BMT helps some older people who have lymphoma

Scientists say Medicare should pay for BMT for people older than 65

Blood and marrow transplants (BMT) can help people aged 65 and older who have non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL).

That’s news from the largest ever study of older people who have lymphoma. Scientists studied nearly 1,200 people who got BMT between 2008 and 2015. All the people got allogeneic, or allo BMT, meaning the cells were donated by someone else.

Scientists divided the people into 2 age groups:
1. Younger than 65
2. Age 65 or older

People in both groups lived equally long. Four years after transplant, about half of the people were still alive, regardless of age. In other words, BMT worked as well for older people as for younger people.

Medicare, the health insurance for Americans 65 and older, does not pay for BMT to treat lymphoma. But, 67 is the average age when a person is diagnosed with NHL. Based on this study, scientists say Medicare should cover BMT for lymphoma in people 65 and older.

Keep in mind
While allo BMT cures some people, it can have serious side effects, and recovery is long. Some people are too sick to get allo BMT.

This study did not include people who got haploidentical (half-matched) BMT, autologous BMT (uses the patients own cells), or cord blood transplants, and so those results might be different. There are other treatments for NHL as well, such as medicines and CAR-T cells.

Ask your doctor
• What treatment is best for me?
• Does insurance cover that treatment?

Learn more about
• This research
• BMT for non-Hodgkin lymphoma
• Insurance coverage

Source

About this research summary
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