ASH: Anti-CD19 CAR T-cell Tx beneficial in B-cell lymphomas

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(HealthDay)—Axicabtagene ciloleucel (axi-cel), an autologous anti-

CD19 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy and autologous T cells that express a CD19-directed CAR (CTL019) are effective for refractory B-cell lymphomas, according to two studies published online Dec. 10 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* to coincide with the annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology, held from Dec. 9 to 12 in Atlanta.

Sattva S. Neelapu, M.D., from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, and colleagues enrolled 111 patients with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, primary mediastinal B-cell lymphoma, or transformed follicular lymphoma with refractory disease despite receiving prior therapy. A target dose of 2×10^6 anti-CD19 CAR T cells/kg body weight was administered to 101 patients. The researchers found that the objective and complete response rates were 82 and 54 percent, respectively. Overall, 42 percent of the patients continued to have a response and 40 percent continued to have a complete response with a median follow-up of 15.4 months.

Stephen J. Schuster, M.D., from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and colleagues used CTL019 to treat patients with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma or follicular lymphoma that had relapsed or was refractory. The researchers found that 64 percent of the 28 adult patients who received CTL019 cells had a response. Overall, 43 percent of the 14 patients with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma and 71 percent of the 14 with follicular lymphoma had complete remission.

"CTL019 cells can be effective in the treatment of relapsed or refractory diffuse large B-cell lymphoma and follicular lymphoma," Schuster and colleagues write.

Several authors from the Neelapu study disclosed financial ties to pharmaceutical companies, including Kite Pharma, which funded the study. The Schuster study was partly funded by Novartis.

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