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link to Reader's Digest article [1]

cancer [2] drugs [3] hormones [4]



In the fight against breast and prostate cancer, Zoladex works in combination with your body's hormones to offer hope.

In warfare, the army, navy and air force play an essential role in attacking and eliminating the enemy.

In the war against cancer, the three main methods of attack are surgery, radiotherapy and toxic drugs. However, as in warfare, there is a different strategy—starving the enemy by restricting supplies.

This approach can also be used to combat cancer. Avastin is a drug that restricts the tumour of its blood supply while Zoladex starves the tumour of hormones that drive its growth.

What types of cancer is Zoladex used for?

Zoladex is a man-made copy of a hormone (Gonadotrophin-releasing hormone) secreted by the brain. When taken to treat cancer, it drastically lowers secretion of oestrogen in women [5] and testosterone in men.

The majority of breast and prostate cancers [6] depend on oestrogen and testosterone to grow and so Zoladex is used to starve them, usually by monthly injection into the stomach.

When it is first administered, hormone levels can briefly increase; a drug is often taken to counteract this.

When Zoladex may not be appropriate

In breast cancer, Zoladex is only given to women with oestrogen-sensitive breast cancer who have not yet reached the menopause [7]. In men, not treating the cancer may be the best treatment—at least for early prostate cancer.

A study showed that Zoladex offered no benefit to men in the early stages of the disease. Instead, Dr Shandra

Wilson of Colorado University suggests that a “watchful waiting” approach is better in early prostate cancer, with frequent scans and blood tests. However, in intermediate and later stages, Zoladex has been shown to improve survival.

Effects of Zoladex in the rest of the body

Oestrogen and testosterone play vital roles throughout the body, especially in control of the reproductive system, emotions, strengthening of bones and modification of cholesterol levels.

The loss of oestrogen during Zoladex therapy can result in hot flushes and breakthrough bleeding in women. The loss of testosterone sometimes causes impotence in men and depression is also a risk. Zoladex is safe for the heart, though special care is advised for those with a history of heart trouble.

The main risk when taking Zoladex seems to be reduced bone strength and osteoporosis, because of the depletion of oestrogen. This can usually be protected against by taking calcium and vitamin D supplements, and by weight-bearing exercise and frequent bone check-ups.

Benefits of Zoladex for women’s health

In times past, distinguished gynaecologists experimented with extraordinary techniques in women’s health. Ovaries were removed and leeches or even neat alcohol were applied to the lower abdomen to treat everything from menstrual pain to epilepsy.

Today, in the management of endometriosis, fibroids and possibly the protection of ovaries during chemotherapy, Zoladex is improving lives.

With drugs like Zoladex, we can hope that precious lives will be saved and the war won against some cases of cancer and women’s health problems.

MEDICAL JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION

Source URL:https://www.helencowan.co.uk/everything-you-need-know-about-zoladex

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