HAEMATOLOGICAL CANCERS

Lenalidomide — SPRINT to a new standard?

Patients with mantle-cell lymphoma typically have advanced-stage disease at presentation, and a dismal prognosis. Older patients frequently cannot tolerate aggressive chemotherapy and stem-cell transplantation, so only chemoimmunotherapy options exist. No optimal treatment or standard of care has been defined; however, lenalidomide has shown promising single-agent activity in patients with refractory disease who were heavily pretreated. Thus, Marek Trněný and coauthors examined the efficacy and safety of lenalidomide compared with investigator's choice of chemotherapy.

This phase II trial (SPRINT) randomly assigned 254 patients with relapsed or refractory mantle-cell lymphoma in a 2:1 ratio to receive lenalidomide or investigator's choice of monotherapy (which included one of the following: rituximab, gemcitabine, fludarabine, chlorambucil or cytarabine). The primary end point, progression-free survival (PFS), was significantly improved in patients receiving lenalidomide (8.7 months versus 5.2 months). This improvement in PFS was despite a worse baseline prognostic profile of patients in the lenalidomide arm. Moreover, patients who

responded to lenalidomide had a long duration of response (median of 16.1 months).

Patients receiving treatment according to the investigator's best choice were allowed to crossover to receive lenalidomide if they had disease progression. Thus, analysis of overall survival did not reveal a significant difference between both arms. The most common grade 3–4 adverse effects in the lenalidomide group were neutropenia and thrombocytopenia, which were managed with dose modification and supportive care. Improvements in pain and physical function were reported for patients treated with lenalidomide.

Trněný comments on the study findings: "This is the first randomized study comparing lenalidomide versus active treatments in the relapsed or refractory setting. Our findings show improved PFS and superior quality-of-life outcomes for lenalidomide."

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