

Potential cancer drug may offer new hope for asthma patients

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A drug being tested to treat cancer could also help patients suffering from asthma, research has suggested.

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh found that the drug - R-Roscovitine - helps to kill certain [immune cells](#) which can exacerbate symptoms associated with asthma.

The findings could lead to an alternative way to treat asthma in patients who are resistant to steroids, which are commonly used in asthma treatments.

Researchers studied the effect that the drug had on immune cells known as eosinophils.

Eosinophils, found in the lungs and airways, help the body fight off [parasitic infection](#). However, too many uncontrolled eosinophils can damage other cells that line the lung, contributing to inflammatory conditions such as asthma.

Researchers found that use of the drug caused the eosinophil cells to undergo a form of cell death known as apoptosis, a natural process where unwanted [cells](#) are removed from the body.

Professor Adriano Rossi, of the Centre for Inflammation Research at the University of Edinburgh who directed the study, said: "Steroids are commonly used to treat asthma but can have unwanted side-effects,

while some asthma patients are also resistant to steroid treatment. It may well be that use of a drug, such as R-Roscovotine, or one that works in a similar same way, could offer an alternative to [steroids](#), or be used in conjunction with steroid treatment for [asthma](#) patients."

More information: The research has been published in the journal *FEBS Letters*.

Source: University of Edinburgh

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