

Appropriateness of Applying the Response Criteria for Multiple Myeloma (MM) to Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia (WM).

Joan Bladé and Silvia Montoto. Institute of Hematology & Oncology. Department of Hematology. Postgraduate School of Hematology "Farreras-Valentí". IDIBAPS. Hospital Clinic. University of Barcelona. Barcelona. Spain.

Monoclonal gammopathies are characterized by the presence of an M-protein in serum and/or urine, which generally correlates with tumor burden. Changes in the level of paraprotein are the basis for assessing the response to therapy and monitoring the evolution of the disease. A constant finding in monoclonal gammopathies is the resistance to chemotherapy reflected by a low rate of complete remission (CR). In fact, the response criteria consider different degrees of partial tumor reduction mainly measured by the decrease in the M-protein size. In general, the M-protein decrease is accompanied by an improvement in the clinical and biological manifestations of the disease (i.e., improvement in skeletal pain and anemia as well as correction of hypercalcemia and decrease in the size of plasmacytomas in MM; correction of anemia and hyperviscosity syndrome in WM and decrease in organ involvement along with organ function improvement in primary amyloidosis). In this regard, the serum and urine M-protein response criteria for MM (1) would be appropriate for WM. Also, the paraprotein response should be complemented with the response criteria for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma concerning bone marrow involvement, hepatosplenomegaly and lymph node enlargement (2). In addition, improvement in main manifestations of WM (i.e., anemia, hyperviscosity syndrome, symptoms from associated cryoglobulinemia and peripheral neuropathy) should be required.

1. Bladé J, Samson D, Reece D, et al. Criteria for evaluating disease response and progression in patients with multiple myeloma treated by high-dose therapy and haematopoietic stem cell transplantation. *Br J Haematol* 1998; 102: 1115-1123.
2. Cheson BD, Horning SJ, Coiffier B, et al. Report of an international workshop to standardize response criteria for non-Hodgkin's lymphomas. *J Clin Oncol* 1999; 17: 1244-1253.