

Younger adults with high risk multiple myeloma may benefit from allo transplant

What were researchers trying to learn?

Researchers wanted to learn how well people with multiple myeloma do after an allogeneic blood or marrow transplant (allo transplant). An allo transplant uses healthy blood-forming cells from a donor to replace the unhealthy ones.

Researchers studied 77 adults with who had an allo transplant at the Medical College of Wisconsin between 2002 and 2013. Everyone in the study was between 23 and 69 years of age. The majority of people in the study:

- Had an autologous (auto) transplant before the allo transplant. An auto transplant uses the person's own blood-forming cells to replace the unhealthy ones.
- Had an allo transplant from a matched sibling (brother or sister)

What did they find?

Researchers found that 5 years after allo transplant, almost 60% of people (6 out of 10) were alive. Almost 40% of people (4 out of 10) were alive without signs or symptoms of myeloma. They found several things affected how long people with myeloma lived after allo transplant:

- **Age.** Younger people lived longer after allo transplant than older people.
- **Disease status.** People with no myeloma signs or symptoms before transplant lived longer after transplant than people with signs or symptoms of the disease.
- **Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection.** People who didn't get CMV after transplant lived longer than people who did get CMV.

Researchers know that sometimes myeloma has aspects that make it more likely to get worse quickly. This is called high risk myeloma. In this study, researchers found that people with high risk myeloma did just as well after allo transplant as people with standard risk myeloma.

Important Points:

- **Allo transplant may help people with high risk myeloma or myeloma that comes back early after an auto transplant live longer without the disease.**
- **Younger people and people with no myeloma signs or symptoms before allo transplant lived longer without the disease.**

Why is this important?

Transplant doctors and people with myeloma have more information about who might benefit from allo transplant. This can help people decide whether to get an allo transplant.

What else should I keep in mind about this study?

The results of research studies are always limited in what they can and can't tell you. With this study, one drawback is that the transplants weren't exactly the same. For example, some people had an allo transplant right after an auto transplant. Others had an allo transplant when the myeloma came back (relapsed). This can make it hard to know what the results mean for you.

The researchers also say that people who get an allo transplant for myeloma should be part of a clinical trial (research study). This is because different research studies on allo transplant for myeloma have had different results. Doctors need more research to find out what treatments are best for people with myeloma.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you have myeloma and are considering transplant, you may want to ask your doctor:

- What type of transplant do you recommend – auto, allo, or both?
- Do I have high risk myeloma?
- When is the best time for me to have a transplant?
- Are there research studies I could join?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [Multiple myeloma](#)

Source

Dhakal B, D'Souza A, Martens M, et al. Allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation in multiple myeloma: Impact of disease risk and post allograft minimal residual disease on survival. *Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma & Leukemia*. 2016 Jul 1; 16(7):279-286. Epub 2016 Mar 30.

About this research summary

Ground-breaking research into blood and marrow transplant is happening every day. That research is having a significant impact on the survival and quality of life of thousands of transplant patients. But the research is written by scientists for scientists. By providing research news in an easy-to-understand way, patients, caregivers, and families have access to useful information that can help them make treatment decisions.

This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of the CIBMTR[®] (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®]). The CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program[®]/Be The Match[®] and the Medical College of Wisconsin.
