Why Does Cancer Kill? Answers Are Coming From Unlikely Places.

Printed from https://www.cancerquest.org/newsroom/2021/12/why-does-cancer-kill-answers-are-coming-unlikely-places on 11/14/2026



Why does cancer kill? That is a surprisingly hard question to answer. When cancer spreads (metastasizes), the affected organs may not work as well, but that does not provide the whole answer. Work with tiny fruit flies may be helping to provide some answers to this question and also providing ways to reduce the death and suffering caused by cancer.

Despite the huge differences between people and flies, cancer in flies is remarkably similar to cancer in humans. Research by scientists at the University of California has shown that tumors in flies produce a small protein (called interleukin-6 or IL-6) that causes a breakdown in the normal barrier between the brain and the blood supply. IL-6 is also known to trigger inflammation in several diseases, including cancer.

When the researchers blocked the effects of IL-6, the flies lived much longer. The results in flies were then shown to be occur in mice with cancer. It is hoped that the results will make it possible to extend the lives (and improve the quality of life) of human cancer patients as well.

Source
https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/09/16/can-fruit-fly-research-help-improve-surviv...
Learn More
Learn more about inflammation and cancer.