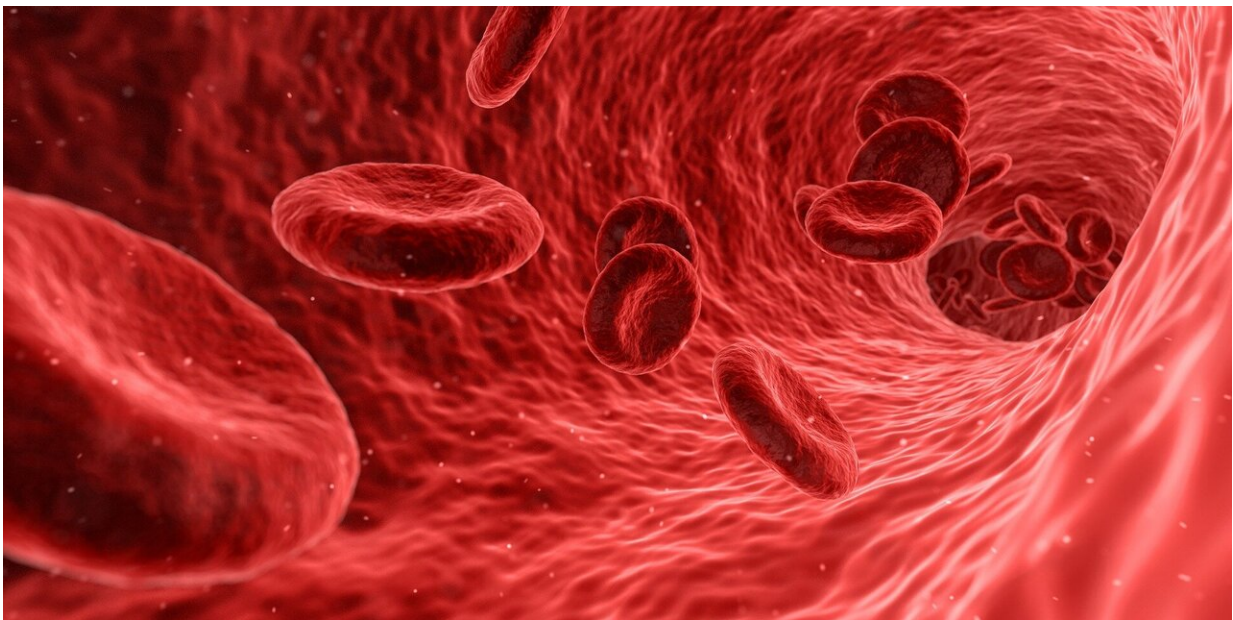


One in five hematological cancer patients suffer blood clots or bleeding

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New Danish research may direct focus toward the serious complications that every fifth hematological cancer patient suffers, according to medical doctor and Ph.D. Kasper Adelborg from Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital, who has studied the cases of 32,000 hematological cancer patients between the years 2000-2013. hematological cancer includes leukaemia, bone marrow cancer and cancers of the lymph nodes.

"This is a broad group of patients with very different disease experiences depending on the type of hematological [cancer](#). Some patients have a particular risk of suffering blood clots, while others have instead a [higher risk](#) of bleeding such as e.g. gastrointestinal bleeding," says Adelborg, adding that the conclusions can be used for even better prevention and individualized treatment:

"If a person has a high risk of suffering a blood clot, treatment with anticoagulant medicine can benefit some patients. But anticoagulant medicine is not desirable if the risk of suffering bleeding is higher. This is a difficult clinical problem, but our study can set goals for what carries most weight for each individual type of cancer," he says.

One example is myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), which is a type of bone marrow cancer. Here, the study showed that the risk of bleeding within 10 years was approximately 15 percent, while the risk of suffering a blood prop was lower.

"This means that doctors who help these patients should be aware that they have a high risk of bleeding and should therefore not prescribe too much anticoagulant medicine," says Kasper Adelborg.

He adds that with each individual patient there is still a need to weigh up the overall risk of a blood prop and bleeding, which includes taking into account the patient's age, medical history, other diseases, lifestyle etc. before choosing a treatment.

Major preventative potential:

The new study, which has been published in the *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis*, corroborates previous studies, though researchers have not previously looked at the entire group of hematological cancer patients together—and neither were there any studies covering so many

years. Additionally, previous studies have either focused solely on [blood clots](#) or bleeding.

Adelborg says that there are major differences in the prognoses for the different patient groups. For example, only a few children develop a blood prop of suffer bleeding in the years after suffering from leukemia, while far more patients with e.g. bone marrow cancer develop blood props and/or bleeding. "The potential for prevention is particularly large in the latter group," he says.

In relation to the population as a whole, the study shows the heightened risk for hematological cancer [patients](#):

- Blood clot in the heart: 40 percent higher.
- Blood clot in the brain: 20 percent higher.
- Blood clot in the legs and lungs: over 300 percent higher.
- Bleeding: 200 percent higher.

More information: Kasper Adelborg et al, Risk of thromboembolic and bleeding outcomes following hematological cancers: A Danish population-based cohort study, *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/jth.14475](https://doi.org/10.1111/jth.14475)

Provided by Aarhus University

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