Another promising approach for hard-to-treat blood cancers

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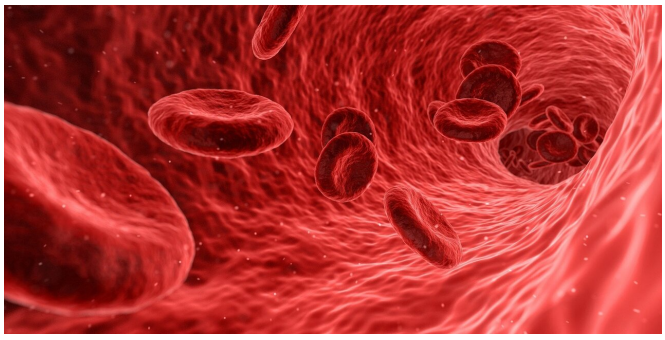

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For patients with some hard-to-treat blood cancers, a simple "off-the-shelf" immunotherapy is achieving promising results.

A clinical trial of the developmental drug Glofitamab has shown it can produce a durable "complete response"—meaning the cancer became undetectable—in patients with relapsed or treatment resistant B-cell lymphomas.

One option for these patients is CAR T-cell therapy—also an immunotherapy but one which involves collecting the patient's T-cells and reprogramming these cells in a laboratory to form a cancer-fighting infusion.

Peter Mac's Group Leader for Aggressive Lymphoma, Dr. Michael Dickinson, said Glofitamab had shown early impressive results in a similar group of patients.

"CAR T-cell therapy is a game-changer for how we treat blood cancer patients who have exhausted conventional treatment options," said Dr. Dickinson.

"The complexity of CAR T-cell therapy has also highlighted the need for more off-the-shelf options and, with Glofitamab, we are now starting to see these emerge.

"These trial results are impressive and support ongoing assessment of Glofitamab in larger scale trials, both as a single agent and in combination with other drugs."

The 171 participants in the Phase I (dose finding) clinical trial had B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma which had relapsed or stopped responding to treatment. More than half (53.8%) showed an anti-cancer response to the drug, and more than a third (36.8%) had a complete response.

The response rate, and complete response rate, increased to 65.7% and 57.1% respectively in a group who received a dose to be tested in a future Phase II trial. Among patients with a complete response, for most (84.1%) this was enduring and the longest tracked patient was cancer free for more than two years.

The drug's most common adverse event was cytokine release syndrome—which is also a potential side-effect of CAR T-cell therapy requiring close management. A paper describing these trial results in full is published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

More information: Martin Hutchings et al. Glofitamab, a Novel, Bivalent CD20-Targeting T-Cell–Engaging Bispecific Antibody, Induces Durable Complete Remissions in Relapsed or Refractory B-Cell Lymphoma: A Phase I Trial, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2021). DOI: 10.1200/JCO.20.03175

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