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**CIBMTR Study Shows, Compared to the Public, People Who Had a Blood or Marrow Transplant (BMT) Have Higher Risk of Dying of COVID-19**

**MILWAUKEE, Jan. 19, 2021** – People who have had blood or marrow transplant (BMT) may be particularly vulnerable to dying from COVID-19, according to a study published today in the journal, [Lancet Haematology](#), using data reported to the CIBMTR® (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research), a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP)/Be The Match® and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW).

BMT (also called hematopoietic cell transplantation, or HCT) is the only cure for some blood cancers, such as lymphoma or leukemia, and may also cure blood disorders such as sickle cell disease. It's vital to understand how COVID-19 affects people who have undergone BMT.

The study included 318 children and adults who contracted COVID-19 prior to August 2020, after they had received a BMT. Of the patients, 14% were aged 20 or younger. Also, 87% of all patients were from the U.S.

One month after getting COVID-19, around 30 percent, or three out of 10 people had died. Based on available data, this appears to be much higher than in people who never had BMT.

“We found that hematopoietic cell transplant recipients were at an increased risk of death if they developed COVID-19 infection, even if they were more than 1 year past transplantation,” said co-first author Akshay Sharma, MBBS, of the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Department of Bone Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapy. “All hematopoietic cell transplant recipients should take utmost precautions to avoid exposure to SARS-CoV-2: practice social distancing, wear face coverings when outside their home, and wash hands frequently.”

“It’s important for everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19,” said co-author Marcie Riches, MD, a Scientific Director at the CIBMTR and Director of the BMT Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “This will help protect people who need or had a BMT. It is unknown how well the vaccine works in patients who had BMT, but we encourage vaccination for patients more than 3 months from transplant.”

Researchers at 11 medical centers co-authored this study. More research is needed to study the impacts of recently identified treatment and support for patients with COVID-19 disease.

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Learn more about [COVID-19 cases after BMT, reported to the CIBMTR](#), and view a [plain-language summary](#) of this study at [www.cibmtr.org](http://www.cibmtr.org).

### **About the CIBMTR**

The [CIBMTR](#)<sup>®</sup> (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research<sup>®</sup>) is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program<sup>®</sup> (NMDP)/Be The Match<sup>®</sup> and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). The CIBMTR collaborates with the global scientific community to advance hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) and cellular therapy worldwide to increase survival and enrich quality of life for patients. The CIBMTR facilitates critical observational and interventional research through scientific and statistical expertise, a large network of transplant centers, and a unique and extensive clinical outcomes database.

For more information on the CIBMTR, please visit [www.cibmtr.org](http://www.cibmtr.org) or follow the CIBMTR on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or Twitter at [@CIBMTR](#).

### **About the Medical College of Wisconsin**

With a history dating back to 1893, The Medical College of Wisconsin is dedicated to leadership and excellence in education, patient care, research and community engagement. More than 1,400 students are enrolled in MCW's medical school and graduate school programs in Milwaukee, Green Bay, and Central Wisconsin. MCW's School of Pharmacy opened in 2017. A major national research center, MCW is the largest research institution in the Milwaukee metro area and second largest in Wisconsin. In the last ten years, faculty received more than \$1.5 billion in external support for research, teaching, training and related purposes. This total includes highly competitive research and training awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Annually, MCW faculty direct or collaborate on more than 3,100 research studies, including clinical trials. Additionally, more than 1,600 physicians provide care in virtually every specialty of medicine for more than 2.8 million patients annually.

### **About the National Marrow Donor Program<sup>®</sup> (NMDP)/Be The Match<sup>®</sup>**

The National Marrow Donor Program<sup>®</sup> (NMDP)/Be The Match<sup>®</sup> is the leading global partner working to save lives through cellular therapy. With more than 30 years of experience managing the most diverse registry of potential unrelated blood stem cell donors and cord blood units in the world, NMDP/Be The Match is a proven partner in providing cures to patients with life-threatening blood and marrow cancers and diseases. Through their global network, they connect centers and patients to their best cell therapy option—from blood stem cell transplant to a next-generation therapy—and collaborate with cell and gene therapy companies to support therapy development and delivery through Be The Match BioTherapies<sup>®</sup>. NMDP/Be The Match is a tireless advocate for the cell therapy community, working with hematologists/oncologists to remove barriers to consultation and treatment, and supporting patients through no-cost programs to eliminate non-medical obstacles to cell therapy. In addition, they are a global leader in research through the CIBMTR<sup>®</sup> (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research<sup>®</sup>)—a collaboration with Medical College of Wisconsin, investing in and managing research studies that improve patient outcomes and advance the future of care.