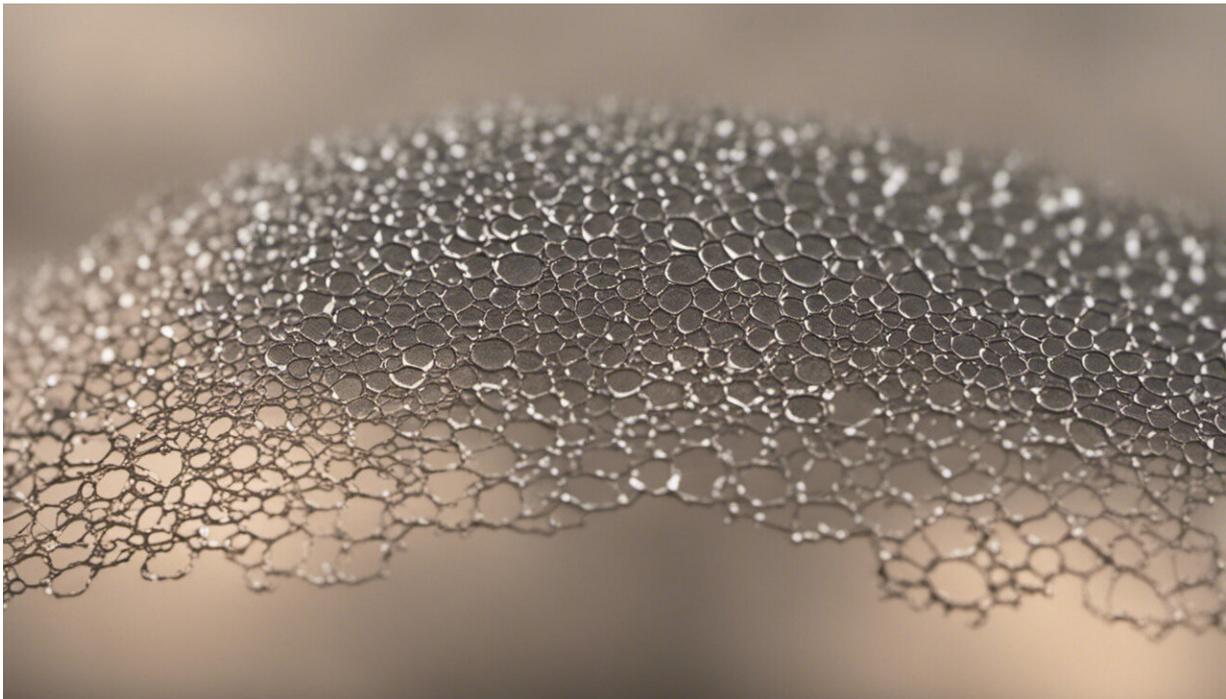


Healing virus 'Rigvir' can double cancer survival rates

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Strangely enough, cancer patients across the world seem to have come to terms with the fact that the most effective treatment against cancer - chemotherapy - actually destroys their immune system. In Latvia, however, a breakthrough virotherapy called Rigvir has been doing wonders since 2004. This new treatment, which breaks down cancer

cells, simulates the immune system and promotes cancer cell suicide, will soon be brought to the rest of Europe partly thanks to EU support under Horizon 2020.

Rigvir officially received its H2020 SME Instrument grant in early August. Most recently, the treatment had shown 'surprisingly positive' outcomes for late cancer patients: A study published in July reveals that the administration of Rigvir in patients affected by melanoma stage IV M1C, small cell lung cancer stage IIIA and histiocytic sarcoma stage IV leads to a significant increase in [life expectancy](#) and quality.

In Latvia, where it has been commercialised since 2004, Rigvir successfully passed all phases of clinical trials on 2 000 patients. Some 75 % of Latvian melanoma patients are already undergoing Rigvir treatment.

'There are millions of [cancer patients](#) around the world who are in need of this unique cancer medicine,' said Rigvir's CFO Karlis Urbans. 'Rigvir is approved in three countries so far, however other patients can get virotherapy with Rigvir via medical tourism. I hope that this grant will make cancer virotherapy available for everyone who could benefit from it. Cancer patients deserve this safe, effective and humane cancer treatment.'

The treatment works on a wide variety of cancers including melanoma, colorectal, pancreatic, bladder, kidney, prostate, lung, uterine, lymphosarcoma, etc. This explains why it is also unleashing passions overseas: At the end of July, the Hope4Cancer Institute in California, USA, issued a press release announcing that it was now the first institution in the country to offer Rigvir virotherapy to its patients.

A healing virus

Rigvir was synthesised from the ECHO-7 virus, which can be found naturally in the intestines of young children. The virus selectively targets malignant cells, which it enters before multiplying through a process called oncolysis - eventually destroying the cancerous cell. Moreover, the virus makes the cancer visible to the patient's [immune system](#), enabling it to fight back.

Rigvir is administered by means of a series of injections over the course of three years. Although Latima - which develops and promotes the treatment - mentions mild side effects on its website, it specifies that the most common side-effect is a subfebrile temperature lasting one to three days. This contrasts with chemotherapy, infamous for the harm it causes to healthy cells.

The next step: EU registration

In order to become available in the whole of Europe, Rigvir has to go through European Medicine Agency (EMA) registration. The H2020 RIGVIR project, which is part of the SME instrument programme, will enable Latima to conduct a feasibility study, with results expected in January 2017. The company is hopeful that this project will be followed by phase 2 funding in order to perform the clinical trials necessary for registration with the EMA.

More information: Project website: rigvir.com/

Provided by CORDIS

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