# **ACUTE LEUKEMIAS**

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### Introduction

#### heterogeneous group of diseases

- malignant transformation of haemopoietic stem cell associated with total or partial loss of the ability to differentiate while maintaining the ability to proliferate
- accumulation of blasts in the bone marrow suppresses normal hematopoiesis and leads to granulopenia, anemia and thrombocytopenia symptoms
- leukemia transformation affects cells of myeloid or lymphoid lineage division into 2 basic groups: AML and ALL

### **Myeloid and lymphoid differentiation**



Ieukemia transformation occurs at different degrees of differentiation

# ACUTE MYELOID LEUKEMIA (AML)

### Leukemogenesis



- mutations associated with myeloid malignancies develop in healthy individuals, resulting in clonal hematopoiesis of indeterminate potential (CHIP)
- the emergence of a secondary mutation will increase the proliferative capacity of preleukemic cells
- and allows the formation of leukemic stem cells and subsequently grows into a leukemic clone

Cellular and Molecular Medicine Research, 2018

# **Clonal hematopoiesis and age**

 somatic mutations are rare in people under 40 years of age, but in 70 years of age they occur in about 10%



### Epidemiology

- incidence ca 3.5 4.0 per 100 000 / year
- CR: incidence about 350 cases / year, prevalence about 1500 cases / year
- the incidence increases with age, especially after 50 years
- the median age at the time of diagnosis is about 67 68 years



## **Development of incidence over time**

• incidence increases slightly



### **AML classification**

● etiology ⇒primary x secondary

❷ morphology ⇒ FAB

€ etiopatogenetic ⇒ WHO

### Etiology

I .: mostly unknown: "de novo" AML (= primary AML)

II .: hereditary / "internal" disposition: ➡ Down's syndrome, neurofibromatosis, sy ataxia - teleangiectasia, Fanconi anemia

III .: external factors ➡ ionizing radiation ➡ pesticides, benzene

IV .: **'treatment-related / induced'**: after chemo / radiotherapy (= secondary AML)

V. in the context of **ongoing hematological disease →** blastic phase of chronic myeloid leukemia, myelofibrosis, etc.

### Secondary ("treatment induced") AML



the consequence of progress and success in the treatment of malignancies

secondary AML after chemo / radiotherapy = major adverse prognostic factor

### **AML classification**

●etiology ⇔primary x secondary

**⊘** morphology ⇒ FAB

€ etiopatogenetic ⇒ WHO

### FAB classification - 1985

- M 0 undifferentiated
- M 1 2 myeloid without / with maturation
- M 3 promyelocytic
- M 4 myelomonocytic (Eo with eosinofilia)
- M 6 erytroid erytroleukemia
- M 7 megakaryoblastic

<u>diagnostic criteria:</u> blast count, morphology, maturation FAB classification is only of auxiliary importance today

### **AML classification**

●etiology ⇔primary x secondary

❷ morphology ⇒ FAB

**€ etiopatogenetic** ⇒ WHO

### WHO classification AML (since 1997)

#### I. AML with reccurent cytogenetic aberration

- $\Rightarrow$  AML with t(8;21)
- ⇒ acute promyelocytic leukemia, AML with t(15;17)
- ⇒ AML with abnormal eosinophils, AML with (inv(16)
- ⇒ AML with 11q23 (MLL)

#### II. AML with multilineage dysplasia

- $\Rightarrow$  with previous MDS
- ⇒ without previous MDS

#### III. AML and MDS, therapy induced

- ⇒ Alkylating cytostatics (melphalan)
- ⇒ topoisomerase II inhibitors (etoposid)

#### **IV. AML otherwise uncategorized**



takes into account prognostic factors (cytogenetic abnormalities)

**<u>klasifikace</u>** distinguishes clinically and biologically different groups

### AML and prognosis

### Patient side factors:

- age
- overall status
- comorbidity

### **Disease-related factors:**

- cytogenetics and molecular genetics
- previous haematological disease (MDS)
- secondary etiology (after previous chemotherapy)

### Dependence of overall survival on age



age itself is a risk factor for AML

Aström M, Brit J Cancer 2000

### **Cytogenetic stratification**

Risk group	cytogenetic abnormalities	
low risk	inv(16), t(16;16), t(8;21), t(15;17)	
Intermediate risk	normal cytogenetics +8 isolated t(9;11) other chromosomal abnormalities	
high risk	komplex karyotype (≥ 3 abnormalities) monosomal karyotype -5, 5q-, -7, 7q-, 11q23 other than t(9;11) inv(3), t(3;3), t(6;9), t(9;22)	

balanced aberration:translocation, inversion ...unbalanced:loss or recovery of part or all of the chromosome

NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines, 2018

# Example: chromosomal aberrations: AML t (8; 21) (example of reciprocal "balanced" translocation)



# Overall survival of AML by cytogenetic prognostic groups



# ACUTE LYMPHOBLASTIC LEUKEMIA (ALL)

### **Epidemiology ALL**

ALL - the most common tumor in childhood (1/3 of all tumors and about 75% of leukemias)

- but only 20% of adult leukemias



2 peaks of incidence: childhood (peak between 3 and 5 years) ~ from about 50 years with further growth with age

# Etiology

### similar to AML but less frequently induced by treatment:

- genetic syndromes (Down sy, Fanconi anemia, neurofibromatosis....)
- external factors radiation, benzene, pesticides
- infection (HTLV-1, EBV)

### in adults (similar to AML), ALL develops most often obtained by somatic mutation

(genetic alteration of lymphoid precursor cell with dysregulation of proliferation and subsequent clonal expansion)

### Leukemogenesis in ALL

#### mechanism similar to AML

### 2 principles:

a. activation of proto-oncogene by juxtaposition of specific gene promoter (IgH, TCR) ➡ deregulation of protein expression
= quantitative change - eg t (8; 14)

b. generation of a new fusion gene ⇒ encodes transcription factors
= qualitative change - t (9; 22)

### **Morphological classification ALL**

**FAB:** L1 - L3 according lymfoblasts morfology

- but: L1, L2 no prediction of genetic abnormalities or clinical behavior
  - L3 exclusively leukemising Burkitt's

lymphoma

today: L1 - L3 nonerelevant, not used

	u	L2	L3 (Burkitt)
Size:	Small	Large & small	Large cells
Heterogeneity:	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous	Homogeneous
Cytoplasm:	- Very thin rim. - Vacuoles +/	- Abundant cytoplasm. - Vacuoles +/	Deeply basophilic & vacuolated cytoplasm.
Nucleus:	Regular nuclear membrane and inconspicuous nucleoli	Irregular nuclear membrane and prominent nucleoli	Nucleus has loose arrangement of chromatin and inconspicuous nucleoli.
N/C ratio:	High nuclear cytoplasmic ratio	Lower N/C ratio	Lower N/C ratio







### Immunophenotype ALL

20 - 25% T – ALL: younger age, significant leukocytosis, mediastinal tumor
 70 - 75% B – ALL:

### immunophenotype allows:

- division into T- or B-ALL
- division into subgroups according to the degree of blast differentiation

a number of "immunophenotypic" classifications (EGIL, GEIL) (pro-B-pre-B-common-B-mature-B)

# Lymphoid series differentiation

classification is based on normal lymphocyte differentiation

**example:** ⇒ normal stages of B-cell differentiation and their malignant counterparts

⇒ similarly for T-ALL



B-acute lymphoblastic leukemia is based on immature B-lymphocytes

# WHO classification of immature (precursor) lymphoid malignancies

B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma, not otherwise specified			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma, with recurrent genetic abnormalities			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with hypodiploidy			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with hyperdiploidy			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with t(9;22)(q34;q11.2)[BCR-ABL1]			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with t(v;11q23)[MLL rearranged]			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with t(12;21)(p13;q22)[ETV6-RUNX1]			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with t(1;19)(q23;p13.3)[TCF3-PBX1]			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with t(5;14)(q31;q32)[ <i>IL3-IGH</i> ]			
B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with intrachromosomal amplification of chromosome 21 (iAMP21)			

B-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma with translocations involving tyrosine kinases receptors (BCR-ABL-like ALL)

#### T-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphomas

Early T-cell precursor lymphoblastic leukemia

### Leukemia vs. lymphoma

### lymphoblastic leukemia vs. lymphoblastic lymphoma:

- in the prevalent involvement of bone marrow and peripheral blood, we define the disease as leukemia
- if adenomegaly prevails without significant bone marrow infiltration (<20%), it is lymphoma

### Influence of cytogenetics and age on survival

influence of cytogenetics

the effect of age and WBC levels



Ho = hypodiploid karyotype, HeH = hyperdiploid karyotype

### **Prognostic factors**

### input parameters:

- cytogenetics / molecular genetics
- age: risk is increasing steadily (> 30 years vs. <30 years)</li>
- WBC:> 30 x 109 / I < 30 x 10 9 / I</p>
- CNS infiltration: yes vs. No

#### response to treatment:

- time to remission: <4 weeks vs. > 4 weeks
- presence of residual disease: positive vs. positive negative

a combination of these factors determines the risk of ALL patients

### Acute leukemia

- 1. clinical manifestation
- 2. diagnostics
- 3. therapy

### **Clinical manifestation**

• development is usually fast - days to weeks (short history)

### • symptomatology is given by:

- changes in blood count (bone marrow infiltration with blasts)
- temperatures with or without obvious infection
- other general symptoms (weight loss, sweating, anorexia...)
- bleeding symptoms (up to DIC)
- bone pain
- tissue infiltration (skin, gums...)
- leukostasis

a patient with acute leukemia must be <u>immediately sent</u> to the center specialized haematological care

### **Bone marrow failure**

- neutropenia: febrile, infection, sepsis angina, stomatitis, HCD infection poorly responsive to common antibiotics
- anemia: fatigue, paleness
- thrombocytopenia: bleeding, petechiae, hematomas



### **Tissue and organ infiltration**

- hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, adenomegaly
- mediastinal tumor (ALL)
- gum hypertrophy
- skin infiltrates
- bone pain
- other organs: CNS, skin, testes, other (ALL)
- extramedullary leukemia (AML) = myeloid sarcoma (chloroma)

#### petechia

#### gum hyperplasia



#### leukostasis





#### Skin infiltrates




#### T-ALL – mediastinal tumor

before treatment



before transplant

after transplant

### Leukostasis

- blast accumulation in microcirculation damages perfusion
- lungs: dyspnoea, hypoxemia, pulmonary infiltrates
- CNS: neurological symptomatology, consciousness disorder, ictus
- vascular system: limb ischemia, myocardial infarction, renal vein thrombosis, retinal haemorrhage, DIC
- usually at leukocyte levels above 50-100 x 10 9 / L, especially in AML

### part of the treatment - leukapheresis!

# **Blood count**

- WBCs are generally elevated but may be normal or leukopenia blasts in peripheral blood
- lack of developmental stages of granulocytes ("hiatus leucaemicus")
- (normocytic) anemia, thrombocytopenia



BLe	206,20		-	4 - 10	10^9/I
BEry	2,84	•>>	-	4 - 5,8	10^12/I
BHb	95	•>>	-	135 - 175	g/l
BHTK	0,291	•>>	-	0,4 - 0,5	1
BObj ery.	102	•	-	82 - 98	fl
BHb ery	33,4	•	>	28 - 34	pg
BHb konc	326	•	-	320 - 360	g/l
BErytr.křivka	18,7		-	10 - 15,2	%
BTrombo	76	•	-	150 - 400	10^9/I
Bshluky trombo	nejsou				
Dif mikr.					
BSeg	0,01	e)))		0,47 - 0,7	1
BLy	0,06	<b>e))</b>		0,2 - 0,45	1
BMMc	0,01			0 - 0	1
BBlasty	0,92			0 - 0	1

#### ALL

Krevní obraz				
B-Le	71,80	normální	4 - 10	10^9/I
B-Ery	4,01	•	3,5 - 5,6	10^12/I
В-НЬ	116	•	130 - 173	g/l
B-HTK	0,352	•>	0,42 - 0,53	1
B-Hb ery	29,1	•	26 - 35	pg
B-Hb konc	331	•	310 - 370	g/I
B-Obj ery.	88	•	80 - 98	fl
B-Trombo	14	e)))	150 - 400	10^9/I
B-Ret př. rel				1
Diferenciál				
B-Seg				1
B-Tyc	0,01	•	0 - 0,04	1
B-Ly	0,23	•	0,2 - 0,45	1
B-Mo	0,01	•	0,02 - 0,1	1
B-Ba				1
B-Eo				1
B-PMc				1
B-Mc	0,01	•	0.0	1
B-MMc				1
B-Blasty	0,74	000	0.0	1

#### AML

Krevní obraz				
B-Le	73,00	(((+)	4 - 10	10^9/I
B-Ery	2,28	e))))	3,5 - 5,6	10^12/I
В-НЬ	94	•>>	130 - 173	g/I
B-HTK	0,279	•>>	0,42 - 0,53	1
B-Hb ery	41,1	<<>	26 - 35	pg
B-Hb konc	336	•	310 - 370	g/I
B-Obj ery.	122	((()	80 - 98	fl
B-Trombo	279	•	150 - 400	10^9/I
B-Ret př. rel				1
Diferenciál				
B-Seg	0,01	•>>>	0,47 - 0,7	1
B-Tyc	0,04	•	0 - 0,04	1
B-Ly				1
B-Mo				1
B-Ba				1
B-Eo		Hiatus le	eukemicu	<b>S</b> 1
B-PMc				1
B-Mc				1
B-MMc				1
B-Bla <mark>B_Blasty</mark>	0,95	<<<>	0.0	1

# Peripheral blood smear



# **Examination of bone marrow**

- necessary for diagnosis
- important for determining the type of leukemia (AML x ALL)
- important for determining prognostic factors

morphology immunophenotyping (flow cytometry) cytogenetics / FISH molecular genetics / NGS

not only for diagnosis but also for investigation of response to treatment and minimal residual disease

### **Morphology - bone marrow**



normal bone marrow

### **Morphology - bone marrow**





#### bone marrow smear:

AML leukemia defined by the presence of> 20% blasts in the bone marrow

### Flowcytometry



## Cytogenetics

#### FISH





translocation 15,17 fusion gene PML/RARA





# **Differential diagnostics**

### leukocytosis:

- infectious mononucleosis (atypical lymphocytes in peripheral blood)
- infection (leukemoid reaction after infection)
- myeloproliferative diseases (CML)
- leukemizing lymphomas

### pancytopenia:

- aplastic anemia
- severe deficiency of vitamin B12 or folic acid
- bone marrow infiltration in carcinomas
- drug-related bone marrow damage (methotrexate in rheumatology)

### Treatment

is intended:

- type of disease (AML, ALL)
- prognostic factors
- age and general condition of the patient

# Chemotherapy

#### induction:

- the first step is to achieve remission of the disease (eradication of the leukemia clone and regeneration of healthy hemopoiesis)
- complicated by transient bone marrow aplasia and pancytopenia
- the same in most patients
- does not remove all blasts residual disease of varying size

#### **post-remission treatment** (intensification, consolidation):

- to destroy residual disease and cure the patient
- prevents relapse
- individualized according to risk factors, age, etc. **maintenance therapy:**
- small doses of cytostatics to maintain remission
   CNS prophylaxis
- intrathecal application

ALL

### AML treatment algorithm



# **Complete remission ?**

### **CR is defined by:**

- neutrophils in  $PB \ge 1.0 \times 109 / L$
- platelets ≥ 100 x 109 / L
- no circulating blasts in peripheral blood
- bone marrow blasts <5%</p>
- no extramedullary leukemia

other more sensitive methods to detect residual disease:

- flow cytometry
- cytogenetics / FISH
- molecular genetics

$$10^{-4} - 10^{-6}$$



several cycles of treatment required to eradicate the leukemia clone

### PCR monitoring after aloSCT - example



clonal rearrangement of the IgV<sub>H</sub> gene in B-ALL

### **Treatment - others**

### supportive treatment

- transfusion, antibiotics, nutrition, growth factors **actinotherapy**
- CNS in ALL, extramedullary leukemia
- whole body irradiation before transplantation
   psycho-social support
- patient and family

### symtomatic treatment

- old patients, insoluble relapse
- substitution, pain treatment, antibiotics

# **Supportive treatment**

#### substitution:

- thromboconcentrates, ERY resuspension
- irradiated and deleukotized (prevention of TA-GVHD and alloimmunization)

### antibiotics, antifungals:

- predisposition (neutropenia, mucosal barrier disorder, immunosuppression)
- prophylaxis and treatment of infectious complications
   nutrition:
- mucositis, enterocolitis
- parenteral nutrition

### granulopoiesis growth factors (G-CSF):

shortens neutropenia time

#### regime measures:

- reverse insulation, air filtration (HEPA)
- low microbial diet, barrier treatment

# Allogeneic transplantation hemopoietic stem cells

# **Type of transplants**

different types of transplants 
→ classification by:

- 1. by donor
  - autologous, allogeneic, related, unrelated, haploidentic...
- 2. by stem cell source (graft type)
  - bone marrow, peripheral stem cells, cord blood
- 3. according to **pre-transplant conditioning** 
  - myeloablative, non-myeloablative

### different combinations of these types

### **Transplant activity in Europe**



Israel

transplant per 10 millions inhabitans (2017)

Passweg JR, BMT 2019

# **Transplant statistics (2017)**

- 17 155 allogeneic transplant in Europe
- main indications: acuute leukemia, myeloproliferative disease



Absolute number of aloTx a indications – last 20 years

AML:	24 % 🔿 39 %
CML:	25 % 🔿 2 %
MPN:	7 % 🗭 16 %

# **Transplantation procedure**

### 1. donor selection

- preparation of the patient so-called **conditioning** (chemotherapy)
- 3. collection and administration of hematopoietic stem cells

### 4. post-transplantation period

- post-transplant immunosuppression
- engraftment and hematopoiesis recovery
- post-transplant complications
- immunotherapy (eg donor lymphocytes)

# **HLA polymorfism**

- HLA genes are the most polymorphic of all known systems to respond to all different peptides (antigens)
- hundreds of allelic variants of each HLA antigen are currently known
- 2019: total alleles 25 756, HLA-A, HLA-B 5735, 7053 alleles .....
- of these variants each inherit 2 alleles, this makes thousands of possible combinations
- polymorphisms are specific to different populations, ethnicities



# **HLA diversity**

- guarantees the presentation of the maximum spectrum of foreign ("infectious") peptides protects the human population from epidemic infection
- more different HLA molecules ⇒ different types of antigenic peptide binding to HLA molecules and different immune responses... ⇒ pressure of selection and migration
- genetic diversity ensures that a pathogen always survives



# **Inheritance of HLA antigens**

- the HLA allele assembly encoded on one chromosome is called a haplotype
- we each have two haplotypes, one from each parent, the haplotype is inherited as a whole
- the resulting phenotype is given by the combined expression of both haplotypes (co-dominance)





# What are donor registers?

a **database** of (young and healthy) people willing to give anonymously to a patient with identical HLA hematopoietic stem cells

What does the database contain?

- basic donor transplantation (HLA) features
- age, sex, blood type, donor weight
- donor contact

# Probability of finding a donor

- only about 20 25% of patients have HLA identical donor in the family (sibling)
- around 80% of patients need an unrelated donor 
   from donor registers
- the probability of finding an unrelated donor in the registers is min. 80%
- it really depends:
  - ethnicity (80% whites 40% Hispanics ess than 20% Asians, African Americans)
  - belonging to a minority (Roma, Vietnamese) they are not represented in the registers
  - and on the urgency of transplantation (takes up to 4 months to find a donor)

# Variables affecting survival after allogeneic transplantation



### Immune aspects of transplantation



③ GvHD - reaction graft x host (graft versus host disease)
 ⇒ the donor's immune system damages the recipient's cells
 ③ GVL - reaction graft x leukemia (graft versus leukemia)
 ⇒ the donor's immune system eliminates residual tumor cells
 ④ graft rejection

⇒ the recipient's immune system eliminates the transplanted donor cells

# Influence of GVHD on relapse



presence of GVHD reduces the risk of relapse (clinically light GVHD is OK) but in case of severe GVHD, survival is worse (not due to relapse but complications of GVHD)

Mohty M, Blood 2003

Przepiorka D, Blood 2001

### What is the GVL effect?

### GVL = graft versus leukemia

- how foreign hematopoietic stem cells can identify recipient tissues as foreign and damage them ➡ GVHD
- even the remaining leukemia cells of the patient are recognized as foreign and may interfere with ➡ GVL

patients with GVHD (and thus GVL) have a significantly lower risk of leukemia relapse than patients without GVHD

# Late complications of transplantation

- eyes: cataract, conjunctivitis
- Iung: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pulmonary fibrosis
- bones, joints: osteoporosis, avascular necrosis
- endocrine function: hypothyroidism, gonad dysfunction
- muscles: myopathy
- kidney: nephropathy
- nervous system: peripheral neuropathy, encephalopathy
- immunity: infection, autoimmune disease

#### mostly associated with chronic GVHD and its treatment

acute GVHD (skin)





### chronic GVHD (skin, mucosae)



# Infectious complications after transplantation



cytomegalovirus pneumoniae

angioinvasive aspergilosis with CNS involvement

### X-ray





#### avascular necrosis of the hip joint (AVN)

# Survival after allogeneic transplantation



- patient survival is continually improving
- main causes of death: relapse, GVHD, infection

# Allogeneic transplant

- indicated in patients with high-risk leukemia (cytogenetics)
- the risk of relapse after aloTx is relatively small (less than after standard treatment)
- but the toxicity of treatment is higher (infection, GVHD, organ toxicity)
- the advantage is the presence of graft-versus-leukemia effect (GVL) - reduces the risk of relapse

### greater anti-leukemia effect - but at the cost of greater toxicity

# THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION