

# Cancer treatment: Therapeutic approach gives hope for the treatment of multiple myeloma

February 5 2016

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A new therapeutic approach tested by a team from Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital (CIUSSS-EST, Montreal) and the University of Montreal gives promising results for the treatment of multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow currently considered incurable with conventional chemotherapy and for which the average life expectancy is about 6 or 7 years.

The study was lead be Dr. Jean Roy, a haematologist at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital and professor at the University of Montreal, between 2001 and 2010 with 92 newly diagnosed patients. Using an approach developed at Maisonneuve-Rosemont, consisting of an autograft to reduce tumour mass followed by a family allograft three to four months later to clean the [bone marrow](#) of [myeloma cells](#) with [immune cells](#) from a family donor (immunotherapy), the study resulted in a total cure rate of 41%, a record level using this strategy. Moreover, patients in complete remission six months after the allograft had a relapse-free survival rate of 60%. Overall, the autograft strategy followed by allograft resulted in relapse-free survival rates of 20-25% in the long term.

"In many hospitals, doctors have abandoned the use of allografts for [multiple myeloma](#) due to the risk of toxicity and relapse. Our results, on the other hand, have led us to offer the treatment to more patients, especially younger patients and those with poorer prognoses," said Dr. Roy.

The results of this research were published in the specialized journal *Bone Marrow Transplantation*.

## Other encouraging data

Moreover, in the same study, the mortality rate associated with this treatment over ten years was 10%, an extremely low rate following a family donor allograft. And while 50% of patients experienced a relapse of their myeloma, the subsequent treatment showed marked efficacy: 50% of these [patients](#) were alive five years after the relapse.

Based on these results, a new study aiming to reduce rates of relapse and complications is currently underway at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital, with still preliminary but very encouraging results.

**More information:** I Ahmad et al. Favorable long-term outcome of patients with multiple myeloma using a frontline tandem approach with autologous and non-myeloablative allogeneic transplantation, *Bone Marrow Transplantation* (2015). [DOI: 10.1038/bmt.2015.319](https://doi.org/10.1038/bmt.2015.319)

Provided by University of Montreal

Citation: Cancer treatment: Therapeutic approach gives hope for the treatment of multiple myeloma (2016, February 5) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-02-cancer-treatment-therapeutic-approach-multiple.html>

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