

# AGONY COLUMN

Submitted by: Positive Communications

Thursday, 27 May 2004

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- Arthritis Centre at forefront of technological innovation

At the first Patient Professional Forum for people with arthritis held at the Royal Society of Medicine on Wednesday 26 May, chaired by LBC Radio's Michael Van Straten, it was revealed that The Arthritis Centre is working with Otsuka Pharmaceuticals (UK) Limited to spearhead the use of a new treatment for rheumatoid arthritis called Adacolumn aphaeresis. Aphaeresis refers to the medical technique where blood is taken from the body and specific pro-inflammatory constituents are removed before the blood is returned. Aphaeresis has been recognised as a novel approach for the treatment of inflammatory related diseases and has been used in most of the major rheumatic diseases, in particular rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus that respond poorly to pharmaceutical intervention.

Otsuka has developed the Adacolumn which is an innovative aphaeresis device that works by selectively removing leukocytes from the blood whilst leaving red blood cells and other blood components largely unaffected. During inflammation, leukocytes cause damage by releasing inflammatory substances that damage the affected inflamed area. Therefore, by reducing the number of activated leukocytes in blood, Adacolumn protects against further tissue inflammation and associated symptoms.

Adacolumn is an established aphaeresis system that has been used in thousands of people in Europe and Japan for about nine years. The Adacolumn is used in the UK for the indications of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, Behcet's disease, and systemic lupus erythematosus [SLE], however this is the first time it has been available in the UK for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. The Arthritis Centre is able to offer patients aphaeresis if conventional pharmaceutical treatments for rheumatoid arthritis are proving ineffective.

Arthritic conditions are common and there are about 9 million sufferers in the UK. They have serious consequences but are eminently treatable. New research also presented at the Arthritis Forum has shown that early care reduces disability and long term outcomes are improved with tight control of the disease (please see abstract below).

The Arthritis Centre which facilitated the Forum, takes a multi-disciplinary team approach to the care of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, back pain and repetitive strain injury. In addition to Consultants with expertise in rheumatology it treats related specialties, such as gastroenterology and pain control and fields a team of specialist nurses and clinical psychologists. The Centre runs educational and training courses for clinicians and patients and also provides consultancy to companies, advising them about helping employees with arthritic conditions, running workplace programmes and providing ergonomic advice. The Arthritis Centre is also introducing highly sophisticated technology into the practice to help with the fast and accurate diagnosis of diseases and is spearheading the use of innovative new treatments for arthritis.

The Arthritis Centre holds clinics in four locations in London and the South East of England. To find out more visit [www.arthritiscentre.org](http://www.arthritiscentre.org) or call 0870 730 3334.

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Issued on behalf of The Arthritis Centre by Tracy Posner.

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Abstract:

Early versus delayed treatment in patients with recent-onset rheumatoid arthritis

The study compared the effects of delayed and early treatment strategies on disease outcome in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. The median lag to the initiation of disease-modifying treatment was 15 days in the early treatment group and 123 days in the delayed treatment group. There was less x-ray joint damage after 2 years in the early treatment group. Early introduction of disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs was associated with a better disease outcome after 2 years.

For full copy of the abstract including graph, please contact Tracy Posner on 020 8566 8811 or email [tracyposner@btconnect.com](mailto:tracyposner@btconnect.com)