

Letter to Editor

Viruses and Leukaemia, Is Leukaemia Preventable?!

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The Human T-lymphotropic virus Type 1 (HTLV-I) is a human RNA retrovirus that is known to cause a type of cancer, referred to as adult T-cell leukaemia and lymphoma, and a demyelinating disease called HTLV-I associated myelopathy/tropical spastic paraparesis (HAM/TSP).

HTLV-I is one of a group of closely related primate T lymphocytic viruses (PTLVs).

Members of this family that infect old-world primates are called Simian T-lymphotropic viruses.

To date, four types of HTLVs (HTLV-I, HTLV- II, HTLV_III, and HTLV-IV), have been identified.

The HTLVs are believed to originate from interspecies transmission of STLVs.

The original name for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was HTLV-III; this term is no longer in use [1].

([http://medical-dictionary, thefreedictionary.com/HTLV-III](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/HTLV-III)).

The HTLV_I genome is diploid, composed of two copies of a single-stranded RNA virus whose genome is copied into a double-stranded DNA form that integrates into the host cell genome, at which point the virus is referred as provirus.

A closely related virus is bovine leukaemia virus BLV.

This begs the question if all leukaemias are virally related are leukaemias preventable with or through the use of antiviral agents!?

References

1. Welsh, James S. Contiguous Cancer. *The Oncologist*. 2011; 16: 1-4.