Good News for Persons with Breast Cancer!

A group of breast cancer display a special protein on their cell surface called HER2. These cancers are called HER2-positive breast cancer.

This HER2 protein was used to create an antibody directed at HER2. The recombinant mono-clonal antibody targets cells expressing the HER2 marker.

In a randomized, international, multi-center trial, patients were studied over one or two years for the effect of "Trastuzumab" or "Herceptin" (the names of the antibodies).

The report of the Herceptin Adjuvant Trial study team was published October 20, 2006, in the New England Journal of Medicine. The one-year results are extremely encouraging in that a disease-free interval was increased by 8.4 percentage points. Observed recurrent events of breast cancer were 125 in the Herceptin group, and 220 in the control group over the first year.

This treatment is in addition to other treatments. It is expensive, but because the group studied were patients with advanced breast cancer, it represents an extremely significant advance.

Careful studies such as this one are needed to show significant benefits, and indeed, that is what Herceptin appears to offer.

This represents one more success; the accumulation of ever-more potent remedies spells greater disease control possibilities, and should encourage any who have had to battle this disease.

Hang on to hope. Help is on the way!