

‘Why didn’t we think of this earlier?’ Immunotherapy could treat more than just cancer

Immunotherapy has transformed cancer care. Now the tools and new knowledge created by this strategy for treating disease by stimulating the body’s immune system are beginning to be employed for everything from fighting autoimmune illnesses to preventing tissue rejection in organ transplants.

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Now that the immunotherapy work has proved so successful in cancer, it makes sense to push it into other illnesses, [professor Marcela] Maus says.

A group led by Aimee Payne, a dermatologist at Penn Medicine, is currently preparing for human trials using reengineered T cells to treat an autoimmune-triggered skin disease called pemphigus. In one subform of the affliction that affects about 4,000 Americans, the immune system produces antibodies against proteins that hold the skin together, resulting in painful, debilitating blisters. Payne and her colleagues direct engineered T cells to destroy the immune cells that make these antibodies, and their work has [shown promise](#) in animals.

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Payne says she got the idea for this approach from all the attention successful CAR-Ts were receiving at Penn Medicine. It seemed so simple in retrospect: “You’re like, ‘Why didn’t we think of this earlier?’” she adds.

Read full, original post: [Could Immunotherapy Treat Diseases Besides Cancer?](#)