Title

CALGB 70601—Education as a predictor of survival in cancer clinical trials

Simple title: CALGB 70601: A lung cancer study to look at whether or not a patient's years of schooling makes a difference in how long they live

Why the study was done

Researchers wanted to know if the amount of education patients had could predict how long they live with lung cancer when they take part in a lung cancer study. This study looked at 1,577 patients who took part in 11 CALGB lung cancer studies and the number of years they went to school.

This chart shows lung cancer patients who took part in these lung cancer studies and how far they went in school:

Education	Number of patients who participated	Number of patients who died
Grade 1-8	206	196
Grade 9-11	284	273
High school graduate	524	496
Some college	355	333
College degree	208	193

When did the study start and end? This study included patients with lung cancer who took part in 11 CALGB studies between August 1989 and January 2001.

How many patients participated? Researchers looked at the results for 1,577 patients. Of the total number of patients, 1,177 patients had non–small cell lung cancer and 400 patients had small cell lung cancer.

The largest group of patients (33 percent) had finished high school, 23 percent had some years of college and 31 percent (about 490 patients) started but did not finish high school. Patients who stopped attending school before high school (13 percent) were more likely to be male, nonwhite and older. This group was also more likely to be unable to do as much physically (performance status PS 1 or 2) and more likely to have chest pain.

Study results

Important findings: Patients in the study with less education had worse physical function than patients with more education. Patients with lung cancer in this study lived an average of 11 months. Patients who lived for a shorter time were more likely to be men or unmarried or to have difficulties breathing, weight loss, a high white blood cell count, or cancer that had spread to the liver, bone or adrenal glands. Years of education did not make a difference in how long a patient lived.

What the results mean

For those lung cancer patients who agreed and were able to take part in a study, years of education did not predict how long they would live with their lung cancer. In the cancer studies, all cancer patients received treatment and follow-up care, regardless of their years of education. The number of years of education did not make a difference in how long patients lived if they were on a cancer study.

Scientific publications about this study

Details about the study can be found in this article:

- Patient education level as a predictor of survival in lung cancer clinical trials
  Herndon II JE, Kornblith AB, Holland JC, Paskett ED
  Journal of Clinical Oncology 26:4116-4123, 2008

You can also talk with your doctor for more information.

This sheet reviews what is known about this research study as of March 2011. New Information may be available.

This study was sponsored by the Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB; www.calgb.org) – a national cooperative group that runs large-scale cancer clinical trials. The CALGB is supported by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and brings together scientists to develop better treatments for cancer.

Research studies (or clinical trials) are done to learn what works better for people in order to find, treat, or prevent cancers. Thank you for your interest in learning more about cancer research advances.