
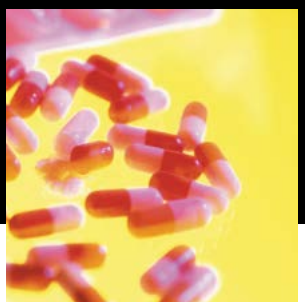
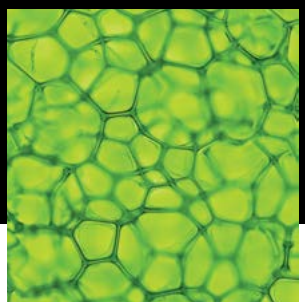


Clinical trial tests melanoma vaccine

More than 73,000 cases of melanoma were diagnosed in the United States in 2015, according to the American Cancer Society. Of the approximately 13,000 deaths from skin cancer each year, 10,000 are attributed to melanoma.

Patients who have been diagnosed with Stage II or III melanoma and have had surgery may be eligible to participate in a new clinical trial at Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU that studies the effectiveness of a vaccine for melanoma. **Stephen Stone, MD,** professor of dermatology, is the principal investigator on the study.

This Phase III clinical trial uses a combination of proteins associated with laboratory-grown melanoma cells to stimulate the body's immune system to fight the cancer. The international study has 63 sites open, all of which are in North America. Stone hopes to enroll 10 patients in the next year.

Initial treatment for melanoma is surgery, followed by radiation and/or chemotherapy, depending on the advanced stage of the disease. Interferon and ipilumumab are currently the only approved treatments by the Federal Drug Administration to reduce the recurrence of melanoma after surgery and initial treatment. "However, the effectiveness of interferon is limited, and patients using the drug have reported feeling flu-like symptoms and severe depression," Dr. Stone says.

At least 100 patients are participating in preliminary studies of the clinical trial vaccine, Stone says. Patients receive the vaccine injections over a two-year period. Two of every three patients receive the vaccine while the third receives a placebo. The most frequent problems reported by patients in the clinical trial are a reaction at the site of the injection and fatigue.

Dr. Stone sees dozens of melanoma patients annually and says those numbers have increased significantly over the years. He attributes that to tanning and tanning beds as well as recognizing tumors earlier due to better diagnostics.

The clinical trial is open to men and women ages 18 to 80 with Stage II and III melanoma.

Vapor therapy offers outpatient option for enlarged prostate

A new medical procedure for treating a common male malady is now available in central Illinois. Water vapor therapy can be done in an outpatient setting to treat benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH), or an enlarged prostate. BPH is present in the majority of men over age 40, and more than 90 percent of men over age 80, according to the National Institutes of Health. It affects the frequency and ease of urination.

SIU School of Medicine surgeon **Kevin McVary, MD,** professor and chief of the Division of Urology, and his staff have performed the treatment as part of a clinical trial. The FDA approved the treatment last winter. SIU will now be instructing urologists from around the country on how to perform this technique. SIU's urology group was one of the country's first test sites for the device's clinical trials.

"This is a big improvement over other therapies," Dr. McVary says. "It is safe, it is effective, it is fast." The innovative technology is minimally invasive and can be performed in clinic or an outpatient surgery center depending on the health of the patient.

Urologists pass a tiny scope and an even smaller needle through the urethra to the prostate. There, the urologist inserts the needle multiple times to deliver small amounts of steam to the targeted area. The water vapor is confined to the boundaries of the prostate and does not affect surrounding tissues. The steam travels between the prostate cell walls and collapses them, shrinking the prostate to normal size. The body then reabsorbs the tissue.

"During the clinical trial, we saw a great result with shrinkage of the prostate, and the patients tolerated the procedure well," says **Danuta Dynda, MD,** assistant professor of research in urology and the Center for Clinical Research.

Rick Fritz, 55, was one of Dr. McVary's first patients to undergo the treatment during its clinical trial phase. "I was getting up so often at night to go to the bathroom, it was disrupting my sleep," he said. "I needed to do something." When McVary told him about the new treatment, he agreed.

"I had one session. We were done in a half-hour and my prostate shrunk by more than half," Fritz said. "It's one of the best things I ever did for myself. I would definitely do it again."

Candidates for the procedure have typically tried medication first without success. For more information about BPH treatments, contact the SIU Division of Urology at 217-545-8000.