

Lay title: Risk of lymphoma (a blood cancer).

Full title: Risk of lymphoma in patients exposed to antitumour necrosis factor therapy: results from the British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register for Rheumatoid Arthritis.

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It is known that patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) have a higher chance of developing lymphoma (a type of a blood cancer) compared with the general population. Patients with RA are often treated with a type of drug called a TNFi (Tumour necrosis factor-alpha inhibitor) which targets parts of the cells in the body to reduce inflammation. This type of treatment is known as a “biologic” therapy, because of how it is made.

It was unknown whether treatment with a TNFi for RA would increase the risk of developing lymphoma. The research team at the BSRBR-RA looked at the numbers of lymphomas that were developed in two groups of people within the study, to see if there was a difference between the two:

Group 1

Number of lymphomas developed in patients with RA who were treated with TNFi therapy.

Group 2

Number of lymphomas developed in patients with RA who were treated with traditional DMARD (Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs) therapy.

Reassuringly, after taking the differences in the groups of patients in to consideration, the results showed that there was no evidence of a higher chance of developing lymphoma in those being treated with a TNFi compared with those being treated with DMARDs.

Should you wish to read this scientific paper in full, the text can be found online here:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27502891>

