CLL SOCIETY

Happy New Year! Over the course of a year of monthly meetings, ***The CLL Society Bloodline*** will teach the BASICS needed to understand CLL, starting this month with definitions and diagnosis. It will also provide news, help with the acronyms and new vocabulary words, and offer simple fun quizzes. The cycle restarts and it updated annually.

MONTHLY QUIZ: Neutrophils are:

1. A type of immature white blood cells.
2. Important in preventing bruising or bleeding.
3. A white blood cell important in fighting infections.
4. The blood cells that when they become malignant, cause CLL.
5. Blood cells that were first discovered in Switzerland, a neutral country.

Correct Answer is #3. Neutrophils or "neuts" are the most common white blood cell in the body and are critical in fighting infections, especially bacterial. They are also involved in inflammation and are the main cells found in pus. They are named neutrophils because their granules are neutral to the staining used for microscopy. Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is a cancer of a different type of white blood cell called a lymphocyte.

NEWS: ASH (American Society of Hematology) Annual Meeting is the most important and competitive to have one's research accepted for presentation hematology meeting to. CLLS had its patient survey accepted for publication and Dr. Brian Koffman accepted two international awards for our work in education, support, research and advocacy.

THE BASICS: Definitions and Diagnosis. CLL is a slow-growing or indolent lymphoma of the B-lymphocytes, a subtype of white blood cell and an important part of our immune system. CLL is both a leukemia and lymphoma and can be found in blood, marrow and lymph tissue, including the lymph nodes and the spleen. SLL (small lymphocytic lymphoma) is the exact same disease but has not significantly spilled over into the blood. CLL/SLL is a cancer of the B cells that are involved in making antibodies. It is diagnosed by finding ≥5000 monoclonal (genetically identical) B- lymphocytes in the blood for a duration of at least three months. The clonal nature of the circulating B-lymphocytes should be confirmed by flow cytometry, a test that identifies specific surface markers on the cell.

WORD/ACRONYM OF THE MONTH: Clone. A group of cells that are genetically identical and originate from a single parent cell. Leukemia cells develop from one original abnormal cell. CLL is an example of a clonal cancer, though just to confuse things, one may have several sub-clones of CLL that fight for dominance and respond differently to treatment.

SURVEY: Once a year we ask all the members of our support groups to complete a brief confidential survey so that we improve what we are doing and report outcomes to our sponsors. Please complete at: https://cllsociety.org/pt-survey/.

If the CLL Society has helped you or a loved one, please consider making a donation.