



# Emerging Therapies for MDS

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The myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) refers to a group of heterogeneous bone marrow disorders characterized by a dysplastic bone marrow. The marrow is usually normocellular or hypercellular with an increased number of blast cells seen, and is frequently associated with abnormal cytogenetic findings. Peripheral cytopenias are also seen. These patients usually present with anemia, and as the disease progresses, they may develop neutropenia and thrombocytopenia, and eventually progress to acute leukemia. The only curative treatment for the MDS

has been allogeneic stem cell transplantation. The transplant is infrequently done since these patients usually present in the seventh decade of life. In the past, the treatment for MDS has been supportive care, specifically transfusion of red blood cells for the anemia and hematopoietic growth factors. Some new agents that are now available for MDS include Revlimid and Vidaza. These drugs have shown some effectiveness in the treatment of this disease and may lead to transfusion independence.

This spring the FDA approved Dacogen for the treatment of MDS. This drug has also been found to be clinically effective in the treatment of patients with MDS including both previously treated and untreated, de novo, and secondary MDS subtypes. Dacogen has been shown to be effective in both the inpatient and outpatient regimens. The inpatient regimen is administered as a continuous infusion over three hours, every eight hours for three days, and repeated every six weeks. A convenient outpatient regimen that has shown to be quite effective has also been reported. The drug is given daily over one hour as a five-day regimen, every 28 days. This regimen is amiable to outpatient therapy and may be more convenient for our OA members to treat their MDS patients in the office setting. **OA**



## Credible Patient Resources (C.P.R.)

### Jump Start Your Patients' Search for Reliable Web Information

*Cut and copy the following web links for a handy reference guide for your patients.*

#### **4anemia.com**

An unbranded educational site regarding the effect of anemia and fatigue induced by chemotherapy.

#### **allaboutmids.com**

Support for patients with MDS and their caretakers.

#### **cancer.com**

Provides CME-certified programs, conference coverage, treatment updates, web casts and interactive case challenges.

#### **clinicaloptions.com**

Provides CME-certified programs, conference coverage, treatment updates, web casts and interactive case challenges.

#### **LAF.org**

The Lance Armstrong Foundation provides practice information and tools for people living with cancer.

#### **patientaccessnetwork.org**

A non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to needed health services for insured patients who cannot afford the out-of-pocket costs associated with their treatment.

#### **pinkribbon.com**

A comprehensive breast cancer resource center.

#### **procritline.com**

Provides financial assistance for qualified individuals receiving Procrit therapy.

#### **strength4yourjourney.com**

An information-packed resource for newly-diagnosed cancer patients — from diagnosis to treatment.

#### **strengthforcaring.com**

A national program for caregivers of loved ones and family members with cancer.

#### **toomuchiron.com**

A resource for patients at risk for iron overload.