IL-2 Doesn’t Increase Lymphoma Risk

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A French study has concluded that Proleukin (Interleukin-2, IL-2) does not appear to increase the likelihood of developing either Hodgkin’s disease (HD) or non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma (NHL), debunking some concerns that this possible immune-based therapy may be associated with a greater risk of these life-threatening cancers. The encouraging data were published online January 7 in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*.

Proleukin acts as a natural chemical messenger for the immune system, stimulating the production of new CD4 cells. It is currently being studied to determine whether it increases survival rates. Some are concerned, however, that Proleukin may also increase a person’s risk for developing either HD or NHL.

To explore this possibility, Eric Fontas, MD, from the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nice, in France, and his colleagues examined the medical records of more than 78,000 HIV-positive patients in the French Hospital Database on HIV. There were 861 people who had taken Proleukin and 77,605 who had not.

Fontas’s team found no difference in the risk for developing either type of cancer in people taking Proleukin. In fact, the rate of new lymphoma cases in people not taking Proleukin was double that of those taking the drug. This difference was not statistically significant, however, meaning that it could have occurred by chance.

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