WHAT IS MULTIPLE MYELOMA?

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of plasma cells, which are made in the bone marrow. Plasma cells play an important role in the immune system, but in patients with multiple myeloma, cancerous plasma cells grow uncontrollably - causing symptoms such as bone pain and fractures¹.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MULTIPLE MYELOMA

HOW DOES MYELOMA DEVELOP?

Myeloma develops when DNA is damaged during the development of a plasma cell. This abnormal cell multiplies and spreads within the bone marrow. The overgrowth of plasma cells in the bone marrow can crowd out normal blood-forming cells, leading to low blood counts².

Myeloma affects areas where bone marrow is normally active in an adult: the spine, skull, pelvis, rib cage, long bones of the arms and legs, and the areas around the shoulders and hips.³

As malignant cells continue to divide, the disease evolves and may include many different types of tumor cells making treatment difficult³.

WHO CAN BE AFFECTED?

Multiple Myeloma is the second most common blood cancer after lymphoma⁴.

It occurs more often in men than in women⁴.

Myeloma is most frequently diagnosed in people between the ages of 65 and 74 years⁴.

Each year, more than 138,000 people are diagnosed with the disease, which particularly affects the elderly⁵.

It caused 98,437 deaths worldwide in 2016⁷.

TREATMENTS

Many treatment options are available to slow the growth of myeloma cells and help ease bone pain, fatigue, and other symptoms, but the type of treatment depends on the patient’s health and the stage of myeloma⁶.

They include:
- Chemotherapy
- Drugs for anaemia
- Radiation therapy
- Stem cell transplant
- Medicines to improve bone health
- Anti-myeloma agents

Despite these options, multiple myeloma remains incurable and most patients will experience multiple relapses. Additional treatment options are therefore needed⁶.

MARCH IS MYELOMA ACTION MONTH

The International Myeloma Foundation (IMF) declared March Myeloma Action Month (MAM) in 2009 to emphasize the importance of developing treatment options for the hundreds of thousands of people living with multiple myeloma worldwide.

This year’s theme, Myeloma Warriors, focuses on and recognizes all those individuals either living with the disease or caring for someone with multiple myeloma.

Sources:
5. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5220685/
7. https://www.cancernetwork.com/multiple-myeloma/multiple-myeloma-incidence-increasing-worldwide-especially-us

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