Most older people who have AML benefit from transplant

Of adults older than 60 who needed BMT, fewer than 5% got BMT

More older people with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) should get blood and marrow transplant (BMT), according to a new study.

BMT can cure AML in people of all ages, but only about 5%, or 5 out of every 100 adults aged 60 and older, get BMT.

Because BMT can have serious side effects, doctors used to believe it was too risky for older adults. But, a new study shows that BMT is helpful for many people aged 60 and older.

Researchers compared medical records of more than 1,300 adults aged 60 and older who had AML. Everyone got allogeneic BMT (cells donated by another person) during 2007-2017.

After considering people's overall health, researchers said age had only a small effect on people's survival.

Two things were more important than age: the type of AML and how well previous treatments worked.

Doctors use lab tests called cytogenetics to find out which type of AML people have. People whose lab test showed low-risk cytogenetics lived longer than people with high-risk cytogenetics.

Also, treatments before BMT were important. If people's cancer temporarily disappears, that's called remission. People whose AML was in deep remission (with no measurable AML cells in their bodies) lived longer than people whose AML was not in deep remission (i.e., had measurable AML cells in their bodies).

Keep in mind

Doctors should send all people who have AML to a transplant center. Transplant doctors can advise whether transplant may be helpful or not. Transplant center staff can look for a BMT donor. They also can offer support to help patients and families cope with AML.

Learn more about

- **AML and BMT at BeTheMatch.org**
- **Clinical trials for adults 60 and older at CTsearchsupport.org**
- **More study summaries at CIBMTR.org**

Source

Maakaron JE, Zhang MJ, Chen K, et al. Age is no barrier for adults undergoing HCT for AML in CR1: contemporary CIBMTR analysis. Bone Marrow Transplantation. 2022;57(6):911-917. Epub 2022/04/04. PMC9232949. doi: 10.1038/s41409-022-01650-5.

About this research summary

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This plain-language summary (PLS) was written by Jennifer Motl at Medical College of Wisconsin and reviewed by an author of the full article.