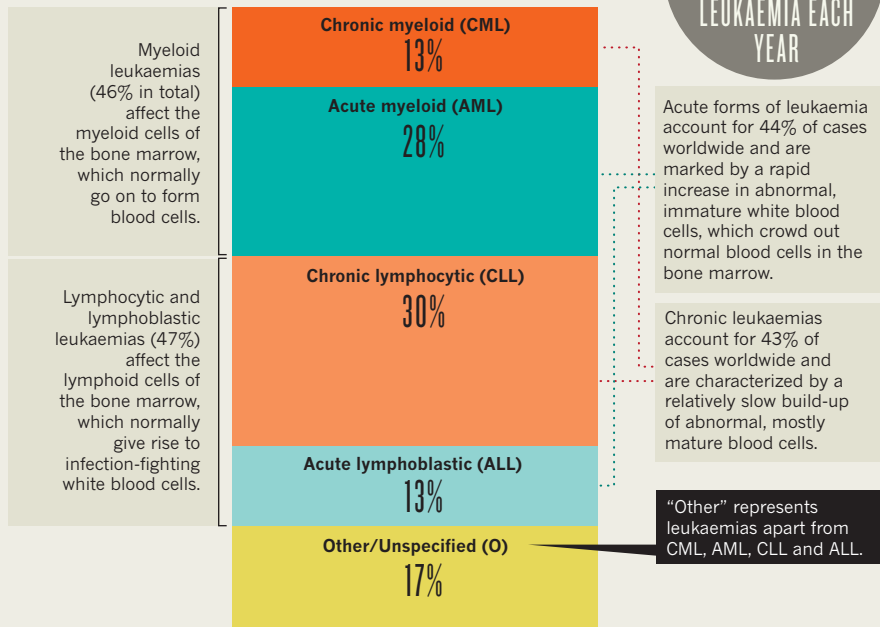


LIVING WITH LEUKAEMIA

Leukaemias are cancers of the blood or bone marrow. But how do they form, and can they be treated? By **Emily Elert**.

TYPES OF LEUKAEMIA

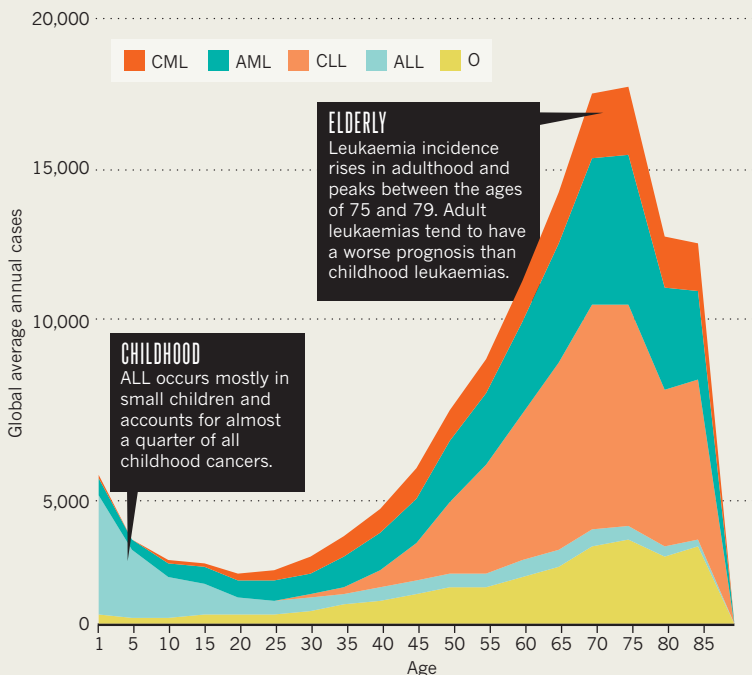
Most leukaemias are either myeloid or lymphocytic/lymphoblastic, depending on which cells they affect, and can be either chronic or acute.



350K PEOPLE WORLDWIDE DIAGNOSED WITH LEUKAEMIA EACH YEAR

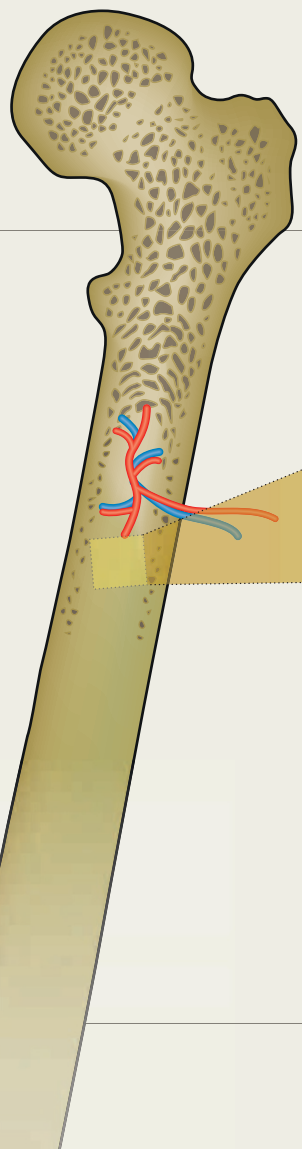
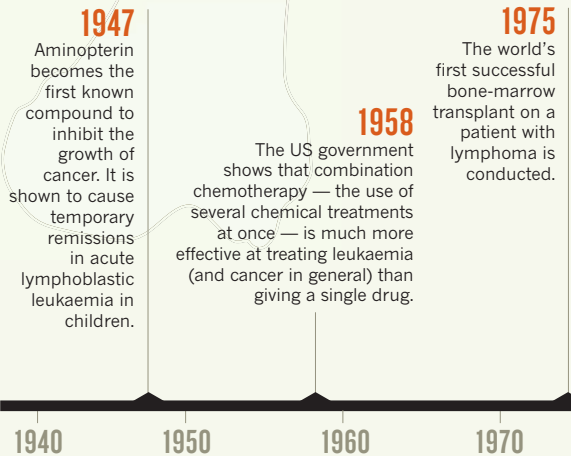
AGE OF ONSET

Most leukaemia occurs in the elderly, but there is a separate, smaller peak in childhood.



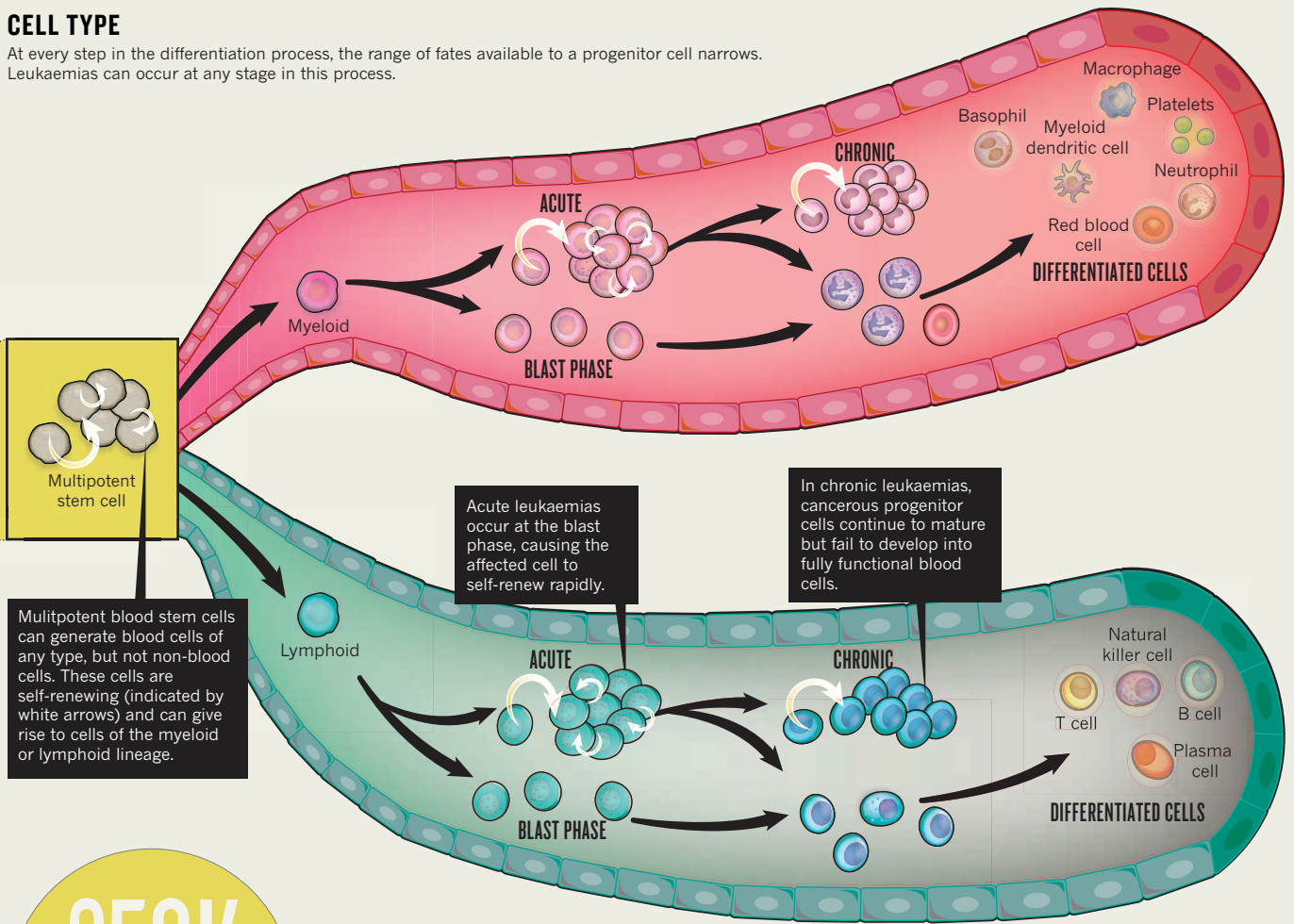
TREATMENT TIMELINE

Important advances in the treatment of leukaemia.



CELL TYPE

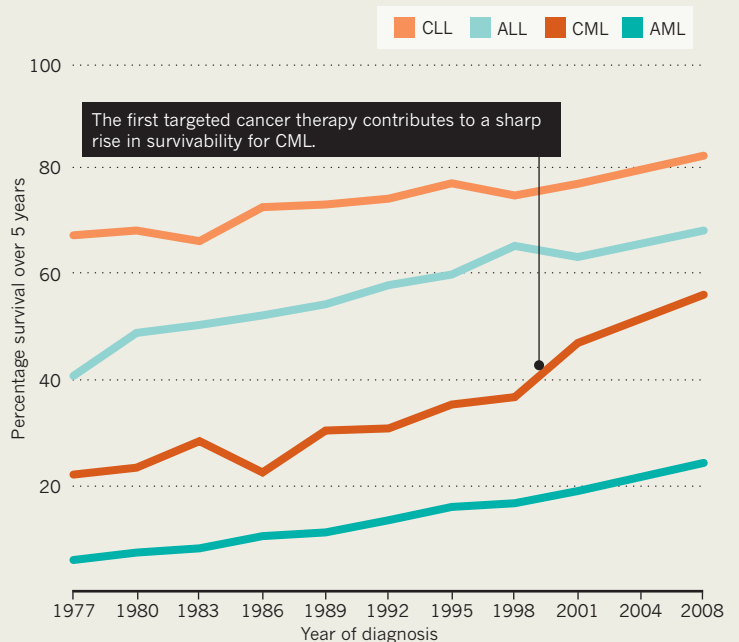
At every step in the differentiation process, the range of fates available to a progenitor cell narrows. Leukaemias can occur at any stage in this process.



250K
DEATHS WORLDWIDE FROM
LEUKAEMIA EACH YEAR

5-YEAR SURVIVABILITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The likelihood of surviving with leukaemia for 5 years has been increasing steadily for more than 30 years as treatments have improved.



1985
A bone-marrow transplant is used to cure leukaemia for the first time.

1986
The National Marrow Donor Program, a US bone-marrow transplant registry, is established.

1995
Scientists discover the 'graft-versus-leukaemia' effect: giving leukaemia patients a dose of healthy white blood cells can help their cancer go back into remission.

2004
The first epigenetic drug is approved to prevent cancer in patients with myelodysplastic syndrome, which can lead to leukaemia.

2008
Scientists sequence the genome of a patient with acute myeloid leukaemia, paving the way for better targeted therapies.