiative aimed at discovering more disease-causing mutations and spurring development of drugs to attack them. In oncology, which researchers view as the field most advanced with the strategy, the science is prompting researchers to develop treatments that target the mutations regardless of where a patient's cancer is located in the body.

The studies reflect how the growing understanding of cancer genetics and the ever-lowering cost of DNA sequencing are changing how patients are treated and how drugs are developed. Several academic centers and some community oncology practices offer genetic analysis of tumor DNA for many of their advanced cancer patients in hopes of pairing them with a promising treatment, but little is known about whether this is improving outcomes for patients.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [U.S. Cancer Study to Match Existing Drugs to Genetic Mutations](#)