



Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer

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Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer Releases Perspective Paper on Investigational Therapies for COVID-19 Patients with Severe Inflammatory Response

MILWAUKEE – The Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) has released a perspective paper reviewing investigational therapies that may warrant evaluation as potential interventions for COVID-19 patients with severe and sometimes fatal inflammatory response and respiratory distress.

[“The Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer Perspective on Regulation of Interleukin 6 Signaling in COVID-19-related Systemic Inflammatory Response,”](#) authored by key leaders in the field of immunoncology, has been accepted for publication in the [Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer \(JITC\)](#), the society’s open access, peer-reviewed online journal. The analysis describes investigational therapeutic strategies to block or modulate the systemic inflammatory response caused by COVID-19, with a focus on the IL-6, IL-1 and TNF-alpha pathways.

In a recent publication, [SITC presented the case for expanded access to a group of drugs known as anti-IL-6 agents](#), based on initial experience from the SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks in Italy and China, where preliminary non-randomized data with immune-modulatory agents appeared to improve outcomes in a subset of COVID-19 patients. Now, with an immunology-informed approach, leading experts in the cancer immunotherapy field have reviewed additional investigational therapies that could be explored as approaches to reduce the severe and damaging inflammatory response observed during COVID-19 infection.

“COVID-19 has pushed the healthcare system to its breaking point in several cities around the world,” said SITC Past President Jon Wigginton, MD. “Therapies that can be demonstrated to prevent the disease from progressing to its severe stage could help reduce the burden on intensive care units and prevent patients from requiring mechanical ventilation, an urgent unmet need.”

Although large-scale trials have been initiated for some anti-IL-6 therapies, definitive answers from these trials are not yet available, access to these drugs may be limited, and alternatives are needed. The paper provides a framework for considering additional investigational options to reduce the human toll of the SARS-CoV-2.

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“We stand with our colleagues in intensive care and infectious disease on the frontlines of this pandemic,” said SITC President Mario Sznol, MD. “The experience with management of adverse events caused by cancer immunotherapy agents may offer insights into the inflammatory pathology seen with this disease, and possibly, potential therapies using agents already approved or under investigation for other indications.”

SITC has also launched an online [COVID-19 resource hub](#) housing important resources and online discussion forums tailored to the immuno-oncology community's unique needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. You need not be a SITC member to access and post in these discussion forums; all are encouraged to participate. Simply create a free CONNECT online account when prompted.

About SITC

Established in 1984, the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) is a nonprofit organization of medical professionals dedicated to improving cancer patient outcomes by advancing the development, science and application of cancer immunotherapy and tumor immunology. SITC is comprised of influential basic and translational scientists, practitioners, health care professionals, government leaders and industry professionals around the globe. Through educational initiatives that foster scientific exchange and collaboration among leaders in the field, SITC aims to one day make the word “cure” a reality for cancer patients everywhere. Learn more about SITC, our educational offerings and other resources at www.sitcancer.org and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

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