

National Jewish Health receives patent for diagnostic method of autoimmune chronic urticaria

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National Jewish Health has received a US patent for a method of detecting autoimmune chronic urticaria, which will help assure many patients that dramatic changes in lifestyle are not needed to treat the condition. Ronald Harbeck, PhD, Medical Director of the Advanced Diagnostic Laboratories at National Jewish Health, and colleagues Drs. Karen Andrews and Donald MacGlashan, Jr. developed the diagnostic assay, which makes use of the protein CD203c as a marker for the condition. The test, offered by the diagnostic laboratories at National Jewish Health, has been highly successful, with 250 to 300 tests run every week for patients around the nation.

Chronic urticaria is recurrent hives that last for six weeks or longer. They can be caused by allergic and non-allergic reactions. It is often difficult to pin down a specific cause. Without a known cause, many patients will try various adjustments to their lifestyles in an often unsuccessful attempt to cure the hives.

"Patients will often try eliminating foods from their diet or pets from their homes and alter their medications, believing they are suffering from [allergic reactions](#)," said Dr. Harbeck.

Approximately 40 percent of chronic urticaria patients have an autoimmune form of the disease, which is essentially a malfunction of the immune system and has no external cause. Doctors can prescribe a

variety of treatments for chronic urticaria, based on symptoms, but rarely prescribe a significant change in lifestyle. The recently granted patent describes a method for detecting this autoimmune form of chronic urticaria.

"This diagnostic method will allow some patients to continue their normal, daily lives knowing that they are not suffering from an allergic condition," said Dr. Harbeck.

The invented method includes detecting the expression of the protein CD203c on cells in the presence of the antibody present in chronic urticaria patients.

"The creation of this diagnostic test is a reflection of the quality of research performed by our scientists and the commitment from National Jewish Health to support the advancement of research discoveries towards clinical applications in the spirit of our brand promise, Science Transforming Life," said Emmanuel Hilaire, PhD, Manager of the Technology Transfer Office at National Jewish Health.

Provided by National Jewish Health

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