

The Southampton Press

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CANCER JOURNEYS

A Twice-a-month column from
Fighting Chance

– *GAME CHANGER* –
*New Treatment for
Advanced Breast Cancer*



Diagnosis

Emotional Impact

Treatment/Side Effects

Survivorship

Patient Stories

The Ovation

On June 5, 2022 thousands of oncologists were packed in to a convention center auditorium in Chicago to hear about a new drug that might revolutionize the treatment for metastatic breast cancer.

Then, the results were announced of a clinical trial involving almost 600 patients, all of whom had metastatic breast cancer. The new drug they received--known as **Enhertu**--doubled the survival time.

The crowd gave a thunderous standing ovation.

New hope had arrived.

The HER2 Puzzle

For decades a protein known as HER2 was observed on the surface of breast cancer cells--sometimes in abundance (HER2-positive) and more often with seemingly zero presence (HER2-negative.)

For years the HER2-positive group was treated with a targeted therapy, Herceptin, but it was not effective if the metastatic breast cancer patient was classified as HER2-negative, in which case their only option was chemo. The nationwide breakdown was:

HER2 Status	% Patients
Positive	20%
Negative	80%



Part of the Standing Ovation in Chicago

New Category. . . HER2- Low

If 80% of those with metastatic breast cancer are HER2-negative then that equates to about 200,000 patients nationwide

For those 200,000 patients scientists assumed that they all had the same zero level of HER2. Everyone was a zero. One size fits all. Really?

Upon closer examination scientists found that in many cases there was a very small but still measurable amount of HER2 on the cancer cells. And a new category was created . . . “HER2-Low”.

How Enhertu Works

As it turned out, patients within the new category, HER2-Low, were quite receptive to Enhertu, having been trapped for decades in a “chemo only option.”

It is a two-part drug. One acts as a navigator, seeking out cancer cells that express only a minimal amount of HER2

Then a second part is a newly formulated chemo that seeps through the cell surface and bathes the cancer cell interior with a poison.

And the Experts Say . . .

“This is a new standard of care . . . it affects a huge number of patients.”

E. Winer, MD Yale

“Phenomenally spectacular”

Head of Daiichi Pharma

They’ve created a new category of breast cancer, HER-2 -Low . . . It will expand the patient population who benefits from HER-2-targeted therapy.

American Society of
Clinical Oncology

Fighting Chance has offices in
Sag Harbor and at the
Phillips Family Cancer Center
in Southampton.

For more details, or information
please call **631 725 4646**.

Visit our website at
www.fightingchance.org

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