

**Fasting and therapy for brain tumours:** In an Open Access study appearing in *PLOS One* researchers have

[identified](#)

a beneficial role for controlled starving (fasting) in the sensitisation of rat, mouse and human cells to radiation therapy and chemotherapy (TMZ). A corresponding author Professor Valter Longo

[commented](#)

that patients should consult with their oncologist before undertaking any fasting: "You want to balance the risks. You have to do it right. But if the conditions are such that you've run out of options, short-term fasting may represent an important possibility for patients."

**Brain metastases:** A Cochrane review of whole brain radiation therapy (WBRT) alone versus WBRT and radiosurgery for the treatment of brain metastases [concluded](#)

that their "Analysis of all included patients, SRS plus WBRT, did not show a survival benefit over WBRT alone. However, performance status and local control were significantly better in the SRS plus WBRT group. Furthermore, significantly longer OS was reported in the combined treatment group for recursive partitioning analysis (RPA) Class I patients as well as patients with single metastasis."

**Blue asbestos and brain tumours:** A [study](#) of people who were exposed to blue asbestos in childhood in Western Australia has found that both males and females have elevated numbers of brain cancers compared with the general population of that State.

**Improved nanoparticles:** Researchers at Johns Hopkins (USA) have [found](#) a way to improve the infiltration of nanoparticles into the brain by coating nano-sized plastic beads with PEG (poly (ethylene glycol)). Their next step is to slow tumour growth or recurrence in rodents.

**Green tea and cognitive function:** Chinese researchers have [found](#) that a key property of green tea (EGCG epigallocatechin-3 gallate) can improve cognitive function by impacting the generation of neuron cells. You can access the full article [here](#)

**Depleting miR-138 and glioblastoma:** Singaporean researchers in collaboration with Austrian

researchers have [shown](#) that using antimiR-138 on mouse models could halt the progression of glioblastoma tumours and reduce the likelihood of a relapse.

**Childhood cancer:** On 31 August the US President Barack Obama [proclaimed](#) September 2012 as National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

**US Home Depot and brain tumour employee:** A Home Depot store in Maryland has lost a \$100,000 [lawsuit](#) after the store fired a longtime cashier while she was on unpaid leave to have a brain tumor removed.

**AZD7451:** US researchers will be [initiating](#) a Phase 1 trial of AZD7451, which is a Tropomyosin-Receptor Kinase (TRK) Inhibitor. They will be studying the effect of the drug on the invasiveness of glioblastoma in patients who have not responded to standard postoperative therapy or whose tumour has progressed.

**PNET and Folic Acid fortification:** A [study](#) of childhood cancer incidence trends in association with the US FDA's mandated fortification of foods with folic acid has indicated a possible connection between reduced primitive neuroectodermal tumor (PNET) rates and a 1992 recommendation that women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. See also [here](#) .

**Northwest Biotherapeutics:** Northwest Biotherapeutics has obtained [approval](#) from the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for its Phase III clinical trial of DCVax-L immune therapy to proceed in the UK.

**BiCNU (Carmustine) and BMS:** Bristol-Myers Squibb is [recalling](#) 31,000 units of BiCNU, an injectable version of the drug carmustine, after discovering one vial was overfilled. The recall affects products sold in the US, Canada, Europe, Latin America and Asia-Pacific. Carmustine is used to treat brain tumours.

**Afinitor Disperz:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has [approved](#) the Novartis therapy

Afinitor Disperz (everolimus tablets for oral suspension), a new pediatric dosage form of the anti-cancer drug Afinitor (everolimus) used to treat a rare brain tumor called subependymal giant cell astrocytoma (SEGA). Afinitor Disperz is the first approved pediatric-specific dosage form developed for the treatment of a pediatric tumor.

**Hong Kong:** A Hong Kong charity, St James Settlement, will [provide](#) subsidies of up to HK\$56,000 each to 25 patients who have a glioblastoma brain tumour and cannot access temozolomide through the Hospital Authority.

**Deadline:** The [deadline](#) for the lowest registration rates for the Society for Neuro-Oncology Conference in Washington in November is 15 October.

**Crowdfunding:** Crowdfunding is a way of utilising digital connections to raise funds for various projects, usually of an entrepreneurial nature. While we are unlikely to see it used to raise funds for drug discovery a group of US-based video game designers are [using](#) the method to try and cover the anticipated treatment costs for an uninsured colleague who has a glioblastoma brain tumour.

**European readers only:** In the July 2012 issue of the IBTA e-news, we mentioned the Rare Cancers Europe (RCE) survey about access to rare cancer care in Europe. The deadline for completing the survey has now been extended to 31 October 2012. We would be grateful if readers of the IBTA e-news *living in the EU 27 countries* could complete this survey which is being conducted with the assistance of the Swedish Institute for Health Economics. Here is the link to the survey:  
<https://sv.surveymonkey.com/s/rarecancers>

**Correction:** It has been pointed out to us that the large (71,793 person) Patient Experience Survey, reported in the August issue of the IBTA E-News, which showed poor results for brain tumour patients, encompassed the views of patients only in the UK and not Scottish or Welsh patients.

Thank you for your continuing support.

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