

## **NEW TYPE OF CANCER DRUG BRINGS MANY TOOLS TO TASK**

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla.—A new generation of experimental cancer drugs is poised to upstage current hotshots by attacking the multiple methods tumors use to grow and spread, instead of just one.

These drugs are like a repairman who brings an entire toolbox to a job instead of just a wrench or hammer. They go beyond current favored medicines like Herceptin, Avastin, and Iressa, which have impressed scientists for their ability to precisely target cancer cells while leaving healthy cells alone.

At a meeting yesterday, doctors reported that one of Pfizer's new multitasking drugs shrank tumors in 40 percent of people with advanced kidney cancer. Current treatments do that in only about 1 out of 10 cases.

Some patients have been on the experimental drug for more than a year – far longer than they'd been expected to live.

Kurt Bonhnen is one. The California accountant was only 49 when he was diagnosed with kidney cancer that had already spread to his lungs.

"I'd been given my death sentence," he said.

Now, 13 large masses in his lungs have been reduced to specks.

"If I can have five more years, I think that they can come up with something fandangled that will either cure the cancer or manage it," he said.

Doctors hope the new generation of cancer drugs will do just that by cutting off the blood supply to a tumor or jamming the "switchboard" it uses to send messages to grow and spread.

The Pfizer drug, so new that it's just called AG-013736 for now, attacks blood supply and one of the switchboard's main lines. Another Pfizer drug, Sutent, also takes this approach.

Dr. Brian Rini, a University of California at San Francisco researcher, reported results of the kidney cancer study on the Pfizer drug. Of the 52 patients in the study, 29 remain on the drug. Cancer has worsened in only 16, or 30 percent. The rest of the patients dropped out or died. Tumors have all but disappeared in several people.

"This looks to be a significant advance." Said Dr. David Johnson, a Vanderbilt University cancer doctor who is president of the oncology society and had no ties to the study or the drug maker.