

PRESS RELEASE

Myeloma treatment compliance demands clear instructions from medical professionals

Berlin, 8 December 2009 – Healthcare professionals and myeloma patients agree that lack of instructions from the doctor or nurse has the most negative effect on whether a myeloma patient correctly follows her/his treatment plan (treatment compliance). This is one of the findings from a recent international comparative survey conducted between March and October 2009 by Myeloma Euronet, the European Network of Myeloma Patient Groups¹.

The majority of survey participants, 278 physicians and nurses and 235 myeloma patients, patient relatives and caregivers, mainly from European countries, stated that the myeloma treatment plan is usually determined together by the doctor and the patient, following a good discussion.

The majority of myeloma patients claimed they were fully familiar with their respective treatment plans. Physicians and nurses, however, were not so sure that all of their patients were able to describe their treatment plan in chronological order, list all their medications, know the purpose of each of their medications and when to take or administer them, and know their potential side effects.

In fact, the survey found that about one in five myeloma patients is not sure or does not know about the potential side effects of each medication received. Correspondingly, about one in five physicians and almost one-quarter of patient relatives and caregivers were not satisfied with the level of information given to myeloma patients regarding the importance of correctly following their respective treatment plans. Reasons for dissatisfaction include lack of time of the doctor, lack of information and education, cultural issues, frequent changes of doctors, complexity of the disease and disease-related information, lack of doctor responsiveness, clarity, and empathy, and difficulties understanding instructions.

“If we want to ensure that myeloma treatment compliance is 100%, patients need clear and easy-to-understand verbal and written guidance from their medical team,” said Anita Waldmann, President of Myeloma Euronet. “It is completely unacceptable if patients are released from hospitals with bags full of drugs but without explanation,” she concluded.

The survey also revealed a number of other issues that can have a negative effect on myeloma treatment compliance, including treatment side effects, cost and insurance-related issues, patient age-related issues, patient forgetfulness, lack of psycho-social support, and frequent changes of the treatment plan.

The survey was made possible through an unrestricted grant from Celgene International.

Myeloma Euronet, a Belgian-registered international non-profit organisation of more than 40 multiple myeloma patient groups and representatives in 20 European countries, is dedicated to raising the awareness of multiple myeloma, an increasingly common form of bone marrow cancer. Myeloma Euronet provides information on the diagnosis, treatment and care of persons living with multiple myeloma and supports its member organisations in the fulfilment of their missions. Myeloma Euronet also advocates, both independently and in collaboration with organisations with similar objectives, on behalf of those affected by multiple myeloma.

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References:

- ¹ The full survey report is available for download at <http://myeloma-euronet.org/en/survey/index.php>