

New drug may help fight heart failure

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Analysis suggests Entresto could extend patients' lives, but one expert has concerns about cost of new drugs.

(HealthDay)—Millions of aging Americans suffer from heart failure, and there are still too few options to treat them. Now, research suggests that a new medication called Entresto might help these patients live longer.

The study did not involve a clinical trial. Instead, researchers analyzed data from nearly 8,400 [heart failure](#) patients with reduced ejection fraction, where a weakened heart loses some of its ability to pump blood.

A team led by Dr. Scott Solomon, director of noninvasive cardiology at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, estimated the patients' survival time if they took Entresto (sacubitril-valsartan) or Vasotec (enalapril), the current standard of care for heart failure.

The researchers projected that patients who took Entresto would live 1.5

to two years longer than those who took Vasotec.

The study in the Dec. 3 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* was funded by Novartis, which makes Entresto.

One expert said that while the results of the study look promising for Entresto, any newly marketed drug is bound to be very expensive compared to generic options.

The Boston study "demonstrates how evolving medical research reduces death and hospitalization rates for [patients](#) suffering from this chronic disease," said Dr. Kevin Marzo, chief of cardiology at Winthrop-University Hospital in Mineola, N.Y.

However, "cost issues for the utilization of new nongeneric drugs, as always, will remain a constant barrier for widespread use of the drug," he added.

Dr. David Friedman is chief of heart failure services at North Shore-LIJ's Franklin Hospital in Valley Stream, N.Y. He noted that a prior clinical trial had already shown Entresto to have a benefit in heart failure, "and now this data shows some years of life gained."

Entresto may "add to our heart failure drug armamentarium to better combat this common heart condition," Friedman said.

According to the study authors, heart failure accounts for more than 1 million hospitalizations each year in the United States and is the leading cause of hospitalization among Americans older than 65.

More information: *New England Journal of Medicine* paper: [dx.doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc1509753](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc1509753)

The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [heart failure](#).

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