

My Journey Part 3 – Bulletin No 2 (7 January 2021)

The Past Two Months

I have now completed Day 63 (Visit 6) of the trial on 6 January. I have a total of 19 visits to the hospital which will culminate in a final PET scan to establish the outcome, success or failure of the trial. This will occur towards the end of 2021, after the completions of 9 more monthly sessions of immunotherapy.

On Tuesday 29 December I first visited the GCUH to undergo blood tests ascertain whether essential body functions were reacting favourably to the program. I then travelled to the PAH hospital for further tests including an ECG and as a result I was once again given a clearance by Dr Ladwa to continue with the program. I received my final session of intradermal injections (.4mls) and then I had my infusion of immunotherapy. It was a long day in my continuing journey. I returned to the PAH on Wednesday 6 January for a review and to hand in the diary which was kept outlining changes to the injection sites (redness and swelling) throughout the week.

Further Background to Agents Used in Trial

***Rationale for proposed treatment** One of the treatment components, AMV002, is a vaccine based on HPV-16 viral proteins that are involved in HPV-related cancers. The idea is that the vaccine will stimulate your body's immune system to target the cancer cells. Indeed, the research grade version of AMV002 was found to be effective in mice challenged with HPV-related tumours.*

The second component of the therapy is an antibody called Durvalumab. While the body's own immune system may slow down or control cancer growth, this natural immune response sometimes stops. In some patients, cancer cells and immune cells start to express signals that stop the body's immune system from killing the cancer. One such signal is called Programmed Cell Death Ligand 1 or PD-L1 for short. Durvalumab works to block this signal and to increase the immune response.

The treatment combines the vaccine AMV002 and the antibody Durvalumab to stimulate the immune system in different ways to hopefully attack and clear cancer cells. This approach has been successful in a mouse model of HPV-related cancer, with the efficacy of research grade AMV002 enhanced by co-treatment with a PD-L1 inhibitor similar to Durvalumab.

Lets hope the line from the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns (1795), *the best laid plans between mice and men may go awry*, will not apply in my case.

What will 2021 Bring (The Waiting Game)

This question is being asked by everyone, once they were called New Year Resolutions, however with the uncertainly in the world at the moment it is difficult to forecast positive outcomes that we would like to see change our lives. Yes we can talk about weight loss programs, drinking less alcohol and quitting smoking the usual resolutions that are generally broken in the first couple of months of the year. No longer can we talk about family reunions, interstate or world travel plans which will have to be left in a holding pattern until the world comes out of this dream shattering pandemic.

Top of my list is the eradication of my cancer, remaining positive and continuing with a normal lifestyle embracing my family, friends and the beauty of the world around us. What more could a person ask for as I enter my 2nd year fighting cancer without any results to be forthcoming until the end of 2021.

I will circulate another bulletin after my first PET scan during the maintenance period which hopefully will be in a couple of months time.

Happy New Year to all

Always Look on the Bright Side of Life

Neil Raward