

**Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML): Finally Making Progress?**

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- Honoraria (ended 12/2017): Celgene, Tolero
- Research support: Merck, Takeda Millennium, Tolero



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**Objectives**

- To discuss pathogenesis/etiology of AML
- To discuss diagnostic testing in AML
- To discuss management of AML in both younger & older patient populations highlighting recent drug approvals
- To discuss novel concepts and investigational agents for treatment of AML



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### Case

- 67 yo M with past medical history significant for Stage I Squamous Cell Carcinoma of Oropharynx in 2015, s/p Cisplatin + XRT, with no evidence of recurrence, presents with progressive fatigue, chest tightness and found to have pancytopenia with WBC =  $1.3 \times 10^9/L$ , Hb = 7.8 g/dL, and platelet count =  $69 \times 10^9/L$ . A bone marrow biopsy is performed revealing 20% blasts by manual aspirate differential with multilineage dysplasia. Cytogenetics reveal a highly complex karyotype and NGS mutational testing reveals TP53 mutation. The patient otherwise has an ECOG PS = 0 and is healthy with minimal other comorbidities.




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### Question 1

What is the next step in the management of this patient?

- A) Refer directly for allogeneic stem cell transplant
- B) 7+3 induction chemotherapy
- C) CPX-351
- D) Azacitidine
- E) 7+3 + Midostaurin




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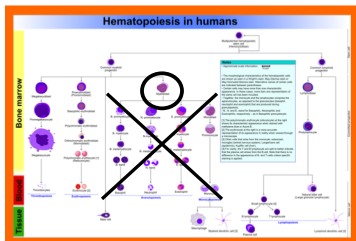
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### What is AML?



Adapted from commons Wikimedia.org/wiki/file:hematopoiesis\_(human)\_diagram.png

- Clonal proliferation of myeloid precursors (i.e. myeloblasts)
  - Reduced capacity for differentiation
  - Reduced capacity for cell death-> uncontrolled proliferation




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## Pathogenesis of AML

- Stem Cell Hypothesis- AML arises from early hematopoietic progenitor/stem cell
- Two-Hit Hypothesis
  - Class 1 Mutations
    - Proliferative advantage
    - Ex: FLT3, NPM1, C-KIT
  - Class 2 Mutations
    - Impair hematopoietic diff.
    - Ex: CEBPA

Reya, Nature 2001

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## Pathogenesis of AML

- Stem Cell Hypothesis- AML arises from early hematopoietic progenitor/stem cell- LSC
- Stem cells- 3 basic properties
  - Not cell cycle-dependent
  - Capable of self-renewal
  - Produce committed progenitor cells
- Stem cells inherently chemoresistant
- Origin of LSC likely dictates prognosis and drug resistance

Cancer Control 2004- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute

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## How To Cure AML?

- Holy grail of AML = Cure
- Working hypothesis is that all (or most) AML's arise from a LSC
- The more primitive LSC- harder to eradicate -> refractory and/or relapse
- Genetic features of AML provide a clue for how primitive AML is

Cancer Control 2004- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute

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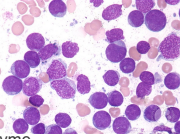
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## Pathology of AML

- Diagnosis:  $\geq 20\%$  myeloblasts in PB or BM
  - Blast % irrelevant in CBF AML [t(8;21); inv(16)] and APL
- Morphology: Smooth chromatin, prominent nucleoli, Auer Rods
- Immunophenotype:
  - Myeloid antigens:
    - MPO, CD13, CD33, CD15
  - Monocytic antigens:
    - NSE, CD11c, CD14, CD64, Lysozyme
  - Blast markers:
    - CD34, CD117





Maslak P, ASH Image Bank



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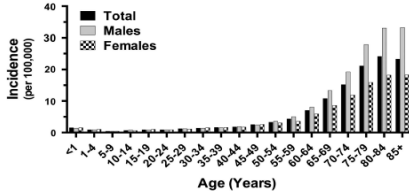
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## Epidemiology of AML




Age (Years)	Total	Males	Females
1-4	0.1	0.1	0.1
5-9	0.1	0.1	0.1
10-14	0.1	0.1	0.1
15-19	0.1	0.1	0.1
20-24	0.1	0.1	0.1
25-29	0.1	0.1	0.1
30-34	0.1	0.1	0.1
35-39	0.1	0.1	0.1
40-44	0.1	0.1	0.1
45-49	0.1	0.1	0.1
50-54	0.1	0.1	0.1
55-59	0.1	0.1	0.1
60-64	0.1	0.1	0.1
65-69	0.1	0.1	0.1
70-74	0.1	0.1	0.1
75-79	0.1	0.1	0.1
80-84	0.1	0.1	0.1
80+	0.1	0.1	0.1

- 18,000 new cases of AML/year
  - > 10,000 deaths/year
- Median age- 67-68 years
  - All ages can be affected



SEER Data, Walter, Leukemia 2015



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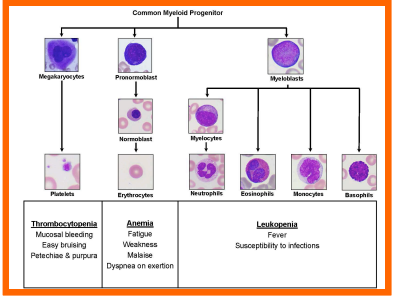
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## Clinical Presentation


- Rapid onset of symptoms over 1-7 days, can be more protracted in MDS-> AML



<b>Thrombocytopenia</b> Mucosal bleeding Easy bruising Petechiae & purpura	<b>Anemia</b> Fatigue Weakness Malaise Dyspnea on exertion	<b>Leukopenia</b> Fever Susceptibility to infections
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Duncan D et al., Acute Leukemia Textbook 2017.



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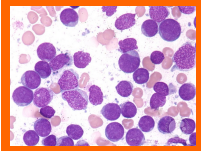
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## Diagnosis

- Bone marrow biopsy and morphology
- If circulating blasts-> can make dx by flow cytometry
- Myeloblasts  $\geq 20\%$  in bone marrow or blood
- Cytogenetics and molecular markers- Critical!



Maslak P, ASH Image Bank

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## Classification/Prognostication

- FAB Classification outdated (M0-M7)
- Genetic information critical for prognostication
  - It's really all about the chromosomes!
- European LeukemiaNet (2010)- 4 risk groups

ELN Risk	Cytogenetic/Molecular	Incidence-Younger pts	Incidence-Older pts
Favorable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• t(8;21); inv(16); t(16;16)</li> <li>• Normal karyotype + NPM1 mut. w/o FLT3-ITD</li> <li>• Normal karyotype + CEBPA double mut.</li> </ul>	41%	20%
Intermediate-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal karyotype + FLT3-ITD</li> <li>• Normal karyotype and NPM1/FLT3 wt</li> </ul>	18%	19%
Intermediate-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• t(9;11) and all other abn.</li> </ul>	19%	30%
Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inv(3); t(3;3); t(6;9); t(v;11); -5; del(5q); -7; abn(17p); complex</li> </ul>	22%	31%

Dohner, Blood 2010; Mrozek, J Clin Oncol 2012

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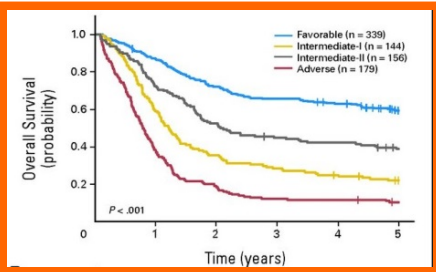
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## Do Risk Groups Matter?

- Risk groups validated to predict outcome



Mrozek, J Clin Oncol 2012

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## AML Outcomes Over Time

**MRC AML Trials: Overall Survival Age 15-59**

**MRC AML Trials: Overall Survival Age 60+**

- Improvements in survival likely due to supportive care and allogeneic transplantation
- No new drugs approved in AML since 1990...UNTIL 2017!

Burnett AK, Hematology Am Soc Hematol Educ Program 2012

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## Management of AML in 2018

- Divided into therapy for younger (<60-65 years) versus older pts (>65 yrs)
- Induction chemotherapy-> Goal = CR (<5% blasts)
- "Standard" induction = "7+3"
  - 7 days of continuous infusion cytarabine
  - 3 days of anthracycline (daunorubicin v. idarubicin)
- Induction therapy advanced with new drug approvals for specific subsets of AML pts
  - **Midostaurin**- FLT3 inhibitor; front-line treatment with 7+3 for newly dx AML with FLT3 mutations
  - **CPX-351**- Liposomal Cytarabine and Daunorubicin approved for t-AML and AML with MDS-related changes or preexisting MDS
  - **Gemtuzumab**- Anti-CD33 antibody with calicheamicin toxin- approved in combination with 7+3
  - **Enasidenib**- IDH2 inhibitor, single-agent for relapsed/refractory AML

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## FLT3 as a Target

- FLT3 = fms-like tyrosine kinase-3
  - FLT3 = tyrosine kinase receptor-> cell survival, signaling, and proliferation
- FLT3 mutations seen in 25-30%
  - ITD mutation- most common- 3 to >200 base pairs inserted into FLT3 gene-> constitutive activation of FLT3
    - Younger pts, highly proliferative, most commonly normal cytogenetics, high rate of relapse
  - TKD mutations- less common, neutral prognosis
- Thought to be a secondary "driver" of AML and co-occurs with other mutations

Leik & Levis, Curr Hematol Malig Rep 2017; Levis, Blood 2017; Davis MI Nat Biotechnol 2011

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## Clonality of AML

**a** Clonal fractions at initial diagnosis Day 170 First relapse

AML1/UPN33124

Cell type: Normal (green), AML (orange)

Mutations:
 

- Founding (cluster 1)
- Primary specific (cluster 2)
- Relapse enriched (cluster 3)
- Relapse specific (cluster 4)
- Pathogenic mutations
- Random mutations in HSCs

- AML is polyclonal at Dx
- After chemo and/or relapse-> becomes oligoclonal based on dominant clone

Ding et al. Nature 2012

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## 7+3 + Midostaurin

- RATIFY Trial- RP3 trial of 7+3 + Midostaurin 50 mg PO Bid on days 8-21 vs. Placebo in ≤60 years with FLT3 mut.
- If CR-> Midostaurin added to consolidation and maintenance
- N=717 pts- CR rates = 59% vs. 54% (p=0.15)

Median Overall Survival

Midostaurin 74.7 mo (95% CI, 51.5-118)  
 Placebo 55.6 mo (95% CI, 33.6-47.9)  
 One-sided P=0.009 by stratified log-rank test

- Midostaurin FDA-Approved in combo with 7+3 for newly Dx AML with FLT3 mutation- April, 2017
- First targeted agent approved for AML

Stone RM, et al. NEJM 2016

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## CPX-351

- Liposomal formulation of 7+3
- RP2 study in newly Dx AML ≥60 yrs vs. 7+3
  - CR rates = 67% vs. 51%, p=0.07
  - Median OS = 14.7 months vs. 12.9 months, lower 60-day mortality with CPX-351
  - Secondary AML appeared to have most benefit
- RP3 study of CPX-351 vs. 7+3 in newly Dx secondary AML 60-75 years
  - N = 309 pts randomized
  - CR rates = 47.7% vs. 33.3% (p=0.016), Median OS = 9.6 months vs. 5.9 months (p=0.005)
- CPX-351 approved for first-line Tx of AML with MDS-related changes and t-AML (August, 2017)
- New SOC for an extremely high-risk AML patient population

Lancet J, ASCO Abstract 2016

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### How to Manage AML in Younger Pts in 2018

- Clinical trials are still imperative for newly dx AML
- Treatment individualized based on prognostic factors at Dx
- If FLT3 mutation (typically back in 2-4 days)-> 7+3 + Midostaurin
- If favorable/intermediate-risk cytogenetics w/o FLT3 mutation and 50-70 years-> 7+3 + GO
  - If <50 years-> 7+3 with high dose daunorubicin versus 7+3 + GO
- If t-AML, AML with MRC or preexisting MDS-> CPX-351
- Adverse-risk AML- no SOC, **clinical trials** versus 7+3 versus cladribine + 7+3
- Suspect treatment algorithms will continue to evolve as more targeted and selective agents are utilized

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### Alvocidib

- Novel agent in development for AML
- Potent CDK9 inhibitor
- Studied in >400 AML pts- newly dx & relapsed/refractory


ARTICLE Acute Myeloid Leukemia

**Randomized multicenter phase II study of flavopiridol (alvocidib), cytarabine, and mitoxantrone (FLAM) versus cytarabine/daunorubicin (7+3) in newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia**


Joshua F. Zeidner,<sup>1,2</sup> Matthew C. Foster,<sup>1</sup> Amanda L. Blackford,<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Litow,<sup>1</sup> Lawrence E. Morris,<sup>3</sup> Stephen A. Strickland,<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey E. Lancet,<sup>1</sup> Prithviraj Bose,<sup>1</sup> M. Yair Levy,<sup>1</sup> Raouf Tibes,<sup>1</sup> Ivana Goja,<sup>1,5</sup> Christopher D. Gooley,<sup>6</sup> Gary L. Rosner,<sup>7</sup> Richard F. Little,<sup>1</sup> John J. Wright,<sup>1,8</sup> L. Austin Doyle,<sup>1,9</sup> B. Douglas Smith,<sup>10</sup> and Judith E. Karp<sup>1,11</sup>

\*Bose and J.E. contributed equally to this manuscript

- CR rates significantly higher with FLAM vs. 1 or 2 cycles of 7+3 (70% vs. 46% vs. 57%, respectively)
- OS no different between either arms
- Predictive biomarkers of response with Alvocidib?



Zeidner J et al, Haematologica 2015



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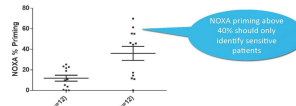
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### Predictive Biomarkers of Alvocidib

- Alvocidib inhibits MCL-1
  - MCL-1- anti-apoptotic peptide regulated by CDK9 and RNA polym II
- Retrospective BH3 profiling from diagnostic bone marrow samples from FLAM vs. 7+3




- High NOXA priming score associated with MCL-1 dependence

- Phase 2 Biomarker-driven clinical trial of FLAM in newly dx and relapsed/refractory AML with NOXA priming  $\geq 40\%$
- Phase 1 study of Alvocidib followed by 7+3 in newly dx AML



Zeidner JF & Karp JE. Leuk Res 2015; Smith BD, ASCO Abstract 2016



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## Elderly AML

- Age >60-65 years
- Dismal prognosis- 5-year survival <10%
  - Increased toxicity and mortality with intensive induction
  - Higher rates of adverse-risk features
  - More aggressive disease biology independent of risk status
- Have not made significant therapeutic advances

MRC AML Trials: Overall Survival Age 60+

Burnett AK, Hematology Am Soc Hematol Educ Program 2012

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## Management of Elderly AML

- Optimal management is key area of research
- No “standard of care”
- 1) Decide if patient is fit or unfit for intensive chemo
  - Variety of objective comorbidity scores can be used
  - Many times = subjective assessment
- 2) Obtain diagnostic/prognostic information
  - Adverse-risk dz do poorly with intensive chemo
- 3) Clinical trials imperative for elderly AML

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## Elderly AML- Fit Patients

- Intensive chemo can be given to select FIT pts up to 75-80 yrs
  - Favorable-risk respond best
- CPX-351- SOC for newly diagnosed secondary AML
  - Pts should be fit to receive intensive chemo- RP3 trial- pts 60-75 yrs
  - Cytopenias tend to be longer with CPX-351
- 7+3- reasonable option for favorable-risk elderly AML
  - Should not use high dose daunorubicin
  - If <70 years and not adverse-risk-> add GO to induction
  - Clofarabine- inferior to 7+3 for elderly AML (RP3 trial)
- Hypomethylating agents- Azacitidine or Decitabine
  - Lower intensity, no need for hospitalization, less toxicity
  - Lower rates of CR but unclear if difference in overall outcomes?
- Gemtuzumab- single agent
- Low dose cytarabine

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## Relapsed/Refractory AML

- Majority of pts who achieve CR-> relapse
- No SOC, outcomes are extremely poor
- Treatment includes intensive salvage chemotherapy versus lower intensity treatments
- Phase 2 Study of High Dose Cytarabine + Pembrolizumab
  - Multi-institutional trial- UNC = Lead site

\*Using Pembrolizumab, there is a strong tendency to be done after every 4th cycle of chemotherapy for year 1, and every 6th cycle of chemotherapy during year 2.

†See Table 1 in article. Table 107 includes all serial blood samples for combinatorial research.

- Enrolled 22 pts to date- overall CR rates = 35%
- Correlative studies- predictive biomarkers of response

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## Targeted Therapy

- IDH2 mutations seen in 8-10% of AML
  - IDH2<sup>R140</sup> and IDH2<sup>R172</sup> mutations
  - Commonly associated with other mutations
- Enasidenib- First-in-class IDH2 inhibitor- oral agent
- Phase I/II study of Enasidenib in relapsed/refractory AML with IDH2 mutations
  - N=239 pts
  - Safe and effective dose = 100 mg daily
  - Overall response rate = 39%, CR rates = ~20%
  - Median duration of response = 5.6 months
- Enasidenib well tolerated- differentiation syndrome can occur in 12% of pts- need to be rigorously monitored
- FDA-approved for Tx of relapsed/refractory AML with IDH2 mutation in August, 2017

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## Where Do We Go From Here?

- Multitude of new agents being explored in AML
- Beginning to understand how best to Tx small subsets of pts
- Predictive biomarker strategies promising- moving away from 1-size fits all Tx
- Immunotherapeutic strategies represent promising avenue of exploration in AML

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## Conclusions

- AML is a challenging Dz to treat
  - Heterogeneous with diverse genetic subsets
- AML pts have a poor prognosis
- 4 new agents approved in AML in 2017
  - Significantly improving outcomes for subsets of pts
  - Standard Rx's are still unsatisfactory
- Prompt referral to highly specialized cancer centers is warranted
- Clinical trials are imperative in all facets of Dz



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## Questions?



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