

PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

Unleashing the Power of the Body's own Immune System to Fight off Deadly Cancers

Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada

With one in twelve Canadians being diagnosed with lung cancer in his or her lifetime, during this month's lung cancer awareness month many health care professionals and patient groups are focusing their attention on an innovative therapy that has the potential to bring long term survival to more Canadian patients.

"Immuno-oncology" or "Immunotherapy" represents an innovative approach to cancer research that seeks to harness the body's own immune system to fight tumor cells. Unlike the traditional approaches to cancer treatment that attack the cancer cell itself – surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and targeted therapy – immuno-therapies are drugs that release the natural brakes on the body's own immune system so it can fight and kill the cancer cells.

Aimed at patients with advanced or metastatic cancer, and acting on the patient's immune system to restore and eliminate cancer cells, immunotherapy is being tested in multiple tumor types. At the moment, immunotherapy

treatment options are already available for patients with metastatic melanoma in Canada, with worldwide clinical trials also underway in other tumors such as lung, kidney, bladder, glioblastoma, and certain breast cancers.

Competition in the immunotherapy space is fast and fierce, with numerous pharmaceutical companies engaged in clinical trials in similar tumors. And while the potential of numerous therapies is good news for Canadians

fighting deadly cancers, the Canadian health system will face a challenge in managing and paying for the flow of new treatments the industry will continue to bring to patients.

"Research into innovative cancer

therapies is moving very fast" said Dr. David Hogg, Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Toronto and Attending Physician, Princess Margaret Hospital. "When you consider the speed at which things are evolving, all the different

tumor types and all the possible combinations that can be tested, there are suddenly some really interesting opportunities. Through immunotherapy we may well be looking at a revolution in cancer care in Canada."

