People with memory problems need support after transplant

In older adults, memory problems may be linked to health after BMT

Memory problems might affect physical health during blood and marrow transplant (BMT), researchers say. Extra therapy may help.

Researchers studied 330 people aged 50-77. People who had measurable memory problems before transplant did not live quite as long after transplant as those without memory problems.

The people got BMT to treat leukemia, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) and other blood cancers. BMT can cure these cancers. However, BMT may have severe side effects.

Researchers wanted to learn who will feel better and live longer after BMT.

In the study, doctors measured forgetfulness and confusion, also called "cognitive impairment." They asked people 6 questions. This test is called the Blessed Orientation Memory Concentration test.

Two years after transplant:
- 55% of people with normal memory were alive
- 40% of people with memory problems were alive

People with cognitive problems can get BMT, researchers say. However, people should get treated for cognitive problems.

Counseling, medicines, and exercise may help. Also, a social worker can help caregivers find providers and programs.

Keep in mind

More research is needed with larger groups of people.

Ask your doctor

- If my family or I need support, where can we find it?
- I'd like a referral to an expert in dealing with memory problems. Could you refer me to someone, such as a:
  - geriatric doctor,
  - social worker,
  - physical therapist,
  - nutritionist,
  - behavioral health specialist
  - and other experts?

Learn more about

- Support for you and your family at BeTheMatch.org
- Caregiver resources at BeTheMatch.org
- More study summaries at CIBMTR.org

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®).

Source

Olin RL, Fretham C, Pasquini MC, et al. Geriatric assessment in older alloHCT recipients: association of functional and cognitive impairment with outcomes. Blood Advances. 2020;4(12):2810-2820. doi:10.1182/bloodadvances.2020001719 PMC7322958