

WEB EXCLUSIVES

Doxil Delays Disease Without Increasing the Risk of Heart Damage

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Women who had received doxorubicin before or immediately after surgery and later progress with advanced disease can benefit from Doxil, a liposome-encapsulated form of the anthracycline doxorubicin, without an increased risk of heart damage, according to research presented in San Antonio on Sunday.

Anthracyclines can cause heart damage in some patients and the damage accumulates over time limiting the drug's use after a patient has been treated with a total of about 400 mg/m² of doxorubicin; but, Doxil envelopes doxorubicin within a bubble of fat so that it can be released slowly and cause fewer and less severe side effects. A total of 751 patients were randomly assigned to receive Taxotere (docetaxel) with or without Doxil. Median time to progression (the length of time before the cancer progressed) improved by almost three months in the Doxil group, reaching 9.8 months compared with seven months for the Taxotere-alone group. Overall survival was similar between the two groups (20.7 months in the Taxotere-alone group compared with 20.6 months for the Doxil plus Taxotere group).

Cardiac toxicity did not increase in the Doxil group, and three cases of congestive heart failure were reported in the Doxil arm compared with four cases in the arm not receiving Doxil. As expected, hand-foot syndrome (pain, swelling, or numbness of the hands or feet) and stomatitis (inflammatory disease of the mouth) were substantially more frequent in patients receiving Doxil. Other serious adverse events were comparable between the arms.

Read more of *CURE's* coverage of the 31st annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium at <http://media.curetoday.com/htmlmail/sabcs>.