

Position Statement

Immunology as a treatment/cure for sarcoma

Sarcoma UK has been asked by an increasing number of patients about a treatment called “immunology” for cancer, including sarcoma, which claims to be an alternative to chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

It is provided by an organisation called the International Immunology Foundation, which has a clinic in Germany. There are three sarcoma case studies cited on the website. They have claimed verbally to one patient that they can get rid of sarcoma with a minimum of 12 procedures and at a cost of €46,000.

Immunopheresis, the procedure used, is not available for cancer in the UK and is not recognised as a treatment for sarcoma.

Sarcoma UK cannot recommend this treatment to sarcoma patients.

1. There are no published peer reviewed scientific papers about research into immunology and sarcoma to back up the claims made. This means that it has not been subject to peer review (scrutiny by other experts in the field), and therefore should not be held to be bona fide research. All established treatments have been through scientific trials before they are more widely used and have peer reviewed papers published in medical journals. This proves that they are effective, and of benefit to sarcoma patients. There is no published peer reviewed evidence to show that “immunology” is an effective alternative to chemotherapy or radiotherapy for sarcoma.
2. Anecdotally, Sarcoma UK is aware of cases where patients have paid for such immunology treatment overseas, with no improvement.
3. Sarcoma UK recommends that patients and families should always discuss treatment options with their sarcoma consultant. He/she will be able to fully explain the treatment options suggested, and also investigate whether there are any on-going clinical trials that might be relevant.
4. Published scientific papers can be found on a database called PubMed. You can access this database via the internet: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/> and search for bona fide research. PubMed comprises over 21 million citations for biomedical literature and you can check whether there are papers published about particular treatments for sarcoma, and whether they are peer reviewed.