Revisiting thalidomide: fighting with caution against idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

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Abstract
Thalidomide is an infamous drug whose use by pregnant women in the middle of last century tragically resulted in serious birth defects. However, as a result of its potent immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory and antiangiogenic properties, thalidomide may be a potential therapy in many diseases. In recent years, thalidomide has been used effectively to treat various malignancies, including multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes, renal cell cancer, glioblastoma multiforme and prostate cancer. In addition, thalidomide has also proven effective against other immune-related diseases, including erythema nodosum leprosum and sarcoidosis. Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a deadly fibrotic disease with no effective treatment options. However, there is data to suggest that thalidomide may be useful in treating the chronic, disabling cough that accompanies IPF. It remains to be seen whether the immunomodulatory and antiangiogenic properties of thalidomide will also make it a potential therapy against the clinical progression of IPF.

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