

**MYÉLOME
CANADA**



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Uniquely devoted to the Canadian myeloma community

VELCADE® for Multiple Myeloma Receives Front-line Approval in Canada
Toronto, ON, September 8, 2008

Research shows VELCADE® combination treatment improves overall survival

VELCADE® (bortezomib) for Injection has received Health Canada approval for front-line (first) treatment of multiple myeloma, a fatal blood cancer. As part of combination therapy, VELCADE® is indicated for the treatment of patients with previously untreated multiple myeloma who are unsuitable for stem cell transplantation. With this new approval, patients with multiple myeloma can now receive VELCADE® earlier following initial disease diagnosis, which may help to slow, reverse or halt disease progression.

"Living with this relentless type of cancer for the past year, I know firsthand how debilitating the rapid progression of the disease can be," says Monique Racine, a Canadian patient diagnosed with multiple myeloma. "By receiving VELCADE® earlier in this disease, other patients may have an even greater benefit from the treatment. This medication, which has done so much good for me, has empowered me and given me a stronger desire to fight my disease."

"Having access to proven effective combination therapies upon disease diagnosis is very important in the fight against multiple myeloma because it gives patients of this fatal disease a chance to extend their life expectancy and their quality of life," comments Dr. Andrew Belch, Hematologist, Department of Oncology, University of Alberta, Cross Cancer Institute, Edmonton, Alberta. "Multiple myeloma is an aggressive disease that advances rapidly, with the patient's condition deteriorating exponentially. The front-line approval of VELCADE® is a positive step forward and should bring renewed hope to multiple myeloma patients and their families."

VELCADE's® front-line approval is based on the phase III VISTA (VELCADE® as Initial Standard Therapy in Multiple Myeloma: Assessment with Melphalan and Prednisone) trial, recently published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM). VISTA is a randomized, international, open-label phase III trial that Canadian investigators participated in. The trial compared VELCADE® in combination with the current standard of care versus the standard of care alone in 682 previously untreated patients who were unsuitable for stem cell transplantation. VISTA demonstrated that patients receiving the standard of care plus VELCADE® achieved a greater overall survival rate at 24 months (83 per cent) compared to those who only received standard of care alone (70 per cent). The complete response in the VELCADE® combination arm was 30 per cent versus four per cent in the standard of care arm alone.

"The approval of VELCADE® as a front-line therapy is a great step forward in the fight against this challenging disease," says Dr. Donna Reece, Hematologist, Toronto, Ontario. "As a physician, it is outstanding that we now have an effective treatment to offer our patients immediately following diagnosis that can not only help to improve their quality of life, but can also extend their life - this is so meaningful for both the patients and their families."

About Multiple Myeloma in Canada: As of 2003, an estimated 6,200 Canadians have multiple myeloma. In 2008, new cases of multiple myeloma are estimated to reach 2,100, an increase of 13.5 per cent since 2005. Furthermore, the number of deaths from this disease in 2008 is estimated at 1,350, which demonstrates an increase of eight per cent since 2005.