

Research News (accessible version)

Doctors look for ways to help more people get lifesaving care



Doctors, health insurance companies and the government are working together to help more people get access to lifesaving transplant and cellular therapies.

Blood or marrow transplant (BMT) and other cellular therapies can cure sickle cell disease, blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma, and more. However, not everyone gets these therapies. And fewer ethnically diverse people get treated.

In order to help people of all races and ethnicities, a workshop was sponsored by 2 groups:

- American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT), a professional society for physicians and other health care staff
- National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match, which manages the most diverse marrow registry in the world to match patients and donors

The group at the workshop discussed reasons that people don't get BMT and cellular therapies, including:

- Some local doctors don't refer people to transplant centers
- Some patients can't afford expensive BMT and cellular therapies, depending on their health insurance
- Some people can't afford to relocate to a transplant center for several months during treatment
- Some patients don't have a family member or caregiver who can take time off of work to help them recover
- Some patients don't trust their doctors

What's next

The group proposed to:

- Teach community doctors about better ways to help patients get BMT and cellular therapies
- Update popular guides to cancer care
- Work with patient groups to meet their needs
- Find resources that support patients and help pay bills
- Study why some health insurers don't pay for therapies
- Track the race and ethnicity of patients treated at different medical centers
- Teach doctors to notice when and why patients can't get care, particularly ethnically diverse patients

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Source

Auletta JJ, Sandmaier BM, Jensen E, et al. [The ASTCT-NMDP ACCESS Initiative: A Collaboration to Address and Sustain Equal Outcomes for All across the Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Ecosystem.](#)

Transplantation and Cellular Therapy. 2022 Dec; 28(12):802-809. Epub 2022 Sep 30. doi:10.1016/j.jtct.2022.09.020.

About this research summary

This information is provided on behalf of the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®] (CIBMTR[®]). 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. © 2023 by CIBMTR, license [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).