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Information about the contributions of each person named as having participated in the study

1) Guarantor(s), i.e., person(s) who is (are) responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole:
- Anna Guarini, Division of Hematology, Department of Cellular Biotechnologies and Hematology, “Sapienza” University, Rome, guarini@bce.uniroma1.it;
- Robin Foà, Division of Hematology, Department of Cellular Biotechnologies and Hematology, “Sapienza” University, Rome; rfoa@bce.uniroma1.it

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The guarantors of this manuscript confirm that all persons designated as authors qualify for authorship, and that each author has participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.

2) Authors who participated in the conception of the study: Anna Guarini, Robin Foà

3) Design & Methods. The following authors were responsible for specific investigations:
- Marilisa Marinelli, Monia Magliozzi, and Isabella Torrente were responsible for ATM gene sequence and dosage data
- Simona Tavolaro and Sabina Chiaretti were responsible for gene profile data
- Emanuele Bellacchio was responsible for ATM point mutation modeling
- Maria Stefania Depropris was responsible for flow cytometry analysis
- Simona Santangelo and Nadia Peragine were responsible for IGHV and TP53 sequencing
- Mauro Nanni was responsible for FISH analysis
- Francesca Paoloni was responsible for statistical analysis
- Francesca Romana Mauro and Ilaria del Giudice were responsible for clinical assistance to patients.

4) Results. The following authors were responsible for specific portions of the results, including figures and tables:
- Marilisa Marinelli, Monia Magliozzi, and Isabella Torrente were responsible for Table 1, Table2, Supplementary Table 1 and Supplementary Table 3
- Francesca Paoloni was responsible for Figure 1
- Simona Tavolaro and Sabina Chiaretti were responsible for Figures 2, 3, Supplementary Figure 2, Supplementary Table 2, Supplementary Table 4 and Supplementary Table 5
- Emanuele Bellacchio was responsible for Figure 4, and Supplementary Figure 1.

5) Writing the manuscript. The following authors were responsible for writing the manuscript:
- Anna Guarini and Robin Foà were responsible for writing Introduction and the Discussion.
Marilisa Marinelli was responsible for writing the section of Design and Methods entitled “CLL patients”, as well as “Relationship between ATM gene mutations and prognostic factors” in the Results section.

Monia Magliozzi and Isabella Torrente were responsible for writing the sections of Design and Methods entitled “DHPLC analysis of ATM gene” and “MLPA analysis of ATM gene”. as well as “DHPLC analysis for ATM mutations and MLPA analysis for ATM deletions/duplications” in the Results section.

Francesca Paoloni was responsible for writing the section of Design and Methods entitled “Statistical analysis of TFI” as well as “Relationship between ATM gene mutations and prognostic factors” in the Results section.

Simona Tavolaro and Sabina Chiaretti were responsible for writing the section of Design and Methods entitled “RNA extraction and oligonucleotide microarray”, “Statistical methods for microarray analysis”, “Real-time quantitative PCR analysis” as well as “Microarray analysis in CLL cells with ATM point mutations”, “Microarray analysis in CLL cells with ATM deletions”, “Validation of gene expression data by Q-PCR analysis” in the Results section.

Emanuele Bellacchio was responsible for writing the section of Design and Methods entitled “Molecular modeling of the ATM kinase domain”, as well as “ATM protein mutations modeling” in the results section.

6) **Contributors Listed in Acknowledgments:** No contributors, beyond entities, listed.