



## PRESS RELEASE

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## **New guidelines for preventing and treating infectious diseases in leukemic patients will help reduce morbidity and mortality**

Date: 13 August 2007

European Guidelines on Antimicrobial Therapy in Patients with Acute Leukemia, covering prophylaxis and treatment of bacterial and fungal infections, have been published today in a Supplement to *The European Journal of Cancer*.<sup>1</sup>

The series of articles published in the *EJC* Supplement presents the results of the First European Conference on Infections in Leukemia (ECIL-1).

'In developing our recommendations at a consensus conference we addressed an urgent need to establish state-of-the-art European standards on prophylaxis and treatment of infectious complications occurring in patients with acute leukaemia and recipients of haematological stem cell transplantations,' said Professor Catherine Cordonnier, Centre Hôpital-Universitaire Henri Mondor, Créteil, France. 'Publication of our

recommendations will help clinicians choose the best treatment for their leukemic patients and thereby should reduce morbidity and mortality.'

ECIL-1 was a joint initiative of four organisations:

- The Infectious Diseases Group of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment in Cancer (EORTC) – [www.eortc.be](http://www.eortc.be)
- The Infectious Diseases working Party of the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) – [www.ebmt.org](http://www.ebmt.org)
- The Supportive Care Group of the European Leukemia Net (ELN) – [www.leukemia-net.org](http://www.leukemia-net.org) and
- The Immunocompromised Host Society (ICHS) – [www.ichs.org](http://www.ichs.org)

In developing the guidelines, six working groups reviewed data from the literature to answer specific questions on the prevention and treatment of bacterial and invasive fungal infections, which are major causes of morbidity and mortality in leukemic patients. The working groups mainly considered data from large prospective trials and meta-analyses and their conclusions were presented and debated at the ECIL-1 conference by an expert panel of 59 infectious diseases specialists, microbiologists, clinical trial specialists or haematologists from 24 European countries, Israel and Australia.

After consensus was reached, the guidelines were finalised, each proposal being scored according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grading for the level of evidence and level of recommendation before being published.

ECIL-1 addressed six topics, three relating to bacterial infections and three relating to fungal infections:

- Fluoroquinolone prophylaxis in neutropenic patients, in the light of recently published large studies
- The place and indications of aminoglycosides and of glycopeptides in the antibacterial armamentarium for febrile neutropenic patients
- The use of empirical antifungal therapy in neutropenic patients

- The main indications of antifungal prophylaxis in leukemia patients, including stem cell transplant recipients, and
- The management of both invasive candidiasis and aspergillosis

Special attention was paid to developing evidence-based recommendations, identifying risk populations, and focusing on infection-related mortality and risk-benefit ratio.

‘The newly published guidelines provide clinicians with information that will help them prevent and treat life-threatening bacterial and invasive fungal infections in their leukemic patients,’ concluded Professor Thierry Calandra, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois, Lausanne, Switzerland. ‘The recommendations will be extended to include viral infections at ECIL-2 in September 2007.’

### **Reference**

1. C. Cordonnier, T. Calandra, F. Meunier. Guidelines from the First European Conference on Infections in Leukaemia: ECIL1. EJC Supplements 2007;5(2):1-60.

### **Notes to editors**

The 1st European Conference on Infections in Leukemia (ECIL-1) was held in Juan-les-Pins, France, from 30 September - 1 October 2005.

The ECIL organisation committee members were:

- Catherine Cordonnier (Créteil, France)
- Thierry Calandra (Lausanne, Switzerland)
- Hermann Einsele (Würzburg, Germany)
- Raoul Herbrecht (Strasbourg, France)
- Per Ljungman (Stockholm, Sweden)
- Johan Maertens (Leuven, Belgium)
- Claudio Viscoli (Genova, Italy)

The six working groups were:

- Fluoroquinolone prophylaxis in neutropenic patients - Giampaolo Bucaneve, Elio Castagnola, Claudio Viscoli, Leonard Leibovici, Francesco Menichetti
- Empirical antibacterial treatment: Aminoglycosides - Lubos Drgona, Mical Paul, Giampaolo Buccaneve, Thierry Calandra, Francesco Menichetti,
- Empirical antibacterial treatment: Glycopeptides and other Gram-positive antibacterials - Alain Cometta, Thierry Calandra, Oscar Marchetti
- Antifungal prophylaxis - Johan Maertens, Pascale Frère, Cornelia Lass-Flörl, Werner Heinz, Oliver Cornely,
- Empirical antifungal treatment - Oscar Marchetti, Catherine Cordonnier, Thierry Calandra
- Antifungal therapy - Raoul Herbrecht, Ursula Fluckiger, Bertrand Gachot, Patricia Ribaud, Anne Thiebaut, Catherine Cordonnier

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