

# Targeted oral therapy combo safe, effective for chronic lymphocytic leukemia

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Acalabrutinib is a second-generation Bruton's tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitor, a newer class of drugs shown to improve the survival of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and mantle cell lymphoma (MCL). Researchers believe that combining BTK inhibitors with an engineered CD20 antibody drug, such as obinutuzumab, could help increase the rapidity and depth of treatment response by further sensitizing cancer cells to respond to treatment with acalabrutinib.

In this phase 1b/II trial, researchers at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC – James) evaluated the combination of acalabrutinib given in combination with obinutuzumab in 45 patients with either relapsed/refractory CLL or who had never been treated for the disease.

Overall, treatment with acalabrutinib plus obinutuzumab was well-tolerated and yielded high response rates that deepened over time. Overall response rate was 95 percent in patients who had received no prior treatment. Median follow-up was 17.8 months in this patient population. Overall survival among patients with relapsed or recurrent disease was 92 percent, reported at a median follow up of 21 months.

"Despite treatment advances for [chronic lymphocytic leukemia](#) in recent years, the urgent need for additional treatment options remains," says study first author Jennifer Woyach, MD, a hematologist and associate professor with the OSUCCC – James. "The overall response rates

observed in the acalabrutinib trials and presented at ASH highlight the potential impact that this investigational [treatment](#) could have on the management of CLL."

Data was reported (Abstract #432) on Dec. 10, 2017, at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting in Atlanta, Ga.

Provided by The Ohio State University

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