Breakthrough Treatments Bring New Hope for Small Cell Lung Cancer Patients Show Notes

Overview:

For decades, a Small Cell Lung Cancer diagnosis carried one of the most devastating prognoses in oncology. But today, groundbreaking treatments are fundamentally rewriting the story for SCLC patients. Thanks to revolutionary advances in immunotherapy, T-cell engagers, CAR T-cell therapy, and antibody drug conjugates, patients are experiencing longer survival and better quality of life than ever before.

New immunotherapies and targeted therapies are offering unprecedented hope for SCLC patients, particularly those with extensive-stage disease. Bispecific T-cell engagers (BiTEs) like tarlatamab—approved by the FDA for extensive-stage SCLC that progresses during or after chemotherapy—are harnessing the body's immune system to directly target cancer cells. These treatments represent the first of a whole new class of drugs that are transforming SCLC from a disease with limited options into one with real hope for years of disease control and, for some patients, the possibility of cure.

Beyond BiTEs, CAR T-cell therapy and antibody drug conjugates are creating additional pathways to treatment success, with many of these once experimental therapies now moving from clinical trials into standard care. The rapid pace of research means new options are continuously emerging, offering patients realistic possibilities for extended survival and improved quality of life.

Guests:

Jacob Sands, MD
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Jacob Sands, M.D., is a thoracic medical oncologist at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. He received his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati before completing residency in internal medicine and fellowship training in hematology/oncology at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Sands joined Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in 2017, where he sees individuals with lung cancer and leads the small cell lung cancer clinical research program.

Dr. Sands is interested in lung cancer diagnostics and therapeutics, and protocol development is ongoing for both non-small cell and small cell lung cancers.

- Resources:
  - Jacob Sands, MD - Dana-Farber Cancer Institute | Boston, MA
  - Jacob Sands, MD - Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
  - Dr. Sands on Lung Cancer Treatment https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDEhXYWI3OA

Wendy Brooks
Patient Advocate with Lung Cancer Foundation of America.
Wendy was diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer in the spring of 2023. A follow-up PET scan in January 2025 showed that the disease was not spreading, but because Wendy had tested positive for Delta-like ligand 3 (DLL3), the doctors were not ready to cease treatment. Instead, they pivoted to another clinical trial using BiTE (bi-specific T-cell engager) immunotherapy – another first in SCLC treatment – which was delivered via injection (as opposed to intravenously) every three weeks. The most recent scans show a 50% reduction in tumor and a 72% reduction in volume. Wendy remains on this course of treatment today.

- Resources:
  - Lung Cancer Screening Saved My Life | LCFA
  - Why Lung Cancer Screening Matters
  - Enrolling in clinical trials does not have to be patients' 'last line of defence'

LCFA's mission is the improvement in survivorship of lung cancer patients through the funding of transformative science.

While raising funds to support lung cancer research, LCFA will raise the public's awareness and serve as a resource for patients or anyone seeking answers, hope, and access to updated treatment information, scientific investigation, and clinical trials.

You can also join the conversation with LCFA on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.