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Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

What is it?

Although components of scorpion venom from various species show anticancer effects in laboratory and animal studies, the scorpion venom marketed to cancer patients has not been scientifically proven to treat cancer in humans.

The claims made for blue scorpion venom marketed to cancer patients as Escozine, Escozul, and Vidatox (a homeopathic version) are mostly based on anecdotes, testimonials, and experiments which may or may not have been properly carried out. In Cuba where these products originated, the government rejected the use of Escozul in 2009 because there was not enough data. The [homeopathic](#) version, which uses very dilute solutions of the active ingredient, has not been shown to treat or prevent cancer. The properties of blue scorpion venom are just starting to be described more thoroughly in scientific research. Therefore, like venoms from other scorpion species, blue scorpion venom compounds one day may be isolated and properly developed to create cancer therapies, but much more research is needed.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- Pain relief

A few lab studies suggest that scorpion venom may be helpful in relieving pain, but human studies are lacking.

- Anti-inflammatory

No scientific evidence currently supports this use.

- Cancer treatment

No scientific evidence supports this use. The “scientific” papers published online about scorpion venom products have not been properly evaluated by the scientific community.

- Chemotherapy or radiation side effects

No scientific evidence currently supports this use.

What are the side effects?

The venoms marketed to cancer patients are untested and unregulated. Therefore side effects are currently unknown.

What else do I need to know?

Patient Warnings:

Scorpion venom products marketed to cancer patients including Escozine and Vidatox have not been studied in clinical trials. There is no evidence for their use to prevent or treat cancer in humans, and they have not been reviewed or approved by the FDA.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you’re not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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