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Cytecare Hospitals becomes Karnatakaâ??s first hospital to offer CAR-T cell therapy

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In collaboration with ImmunoACT, an IIT Bombay-incubated startup



Bengaluru-based Cytecare Hospitals has expanded its cancer care service offering via collaboration with ImmunoACT, an IIT Bombay-incubated startup, known to develop the country's maiden CAR-T cell therapy for blood cancers. Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T cell therapy, a type of immunotherapy, is globally considered one of the most promising areas of personalised cancer treatment.

As the first hospital in Karnataka to offer CAR-T cell therapy, outside of a clinical trial setting, Cytecare Hospitals will provide treatment access to ImmunoACT's pioneering CAR-T cell therapy, NexCAR19(Actalycabtageneautoleucel). Patients aged 15 and above can avail of the therapy for refractory or relapsing B-cell lymphoma and B-acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Renowned globally for its unparalleled success in improving the quality of life and overall survival of patients with otherwise abysmal outcomes in B-cell malignancies, CAR-T cell therapies are widely available in the US and Europe.

Over 30,000 patients with certain blood or bone marrow cancers have been treated with CAR-T cell therapies. However, they can be expensive and often cost $400,000+ just for the primary therapy. In India, the cost is substantially lesser at almost 1/10th of the overall cost in the United States.

Commenting on the significance of the latest collaboration, Dr. Prasad Narayanan, Director, Medical Oncology, Haemato Oncology & Bone Marrow Transplant, at Cytecare Hospitals said, "We've been waiting for CAR-T cell therapy to become a reality in India for a long time now. There is a widely unmet clinical lead in B-cell malignancies, especially when one or more lines of treatment have failed, with the existing standard of care."

NexCAR19 is India's first CAR-T cell therapy that was given market authorisation in October 2023 by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI). ImmunoACT developed it through research efforts at IIT-Bombay, which were then accelerated through clinical trials in partnership with Tata Memorial Centre.