

13. December 2013

New Methods Improve Breast Cancer Therapy

The Charité presents research findings at world's largest conference on breast cancer.

Scientists at the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin have identified new pieces of the puzzle surrounding more specifically targeted and patient-specific use of chemotherapy in breast cancer. They were able to identify groups of patients, in which the use of chemotherapy is expected to be particularly effective. The researchers present their latest findings this week at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in Texas, USA. These results were obtained in the context of the EU research project RESPONSIFY*, funded in the amount of 6 million Euros distributed across partners in six European countries.

In Europe, approximately 463,000 women show new cases of breast cancer each year. The aim of the RESPONSIFY project is to identify the conditions that determine which specific drug substances might be expected to be the most or, if it is the case, least effective in the treatment of breast cancer, including the substances trastuzumab, lapatinib and carboplatin. In order to better observe the effects on the tumor, researchers administered the chemotherapy and aforementioned drug substances prior to surgically removing the tumor. They found that carboplatin is effective in patients with tumors in which many inflammatory cells can be found. Trastuzumab and lapatinib exhibit relatively weak effects in tumors exhibiting a certain mutation occurring in approximately 19 percent of cases. "We have demonstrated that the body's own defense system is capable of supporting and strengthening the effects of chemotherapy." was how Prof. Carsten Denkert of the Institute of Pathology described the results. "We are very pleased to now present the findings of a European research project here in Texas and to have prompted such international interest."

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*RESPONSIFY has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 278659.