

## Can our body's immune system become cancer-fighting machine?

Monash University researchers have discovered the way in which a common blood cancer thrives by concealing itself from the body's immune system.

This breaks new ground towards an eventual cure for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia — the most common adult leukaemia in the developed world, with more than 1100 new cases in Australia every year.

This cancer attacks the white blood B cells that usually produce antibodies to fight off infections.

Most CLL patients die of other diseases because their bodies can no longer protect them.

Fabienne Mackay, with Monash's immunology department, said treatments had so far involved killing all B-cells, both cancerous and healthy, which left patients more vulnerable to secondary infections. "It turns out that cancer cells are very good at sabotaging the immune system, using various tricks that confuse immune cells and 'smoke screens' preventing immune cells from recognising the cancer," she said.

Professor Mackay said the discovery by her team paves the way for the creation of treatments that allow the body to fight the cancer itself.

"The best weapon we have for fighting cancer is the immune system itself. It can sense the presence of an infection but also the emergence of a cancer."

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** Immune discovery exposes cancer cells' camouflage