

Patient questions, ALTO Arm 2:

The Adjuvant Lapatinib and/or Trastuzumab Treatment Optimisation study (ALTO) is discontinuing Arm 2 of the phase III clinical trial of two targeted therapies for patients with early stage HER2-positive breast cancer. All patients in the trial received other treatments as part of standard of care as indicated (such as chemotherapy, radiation, anti-estrogens) after surgery, and were randomized to one of four different ways to receive the two types of anti-HER2 therapy trastuzumab or lapatinib. The change in status of this trial directly affects patients assigned to Arm 2, lapatinib alone.

How have my chances for optimal breast cancer outcome been affected by my participation in ALTO's lapatinib only arm?

It is difficult to predict an individual's recurrence rate based on the data. You should contact your study doctor to discuss treatment options--because your study doctor knows your disease and treatment history he/she is in the best position to offer guidance for your ongoing breast cancer care.

A patient Helpline has been set up to answer your questions (call 888 313 5689)

What does it mean that "I will be offered trastuzumab"? Do I have to pay for it?

GlaxoSmithKline has offered to provide trastuzumab free of charge for eligible patients in North America and in other countries whose insurance carrier declines to cover the drug.

I was treated with lapatinib, and now I feel I missed out on the care that is routinely given to patients like me who did not volunteer for this clinical trial.

Clinical trials are conducted to test therapies that may offer benefit to patients, and the best of these studies compare promising new treatment against the standard of care, while ensuring the safety of patients. That is how medicine advances. All patients in this trial have received other treatments in standard of care. Your participation in this clinical trial is greatly valued, and appreciated, and the knowledge gained in this trial will help physicians improve treatment of breast cancer in the future.

I am being treated with lapatinib for advanced breast cancer. Does this mean this drug is not as effective for me?

We would not conclude that.

Lapatinib has been shown to have activity in breast cancer, both to help shrink tumors before surgery and also in patients with advanced (metastatic) disease.

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