The treatment of adults with acute lymphoblastic leukemia

ACUTE LYMPHOBLASTIC LEUKEMIA | JANUARY 1, 2008
The Treatment of Adults with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

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Abstract

Despite the relatively low incidence of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in adults, large national and international collaborations have recently improved our understanding of how to treat ALL in adults. This article documents and examines the current evidence base for a "state of the art" therapy in both Philadelphia chromosome–negative and –positive adult ALL. The article comments upon areas of therapeutic debate, such as the role of bone marrow transplantation. In particular, the controversial subject of whether the superior outcome seen in younger patients is predicated on disease biology or therapeutic strategy is examined closely. Promising approaches under development are also discussed.

Topics: acute lymphocytic leukemia, bone marrow transplantation, philadelphia chromosome

References

References


Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) accounts for 20% of all acute leukemias seen in patients over 20 years of age, and affects approximately 2 persons per 100,000 in the United States annually. Despite its relative rarity, ALL continues to generate considerable interest because of its high mortality when untreated, and because of the biologic and therapeutic lessons learned from studying this disease. The follow-up periods for these trials are still short, however, and the full impact of the use of G-CSF during the treatment of adults with ALL remains to be determined. GIMEMA Trial. The GIMEMA ALL 0288 trial is one of the largest randomized trials in adults to date [14]. Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) is a cancer of the lymphoid line of blood cells characterized by the development of large numbers of immature lymphocytes. Symptoms may include feeling tired, pale skin color, fever, easy bleeding or bruising, enlarged lymph nodes, or bone pain. As an acute leukemia, ALL progresses rapidly and is typically fatal within weeks or months if left untreated.