

A BREAKTHROUGH VACCINE FOR BREAST AND GASTRIC CANCER IS IN TRIALS

A VACCINE that treats one of the most common forms of breast cancer.

LONDON, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, November 15, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The therapy stimulates the body's own immune system to fight the cancer and studies have showed it produced improved survival rates in mice. The vaccine will help the one in four women whose breast cancer over expresses the HER2 protein as well as HER2 gastric cancer patients. Over 1 million cases of gastric cancer are diagnosed each year, mostly in Asia, and the five year survival rate is just 30 per cent.



Trials in Europe have already shown the vaccine is safe and it is now being trialled in Asia on gastric cancer patients.

While researchers hope it will help breast cancer patients, they can't trial it on these patients in Australia yet.

This is because standard use of the expensive drug Herceptin treatment here would conflict with proving the vaccine works.

Medical University of Vienna researcher Professor Ursula Wiedermann is the co-inventor of the HER-vaxx.

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If the vaccine works it would most likely be used in combination with chemotherapy, radiation and Herceptin to improve survival, she said.

The idea is that patients with newly diagnosed HER 2 positive cancers would be given the vaccine before any other treatment.

It would stimulate their immune system to fight the cancer then other standard treatments would be loaded on top to kill off the cancer.

Repeat vaccinations would most likely be needed over the patients' lifetime.

"It's like tetanus, you need a booster vaccine to keep the memory of the immune system activated," Professor Wiedermann said.

Eventually the vaccine could be used to try and prevent cancer, Professor Wiedermann said.

"If you had a certain gene and your risk of cancer was high it would make sense to prophylactically vaccinate (vaccines that stimulate an immune response)."

Trials in mice showed the vaccine prolonged the onset of cancerous tumours and once a tumour was established it slowed tumour growth, Professor Wiedermann said.

Armadale-based Australian company Imugene is providing funding to develop the vaccine and run early trials.

Another vaccine against ([breast cancer fundraising](#)) developed by researchers based at the Burnett Institute in Melbourne targeted the mucin 1 protein and slashed the rate of breast cancer returning from 60 to just 12 per cent over a 15-year period.

Work on this has stalled because of high costs when only a small number of women got an extension to their lifespan.

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