



PRESS RELEASE, April 23, 2020

Distinct clinical therapeutic effects from interleukin-1 receptor blockers

Scientists at Lund University have now published results from a clinical trial in which IL-1 receptor inhibitors have been used to treat patients with chronic pain in the lower urinary tract (interstitial cystitis). The trial reveals strong positive clinical effects on symptoms and quality of life.

The molecular causes of cystitis and chronic pain in the urinary tract have long been unclear. Patients develop severe pain, decreasing their quality of life in every way. Many treatments have been tested, such as antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, morphine and antidepressants. Surgery has been used but with no lasting effects, and patients have often been left severely disabled with a significantly poorer quality of life.

The trial is based on the fact that IL-1 **beta** has been identified as a cause of the symptoms of acute cystitis, including pain, which worsens in the case of chronic disease. IL-1 receptor blockers used in animal models have been shown to protect the subjects and reverse the progress of the disease. A new clinical trial has now revealed that treatment with an IL-1 receptor inhibitor is also effective in combating pain in the urinary tract in humans.

Patients experiencing chronic pain in the lower urinary tract were treated, with nine out of ten patients reporting dramatic clinical results, with a reduction in symptoms and an increased quality of life. The inflammatory response was reduced and the production of the neuropeptides that trigger pain reflexes from the urinary tract fell sharply ($P < 0.001$).

The IL-1 inhibitor is part of a collaboration between Lund University and SelectImmune, and the company plans to expand the clinical trials of acute and chronic cystitis in collaboration with scientists as soon as possible.

“The results are particularly pleasing for this specific group of patients where, in many cases, no treatment options are available,” says Björn Wullt, associate professor in urology, who carried out the clinical portion of the trial.

“The results are incredibly promising and could offer these patients a new, molecular-based treatment to finally alleviate their suffering,” says Catharina Svanborg, who led the project.

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SelectImmune Pharma is a pharmaceutical company whose shares are traded on the Spotlight Stock Market. The company’s goal is to develop new immunotherapies, which act as immune enhancers and offer alternatives to antibiotics.

This information is inside information that SelectImmune AB is required to publish under the EU Market Abuse Regulation. This information was provided to the media, through the agency of the contact persons set out above, for publication on April 23, 2020.