

Modified herpes virus boosts immunotherapy treatment for melanoma

In a two-year UCLA-led study, nearly two-thirds of people with advanced melanoma responded positively to a treatment that combines the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab with a herpes virus called talimogene laherpareovec, or T-VEC. Researchers led by Dr. Antoni Ribas found that the treatment's side effects were manageable, and comparable to side effects for people who took either pembrolizumab or T-VEC as a standalone treatment.

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T-VEC is a genetically modified version of the herpes simplex virus that causes cold sores, but is safe to use. T-VEC has already been approved for the treatment of melanoma and it works both by directly killing cancer cells and using a protein that attracts immune cells into the cancers.

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The phase 1 clinical trial evaluated 21 people with advanced melanoma. Researchers injected patients' melanoma tumors with T-VEC for six weeks and then gave them infusions of pembrolizumab. Sixty-two percent of the patients had a partial or complete response, meaning that their tumors either shrank or were no longer detectable.

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The combination therapy could provide an alternative treatment for people with melanoma whose tumors don't respond to other therapies. It also being tested in people with head, neck and colon cancers.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Adding Modified Herpes Virus to Immunotherapy Shows Promise for Treating Advanced Melanoma](#)