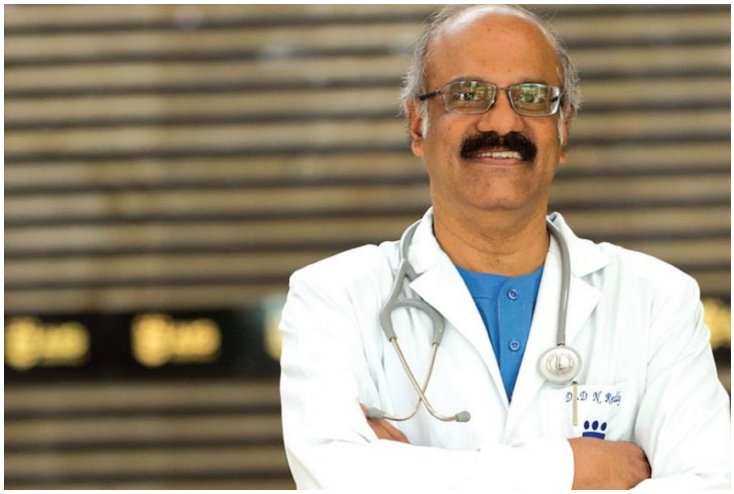
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AIG Hospitals starts monoclonal antibodies-based treatment for COVID-19 patients

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The drug cocktail has gained enough traction from global media ever since it got administered on ex-US President Donald Trump



Monoclonal antibodies-based treatment is seen as the latest armament in the fight against COVID-19. The drug cocktail has gained enough traction from global media ever since it got administered on ex-US President Donald Trump but is it really a wonder drug?

As AIG Hospitals started giving this treatment to its patients, Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals through a select media briefing demystified some of the most asked questions regarding this therapy.

Dr Reddy said that the real-world evidence of these monoclonal antibodies is yet to be established but the clinical studies published in peer-reviewed journals including the New England Journal of Medicine are encouraging as they have shown to reduce hospitalisation or death by over 70 per cent, including a drastic reduction in viral clearance.

“Patients over 65, obese patients, with uncontrolled diabetes, cardiovascular patients, those who are under immunosuppressants like Cancer patients are ideal candidates for this treatment. The timing also has to be appropriate where it needs to be given within three to seven days at max,” said Dr Reddy.

He further added that. “Within one week, this treatment can help patients become RT-PCR negative. Pregnant women are not supposed to be given this treatment as we don’t have enough safety data for this subset of patients. There is also a possibility to explore the prophylactic usage of this combination especially among the high-exposure groups like healthcare workers. This to be highlighted that as per US FDA, benefits of this antibodies cocktail have not been observed in patients hospitalised due to COVID-19; moreover, if this combination is administered on patients requiring high-flow oxygen or mechanical ventilation then the clinical outcomes can become worse.”

At AIG, we are doing a major study where we are looking at its efficacy against the double mutant variant of the virus,” Dr. Reddy said. He further added that “this treatment has the potential to increase mutant variants and that is why irrational use of these antibodies’ cocktails should be absolutely discouraged.”

The cost of treatment is around Rs 70,000. “Hospitals and physicians need to factor in this cost element for its judicial usage,” Dr. Reddy said. It is worth noting that it is to be given only in a hospital setting where there is provision to activate the emergency medical system immediately following any infusion-related adverse reaction.