

Associated Malignancies in WM patients

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Several studies have reported an increased incidence of second cancers in lymphoproliferative disorders. Aims of this study were to assess the frequency, characteristics and predictive factors of second cancers in 230 patients with Waldenström macroglobulinemia (WM), and to evaluate whether WM patients are at higher risk of second cancers as compared to an age- and sex-matched control population.

A second cancer occurred in 32 patients (14%) after a median time of 51 months (6-157) from diagnosis of WM. Twenty-two patients (10%) developed solid cancers and 10 (4%) second haematologic malignancies. The cumulative incidence of solid cancers was 12% at 10 years and 17% at 15 years, while the incidence of hematologic malignancies was 6% and 8%, respectively. The overall risk of second cancer in WM was 1.69 times higher than expected. The incidence by tumour type showed that WM patients were at increased risk for diffuse large B cell lymphoma, myelodysplastic syndrome/acute myeloid leukaemia and brain cancer. The risk of second cancer was not influenced neither by age, sex, clinical and hematologic features at presentation nor by treatment given for WM.

Multicentric studies with large number of patients and longer follow-up are needed to clarify whether the increased incidence of second cancers is related to treatments or to the immunologic impairment associated with the disease, taking into account that the two mechanisms are not mutually exclusive. Regardless of the underlying pathogenetic mechanisms, the awareness of an increased risk of second cancers suggests a careful oncohematologic surveillance of WM patients.