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Lenalidomide Maintenance Halves Multiple Myeloma Relapse

IFM 2005-02 trial, May 26 2010

May 26 2010 —Maintenance therapy with lenalidomide after treatment with autologous stem cell transplantation slowed disease progression by 54% in patients with multiple myeloma, according to interim results from the IFM 2005-02 trial.

Michel Attal, PhD, professor of hematology at Purpan Hospital in Toulouse, France, discussed the results during a press conference in advance of the 2010 ASCO Annual Meeting. He called these interim results promising and added that, if confirmed on final analysis, these results show that lenalidomide can improve quality of life for patients with myeloma.

“Lenalidomide was shown to dramatically reduce rates of progression; there was a 54% reduction of progression, in all strata of the group,” Attal said. “Lenalidomide is probably the first effective maintenance treatment in myeloma.”

Attal added that it was important to await final analyses of progression-free survival (PFS) and overall survival (OS) — the data are due in December — before drawing any firm conclusions about the drug’s effectiveness.

Researchers with Intergroup Francophone du Myelome enrolled 614 patients who had undergone autologous stem cell transplant for non-progressive myeloma within the previous six months. Researchers then randomly assigned 307 patients placebo and 307 patients 10 mg to 15 mg daily lenalidomide until relapse.

In December 2009, after a median follow-up of 24 months, researchers performed a pre-planned interim analysis and found only 25% of the lenalidomide group experienced progression or death compared with 47% of the placebo group.

Maintenance with lenalidomide improved three-year PFS from randomization by 34% in the placebo group compared with 68% in lenalidomide group (HR=0.46). Attal said benefit held whether or not patients had complete response after transplantation. – by Jason Harris

Current ASCO president Doug Blayney MD, medical director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, said that myeloma is another cancer that is moving into the chronic disease category, with patients kept on maintenance therapy to keep the disease in remission and prevent the recurrences, which are "devastating and painful."