

Florida Trend



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Novel Technology Brings Advancements to Treating Patients

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A Novel Technology Created by Moffitt Offers Access to Immunotherapy Products to Increase Patient Outcomes

Moffitt Cancer Center was established in 1981 by the Florida Legislature to address the state's cancer burden and has been leading the fight to design and adopt these novel treatment options. In the past decade, the landscape of treating cancer has broadened to include a focus on using personalized medicine approaches such as immunotherapy, a form of cancer treatment using the body's own immune system. Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocyte (TIL) therapy is one

such approach that uses immune cells that are removed from the tumor of a patient, grown (expanded?) outside of the body to very large numbers, evaluated for their tumor killing ability, and then reintroduced into the patient. This expanded army of TILs are then able to travel to sites of the cancer cell deposits and eliminate them. TIL therapy has shown great promise against solid tumors such as melanoma and lung cancer, and Moffitt is now expanding the scope to colorectal cancer and sarcoma.

A technology developed by Dr. James Mulé, PhD, Associate Center Director for Translational Science of Moffitt Cancer Center, will allow medical centers and companies access to TIL products that have features that make them even better cancer killing agents.

Dr. Mulé and colleagues, including Dr. Jane Messina, MD, Senior Member, Pathology, Hatem Soliman, Breast Oncology, Vernon Sondak, MD, Cutaneous Oncology, and Roger Li, MD, Genitourinary Oncology, have identified



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a set of human immune-related genes activated in a subset of solid tumors that are able to better predict better outcomes in treating cancers with certain immunotherapies. Moreover, TILs from tumors with these genes activated will also have enhanced killing activity against the tumor for reintroduction into the patient.

This novel technology will now be employed in clinical trials to potentially improve both new and existing immunotherapeutics and their outcome for patients with solid tumors, which account for about 90% of all cancer cases in the United States. The Moffitt team members have shown that this immune-related gene signature set is important and predictive using patient samples in the laboratory setting and the next step will be to move this novel approach into the clinic as both a diagnostic test to pre-screen cancer patients to receive immunotherapy, as well as a method of manufacturing more formidable TILs for subsequent reintroduction into cancer patients.

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