

What is the truth about STI571? Does STI571 cure cancer? STI571 side effects. Summary of latest research and news on STI571 by Dr Patrick Dixon MA MBBS. Please note that STI571 is often misspelled as ST1571, especially by those looking on the net.

STI571 is a new cancer drug which appears to have sent 95% of patients with CML (chronic myeloid leukaemia or chronic myelogenous leukemia) into remission in early trials. In one UK trial 30 out of 31 people had white blood cell counts which returned to normal after a month on STI571 while the final patient's blood count also became normal soon after.

All 31 patients were selected from the 50% of all patients with CML who are sensitive to the STI571. Eleven showed significant improvement and three of those eleven cleared their bone marrow of leukaemic cells completely.

Side effects seem very few from the daily STI571 tablet, certainly a lot less than bone marrow transplant or interferon.

Now Novartis who makes STI571 is under pressure together with the regulatory authorities to bring the drug to market as quickly as possible. The US licence application for STI571 is imminent. The US Food and Drug Administration have agreed to an "accelerated STI571 approval" which means the drug will undergo only two rounds of tests, not three.

Chronic myeloid leukaemia is diagnosed in around 1,000 people each year in the UK. It is caused by the Philadelphia chromosome - an abnormality that arises when part of one chromosome becomes attached to another. STI571 works by blocking enzymes only used in these cancer cells.