NCCN Meeting on Blood Cancers Empowers Interprofessional Care Teams

NCCN conducted a 3-day, live virtual congress on October 14–16, 2021, addressing the latest in therapeutic advances, updates to the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines), and treatment debates across the broad spectrum of blood cancers. Incorporating interactive polling and moderator-facilitated Q&A sessions, the NCCN Virtual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies was designed to meet the needs of the full interprofessional care team, including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals who manage the care of patients with hematologic malignancies.

Additionally, NCCN hosted the NCCN Virtual Nursing Forum: Advancing Oncology Nursing in Hematologic Malignancies, on Friday, October 8, 2021, to provide nurses with comprehensive and clinically relevant information to optimize care for patients with blood cancers.

“In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s congress was again presented in a virtual format through both live and on-demand webcasts,” said Andrew D. Zelenetz, MD, PhD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) and congress Co-Chair. “While we prefer face-to-face interactions, we are gratified that we were able to still deliver a valuable interactive experience that helps maintain the high quality of patient care across the country—and the globe.”

“The NCCN Annual Congress for hematologic malignancies provides a platform for leading experts to share and debate the latest evidence and practice recommendations for patient management,” said event Co-Chair Ranjana H. Advani, MD, Stanford Cancer Institute. “Our hope is that clinicians who attend will be better equipped to put novel therapies and treatment guidelines into practice.”

Interactive Virtual Conference

The NCCN 2021 Virtual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies focused on the current standards of hematologic oncology care as well as key updates to the NCCN Guidelines. Presentations included treatment updates and patient case studies on:

- Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia/Small Lymphocytic Lymphoma
- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia
- Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma
- Follicular Lymphoma
- Histiocytic Neoplasms
- Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Mantle Cell Lymphoma
- Marginal Zone Lymphomas
- Monoclonal Gammopathy of Clinical Significance
- Multiple Myeloma
- Myeloproliferative Neoplasms
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphomas
- Plasma Cell Neoplasms
- Peripheral T-Cell Lymphomas
- Systemic Light Chain Amyloidosis
- Waldenström Macroglobulinemia

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doi: 10.6004/jnccn.2021.0057

The congress' virtual format offered opportunities for participants to engage with faculty in real time, to visit an online exhibition hall, and to network with colleagues in breakout rooms. For 60 days following the event, registrants are also able to access all of the recorded presentations, allowing time to review sessions they may have missed or revisit sessions important to their practice. NCCN expects more than 500 healthcare professionals to participate.

"We are gratified by the broad range of oncology professionals who attend this congress," said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. "Last year, attendance was 29% physicians, 30% nurses, 11% pharmacists, and 30% other healthcare professionals; 69% of the respondents to our survey reported that they work as part of an interprofessional health care team. This mix makes for dynamic practice discussions based on multiple informed perspectives that are critical to improving patient outcomes."

NCCN Publishes New Guide to Improving Knowledge and Quality of Life for Patients With Small Cell Lung Cancer

NCCN has announced the publication of new NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC), which is a neuroendocrine tumor type of lung cancer that is linked to smoking and tends to be aggressive. However, it is important to understand management options and ways to mitigate symptoms of the cancer and/or therapy. This guide is intended to empower patients and caregivers with the same expert treatment information as their doctors. It is free to view or download at [NCCN.org/patientguidelines](https://www.nccn.org/patientguidelines) and is funded by NCCN Foundation.

"When you first learn of your or your loved one's lung cancer diagnosis, it can be a shock," said Deb Violette, President, Free ME From Lung Cancer. "It's hard to know what information is important or even what questions to ask. These patient guidelines from NCCN give us the scientifically accurate and valid information we need before we try to navigate what's out there on the internet or hear things from friends. People can look through this book on their own time and learn more about what to expect from their treatment course."

The NCCN Guidelines for Patients: SCLC are based on the latest evidence and expert-consensus from the gold standard NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) intended for healthcare professionals. The NCCN Guidelines for SCLC are developed by a multidisciplinary panel of experts from across the leading cancer centers that comprise NCCN Member Institutions. These expert recommendations are presented in non-medical terms for the patient version, which also include a glossary, illustrations, suggested questions to ask doctors, and space for notes.

"People with SCLC often experience rapid deterioration but also equally rapid response to treatment," explained Apar Kishor P. Ganti, MD, Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center, Chair of the NCCN Guidelines Panel for SCLC. "I remember my very first patient entering the hospital in a wheelchair. After his first cycle of chemotherapy he was able to walk out and have a much better quality of life, and even celebrate an important milestone. This disease is very aggressive and can be a bit of a rollercoaster. I'm grateful to now have this new resource from NCCN to help patients and their loved ones gain a clearer understanding of what to expect."

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Dr. Ganti continued: “The introduction of immunotherapy as part of first-line treatment for patients with widespread disease has been a big step forward. More trials are underway and we’re hoping to know more about the role of immunotherapy for localized SCLC in the next few years.”

NCCN’s clinical and patient guidelines for SCLC stress the importance of encouraging patients to quit smoking if at all possible. People who smoke are much more likely to get SCLC and people who continue smoking through treatment generally have poorer outcomes. NCCN also publishes clinical practice guidelines for smoking cessation to inform health care providers regarding best practices and tailored approaches to help people avoid or overcome this dangerous habit.

There are now more than 55 different NCCN Guidelines for Patients covering every major type of cancer, along with topics like managing cancer-related distress, nausea and vomiting, and survivorship, plus special considerations for adolescents and young adults across all cancer types. Free digital versions are available at [NCCN.org/patientguidelines](https://www.nccn.org/patientguidelines) and via the NCCN Patient Guides for Cancer app. Printed versions are available for a nominal fee at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).