

## **The ASCO Cancer Foundation Funds Landmark Study that Sheds New Light on Palliative Care**

In a landmark study published Wednesday by the [\*New England Journal of Medicine \(NEJM\)\*](#), researchers found that patients with terminal lung cancer who began receiving palliative care immediately upon diagnosis were not only happier and in less pain – but they lived nearly three months longer. The study, which has far-reaching implications on cancer and palliative care worldwide, was conducted by researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital and funded by [The ASCO Cancer Foundation](#).

“The results of this study are great news for cancer patients,” says lead author Dr. Jennifer Temel. “Oncologists often have fears about talking to their patients about palliative care and have concerns that state-of-the-art cancer care and palliative care cannot be done simultaneously. This study shows that addressing both symptom management and cancer therapy at the same time is not only feasible, but also beneficial for patients, and will have a huge impact on both fields.”

In the three-year study, 151 patients with non-small-cell lung cancer at Massachusetts General Hospital were randomly assigned to receive either oncology treatment alone or oncology treatment with palliative care. Those receiving palliative care from the start reported less depression and happier lives as measured on scales assessing quality of life and mood. The most surprising outcome however, is that “patients lived longer with early palliative care,” says Dr. Temel. “In some ways it is intuitive that the healthier you are, the better you feel and the more active you are, the better you do, but we now have data to back that up.”

Dr. Temel received a Career Development Award (CDA) from The ASCO Cancer Foundation in 2005 to pursue her interest in the effects of palliative care on cancer patients, which resulted in the *NEJM* study. “I never would have been able to do this study without funding from The ASCO Cancer Foundation,” says Dr. Temel. “At the point when I wrote for this grant, I was mid-career, so there weren’t a lot of grant opportunities out there for me. The ASCO Cancer Foundation fills a niche with its CDA by providing funding for large-scale research projects for clinical researchers who are not yet at a point in their careers where they can apply for major funding.”

The ASCO Cancer Foundation Grants Program has awarded more than \$67 million to clinical and translational oncology researchers since its inception in 1983, including more than 180 CDA’s, which are aimed at clinical investigators who have received their initial faculty appointment to establish an independent clinical cancer research program. “The Career Development Award provides funding for promising researchers, who often become very strong academic oncologists and whose projects are published in prominent, high-impact journals, such as Dr. Temel,” said Nancy R. Daly, MS, MPH, Executive Director of The ASCO Cancer Foundation. “We are pleased that the Foundation was able to support this research given the important topic, one which affects many Americans today.”

The ASCO Cancer Foundation supports educational programs of the highest quality in cancer care and prevention; facilitates the dissemination of information about cancer and cancer

treatment to patients and their families; and, through its grants program, supports, encourages, and recognizes excellence in clinical research in the field of oncology.

Results of the study were reported on in major media outlets including [The New York Times](#), [USA Today](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Boston Globe](#) and the [Los Angeles Times](#).

For more information on funding projects such as these, visit [The ASCO Cancer Foundation website](#). To comment on this study, please log in to the [“The ASCO Cancer Foundation” forum](#) on [ASCOconnection.org](#) with your [ASCO.org](#) username and password.