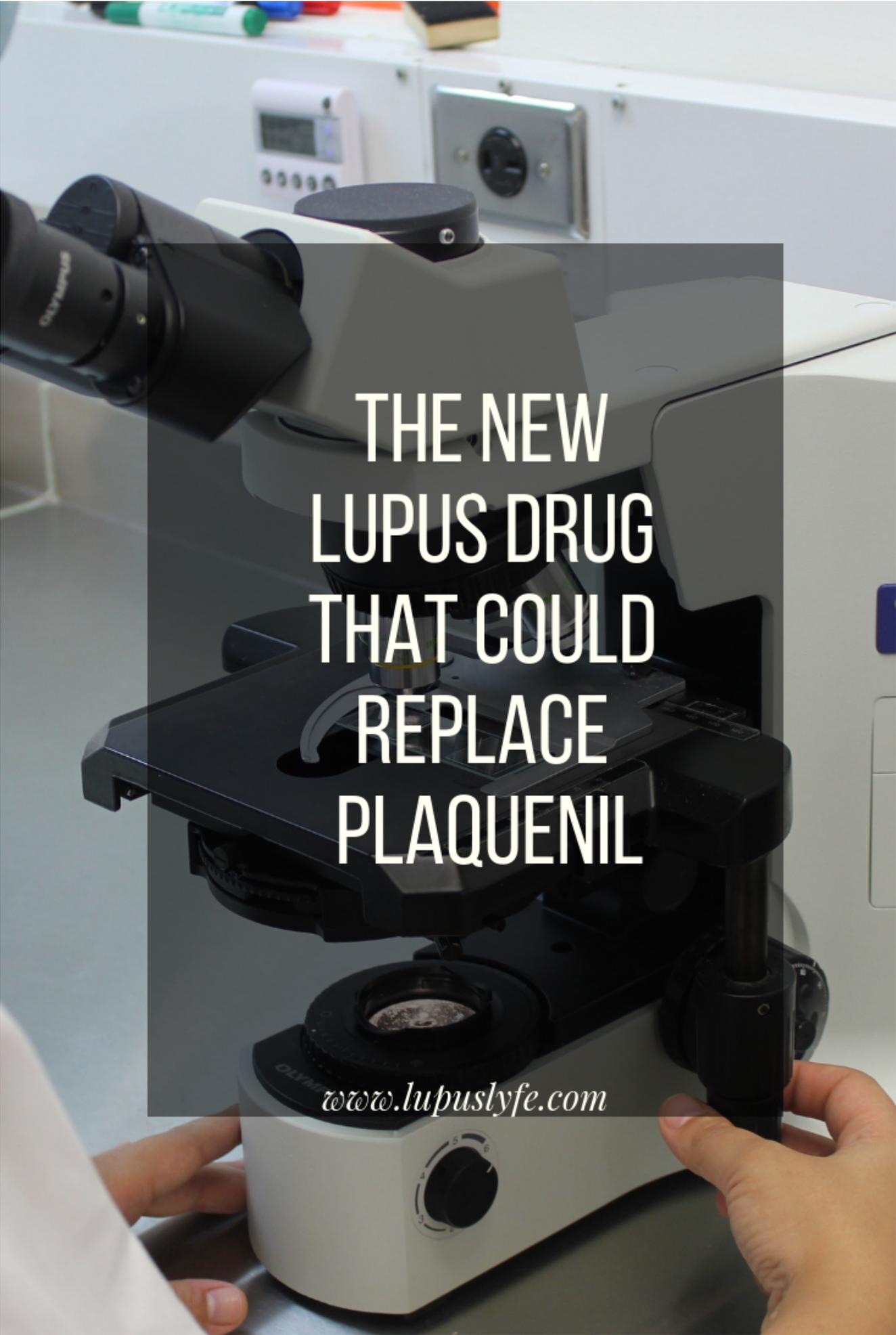


The New Lupus Drug That Could Replace Plaquenil

According to the [Lupus Research Institute](#), a new study by [Target Identification in Lupus](#) grantee [Keith Elkon, MD](#), of the University of Washington, Seattle, and colleagues has given hope that a new drug they designed could possibly work better than the most common anti-malaria drug currently prescribed to lupus patients.

A person wearing a white lab coat is operating a black and white Olympus microscope in a laboratory. The microscope is the central focus, with the person's hands visible adjusting the base and stage. The background shows a white lab bench with various pieces of equipment, including a digital scale and a control panel. The overall scene is brightly lit, typical of a clinical or research environment.

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Plaquenil is the brand name of Hydroxychloroquine. Hydroxychloroquine is an anti-malarial drug that has been used for a long time in rheumatic diseases like lupus and arthritis. It was originally created as an anti malarial drug, but was found to help manage lupus patients around the time of World War II. Hydroxychloroquine can be seen as a foundation drug that many lupus patients will continue to be on for the rest of their lives.

Even if it is not working by itself, most rheumatologists will layer lupus treatment with another drug while still keeping their lupus patients on Hydroxychloroquine. This is because Plaquenil has been studied and shown to help manage lupus symptoms like muscle and joint pain, skin rashes, pericarditis, pleuritis, and even fatigue. It has also been shown to reduce the risk of further organ damage in lupus patients when taken for long term management of lupus. The risk of flares also drops to around 50% when a patient is on Plaquenil.

For over 50 years, Hydroxychloroquine was one of the only medicines that had been approved specifically as a treatment for lupus. In recent years, many strides have been made to increase funding for lupus research and clinical trials, and there is great hope on the horizon for lupus sufferers.

According to the study conducted by [Target Identification in Lupus](#) grantee [Keith Elkon, MD](#), of the University of Washington and his colleagues, a new drug they designed, has shown promising results in a study with mice. [This lupus study](#), focused on the type I interferons that are believed to be produced in excess among lupus patients. Type I interferons are a large subgroup of [interferon](#) proteins that help regulate the activity of the immune system. In patients with

lupus, these proteins are found in excessive numbers and could explain the overreaction of lupus patient's immune systems.

Anti-malarials also work in lupus patients by reducing the number of interferon proteins, but they are not sufficient for more serious lupus symptoms and manifestations. This study by Dr. Elkon provides a promising look to a safer and more reliable drug that will help to reduce interferon proteins and provide better lupus disease management.

This new drug, currently called X6, was shown to provide a better response to lupus symptoms than that of Hydroxychloroquine. During the study, Dr. Elkon and his team compared the results of the new drug X6 to Hydroxychloroquine in mice that carried a specific gene mutation, also found in some lupus patients. The results were exciting for the lupus community.

[According the journal published,](#) the lupus researchers concluded that drug X6 diminished the amount of type I interferons in the mice, while hydroxychloroquine did not. In the same study, the research team noted that X6 worked better to reduce heart inflammation as well. It was concluded that X6 outperformed Hydroxychloroquine in this study and further tests will need to be conducted before this new lupus drug would be allowed in human clinical trials.

[The Lupus Research Institute](#) is one of my favorites sites to stay up to date on all the new lupus research and drugs that will hopefully lead to a cure for lupus. I highly recommend visiting their site to stay abreast of new treatments and studies being conducted that solely focus

on lupus and its treatment.