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TREATMENT OF CML BLAST CRISIS WITH LOW DOSE ARA-C

Schey *et al* (1985) reported in this Journal a case of CML in blastic crisis treated with TAD preceded by low-dose cytosine arabinoside (L-DAC). But in our opinion neither the rationale of this treatment, nor what role L-DAC in 'priming' strategy plays in such regimen, is clear. There is no difference in reduction of myeloblasts and neutrophils between the second course (without L-DAC) and the fourth and sixth course (with L-DAC 'priming'). However, any new therapeutic approach to the treatment of the blastic crisis of CML is always of interest. Recently we have treated with L-DAC alone seven patients with Ph1 positive CML in blastic transformation (Di Raimondo *et al*, 1985). The rationale of our attempt was to see if the reported capability of L-DAC in inducing cellular differentiation (Castaigne *et al*, 1983) could restore the disease to the chronic phase. We obtained in only one case a return to chronic phase which lasted for 15 weeks. Four patients showed a transitory control of the disease with an evident reduction of leucocytosis but without significant change in the ratio of differentiated myeloid cells to blasts. No effect was observed in one patient, while in another a progression of disease occurred. We did not observe any side effect by L-DAC alone. Our data

would suggest that L-DAC has a cytostatic rather than a maturational effect, but its efficacy is not such as to represent a marked advance in the therapy of blastic crisis. The lack of side effects and the ability to administer the therapy in outpatients suggest L-DAC could be a useful palliative therapy in patients with blast crisis where more aggressive therapy is contraindicated.

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LIFE EXPECTANCY OF SWEDISH HAEMOPHILIACS

Larsson (1985) states that 'very few papers on life expectancy in haemophilia have previously been published' and gives only four references published in 1980–83. May I point out that longevity of haemophilic patients, including an age distribution pyramid, was described 20 years earlier by Nour-Eldin (1961, 1967).

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