



CLL SOCIETY

The CLL Society Bloodline May 2019

MONTHLY QUIZ: CLL/SLL is considered an orphan disease:

1. True
2. False

ANSWER: The correct answer is True.

CLL may be the most common blood cancer in adults but is still quite rare and considered an orphan disease. Overall there are about 22,000 new cases of CLL/SLL in the United States each year. Compared to breast cancer, which has 250,000 new cases annually, and 161,000 new cases of prostate cancer, CLL/SLL is quite small.

Incidence is the term used to describe the number of new cases annually.

Prevalence is the number of all patients living with the disease. With the number of new treatments that have become available for CLL/SLL in the past few years, the prevalence of CLL/SLL has been increasing as patients are living longer.

NEWS:

During May the CLL Society is finishing its final 2018-19 Educational Forums in Boston (5/4), NYC (5/18), and San Diego (5/25). If you can make any, please join us and say hello. Later in May and June, we will report the latest CLL research news from the annual meetings of ASCO (American Society of Clinical Oncology) and EHA (European Hematology Association).

THE BASICS: Treatment Choices

In our last issues of *The CLL Society Bloodline*, we covered what needs to be done when first diagnosed, before treatment, and how to know when treatment is needed. In this issue, we broadly discuss frontline treatment choices. Treatment decision should always be individualized and depends on several factors including:

- Your age, your overall health, and any co-morbidities.
- Your prognostic factors (especially FISH, TP53 mutation and IGHV mutation).
- Your personal preference.

Your choices are complicated and there may be significant disagreement between well-meaning experts, making it even harder to make a decision. The approved **first** treatments broadly fall into 3 categories with significant overlap:

- 1: Chemo-immunotherapy or CIT including FCR (fludarabine, cyclophosphamide and rituximab) and BR (bendamustine and rituximab).
- 2: Ibrutinib, a targeted oral therapy.
- 3: Clinical trials.

All of these are explained in more detail in the treatment, FAQ, and clinical trial sections of our website and will be the subject of upcoming Bloodlines: <https://CLLSociety.org>

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. Leukemia is an example of a **clonal** cancer. CLL/SLL are slow-growing blood cancers in which too many **clonal** white blood cells or lymphocytes are found, either in the lymph nodes causing them to be enlarged if it is SLL, or in the blood and bone marrow if it is CLL. The cells involved are identical in CLL and SLL.

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