

MM Fighters! Support Group Meeting
October 24, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Due to unexpectedly severe side effects from his maintenance, Chris could not make the meeting on Saturday, and at the last minute, Mari, Una and Marilyn all responded to 8:45 AM text messages and did a great job stepping in and running the meeting. Thrown to the lions, they walked away unscathed! My deep thanks to these three, for they truly are

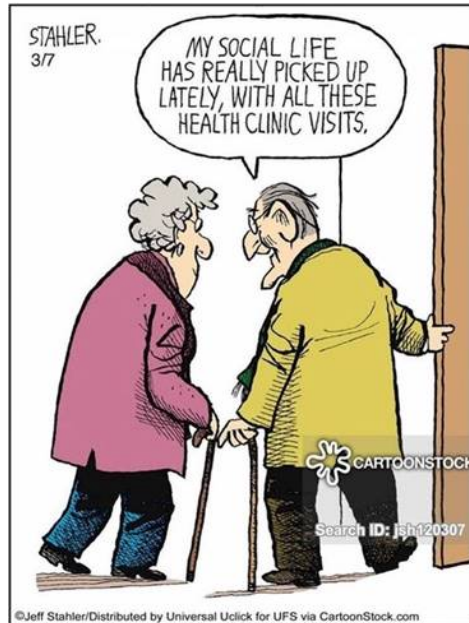


Thoughts For The Month

This month's thought is a nice way to start your day...both for yourself and for everyone else (thank you, Marilyn, for passing this along!)....

Every morning I take a deep breath in and then breathe a deep breath out. I envision breathing in all good things, and then when I breathe out, I breathe out all the good things to share with everyone else.

And what is life without a little humor...perhaps something that we all have felt these past 6+ months?



Speaker

Our speaker this month, from the SCCA and UW, was **Dr. Andrew Cowan**, an oncologist and researcher. His presentation focused on **“What’s New For Relapsed Multiple Myeloma in 2020”**.

Briefly, Dr. Cowan reviewed the study of BCMA CAR T cells in combination with a gamma secretase inhibitor, which has been found to help bind BCMA to the myeloma cells instead of allowing it to detach and flow freely in the blood.

- This provides the CAR T cells with more targets on each myeloma cell, and minimizes wasting these killer cells on BCMA not attached to myeloma cells.
- Results showed a boost in BCMA being expressed on the myeloma cells and a 100% overall response rate to the treatment.

Dr. Cowan, additionally reviewed the use of Belantamab mafodotin which has been FDA approved for patients with four prior protocols. Dr. Cowan reviewed two studies related to the use of Belantamab mafodotin – DREAMM1 and DREAMM2.

- The biggest problem in both studies was/is eye toxicity (keratopathy) which is not necessarily reversible.
- All patients that use this new treatment will need an ophthalmologist and visits before each treatment. Doctors will select ophthalmologist.

The positive note is that many new agents are coming for multiple myeloma.

In answering member questions, Dr. Cowan responded:

- ASH will be a virtual conference this year.
- There is no specified age limit for CAR T cell or CAR T cell engagers protocols. Frailty of patient can determine if eligible.
- You have to really be in Seattle to participate in these clinical trials.
- Most trials exclude patients with amyloidosis.

- New treatments are not usually front line, because it would probably be unethical.
- Drug companies usually approach clinics, institutions to begin trials.

Dr. Cowan's presentation is attached to this email.

Patient Roundtable

Many topics were discussed including:

- Risks of taking drugs vs risks of multiple myeloma returning if no treatments.
- Sensitivity of impact of initial treatments vs impact of later ones.
- Lack of results from daratumamab and better results with kyprolis.
- Risk of blood clots with carfilzomib/kyprolis?
- Feeling ok and looking ok when numbers say something different and being vigilant.
- Accessing lab results on your institution's patient chart service.
- Fun things members have done, including shooting at the range, gardening, virtual exercise classes, going for a drive.
- Link to virtual exercise classes through Team Survivor Northwest – teamsurvivornw.org

Next MM Fighters! Meeting:

Saturday, November 14th, 2020 – 10AM – Noon – Rachel Douglas, Physical Therapist, SCCA – “The Benefits of Physical Therapy for Myeloma Patients”
VIRTUAL MEETING

The group will be taking a break during December and will start meetings again in January. Notices will be sent out with details after Christmas.