

Controversy: How to cure Ph+ ALL in adults – By chemotherapy plus TKI

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Chemotherapy-TKI combinations represent the first step of modern “curative intent” therapy of Ph+ adult ALL. The goal is to achieve an initial CR and then perform an allogeneic SCT, commonly perceived as a standard procedure to cure. Several clinical studies were performed with TKIs plus chemotherapy. Apart from the issue of allogeneic SCT, they addressed the role of intensive vs. non-intensive chemotherapy; the role of different TKI’s; the significance of MRD results and other risk factors (WBC count, BCR-ABL transcript, TK domain point mutations, additional cytogenetic/genetic alterations). Whether an allogeneic SCT is planned or not, optimizing the early TKI-chemotherapy treatment phase allows to reduce early mortality and increase CR and molecular CR rates for maximal transplantation results or no allogeneic SCT approach. The most recent trials are evaluating the powerful TKI ponatinib and of chemo-free regimens with TKIs plus immuno-targeting agents (blinatumomab).