Will Zika virus treat brain cancer?

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British scientists are planning to test the ability to attack Zika virus brain cells to destroy brain cancer cells, that may offer new ways to combat a type of cancer.

Studies will focus on patients with **glioblastoma** , a type of extremely malignant brain cancer. Currently, patients with Glioblastoma have only 5% chance of survival over 5 years. This type of glioblastoma is extremely difficult to treat, even if the patient has used all three common methods such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, their life usually lasts only No more than 15 months.

We all know **Zika is a dangerous virus** . Zika virus often causes serious birth defects in the fetus by attacking developing stem cells in the brain. Stem cells in the brain are the first cells to appear, yet differentiate functions and need time to mature.

In 2015, an outbreak occurred in Brazil and quickly spread throughout 60 countries and territories. In young children with a high rate of stem cells in the brain, Zika virus will cause **small head defects** right from the time of birth. However, for adults it is different, the brain has been fully developed so it cannot shrink. Therefore, Zika is less dangerous and is only enough to cause symptoms like a common cold in adults.

Scientists found that in Glioblastoma brain cancer, cancer cells are similar to stem cells in the developing stage. Therefore, Zika virus can be used **only to attack cancer cells, not to damage healthy tissue and to pose no danger** .

Compared to current treatments, doctors must use them with caution, at low doses to avoid damaging healthy cells. However, with Zika virus, that may be automatic and doctors don't need to bother much.

The team, led by Dr. **Harry Bulstrode** at Cambridge University, is planning to test Zika's ability to work with brain cancer cells. Initially, scientists will only experiment with cells grown in the laboratory and in mice, hoping the tumor will grow slowly.

" *When putting concerns about Zika, scientists only think about babies and children. Because it is an urgent global concern, the research focus has been put into finding ways. But we are trying to approach Zika in a different way and intend to use this new understanding to see: Can the virus lead to a cure for one of the types of cancer? is it most difficult to treat today?* "said Dr. Bulstrode.

" *We hope to demonstrate that Zika virus can slow the growth of brain tumors under laboratory conditions. If it is possible to learn the ability to cross the blood-brain barrier and choose brain stem cells Zika, we can hold the key to treating [not only cancer but also many other brain diseases] in the future,* "Bulstrode said.

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