Treatment of relapsed CD20+ Hodgkin lymphoma with the monoclonal antibody rituximab is effective and well tolerated: results of a phase 2 trial of the German Hodgkin Lymphoma Study Group

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This phase 2 trial was performed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the chimeric monoclonal anti-CD20 antibody rituximab in patients with relapsed lymphocyte-predominant Hodgkin lymphoma or other CD20(+) subtypes of Hodgkin disease (HD). Eligibility criteria required expression of the CD20 antigen on more than 30% of malignant cells. Fourteen patients were treated with 4 weekly intravenous infusions of rituximab (375 mg/m(2)). All patients had at least one prior chemotherapy (median, 2). The median time from first diagnosis was 9 years. Adverse events, such as rhinitis, fever, chills, and nausea, were usually transient and of mild to moderate grade, allowing outpatient treatment in most cases. All patients completed treatment and were eligible for a response. The overall response in 14 assessable patients was 86%, with 8 complete remissions and 4 partial remissions, and 2 patients with progressive disease. At a median follow-up of 12 months, 9 of 12 responders were in remission. The median duration of response has not been reached yet (20+ months). We conclude that rituximab is both safe and effective in a subgroup of CD20(+) patients with HD.

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