

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 76 (2010)
Heft: [3]

Artikel: New hope in treatment of childhood leukaemia
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-944162>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

New hope in treatment of childhood leukaemia

Zurich researchers have found a new treatment approach which they hope will help young leukaemia patients who don't respond to conventional therapies.

By combining available chemotherapeutic agents, great progress was achieved with the treatment of childhood leukaemia in the last 30-40 years, so that over 80 per cent of cases of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL), the most frequently occurring form of childhood leukaemia (up to 70 cases a year in Switzerland and up to 1,000 cases in Europe), can be cured. But there is still a sub-group of patients that are resistant to treatment, and modern treatment processes are still very long and hard for the affected youngsters.

A Zurich University Children's Hospital team conducted research around the resistance to treatment for ALL. Chemotherapy normally triggers the cancerous cells to commit suicide. But in patients with a resistance to this treatment this doesn't happen. The Zurich team investigated a substance called obatoclax mesylate and found that it had a positive effect. This has to do with

what is called programmed cell death. Cells can, in certain situations, induce their own suicides. This is absolutely critical for us to survive. If we have an infection, the virus will trigger the white blood cells to fight. They will proliferate to do the job, but then we have to get rid of them or we'll have leukaemia. A mechanism is in place to kill them; this is a programmed cell death, which triggers the system to clean the fragments of dead cell bodies away.

It was found that a low dose of obatoclax mesylate could influence the mechanism that controls programmed cell death, thus restoring the response to conventional anti-leukaemia drugs when given in combination.

It is hoped that within the next 18 months a small one-week treatment can be developed to treat patients with resistant leukaemia. However, it will take close collaboration between European and North American centres to develop the treatment further to achieve the best curative effect.

from swissinfo

LEUKAEMIA

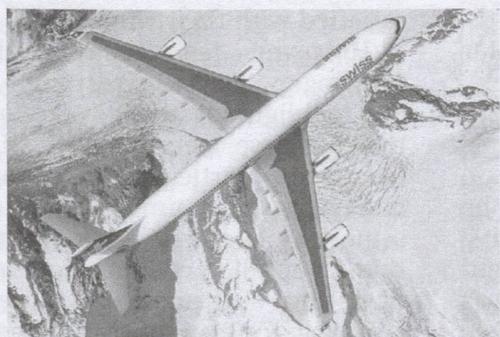
Leukaemia is a cancer of the blood or bone marrow, characterised by an abnormal proliferation of white blood cells (leukocytes).

Acute leukaemia is characterised by the rapid increase of immature blood cells, which makes the bone marrow unable to produce healthy blood cells. Immediate treatment is needed as the rapid progression and accumulation of the malignant cells can spill over into the bloodstream and spread to other body organs.

Chronic leukaemia involves the excessive build up of relatively mature, but still abnormal, white blood cells. It can take time to progress and mostly occurs in older people.

Around 870 people are diagnosed with leukaemia in Switzerland annually, making up around 2% of all cancers. Almost half of those affected are 70 years old or over when diagnosed.

Acute leukaemia is the most common type of cancer among children.



QUALITY, SWISS MADE.



The quality of a Swiss watch, neatly packaged in an airline.

It's the small things that make an airline great. At SWISS, we pay attention to every detail of our service. From personal assistance, to inflight cuisine and entertainment programmes: it all makes a difference. And with every flight we get just a little bit better. So you can count on enjoying your time on board. Enjoy competitive and flexible airfares to Switzerland and onto Europe with connections via Hong Kong, Shanghai, San Francisco and Los Angeles. For further information on Swiss airfares from New Zealand contact your local bonded Travel Agent or visit SWISS.COM.

SWISS.COM