Six main barriers prevent patients from getting transplant for multiple myeloma

People with multiple myeloma and their doctors say that there are 6 main obstacles to getting a transplant.

Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that can be cured with an autologous blood or marrow transplant (BMT), using the patient's own cells. However, BMT requires months of preparation and recovery. According to a recent study, some obstacles to transplant include:

- **Needing a full-time caregiver**: Some transplant centers require patients to have someone stay with them, 24 hours day, for up to 3 months after transplant. Not everyone has someone available to do this.
- **Risk of serious effects**: BMT can have serious effects, which cause some patients to avoid transplant.
- **Lack of local emotional support**: Patients tend to do better if they have family and friends who can comfort them during their recovery. However, some people live far from their family and friends, especially in rural areas.
- **Money problems**: Transplant is costly, even with health insurance. Also, some patients and caregivers cannot afford to take several months off of work.
- **Distance from the transplant center**: Patients who live far away may have problems both traveling to the center and affording lodging for family members.
- **Getting referred to transplant**: Some patients are never referred to transplant in the first place, because their community doctors do not perform transplant and may not send them to a transplant center.

Keep in mind

This small study included only 27 physicians and patients in Wisconsin, and other regions may have additional or different challenges.

Learn more about

- Autologous transplant at NMDP.org
- Clinical trials for multiple myeloma at CTsearchsupport.org
- More study summaries at CIBMTR.org

Source

Wu JF, Akinola IM, D'Souza A, Cusatis R. A Multistakeholder Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to Autologous Stem Cell Transplantation for Multiple Myeloma. Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma and Leukemia. 2025 Jul 11: S2152-2650(25)00238-1. Epub ahead of print. PMCID: PMC12357161. doi: 10.1016/j.clml.2025.07.002.

About this research summary

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This plain-language summary was written by Jennifer Motl at the Medical College of Wisconsin and reviewed by an author of the full article.