

Blood and marrow transplants (BMT) help people with advanced myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS)

Not enough people have access to life-saving transplant

Although BMT is the only known cure for MDS, many people aren't aware of BMT or think that they're too old to have one because of its side effects.

Using smaller doses of therapy with BMT have made it safer. Now a new study of 400 older adults, aged 50 to 75, suggests that this type of BMT, along with a matched donor, helps people with advanced MDS live longer with a similar quality of life.

If a donor was found within 90 days, then patients got BMT. Otherwise, patients got other types of therapies. After 3 years:

- About half the people who got BMT were alive;
- Only about a quarter of the people who did not get BMT were alive;
- Quality of life after BMT was similar whether patients got BMT or not.

Experts say community doctors and transplant doctors should team up to care for people with MDS. They should work with insurance companies and patient advocacy groups to:

- Spread the news about BMT for older patients;
- Help patients visit a transplant center to find a donor for BMT early;
- Make health care affordable;
- Provide emotional support for patients and families;
- Help patients and families to get transportation and housing if they need to travel for transplant;
- Listen to and collaborate with communities of color.

Ask your doctor

Is transplant a treatment option for me? What are the possible benefits and harms?

Sources

Nakamura R, Saber W, Martens MJ, et al. [Biologic Assignment Trial of Reduced-Intensity Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation Based on Donor Availability in Patients 50-75 Years of Age With Advanced Myelodysplastic Syndrome](#). *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. [Epub ahead of print] Epub 2021 Jun 9. doi: 10.1200/JCO.20.03380.

Warlick ED, Ustun C, Andreescu A, et al. [Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network Study 1102 heralds a new era in hematopoietic cell transplantation in high-risk myelodysplastic syndromes: Challenges and opportunities in implementation](#). *Cancer*. [Epub ahead of print.] 2021 Aug 10. doi: 10.1002/cncr.33826.



Learn more about

- MDS at [BeTheMatch.org](https://www.BeTheMatch.org), [NCCN.org](https://www.NCCN.org), [MDS-foundation.org](https://www.MDS-foundation.org), and [AAMDS.org](https://www.AAMDS.org)
- Clinical trials for MDS at [CTsearchsupport.org](https://www.CTsearchsupport.org)
- More study summaries at [CIBMTR.org](https://www.CIBMTR.org)

About this research summary

The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network (BMT CTN) is a collaboration of The Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research® (CIBMTR®); The Medical College of Wisconsin; The National Marrow Donor Program® / Be The Match®; and The Emmes Company®.

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BMT CTN Data Coordinating Center

Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research® • Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin • Clinical Cancer Center
9200 W. Wisconsin Avenue • Suite C5500 • Milwaukee, WI 53226 • 414-805-0700 • Fax: 414-805-0714

The Emmes Company® • 401 N. Washington Street • Suite 700 • Rockville, MD 20850 • 301-251-1161 • Fax: 301-251-1355
National Marrow Donor Program®/Be The Match® • 500 N. 5th Street • Minneapolis, MN 55401 • 612-627-5800 • Fax: 763-406-4370