

Blood and marrow transplant helps treat myelofibrosis

BMT may help more people with myelofibrosis than previously known



Blood or marrow transplant (BMT) is the only cure for myelofibrosis. This rare blood cancer, pronounced my-ah-lo-fye-BRO-sis, is nicknamed MF.

Although it can cure MF, BMT also may cause severe side effects. Doctors wanted to know if BMT or medicines work better to treat it.

Doctors check how severe MF is for every person diagnosed with it. There are four levels of MF, from low-risk to high-risk. Doctors used to think that BMT was too dangerous for people with low- or intermediate-risk MF.

However, a new study shows that some people with intermediate-risk MF may benefit from BMT.

In the largest study of MF so far, researchers looked at the medical records of about 1,900 people. They had about 6 years' worth of records for most people.

People who had BMT for intermediate risk or higher risk MF lived longer on average than people who did not get BMT.

However, there was a higher risk of dying in the first year after BMT. That was due to side effects of BMT, such as graft-versus-host disease, organ failure, and infection.

Keep in mind

Every person is different. It's important to ask your doctor: What are the risks and possible benefits for me, personally? What may happen if I take only medicines instead of BMT?

Also, Medicare insurance does not yet pay for BMT for people with intermediate-risk MF. However, there are medicines and clinical trials for MF.

What's next

More research is needed on how to stop side effects of BMT and improve a person's quality of life.

Learn more about

- [Treatment decisions at BeTheMatch.org](#)
- [Clinical trials for myelofibrosis at jcctp.org](#)
- [More study summaries at CIBMTR.org](#)

Source

Gowin K, Ballen K, Ahn KW, et al. [Survival following allogeneic transplant in patients with myelofibrosis](#). Blood Advances. 2020 May 12; 4(9): 1965–1973. Published online 2020 May 8. doi: 10.1182/bloodadvances.2019001084 PMC7218417

About this research summary

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