New treatment helps patients with lymphoma live longer

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Abstract

A new treatment protocol developed by physicians in Italy is helping patients with aggressive B-cell lymphoma live longer. The protocol uses a 3-drug combination called R-BAC, which includes rituximab, bendamustine, and cytarabine. The synergy between bendamustine and cytarabine makes the approach highly effective. Both are among the most potent inhibitors of DNA replication and, some believe, of DNA repair. Prior in vitro work showed that when leukemic lymphocytes were incubated with bendamustine, twice as much cytarabine accumulated in the cells which translated to highly significant gains in cytotoxicity. Coupled with the immune boost provided by rituximab, the protocol showed promising results in patients with mantle cell lymphoma and B-cell relapsed/refractory aggressive lymphoma. In heavily pretreated relapsed/refractory diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, the overall response rate was 69% and the complete response rate was 41%. Tumor shrinkage was seen in 79% of patients. And the median overall survival was 17.3 months. Overall, the results suggest that treatment with R-BAC is a good option to help manage B-cell lymphoma. M. Chiara Tisi, et al. Rituximab, bendamustine and cytarabine (R-BAC) in patients with relapsed-refractory aggressive B-cell lymphoma. (2018) American Journal of Hematology. Corresponding author: Carlo Visco