CALGB-50803 and RELEVANCE Trials of Lenalidomide and Rituximab in Previously Untreated Follicular Lymphoma
CME INFORMATION

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Each year, thousands of clinicians, basic scientists and other industry professionals sojourn to major international oncology conferences, like the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and European Hematology Association (EHA) annual meetings and the International Conference on Malignant Lymphoma (ICML), to hone their skills, network with colleagues and learn about recent advances altering state-of-the-art management in hematologic oncology. As such, these events have become global stages where exciting science, cutting-edge concepts and practice-changing data emerge on a truly grand scale. This massive outpouring of information has enormous benefits for the hematologic oncology community, but the truth is it also creates a major challenge for practicing oncologists and hematologists.

Although original data are consistently being presented and published, the flood of information unveiled during a major academic conference is unprecedented and leaves in its wake an enormous volume of new knowledge that practicing oncologists must try to sift through, evaluate and consider applying. Unfortunately and quite commonly, time constraints and an inability to access these data sets leave many oncologists struggling to ensure that they are aware of crucial practice-altering findings. This creates an almost insurmountable obstacle for clinicians in community practice because not only are they confronted almost overnight with thousands of new presentations and data sets, but they are also severely restricted in their ability to review and interrogate the raw findings.

To bridge the gap between research and patient care, this CME activity will deliver a serial review of the most important emerging data sets on treatment approaches and novel agents in non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) from the latest ASCO, EHA and ICML meetings, including expert perspectives on how these new evidence-based concepts may be applied to routine clinical care. This activity will assist medical oncologists, hematologists and hematology-oncology fellows in the formulation of optimal clinical management strategies and the timely application of new research findings to best-practice patient care.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Appraise recent clinical research findings on the efficacy and safety of radioimmununotherapy with ⁹⁰Y-ibritumomab tiuxetan for elderly patients with CD20-positive B-cell NHL.
- Compare and contrast the differences in patterns of care and treatment outcomes in older versus younger patients with follicular lymphoma based on data from the US National LymphoCare Study database.
- Evaluate the benefits and risks of novel therapeutic approaches with lenalidomide as a single agent in relapsed or refractory mantle-cell lymphoma (MCL) after bortezomib treatment or in combination with rituximab (R² regimen) for patients with previously untreated follicular lymphoma.
- Assess the effectiveness and tolerability of up-front combination therapy with bendamustine and rituximab versus standard rituximab-based chemotherapy in advanced indolent NHL compared to in MCL.
- Consider the clinical impact of rituximab maintenance versus observation after induction chemotherapy on the risk of relapse for patients with aggressive B-cell lymphoma.
- Recall the utility of post-therapy surveillance imaging approaches for earlier detection of relapses in patients with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma.

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FACULTY — The following faculty (and their spouses/partners) reported real or apparent conflicts of interest, which have been resolved through a conflict of interest resolution process:

Andrew M Evens, DO, MSc
Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology
Tufts University School of Medicine
Director, Lymphoma Program
Leader, Clinical Sciences Program
Tufts Cancer Center
Boston, Massachusetts

Advisor Committee: Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company, Seattle Genetics, Spectrum Pharmaceuticals Inc; Contracted Research: Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company, ZIOPHARM Oncology Inc.

Ian W Flinn, MD, PhD
Director of Blood Cancer Research
Sarah Cannon Research Institute
Tennessee Oncology
Nashville, Tennessee

Contracted Research: AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP, Celgene Corporation, Cephalon Inc, Genentech BioOncology, Gilead Sciences Inc, GlaxoSmithKline, Infinity Pharmaceuticals Inc, Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, Roche Laboratories Inc.

Christopher Flowers, MD, MS
Associate Professor of Hematology and Medical Oncology
Emory School of Medicine Winship Cancer Institute
Atlanta, Georgia
Consulting Agreements: Celgene Corporation, Genentech BioOncology; Contracted Research: Abbott Laboratories, Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc, Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company, Sanofi, Spectrum Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Jonathan W Friedberg, MD, MMSc
Samuel Durand Professor of Medicine
Director, Wilmot Cancer Center
University of Rochester
Rochester, New York

Advisory Committee: Genentech BioOncology; Data and Safety Monitoring Board: Lilly.


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Hardware/Software Requirements:
A high-speed Internet connection
A monitor set to 1280 x 1024 pixels or more
Internet Explorer 7 or later, Firefox 3.0 or later, Chrome, Safari 3.0 or later
Adobe Flash Player 10.2 plug-in or later
Adobe Acrobat Reader
(Optional) Sound card and speakers for audio

Last review date: November 2013
Expiration date: November 2014
This fourth and final issue of 5-Minute Journal Club walks through a number of interesting lymphoma presentations from ASCO, EHA and ICML at Lugano, but as we were putting the final touches on the program last Friday, a white-hot email came through announcing the FDA approval of yet another novel anticancer agent, in this case the glycoengineered type II anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody (MoAb) obinutuzumab (O) combined with chlorambucil (Clb) in previously untreated CLL. To add to the critical nature of this moment, just yesterday ASH posted abstracts from the annual meeting coming up next month, and among these are definitive findings from a Phase III up-front trial in CLL of 663 older patients (median age 73) first reported preliminarily at ASCO evaluating Clb alone or with O or with rituximab (R).

The world will see these landmark data and begin the debate at ASH, but the bottom line is that OClb resulted in a statistically significant and clinically meaningful prolongation of progression-free survival (PFS) and higher rates of complete response (CR) and minimal residual disease negativity compared to RClb. However, in terms of tolerability, infusion-related reactions and neutropenia without an increase in infections were more common with OClb.

We immediately sought help in figuring out what this means to physicians in practice, and for the bonus finale of this series check out the thoughts of Dr Michael Williams about obinutuzumab, trogocytosis and where we are in CLL at the moment. Meanwhile, here are our picks for the best summer lymphoma papers:

1. R squared (again)

At ASH in December Dr Nathan Fowler presented more mature data from his pathfinding Phase II trial evaluating lenalidomide (Len)/rituximab (R squared) up front in indolent lymphomas, including follicular lymphoma (FL), and at Lugano we saw a CALGB study with similar stellar results (72% CRs). An ongoing Phase III trial compares this nonchemotherapy regimen to R-chemotherapy, but where this will fit in with O and the new small-molecule B-cell receptor inhibitors such as ibrutinib and idelalisib is unclear.
In another interesting Lugano paper, the US-based prospective “LymphoCare” registry reported the largest ever series of patients with FL older than age 80 (n = 209) and not surprisingly demonstrated less use of R-chemotherapy and more R monotherapy, but of interest, response rates were only slightly lower than those in younger patients.

2. Radioimmunotherapy (RIT) consolidation after R-chemotherapy as an alternative to R maintenance

During our recent (and soon to be published) lymphoma/CLL think tank, Dr Julie Vose commented that she sometimes uses RIT rather than R maintenance after R-chemotherapy in older patients with indolent lymphomas, particularly when transportation to and from clinic for R infusions is problematic. In this regard, a Phase II Polish study presented in Lugano looked at RIT consolidation in 46 patients with mantle-cell lymphoma (MCL) ineligible for autologous stem cell transplantation or after chemosensitive relapse and reported an encouraging median PFS of 3.5 years. Another paper from EHA documented excellent outcomes in 39 patients with a variety of lymphomas, using RIT either as consolidation or monotherapy for relapsed/refractory disease with 74% CRs.

3. Bendamustine + R (BR) in indolent lymphoma

At ASCO and Lugano we saw more data from the Phase III BRIGHT study demonstrating at least equivalent efficacy between BR and R-CHOP/R-CVP in patients with NHL and perhaps an advantage in MCL with BR, which is now commonly used first line in indolent lymphomas primarily due to its tolerability profile, including the lack of alopecia.

4. Len in MCL

The 134-patient EMERGE study that led to the recent FDA indication of Len in MCL was updated at EHA and recently published in the JCO demonstrating a 28% overall response rate in patients with heavily pretreated disease (median of 4 prior therapies). The hope is that greater efficacy will be seen if this agent is administered earlier, although the current indication restricts its use to patients who have received 2 prior treatments, including bortezomib.

5. Post-therapy surveillance scans in diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL); R maintenance in DLBCL

An ASCO oral presentation was one of a number of recent retrospective lymphoma series documenting the rare likelihood of surveillance scans detecting recurrence in an asymptomatic patient with normal laboratory data, but many oncologists continue to employ this practice, likely due to the potential curability of relapsed disease.
This summer we also saw more generally unimpressive results with R maintenance in DLBCL, and not surprisingly, investigators do not endorse this strategy. Perhaps better outcomes will be seen with the new generation of anti-CD20 MoAbs like O.

Speaking of O, as promised here are a few initial thoughts and comments from Dr Williams on questions that will be discussed a great deal starting at 4:15 PM on Sunday, December 8 in New Orleans:

**Aren’t all anti-CD20 MoAbs the same?**

Until maybe yesterday most lymphoma investigators have been generally unexcited about the possibility that a whole lot more could be squeezed out of new anti-CD20 agents compared to R in B-cell neoplasia, but the new O data are likely to result in a lot more interest in exactly how MoAbs improve cancer outcomes (trastuzumab, for example, in breast cancer). Dr Williams notes that the enhanced efficacy of O compared to R may relate to its much greater binding affinity to CD20 and increased stimulation of antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity — factors that may be more important in CLL than lymphomas because of the lower CD20 density on CLL cells.

**When should O be considered right now in practice?**

Dr Williams, like many lymphoma investigators, not uncommonly uses the venerable Clb alone or with R mainly in older, frail patients with lower-risk disease, and based on the new FDA indication he is ready to selectively combine O with Clb as soon as it’s available on his formulary. He also often uses the type I MoAb ofatumumab as monotherapy in patients with CLL who have received prior R but will now be inclined to try O instead. However, until more data are available, Dr Williams will not combine O with other chemotherapies either in CLL or lymphomas, but he is interested in seeing data emerge from Phase II combination studies, particularly those testing O with bendamustine.

**What is the basis for the apparent improved outcomes with O compared to R?**

The dosing with O is greater than with R, and some have suggested this was a factor in the trial results. Dr Williams, however, is convinced that the fundamental differences in mechanisms of action of O and R explain the advantage observed, at least in CLL, and he is particularly interested to see data with O related to a phenomenon called “shaving” that he and collaborators reported on, in which the CD20/R complex on the cell surface is removed by the spleen and reticuloendothelial system, allowing leukemic cells to survive. This process is also known as trogocytosis (from the ancient Greek “to nibble”), and Dr Williams is curious to study whether a variation in how the O/CD20 complex is “nibbled” might explain the improved outcomes.
That does it for this short review series. Stay tuned for our upcoming audio and video highlights of the aforementioned lymphoma/CLL think tank as Dr Vose, Dr Williams and their colleagues tackle many other key questions of the day.

Neil Love, MD
Research To Practice
Miami, Florida

Trogocytosis of IgG bound to targeted antigens is mediated by Fcγ receptors on acceptor cells. Interaction of IgG bound to target antigens on the donor cell (1) with Fcγ receptors on the acceptor cell leads to formation of an immunologic synapse (2). The acceptor cell then ingests the immune complex and portions of the donor cell membrane, along with the participating Fcγ receptors (3). Other surface antigens in close proximity to the target immune complex are also taken up by the acceptor cell. Ag, antigen; PBMC, peripheral blood mononuclear cell. Professional illustration by Paulette Dennis.

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CALGB-50803 and RELEVANCE Trials of Lenalidomide and Rituximab in Previously Untreated Follicular Lymphoma

Presentations discussed in this issue

Martin P et al. **CALGB 50803 (ALLIANCE): A Phase 2 trial of lenalidomide plus rituximab in patients with previously untreated follicular lymphoma.** *Proc ICML 2013; Abstract 063.*

Morschhauser F et al. **The ‘RELEVANCE’ trial: A LYSa-sponsored Phase 3 randomized study to compare the efficacy and safety of rituximab plus lenalidomide versus rituximab plus any chemotherapy in subjects with previously untreated advanced follicular lymphoma.** *Proc ICML 2013; Abstract 136.*

Slides from presentations at ICML 2013 and transcribed comments from a recent interview with Jonathan W Friedberg, MD, MMSc (7/19/13)

Alliance/CALGB 50803: A Phase 2 Trial of Lenalidomide plus Rituximab in Patients with Previously Untreated Follicular Lymphoma¹

The ‘RELEVANCE’ Trial: A LYSa-Sponsored Phase 3 Randomized Study to Compare the Efficacy and Safety of Rituximab plus Lenalidomide versus Rituximab plus Any Chemotherapy in Subjects with Previously Untreated Advanced Follicular Lymphoma²

¹Martin P et al.  
*Proc ICML 2013; Abstract 063.*

²Morschhauser F et al.  
*Proc ICML 2013; Abstract 136.*
Alliance/CALGB 50803: A Phase 2 Trial of Lenalidomide plus Rituximab in Patients with Previously Untreated Follicular Lymphoma

Martin P et al.
Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 063.

Background

- The SAKK trial demonstrated that rituximab is active as a single agent for the treatment of follicular lymphoma (FL).
- Two Phase II studies demonstrated that rituximab in combination with galiximab or epratuzumab is effective in patients with previously untreated FL and a low FLIPI score (Ann Oncol 2012;23:2356; Cancer 2013;119(21):3797-804).
- Also, the Phase II CALGB-50401 study showed that lenalidomide in combination with rituximab (R²) demonstrated activity in patients with recurrent FL.
- **Study objective:** To determine the efficacy and safety of lenalidomide in combination with rituximab for patients with previously untreated FL.
### Phase II CALGB-50803 Trial Design

**Eligibility (n = 65)**
- Bulky Stage 2 or Stage 3, 4 follicular NHL
- Previously untreated, Grade 1, 2 or 3a disease
- FLIPI 0-2 risk factors

1 cycle = 28 days, 12 cycles planned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle #</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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- Lenalidomide 20 mg days 1-21; can increase to 25 mg; reductions permitted

- **Rituximab 375 mg/m^2** weekly x 4 (cycle 1) then day 1 of cycles 4, 6, 8, 10

- PET/CT scan performed at baseline, weeks 10, 24 and 52
- CT/MRI chest/abdomen/pelvis every 4 mo x 2 y, then every 6 mo until PD up to 10 y
- **Primary endpoints:** Response rate, time to progression


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### Baseline Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All FLIPI (n = 65)</th>
<th>FLIPI 0-1 (n = 20)</th>
<th>FLIPI 2 (n = 41)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>53 years</td>
<td>53 years</td>
<td>53 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥60 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;4 nodal sites</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1-2 disease</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulky (≥7 cm) disease</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3-4 disease</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Overall (n = 57)</th>
<th>FLIPI 0-1 (n = 17)</th>
<th>FLIPI 2 (n = 36)</th>
<th>FLIPI 3 (n = 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORR</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete response (CR)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial response</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable disease</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not evaluable</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 4 additional patients in PET CR but not confirmed by bone marrow biopsy
- No significant association was found between CR rate and FLIPI score, presence of bulky disease or grade.
- Median time to first response: 10 weeks
- Progressive disease: 7/57 (12%)


Adverse Events

**Hematologic**

- Lymphopenia
- Neutropenia
- Thrombocytopenia
- Anemia

**Nonhematologic**

- Fatigue
- ALT increased
- Pain
- Rash
- AST increased
- Infusion reaction
- Infections
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Hyperglycemia
- Alk phos increased
- Hyperbilirubinemia
- Pruritus
- Sensory neuropathy
- Dry skin

Comparison to Other Phase II CALGB Trials of Rituximab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>50803 (n = 65)</th>
<th>50701* (n = 59)</th>
<th>50402† (n = 61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regimen</td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>Epratuzumab/R</td>
<td>Galiximab/R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>53 y</td>
<td>54 y</td>
<td>57 y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median follow-up</td>
<td>1.6 y</td>
<td>2.7 y</td>
<td>4.3 y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Tx</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORR</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR/CRu (overall)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLIPI 0-1/2</td>
<td>77%/70%</td>
<td>31%/44%</td>
<td>75%/52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median PFS</td>
<td>Not reached</td>
<td>3.5 y</td>
<td>2.9 y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Author Conclusions

- Lenalidomide in combination with rituximab is highly active as front-line therapy for patients with low- and intermediate-risk FLIPI scores.
  - Overall response rate: 93%; CR: 72%
  - No association between FLIPI score and CR
- A longer follow-up time is required to evaluate PFS.
- The regimen was well tolerated.
  - Grade 3/4 neutropenia occurred in 20% of patients
  - Febrile neutropenia was reported in only 1 patient
  - Fatigue was common with Grade 1/2 intensity occurring in 77% of patients

Investigator Commentary: CALGB-50803 Phase II Trial of Lenalidomide/Rituximab (R²) in Previously Untreated FL

This CALGB single-arm Phase II study of R² for patients with previously untreated FL yielded similar results to those previously reported by Nathan Fowler and colleagues (Proc ASH 2012;Abstract 901). The combination regimen in the CALGB trial was administered in a slightly different manner than that used in the Fowler study but still resulted in an extremely high response rate. Based on Phase II data, the Phase III RELEVANCE trial will evaluate the R² regimen versus R/chemotherapy (see Morschhauser et al. Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136).

The question persists as to how lenalidomide and rituximab work together to produce these responses. Some of my earlier clinical research studied how to potentiate rituximab by stimulating the immune system. To the degree that lenalidomide acts as an immunomodulator, it may stimulate some components of the immune system and it may help an antibody work better. The bottom line is that there is no question from the data that for an indolent lymphoma R² is better than lenalidomide alone, and this CALGB study demonstrated that.

*Interview with Jonathan W Friedberg, MD, MMSc, July 18, 2013*

The ‘RELEVANCE’ Trial: A LYSASponsored Phase 3 Randomized Study to Compare the Efficacy and Safety of Rituximab plus Lenalidomide versus Rituximab plus Any Chemotherapy in Subjects with Previously Untreated Advanced Follicular Lymphoma

Morschhauser F et al.  
*Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136.*
Background

- Rituximab (R) in combination with chemotherapy followed by R maintenance is a standard treatment for patients with previously untreated follicular lymphoma (FL) (Lancet 2011;377:42-51).

- A Phase II trial demonstrated that the combination of lenalidomide with rituximab (R²) is active and tolerable in patients with untreated FL (Proc ASH 2012;Abstract 901):
  - 3-year progression-free survival (PFS): 81%
  - Overall response rate: 98%
    - Complete response (CR)/unconfirmed CR (CRu): 87%

- **Study objective:** To compare the efficacy and safety of R² to R/chemotherapy for patients with previously untreated FL.


Ongoing Phase III RELEVANCE Trial Design (NCT01650701)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target accrual (n = 1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD20-positive FL (Grade 1, 2 or 3a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II-IV disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No prior systemic therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥1 GELF criterion*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Primary endpoints:** CR/CRu rate at 120 weeks, PFS
- **Secondary endpoints include:** Event-free survival, time to next lymphoma treatment, overall survival, minimal residual disease using PCR and health-related quality of life

Study Methods

- Patients will be stratified prior to randomization by:
  - FLIPI score (0-1 vs 2 vs 3-5)
  - Longest diameter of the largest node (>6 vs ≤6 cm)
  - Age (≤60 vs >60 years)
- Patients randomly assigned to the R² arm will receive:
  - Lenalidomide dose: 20 mg on d2-22 every 28 d x 6 cycles
    - If CR achieved, then 10 mg on d2-22 for 12 cycles
    - If PR, continue with 20 mg for 3-6 cycles and then 10 mg on d2-22 every 28 d for ≤18 cycles
  - Rituximab dose: 375 mg/m² on d1,8,15,22 of cycle 1; d1 of cycles 2-6
    - After 8 weeks, patients with responsive disease will continue with 375 mg/m² of rituximab every 8 weeks for 12 cycles.

Morschhauser F et al. Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136. (Abstract only)

Study Methods (Continued)

- Patients randomly assigned to the control arm of the trial will receive the investigator’s choice of 6-8 cycles of one of the following:
  - R-CHOP
  - R-CVP
  - R-bendamustine
- After 7 or 8 weeks, patients with responsive disease will continue to receive 375 mg/m² of rituximab every 8 weeks for 12 cycles.

Morschhauser F et al. Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136. (Abstract only)
**Determination of Efficacy**

- Efficacy determination will be based on the coprimary endpoints of complete response rate at 120 weeks and PFS using the International Working Group’s response criteria (Cheson 1999).
- The current study design hypothesizes a superiority of the experimental arm.
- The secondary objectives are to compare event-free survival, time to next lymphoma treatment, overall survival, minimal residual disease using PCR and health-related quality of life.

Morschhauser F et al. Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136. (Abstract only)

**Study Progress**

- So far, 213 patients have been enrolled in 50 centers in the United States, France and Belgium.
- Additional centers from Australia (ALLG), Canada (NCCI-CTG), Germany (GLSG), Portugal, Spain (GELTAMO) and Italy will join the study in the second quarter of 2013.

Morschhauser F et al. Proc ICML 2013;Abstract 136. (Abstract only)
Investigator Commentary: Ongoing Phase III RELEVANCE Trial of $R^2$ for Patients with Previously Untreated FL

The ongoing Phase III RELEVANCE trial is based on the extremely promising results obtained in Phase II trials of $R^2$ for untreated FL. The trial will randomly assign patients to the $R^2$ regimen or to physician’s choice of R-CHOP, R-CVP or R-bendamustine. The target accrual of the RELEVANCE trial is 1,000 patients, with coprimary endpoints of CR/CRun and PFS.

Patients on both treatment arms will receive a component of rituximab maintenance therapy. The trial is designed to determine whether large groups of patients may be able to avoid chemotherapy and still have the same excellent outcomes. I’ve heard anecdotally from investigators participating in this trial that, surprisingly, even patients with bulky disease and those who seem ill and appear to need chemotherapy are responding well to the $R^2$ regimen.

*Interview with Jonathan W Friedberg, MD, MMSc, July 19, 2013*