New Treatment Could Fight Liver Cancer

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Researchers have identified a new therapy that could help treat hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, the most common form of liver cancer) in a certain subset of people with the disease. They investigated a small molecule called BLU-554 that inhibits fibroblast growth factor receptor 4 (FGFR4) and presented their findings at the 50th International Liver Congress in Vienna, Austria.

Some people with HCC will have harmful growth in the FGFR4 proteins, likely driving liver cancer; an estimated 30 percent of people with the cancer may be good candidates for this new treatment.

Liver cancer is a potential outcome of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection.

“Most people are diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma once the cancer is at an advanced stage and the outlook is poor,” Laurent Castera, MD, PhD, vice secretary of the European Association for the Study of the Liver, said in a press release. “Median survival from time of diagnosis is about six months. Finding new disease drivers and treatment options for patients with hepatocellular carcinoma is critical to make strides against this devastating disease.”

The investigators developed liver cancer models in a laboratory setting, which helped them determine that BLU-554 significantly fought the development of tumors.

Phase I clinical trials of BLU-554 are planned to begin soon.

To read a press release about the study and the conference abstract, click here.

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