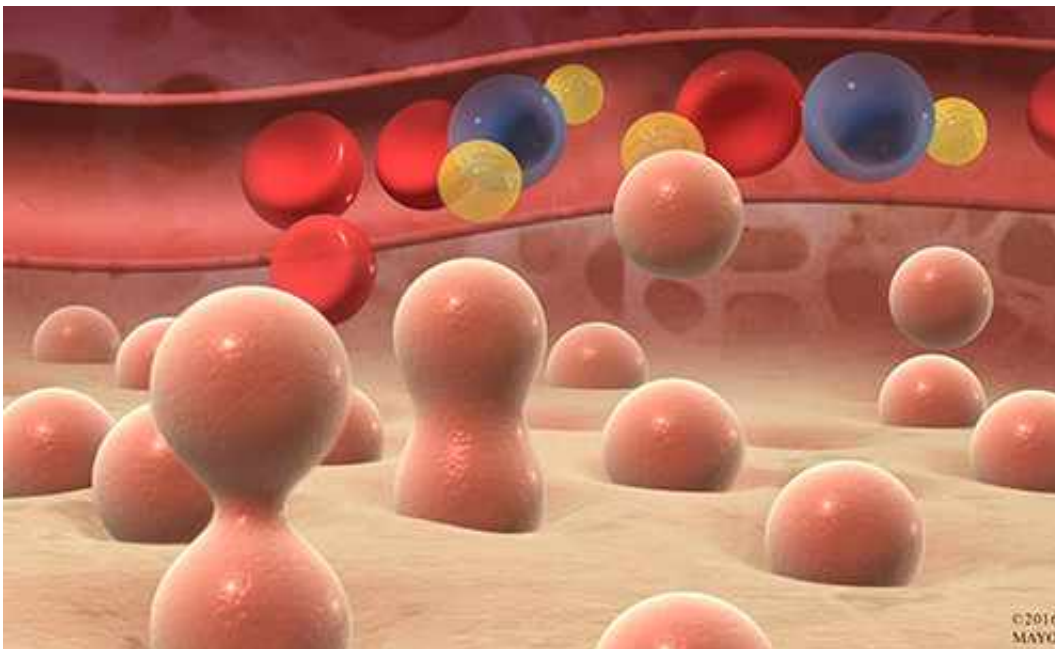


Study shows that choice of medical center impacts life expectancy of multiple myeloma patients

October 26 2016



Credit: Mayo Clinic

People diagnosed with multiple myeloma are more likely to live longer if they are treated at a medical center that sees many patients with this blood cancer. Mayo Clinic researchers published these findings today in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Multiple myeloma is a rare form of [blood cancer](#) that attacks plasma

cells—white blood cells that normally produce antibodies to fight infection. The study measures the difference in life expectancy for patients treated by doctors with varying degrees of experience with the disease.

"Studies on cancer surgery have shown the more experience the center or practitioner has, the better the outcome," states study author Ronald Go, M.D., a hematologist and health care delivery researcher at Mayo Clinic. "It is very difficult to be proficient when doctors are seeing only one or two new cases of multiple myeloma per year. We wanted to see if volume matters when it comes to nonsurgical treatment of rare cancers such as multiple myeloma."

The new research shows multiple myeloma patients benefit from treatment at more experienced centers. For example, patients treated at centers seeing 10 new patients per year had a 20 percent higher risk of death than those treated at centers seeing 40 new patients per year. Most cancer treatment centers in the United States see fewer than 10 new multiple myeloma patients per year.

The researchers used the National Cancer Database, examining outcomes for 94,722 [multiple myeloma](#) patients at 1,333 centers.

These findings previously were presented at the [American Society of Hematology](#) Annual Meeting in December 2015.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

Citation: Study shows that choice of medical center impacts life expectancy of multiple myeloma patients (2016, October 26) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-choice-medical-center-impacts-life.html>

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