Response to comment by P. Vassilakopoulos and colleagues

We thank Dr. Vassilakopoulos and colleagues[1] for their valuable comments regarding the findings of the NHL13 rituximab maintenance trial,[2] which add some interesting views on our data. We agree that evaluating differences between primary lymphoma sites and bone marrow (BM) infiltration ("discordant histology") would be very interesting. Unfortunately, these data are not available for the trial. However, we have analyzed the distribution of patients with BM involvement between the diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) and follicular lymphoma grade 3b (FLG3b) subgroups at diagnosis: 10.3% of DLBCL and 30% of FLG3b lymphomas had BM involvement. This difference is significant (P=0.015) and also supports the hypothesis put forward by our Greek colleagues. Regarding sex and age, we would like to stress that, in NHL13, rituximab improved event-free survival of male patients under and over 60 years of age.

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