

Treatment With Lenalidomide Delays Myeloma Recurrence

In an ongoing study, patients who did not receive the drug lenalidomide (Revlimid) were about twice as likely as the patients who received lenalidomide to have their myeloma return within three years (called a recurrence or relapse). Myeloma is a cancer of the plasma cells in the bone marrow, the spongy tissue inside of bones. Plasma cells are a part of the body's immune system and produce antibodies that help the body fight infection.

Patients in this study had been previously treated with high-dose chemotherapy and an autologous stem cell transplant, the standard treatment for myeloma. Autologous stem cell transplantation is a procedure in which some of a patient's stem cells are removed before high-dose chemotherapy and returned after chemotherapy to create healthy bone marrow. After this initial treatment, all patients received treatment with lenalidomide for two months and some patients continued receiving longer-term treatment called maintenance therapy with lenalidomide, and some did not.

What This Means for Patients

"These results are very promising. If confirmed, they suggest that maintenance therapy with lenalidomide can improve quality of life in patients with myeloma by delaying the need for more intensive therapy to treat a relapse," said lead author Michel Attal, PhD, Professor of Hematology at Purpan Hospital in Toulouse, France. This study is still in progress to find out whether patients who receive lenalidomide live longer than patients who do not receive the drug.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What stage of myeloma do I have?
- What are my treatment options?
- What is my prognosis (chance of recovery)?
- If the myeloma returns, what treatment do you recommend?
- What are the side effects of treatment and how can they be managed?

For More Information

[Guide to Multiple Myeloma](#) [1]

[ASCO Answers Fact Sheet: Multiple Myeloma](#) [2]

[Understanding Bone Marrow and Stem Cell Transplantation](#) [3]

[Explaining Maintenance Therapy](#) [4]

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Multiple+Myeloma>

[2] http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/vignette/ASCO_Answers_Myeloma.pdf

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Understanding+Bone+Marrow+and+Stem+Cell+Transplantation>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Explaining+Maintenance+Therapy>