

Immune-based therapies

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Most of the recent attention in HIV research has focused on treatments that attack HIV itself, or work against the [virus](#) [1]A small infective organism which is incapable of reproducing outside a host cell. in the body. However, there is a significant move towards looking at ways to prevent, treat or repair immune system damage caused by HIV. This makes sense, because it is not HIV itself, but the damage the virus does to the immune system, which puts people at risk of illness and death.

Approaches to managing or treating HIV immune system damage are called immune-based therapies or immune modulators. At this stage, there are no immune-based therapies licensed to treat HIV. However, a number of [experimental](#) [2](Of a drug) Not licensed for use in humans, or as a treatment for a particular condition. Experimental drugs are studied in clinical trials to determine their safety and efficacy, and are sometimes made available via Special Access Schemes prior to their approval. treatments are being examined. Many people believe immune-based therapies will still need to be used in combination with [antiviral](#) [3]A medication or substance which is active against one or more viruses. May include anti-HIV drugs, but these are more accurately termed antiretrovirals. drugs, but may mean that antiviral drugs need only be used infrequently or sporadically, rather than every day.

Interleukin-2 (IL-2) is the most advanced of the immune-based therapies. There are currently several clinical trials of this drug being conducted at sites all around the world, including a number of sites in Australia. IL-2 has previously been shown to increase the production of CD4 cells. The trial hopes to show that these cells function well and have a protective effect on the immune system.

Other immune-based therapy approaches include therapeutic vaccines, designed to stimulate the immune system's ability to directly fight HIV. Ongoing research in this area continues, although the results to date have not been promising.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/125>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/491>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/123>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-tests-and-treatments/antiviral-treatments/illicit-and-recreational-drugs>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-tests-and-treatments/antiviral-treatments>