

Younger BMT donors sometimes better than older donors

Blood and marrow transplant helps people with myelodysplastic syndromes



New research may change the way doctors choose the best donors for blood and marrow transplant (BMT).

A new study of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) followed people who got a matched BMT. It showed that younger, unrelated donors may be better than older, sibling donors.

MDS is a blood cancer that is more common in older people. BMT can cure MDS. In the past, doctors recommended that BMT donors be a close match genetically. Matched siblings, meaning brothers or sisters, were considered the best, regardless of age.

However, a new study shows that sometimes, matched young, unrelated donors are better than matched, older sibling donors.

Doctors checked medical records of about 1,800 people, aged 50 and older, who had MDS. Everyone got BMT from a matched donor during 2011-2017. The patients were divided into 2 groups by type of donor:

- Matched, unrelated donor, aged 35 or younger
- Matched, sibling donor, aged 50 or older

People stayed cancer-free longer if their matched donor was younger and unrelated rather than an older sibling.

Keep in mind

This is a small study and might not have uncovered all the reasons that people lived longer.

Although BMT can cure cancer, it also can have serious side effects in some people.

Ask your doctor

What type of BMT donor is best for me? What are the possible benefits and harms of BMT and other treatments?

Learn more about

- [MDS at BeTheMatch.org](#)
- [Clinical trials for MDS at CTsearchsupport.org](#)
- [More study summaries at CIBMTR.org](#)

Source

Guru Murthy GS, Kim S, Hu ZH, et al. [Relapse and Disease-Free Survival in Patients With Myelodysplastic Syndrome Undergoing Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation Using Older Matched Sibling Donors vs Younger Matched Unrelated Donors](#). JAMA Oncology. Epub 2022 Jan 14. PMC8759031. doi: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2021.6846.

About this research summary

This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of the CIBMTR® (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research®). The CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program®/Be The Match® and the Medical College of Wisconsin.



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This plain-language summary was written by Jennifer Motl at the Medical College of Wisconsin and reviewed by an author of the full article. © 2022 by CIBMTR, license [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).