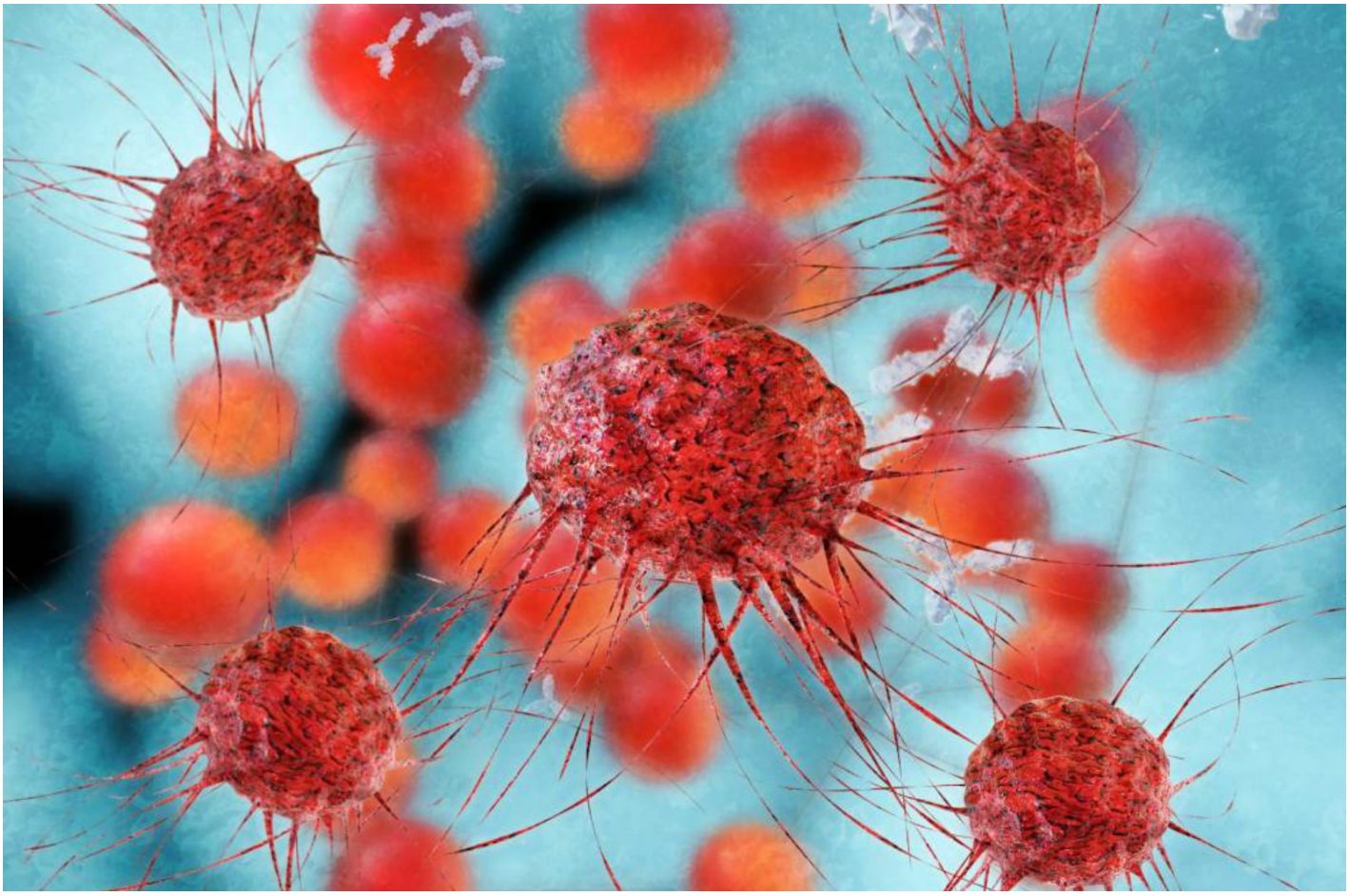
Drug Decreases Activity Of Enzyme HDAC To Slow Cancer

Columbia University



Cancer is a complicated disease that in many cases spreads rapidly. Researchers at Columbia University in New York have developed a drug that can stop, or at least slow down, the growth of cancer cells by inhibiting the activity of certain enzymes that are abnormally active.

This research was initiated in the 1980s by Columbia University professor Ronald Breslow, Ph.D., and Paul A. Marks, M.D., of Memorial SloanKettering Cancer Center. In 2001 they co-founded Aton Pharma, a privately held biopharmaceutical company, to develop and commercialize their discovery.

Called Zolinza™*, the drug targets cancer cells in which excess amounts of the enzyme histone deacetylase (HDAC) prevents the normal function of genes that control standard cell activity. Zolinza™ decreases the activity of HDAC, allowing for the reactivation of genes that may assist in slowing or stopping the growth of cancer cells. In 2004 Merck and Co. acquired Aton Pharma.

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> *In 2006 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Zolinza™ for treating cutaneous T-cell lymphoma, an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, becoming the first oral drug in its class to reach the market.*

The effectiveness of Zolinza™ as a treatment for other types of cancer, including leukemia, multiple myeloma, advanced Hodgkin's lymphoma, and solid tumors, is also being studied. *Zolinza is a registered trademark of Merck & Co., Inc., Whitehouse Station, N.J., USA

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