

Oxfordshire firm set to start 'HIV cure' trials

AN OXFORDSHIRE company is set to begin clinical trials on a potential cure for Aids, it emerged this week.

Adaptimmune Limited, along with professors at the universities of Cardiff and Pennsylvania, have engineered new immune cells that can destroy HIV-infected cells in a laboratory.

Now the company, based in Milton Park, near Abingdon, wants to begin clinical trials next year to see how effective the cells will be on patients infected with HIV.

The problem facing scientists is the ability of the HIV to mutate when it enters the human body, making it impossible to cure with conventional medicine.

Researchers believe that this ability may still prevent the virus from being completely destroyed, however, each time the virus is forced to mutate it appears to become less powerful.

Cardiff University professor Andy Sewell said: "In the face of our engineered assassin cells, HIV will either die or be forced to change its disguise again, weakening itself along the way.

"We'd prefer the first option, but I suspect we are going to see the latter."