

New treatment for GVHD has fewer side effects

Sirolimus treats graft-versus-host disease

Scientists say a medicine called sirolimus can treat acute graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) and causes fewer side effects than older medicines.

Scientists studied 127 people with GVHD during 2016-2018. The people had had a blood or marrow transplant (BMT) in the United States for leukemia, lymphoma or other disorders.

Although BMT can cure these problems, it also can cause GVHD. In GVHD, the donated cells may attack the skin and organs. Prednisone is a medicine that treats GVHD, but side effects may include infections and high blood sugar.

In the study, scientists compared two groups of people after about a month of treatment.

- The first group got sirolimus only (with the goal to avoid steroid treatment)
- The second group got standard high doses of prednisone only (no sirolimus)

Both groups had equal rates of control of GVHD. But the people who got sirolimus did better than the prednisone-only group in some ways. They were more likely to:

- stop immune suppression medicines
- have normal blood sugar
- have fewer infections
- have better quality of life

Keep in mind

This was a small study of mostly adults with lower risk acute GVHD. More research is needed. Ask your doctor about the best GVHD treatment for you, personally.

Source

Pidala J, Hamadani M, Dawson P, et al. Randomized Multicenter Trial of Sirolimus vs. Prednisone as Initial Therapy for Standard Risk Acute GVHD: BMT CTN1501. *Blood*. 2019. Epub 2019/11/19. doi: 10.1182/blood.2019003125.



Learn more about

- This study from its [publication](#)
- This study on ClinicalTrials.gov
- GVHD prevention from BeTheMatch.org
- More GVHD clinical trials at JCCTP.org

About this research summary

The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network (BMT CTN) conducts research that helps thousands of people live longer and feel better.



BMT CTN Data Coordinating Center

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