

## BMT helps some older people who have lymphoma

### Scientists say Medicare should pay for BMT for people older than 65

Blood and marrow transplants (BMT) can help people aged 65 and older who have non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL).

That's news from the largest ever study of older people who have lymphoma. Scientists studied nearly 1,200 people who got BMT between 2008 and 2015. All the people got allogeneic, or allo BMT, meaning the cells were donated by someone else.

Scientists divided the people into 2 age groups:

1. Younger than 65
2. Age 65 or older

People in both groups lived equally long. Four years after transplant, about half of the people were still alive, regardless of age. In other words, BMT worked as well for older people as for younger people.

Medicare, the health insurance for Americans 65 and older, does not pay for BMT to treat lymphoma. But, 67 is the average age when a person is diagnosed with NHL. Based on this study, scientists say Medicare should cover BMT for lymphoma in people 65 and older.

### Keep in mind

While allo BMT cures some people, it can have serious side effects, and recovery is long. Some people are too sick to get allo BMT.

This study did not include people who got haploidentical (half-matched) BMT, autologous BMT (uses the patient's own cells), or cord blood transplants, and so those results might be different. There are other treatments for NHL as well, such as medicines and CAR-T cells.

### Ask your doctor

- What treatment is best for me?
- Does insurance cover that treatment?

### Learn more about

- [This research](#)
- [BMT for non-Hodgkin lymphoma](#)
- [Insurance coverage](#)

### Source

Shah NN, Ahn KW, Litovich C, et al. Outcomes of Medicare-age eligible NHL patients receiving RIC allogeneic transplantation: A CIBMTR analysis. *Blood Advances*. 2018 Apr 24; 2 (8):933-940. doi:10.1182/bloodadvances.2018018531. Epub 2018 Apr 23. PMC5916010.

### About this research summary

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