

## TREATMENT FOR ADVANCED LUNG CANCER

Rosemary Cress, DrPH  
Director of Research, CRGC

Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is the leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide. Unfortunately, the vast majority of patients are diagnosed with Stage III or IV disease, which dramatically reduces the chance for cure or meaningful survival. The overall 5-year survival rate is approximately 16%.

The incorporation of surgery into a multidisciplinary treatment plan is associated with increased overall survival, but very few patients receive surgery. The purpose of this study was to assess use of surgery for patients diagnosed with advanced stage NSCLC in California. This was a collaboration between Dr. Rosemary Cress at the CRGC and Dr. Elizabeth David, a thoracic surgeon at the UC Davis Medical Center.

Using data from the California Cancer Registry, we identified 34,016 patients diagnosed between 2004 and 2012 with Stage IIIA, IIIB and IV NSCLC. Twenty-seven percent of patients received no treatment. The most common treatment modality was chemoradiation, received by 26% of patients. Only 11% of patients had surgery as part of their treatment (sublobar resection, lobectomy or bilobectomy/pneumonectomy). There was a significant decline over time in receipt of surgery alone or in combination with other treatment. Survival was significantly longer for patients who had surgery alone or in combination with radiation or chemotherapy.

Results of this study must be interpreted with caution as not all advanced stage NSCLC patients are good candidates for surgery, and the patients who were treated with surgery were likely selected because they were considered healthy enough for surgery. However, surgery clearly substantially improves the survival for those who receive it, so the authors suggest that late stage patients would benefit from having a thoracic surgeon involved in staging and treatment decisions. The decline in use of surgery over time is of concern.

More information can be found in the article about the study that was published in the Annals of Thoracic Surgery. The study also was highlighted in the US World and News Report: <http://health.usnews.com/health-care/articles/2016-06-21/do-too-many-lung-cancer-patients-miss-out-on-surgery>.

As always, this important research could not be completed without the diligent efforts of registrars and other registry staff who collect information from medical records and ensure complete and high quality data.