

Rituximab beneficial in secondary progressive MS

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(HealthDay)—For patients with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis

(SPMS), treatment with rituximab is associated with a significantly lower Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS) score and delayed progression, according to a study published online Jan. 7 in *JAMA Neurology*.

Yvonne Naegelin, M.D., from the University of Basel in Switzerland, and colleagues conducted a [retrospective cohort study](#) using data from [patients](#) with SPMS at three multiple sclerosis centers from 2004 to 2017. The EDSS score was compared for 54 patients with SPMS treated with rituximab and 59 patients not treated with rituximab; after propensity score matching, 44 pairs of patients were included. Patients were followed for up to 10 years.

The researchers found that patients with SPMS who were treated with rituximab had a significantly lower EDSS score during a mean follow-up of 3.5 years in the covariate-adjusted matched set (mean difference, -0.52). In the rituximab-treated group, the time to confirmed disability progression was significantly delayed (hazard ratio, 0.49).

"Only a few anti-inflammatory treatments may be associated with a beneficial outcome in patients with SPMS," the authors write. "The differential response to these treatments may provide clues to understanding which parts of the B-cell response are pathogenic in SPMS and which patients might benefit from such treatments."

Several authors disclosed financial ties to [pharmaceutical companies](#), including Biogen, which manufactures rituximab.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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