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on multiple myeloma

Supportive care in myeloma – when treating the clone alone is not enough

Hematology, ASH Education Program, 2024 December 6; 2024(1):569–81

Bortezomib before and after high-dose therapy in transplant-eligible patients with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma:

long-term overall survival after more than 10 years of follow-up from the phase III HOVON-65/GMMG-HD4 trial

HemaSphere, 2024 November 20; 8(11):e70052

Isatuximab plus bortezomib, lenalidomide, and dexamethasone for transplant-ineligible newly diagnosed multiple myeloma patients: a frailty subgroup analysis of the IMROZ trial

Haematologica, 2025 March 20; Epub ahead of print

Daratumumab or active monitoring for high-risk smoldering multiple myeloma

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Medical Writers (this issue)

Lorraine Law Kathy Longley David Newton

Art Design Jan van Halm

Layout and Printing

Drukmeesters, Zwijndrecht, the Netherlands

Publishing Director

Evelien Enter

Publisher

Waldemar H.G. Dobrowolski

Framingham by

Postbus 1593 1200 BN Hilversum The Netherlands www.framinghampublishers.com

FramingHam *on multiple myeloma* is published by the support of Sanofi AB
Stockholm, Sweden
MAT-BE-2500647 (ver. 1) Jun 2025

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SUPPORTIVE CARE IN MYELOMA – WHEN TREATING THE CLONE ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

Hematology, ASH Education Program, 2024 December 6; 2024(1):569-81

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BACKGROUND & AIM: While the overall survival of patients with multiple myeloma (MM) has improved thanks to the introduction of effective therapies, treatment-related adverse events mean there has not been an accompanying improvement in quality of life. It is therefore crucial to optimize supportive care in order to maximize patients' outcomes. The aim of this article was to review aspects of supportive care in MM.

ARTICLE TYPE: Expert review.

FINDINGS: Myeloma-related bone disease affects most patients with MM during the course of their disease, and current options for its prevention mainly involve using bisphosphonates to inhibit osteoclast activity. The International Myeloma Working Group (IMWG) recommends that all patients with MM should receive bisphosphonates regardless of the presence of bone disease, as they are associated with fewer pathological fractures and skeletal-related events, and less pain. Zoledronate is the preferred option, with pamidronate and denosumab as alternatives.

The risk of venous thromboembolism is increased in patients with MM, and particularly in those treated with immunomodulatory drugs. The IMWG therefore recommends risk-adapted prophylaxis for all patients receiving therapy, with aspirin for patients at low risk and low-molecular-weight heparin for those at high risk. New

tools have been introduced that may help refine risk stratification and aid the choice of anticoagulant regimen in individual patients, and direct oral anticoagulants may be an option for long-term use.

MM therapies targeting GPRC5D (G-protein-coupled receptor, class C, group 5, member D) can cause on-target, off-tumour effects involving the skin, nails and mouth. Evidence suggests that there are fewer such effects with GPRC5D-targeted chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy than with bispecific antibodies. While these events are common, they are manageable and do not usually require discontinuation of therapy. There is scope for investigating different dosing schedules to minimize toxicity.

The risk of infections is increased in patients with MM, whose immune system is compromised by both the disease itself and the use of immunomodulatory drugs. The IMWG recommends using prophylactic Ig replacement therapy in patients with serum Ig concentrations of less than 400 mg/dL and in those with severe recurrent infections. Other measures are needed for individuals on T-cell-redirecting therapies, and these are discussed.

CONCLUSION: Supportive care is essential for patients with MM to reduce skeletal-related events, prevent venous thromboembolism, optimize T-cell-redirected therapy and avoid infections.

BORTEZOMIB BEFORE AND AFTER HIGH-DOSE THERAPY IN TRANSPLANT-ELIGIBLE PATIENTS WITH NEWLY DIAGNOSED MULTIPLE MYELOMA:

LONG-TERM OVERALL SURVIVAL AFTER MORE THAN 10 YEARS OF FOLLOW-UP FROM THE PHASE III HOVON-65/GMMG-HD4 TRIAL

HemaSphere, 2024 November 20; 8(11):e70052

AUTHORS: Mai EK, Nogai A, Lokhorst HM, van der Holt B, Zweegman S, Weisel KC, Croockewit S, Jauch A, Hillengass J, Stevens-Kroef M, Raab MS, Broijl A, Bos GM, Brossart P, Ypma P, Hanoun C, Bertsch U, Hielscher T, Salwender HJ, Scheid C, Goldschmidt H, Sonneveld P CENTRE FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Heidelberg Myeloma Center, Department of Internal Medicine V, Heidelberg University Hospital and Medical Faculty Heidelberg, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

BACKGROUND & AIM: The introduction of proteasome inhibitors, immunomodulatory drugs and monoclonal antibodies has improved the life expectancy of patients with multiple myeloma, and multidrug combinations have been associated with increased progression-free survival and depth of response. However, it is not clear whether these benefits lead to improved long-term overall survival (OS). The aim of this study was to assess the long-term OS of patients with multiple myeloma receiving high-dose, multidrug therapy, with or without bortezomib.

STUDY DESIGN: Investigator-sponsored, multicentre, randomized, open-label, phase 3 trial.

ENDPOINT: OS.

METHOD: The HOVON-65/GMMG-HD4 trial included 827 patients with newly diagnosed, symptomatic multiple myeloma from 75 centres in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. One group of participants was randomized to receive induction therapy with vincristine, adriamycin and dexamethasone (VAD), followed by high-dose chemotherapy with melphalan and autologous stem-cell transplantation (ASCT) and then maintenance therapy with thalidomide. The second group received induction therapy with bortezomib, adriamycin and dexamethasone (PAD), followed by ASCT and maintenance therapy with bortezomib.

Progression-free survival results after a median follow-up of 96 months have been reported previously, and the current paper reports final long-term OS data.

RESULTS: A total of 508 patients (61%) died. The median follow-up of those still alive, including 78 patients lost to follow-up (n=319), was 11.4 years (interquartile range 10.2-12.3 years). The 12-year OS rate was 32% in the VAD group and 36% in the PAD group, with no significant difference between the two on either univariable Cox regression analysis (hazard ratio 0.87, 95% confidence interval 0.73–1.04; p=0.12) or using a stratified log-rank test (p=0.15). However, PAD was associated with improved OS in patients with International Staging System stage 3 disease (HR 0.66, 95% CI 0.45-0.97), 13q14 deletion (HR 0.68, 95% CI 0.51-0.90) or renal impairment (HR 0.31, 95% CI 0.16-0.57). Multivariable Cox regression analysis found that PAD was significantly associated with an OS benefit (HR 0.84, 95% CI 0.70-1.00; p=0.048).

CONCLUSIONS: More than 30% of patients survived for 12 years or longer, with a small OS improvement seen when combining high-dose chemotherapy with bortezomib versus vincristine. OS was significantly improved with PAD versus VAD in subgroups of patients with stage 3 disease, 13q14 deletion or renal impairment.

ISATUXIMAB PLUS BORTEZOMIB, LENALIDOMIDE, AND DEXAMETHASONE FOR TRANSPLANT-INELIGIBLE NEWLY DIAGNOSED MULTIPLE MYELOMA PATIENTS:

A FRAILTY SUBGROUP ANALYSIS OF THE IMROZ TRIAL

Haematologica, 2025 March 20; Epub ahead of print

AUTHORS: Manier S, Dimopoulos MA, Leleu XP, Moreau P, Cavo M, Goldschmidt H, Orlowski RZ, Tron M, Tekle C, Brégeault MF, Shafer AT, Beksac M, Facon T
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BACKGROUND & AIM: In the phase 3 IMROZ study, the addition of isatuximab to bortezomib, lenalidomide and dexamethasone (Isa-VRd) was associated with significantly improved progression-free survival (PFS) versus bortezomib, lenalidomide and dexamethasone alone (VRd) in transplantineligible patients aged 80 years or younger with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma (NDMM). Frail patients do not tolerate myeloma treatment regimens as well as fit patients and have worse outcomes. As such, the aim of this subgroup analysis of the IMROZ data was to investigate the efficacy of Isa-VRd followed by Isa-Rd versus VRd followed by Rd according to patient frailty.

STUDY DESIGN: Post hoc subgroup analysis of an international, open-label, phase 3 study.

ENDPOINTS: Primary: PFS. Key secondary endpoints included rates of complete response or better and minimal residual disease (MRD)-negativity in those with a complete response or better.

METHOD: IMROZ randomized patients aged 80 years or younger with transplantineligible NDMM to receive Isa-VRd followed by Isa-Rd (*n*=265) or VRd followed by Rd (*n*=181). The simplified International Myeloma Working Group frailty score was used to classify patients at baseline as frail (score ≥2) or non-frail (score 0/1), and analyses of the endpoints were performed

according to frailty status. MRD was assessed using next-generation sequencing of bone marrow samples from patients with a complete response or better at a threshold of 10^{-5} .

RESULTS: Overall, 26.7% of patients were classified as frail (69 receiving Isa-VRd and 50 receiving VRd) and 72.0% as non-frail (193 and 128, respectively). After a median follow-up of 59.7 months, PFS was significantly improved with Isa-VRd versus VRd in both non-frail patients (not reached versus 59.70 months; hazard ratio 0.615, 95% confidence interval 0.419–0.903, p=0.0131) and frail patients (not reached versus 28.91 months; HR 0.518, 95% CI 0.294-0.912, p=0.0227). Both frail and non-frail subgroups had higher rates of complete response or better with Isa-VRd versus VRd. In these patients, MRD-negativity was seen in significantly more frail patients treated with Isa-VRd versus VRd (46.4% versus 20.0%; odds ratio 3.459, 95% CI 1.495-8.006, p=0.0030). Definitive discontinuation rates due to treatment-emergent adverse events were similar in both treatment arms regardless of frailty status.

CONCLUSION: Compared with VRd alone, combination therapy with Isa-VRd resulted in significantly improved PFS and deep response rates regardless of frailty status in patients with transplant-ineligible NDMM.

DARATUMUMAB OR ACTIVE MONITORING FOR HIGH-RISK SMOLDERING MULTIPLE MYELOMA

The New England Journal of Medicine, 2025 May 8; 392(18):1777-88

AUTHORS: DIMOPOULOS MA, VOORHEES PM, SCHJESVOLD F, ET AL., FOR THE AQUILA INVESTIGATORS CENTRE FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Alexandra General Hospital, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

BACKGROUND & AIM: There are no approved treatments for patients with smouldering multiple myeloma (MM) who are at high risk of progressing to active MM. Daratumumab is an anti-CD38 monoclonal antibody that is used to treat MM, and a phase 2 study has reported activity of daratumumab monotherapy in patients with intermediate- or high-risk smouldering MM. The aim of this study was to investigate whether daratumumab delays progression to active disease in patients with high-risk smouldering MM.

STUDY DESIGN: Open-label, multicentre, randomized, phase 3 trial.

ENDPOINTS: Primary: progression-free survival. Secondary endpoints included overall survival, response rate and safety.

METHOD: Adults with smouldering MM who were at high risk for progression to active MM were randomized to receive subcutaneous daratumumab (1800 mg every week in cycles 1 and 2, every 2 weeks in cycles 3–6 and every 4 weeks thereafter; n=194) or active monitoring (n=196). Treatment was continued for 39 cycles or 36 months, or until disease progression.

RESULTS: At a median follow-up of 65.2 months (range 0–76.6 months), progression to active disease or death had

occurred in 34.5% of patients in the daratumumab group versus 50.5% in the activemonitoring group (hazard ratio 0.49, 95% confidence interval 0.36–0.67; *p*<0.001), with a 5-year progression-free survival rate of 63.1% versus 40.8%, respectively. The 5-year overall survival rate was also better with daratumumab, at 93.0% versus 86.9% in the active-monitoring group (HR 0.52, 95% CI 0.27-0.98). A total of 17 patients (8.8%) in the daratumumab group had a complete response or better versus none in the active-monitoring group, with a very good partial response or better in 58 (29.9%) versus two (1.0%) patients, respectively. Overall, 40.4% of patients in the daratumumab group and 30.1% in the active-monitoring group had grade 3/4 adverse events, the most common of which was hypertension (5.7% and 4.6%, respectively). Adverse events led to treatment discontinuation in 11 patients (5.7%) in the daratumumab group and to death in two patients (1.0%; COVID-19 and COVID-19-related pneumonia), but there were no new safety concerns.

CONCLUSIONS: Daratumumab monotherapy was associated with a significantly lower risk of progression to active MM or death compared with active monitoring among patients with high-risk smouldering MM, and higher overall survival. There were no new safety concerns.

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