

'Cancer vaccine' boosts survival rates when combined with immunotherapy drugs in small study

The largest study to date of a "cancer vaccine" plus one of the immunotherapy drugs that has revolutionized cancer treatment found that they kept patients' tumors in check longer, on average, than drugs alone, but that the benefit was still only a few months for two forms of cancer, study sponsor Neon Therapeutics reported on [July 15].

It was a hint that an experimental therapy often described as the next great hope for immune-based approaches to fighting cancer will not be a silver bullet.

In the study, the 21 patients with metastatic bladder cancer, and the 27 with metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer, had a median progression-free survival (PFS) of 5.6 months, meaning half saw their tumors grow or spread before that time.

The 34 metastatic melanoma patients did dramatically better: After 13.4 months, the PFS had not yet been reached. That is, fewer than half the patients had experienced cancer growth or further metastasis by that point.

By comparison, in clinical trials of the immunotherapy drugs called [checkpoint inhibitors](#), median progression-free survival has been about two to four months in non-small cell lung, and two to three months in bladder cancer.

Read full, original post: [In a small study, a cancer vaccine assist beats immunotherapy drugs alone](#)