

Brain cancer survival improved following FDA approval of bevacizumab, study finds

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A new population-based study has found that patients with glioblastoma who died in 2010, after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of bevacizumab, had lived significantly longer than patients who died of the disease in 2008, prior to the conditional approval of the drug for the treatment of the deadly brain cancer. Bevacizumab is used to treat patients with certain cancers whose cancer has spread. The study appears in the journal *Cancer*.

"There has been a great deal of debate about the effectiveness of bevacizumab in treating patients with glioblastoma," says lead author Derek Johnson, M.D., a neuro-oncologist at Mayo Clinic Cancer Center. "Our study found that, at the population level, treatment strategies involving bevacizumab prolonged survival in patients with progressive glioblastoma."

Researchers analyzed data on 5,607 adult patients from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) database before and after the conditional approval of bevacizumab for the treatment of glioblastoma in 2009. The SEER database covers 18 geographic areas of the U.S., which collectively represent 28 percent of the U.S. population.

Researchers studied survival in 1,715 patients with glioblastoma who died in 2006, 1,924 who died in 2008 and 1,968 who died in 2010. "The difference in survival between 2008 and 2010 was highly significant and likely unrelated to any advancements in supportive care," Dr. Johnson

says. "This study provides the strongest evidence to date that bevacizumab therapy improves survival in patients with glioblastoma."

Glioblastoma, is an [aggressive cancer](#) in which tumors grow rapidly and spread rapidly to new sites. It is the most common [malignant brain tumor](#) in adults and accounts for about 22 percent of all brain cancers. About 3,000 people develop a glioblastoma each year in the U.S.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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