
Penn Medicine Immunotherapy Pioneer Carl June, MD, Awarded 2015 Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize

University of Pennsylvania cancer and HIV expert **Carl June, MD**, has been named one of two recipients of the 2015 Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize for his outstanding work in cancer immunotherapy. Since 1952, the Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize has been awarded to scientists who have made great advancements in the fields in which Paul Ehrlich worked, in particular immunology, cancer research, microbiology, and chemotherapy. The prize is presented each year on March 14, the anniversary of Paul Ehrlich's birthday, in Frankfurt, Germany.

June is the Richard W. Vague Professor in Immunotherapy in the department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and director of Translational Research in Penn's Abramson Cancer Center.

He is widely recognized as leader of the team responsible for the first successful and sustained demonstration of the use of CAR T cell therapy, an investigational approach in which a patient's cells are removed through an apheresis process similar to dialysis and modified in Penn's cell and vaccine production facility. Scientists there reprogram the patients' T cells through a gene modification technique using a viral vector that trains them to recognize specific types of cancer cells. The modified cells – known as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cells – are then infused back into the patient's body, where they multiply, hunt and attack tumor cells.

The latest results of clinical trials of more than 125 patients showed a response rate of 90 percent among pediatric and adult acute lymphoblastic leukemia patients. Among patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, the earliest group the research team began clinical trials with, in 2010, about 50 percent of patients respond to the therapy, and remissions among some of the first patients treated with the approach now exceed four and a half years. Early results in studies of patients with lymphoma and myeloma are also promising, and clinical trials are now underway to test this approach in patients with solid tumors.

Click here (http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2015/03/june/) to view the full release.

CREDITS

Holly Auer
Writer

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