

More tests needed to show when BMT can help older people

Blood and marrow transplant is underused in people older than 60



Blood and marrow transplant (BMT) is helpful for older people, but only 5-10% of older people who need BMT get this lifesaving treatment.

Transplant physicians agree that transplant can help older patients, but BMT can have serious effects, and doctors worry that older people might get too sick after transplant.

According to a recent survey, about 90% of transplant doctors believe they need better tests to help predict which older adults can safely undergo BMT.

Many doctors say the current tests of how well a person functions in daily life are not enough. These tests don't detect problems older people may have before transplant that would make getting a transplant less safe. Some problems may affect memory, thinking and emotional wellness. Other problems can cause weakness, falling or dangerous weight loss.

Plus, if detected, it's possible that problems can be treated to make it safer for an older adult to have a BMT.

A doctor who specializes in cancer treatments for older people, called a geriatric oncologist, can help, too. But not all transplant centers have these special doctors.

What's next

A separate study may find some better tests for older people. The study is called the Composite Health Assessment Risk Model (CHARM) for Older

Adults. It's nearing completion at 26 transplants centers in the US. Results will be available in about 2 years.

Ask your doctor

- Would a HCT help treat my disease?
- Since I'm older, would a geriatric assessment be helpful for me?

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Source

Mishra A, Preussler JM, Bhatt VR, et al. [Breaking the age barrier: Physicians' perceptions on candidacy for allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation in older adults](#). *Transplantation and Cellular Therapy*. [Epub ahead of print] Epub 2021 Mar 28. PMC8254775. doi:10.1016/j.jtct.2021.03.028.

About this research summary

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