

# Immunotherapy for prostate cancer in sight

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An international study carried out with involvement of the MedUni Vienna is giving hope to patients with advanced prostate cancer. In just a few years' time, Ipilimumab could be approved as a treatment for the world's third-most common type of cancer.

The immunotherapeutic agent Ipilimumab has been shown to have a markedly positive effect in the treatment of patients who are resistant to conventional hormone treatments and chemotherapy. These are the words of a core statement from a study, recently published in the highly respected journal *The Lancet Oncology*, which was set up based on collaboration between the world's leading centres for the research and

treatment of prostate cancer.

The scientists investigated the extent to which immunotherapy with this agent is also suitable for the more common type of advanced prostate cancer. The medication is already being successfully used as immunotherapy for advanced melanoma – a comparatively rare type of cancer.

## **Major success in the immunotherapy of carcinomas**

Michael Krainer, Head of the Urological Tumours Working Group within the Department of Oncology (University Department of Internal Medicine I) at the MedUni Vienna, which played a key role as the lead recruitment centre for Germany and Austria, had this to say about the study results: "For us, it is virtually a miracle that immunotherapy demonstrates such a clear effect at such a late stage of the disease. The results of our study must be regarded as a further major success in the immunotherapy of carcinomas." The substance's mechanism of action is as follows: the Ipilimumab antibodies disable "inhibitors", giving the body's immune system a boost.

## **Approval of the medication in sight**

Despite this good effect, it's not all plain sailing: the "revved up" immune system can also attack the body's own tissues. According to the study, Ipilimumab is therefore not suitable – in view of its side effects – for treating patients with advanced prostate cancer who are in poor general health. For this reason, a further study is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2015. This follow-on study is limited to patients with a better prognosis and who are in better overall health. Krainer expresses his expectations thus: "Based on our results, I anticipate that this study will bring approval for Ipilimumab for patients

with advanced prostate cancer."

## **European Centre of Expertise for urological tumours**

The Urological Tumours Working Group at the MedUni Vienna is regarded across Europe as one of the most highly respected study support centres in the field of prostate cancer. Since 2002, several hundred patients have been included in 17 clinical studies. The spectrum covers all modern treatment options and ranges from chemotherapy and hormone therapy to immunotherapy.

## **Prostate cancer: the third-most common form of cancer**

Worldwide, [prostate cancer](#) is the third-most common form of cancer and is globally the sixth-most common cause of death from cancer among men. Each year, around 300,000 men are diagnosed with the condition within the European Union, and around two million men in the EU are currently living with the condition.

Provided by Medical University of Vienna

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