

EA6174/STAMP Clinical Trial Results Summary

Testing Pembrolizumab Versus Observation in Patients With Merkel Cell Carcinoma After Surgery

What did this trial involve and who was it for?

EA6174/STAMP was for people with stage 1-3B Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC) that had been removed by surgery. The trial was open to enrollment from October 2018 to July 2024. MCC is a rare and aggressive form of skin cancer. The usual treatment is surgery, followed by close observation (regular monitoring through check-up visits, blood tests, or scans) and sometimes radiation therapy. Unfortunately, MCC often comes back (recurs), and fewer than half of patients survive 5 years after their diagnosis.

The purpose of EA6174/STAMP was to see if giving the drug pembrolizumab after surgery would help lower the chance of the cancer growing back and help patients live longer. Pembrolizumab is a type of immunotherapy known as a PD-1 inhibitor. It works by stimulating the immune system to destroy cancer cells. Pembrolizumab was already approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in other cancers.

A total of 293 people whose tumors had been removed by surgery participated in EA6174/STAMP. Participants were randomly assigned by a computer to one of two treatment groups:

1. The current standard approach: observation, or
2. The study approach: pembrolizumab given for one year.

Patients in both groups were also able to receive radiation therapy if it was advised by their doctor.

What are the results?

- The study approach (one year of pembrolizumab) showed a small improvement in the amount of time patients lived without signs of their cancer returning, but this difference was not large enough to be considered statistically meaningful.
 - Two years after surgery, 73% of patients who received pembrolizumab showed no recurrence compared with 66% of patients who did not receive the drug.
- The study approach did show a significant improvement in the amount of time patients lived without their cancer spreading to distant parts of the body, such as the liver, lungs, or bones.
 - Patients who received pembrolizumab had a 42% lower risk of developing distant tumors within two years after treatment.

What do the results mean for patients?

- Receiving pembrolizumab after surgery may help people with Merkel cell carcinoma by preventing their cancer from returning in distant parts of the body.
- Researchers are still collecting long-term survival data to better understand the full benefits of pembrolizumab.

For more information, go to:

- United States National Institutes of Health (NIH) Library of Medicine:
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/study/NCT03712605>
 - *Annals of Oncology*: [https://www.annalsofoncology.org/article/S0923-7534\(25\)04838-0/fulltext](https://www.annalsofoncology.org/article/S0923-7534(25)04838-0/fulltext)
 - ECOG-ACRIN Website:
<https://ecog-acrin.org/press-release-immunotherapy-after-surgery-shows-potential-in-preventing-the-spread-of-aggressive-skin-cancer/>
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About ECOG-ACRIN

This trial was led by the ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group (ECOG-ACRIN). ECOG-ACRIN is a membership-based scientific organization that designs and conducts cancer research involving adults who have or are at risk of developing cancer. ECOG-ACRIN is a component of the National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network. Learn more at www.ecog-acrin.org.

To all the patients that participated in this trial, thank you. Your participation, and that of other patients like you, made this research possible.