Drug may significantly reduce risk of relapse in people with kidney cancer, study finds

Approximately 300,000 people worldwide are diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma each year, and of the 16 percent of patients diagnosed with stage III or localized type of the disease, almost half will relapse following surgery and develop metastases. A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine has shown for the first time that use of the cancer drug sunitinib in an adjuvant setting can significantly improve disease-free survival in patients who are at high risk for tumor recurrence.

Dr. Allan Pantuck is a professor of urology at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, where he serves as Director of Translational Research for the UCLA Kidney Cancer Program. He specializes in gene and immune therapies for genitourinary cancer, molecular and genomic characterizations of kidney cancer, and the nutritional aspects of bladder and prostate cancer prevention and treatment. He has published and lectured widely, and is board certified in urology.

A co-author of the study, Dr. Pantuck can speak on the emerging scientific research regarding the effectiveness of sunitinib in treating renal cell carcinoma and in comparison to traditional strategies, such as radiotherapy and hormone therapy, that have not proven successful. He can also address how relapse risk can be assessed using the Integrated Staging System (UISS) developed at UCLA.

“Kidney cancer is a deadly disease, and while the prognosis for metastatic renal cell carcinoma has improved in the past decade, if the cancer returns there are extremely few treatment options and survival is usually measured in months,” said Dr. Pantuck. “The results from this extensive study show encouraging survival and strong safety data, and support sunitinib as a potential new adjuvant treatment option for people with kidney cancer.”

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UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center has more than 450 researchers and clinicians engaged in cancer research, prevention, detection, control, treatment and education. One of the nation's largest
comprehensive cancer centers, the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center is dedicated to promoting research and translating basic science into leading-edge clinical studies. In August 2016, the Jonsson cancer center ranked among the top five cancer centers nationwide by U.S. News & World Report.