

## News Articles Related to MS

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### Campath Trial Results

Two-year interim results from a Phase 2 trial comparing Campath (Alemtuzumab) with Rebif ( Interferon beta-1a ) for the treatment of multiple sclerosis have demonstrated statistically significant efficacy of Campath compared to Rebif. The Campath regimen was administered once per year by intravenous infusion, while the Interferon beta-1a regimen was administered three times per week by subcutaneous injection.

Patients taking Campath experienced at least a 75 percent reduction in the risk for relapse after at least two years of follow up when compared to patients treated with Interferon beta-1a. Patients taking Campath experienced at least a 65 percent reduction in the risk for progression of clinically significant disability when compared to patients treated with Interferon beta-1a.

Dosing of Campath in this study was suspended in September 2005 after three patients developed immune thrombocytopenic purpura ( ITP ), a treatable condition in which patients experience a low platelet count as a result of an immune response directed against the platelets. To date, a total of six patients have been diagnosed with ITP in this trial. Other than ITP, serious adverse events related to treatment occurred among eight patients treated with Campath. Two patients treated with Interferon beta-1a experienced serious adverse events related to treatment.

### DIRECT-MS Comments

Campath is a powerful immune suppressant which knocks out most of one's T cells. It is not surprising it is more effective than Rebif for slowing progression and reducing attacks. However Campath is 7 times as likely to cause serious side effects and that is just on the basis of two infusions. One cannot help but wonder how many would suffer serious side effects over an extended period of time of use.

The currently approved drugs do not commonly cause serious side effects but only have a minor positive effect on MS progression. The more powerful immune suppressants such as Campath are naturally more effective but at a major cost. Perhaps someday a drug which is effective and which has minor side effects will be concocted. For this to happen, the unimaginative strategy of beating up the immune system will have to be abandoned.

