Depression and immunity in breast cancer patients

Research from Stanford University School of Medicine explores the role of depression on the immune systems of patients with metastatic breast cancer. The effects of stress and depression may compromise the body's ability to fight off infection and the ability to deal with the progression of the disease.

Studies show that higher levels of depression correlate with accelerated tumor growth. Elevated and abnormal levels of the hormone cortisol, which acts on the immune system, occur congruent to depression and stress, and the Stanford study sought to illuminate the role of cortisol in cancer prognosis.

The results of the study suggest that both cortisol and depression impact cellular immune response. Although no significant correlation between depression and cortisol was determined, the study did indicate that participants with strong symptoms of depression manifested poor immune response compared to participants with fewer symptoms of depression.

News source:
http://www.healthnewsdigest.com/news/Cancer_Issues_660/Depression_s_Effect_on_Immune_System_May_Worsen_Cancer.shtml

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