



Indolent lymphomas

The therapy of aggressive non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was somewhat standardized a few years ago and has allowed physicians to obtain encouraging results, recently reported in this journal.¹⁻⁵ Researchers are currently investigating the timing of some treatment options (e.g. ABMT used either as a front-line, a post-induction or a post-relapse choice) and the possible role of new drugs administered either alone or in combination regimens. Indolent lymphoma has been dormant for a long time. Once upon a time wait-and-see used to be a legitimate choice and achieved excellent survival rates in several institutions. Most researchers have felt for a long time that conventional chemotherapy cannot modify the survival of patients with advanced-stage indolent lymphoma. Recently, however, we have reached a turning point. The progressive development of high-dose chemotherapy treatments followed by rescue with stem cells in young patients has led us to assess their therapeutic efficacy. We have felt ourselves compelled to switch from a cautious and somewhat passive approach to an aggressive one. Molecular biology laboratories have been developing useful tools for identifying and monitoring minimal residual disease, allowing clinicians to evaluate the real impact of complete remission quality on survival. The daily acquisition of new biological data influencing both clinical and therapeutic decision-making processes, the recent development of monoclonal antibodies targeting surface antigens expressed by most if not all indolent lymphomas, and the constant improvement of the results obtained with both conventional and high-dose chemotherapy, all justified the need for an international scientific workshop on indolent lymphoma. It is a time of great fervor and expectations. It is a time of conspicuous increase of understanding, focused mainly on biology and therapy of this intriguing subset of lymphoma. All the more reason, therefore, for establishing what is certain and what is not, what can be immediately, or shortly, implemented in daily hospital routine and what still needs confirmation. These are the reasons for which the "Indolent Lymphoma Workshop" was organized in Bologna on October 18-19, 1999.⁶⁻³⁰ Reports of this workshop can now be seen and downloaded at the following web site:

<http://www.haematologica.it/il.html>

In addition, this issue of Haematologica reports an updated review article on molecular pathophysiology of indolent lymphomas.³¹

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