

What are the treatment goals for maintenance therapy in myeloma?

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My name is Adam Cohen, and I am an assistant professor in medical oncology at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am often asked what are the treatment goals for maintenance therapy in myeloma? What is clear now from several studies is that maintenance therapy with either thalidomide, lenalidomide, or bortezomib can improve the depth of response, the duration of response, and progression-free survival compared with just stopping therapy at the end of induction. Our hope is that this will translate into an overall survival advantage; however, the data so far appear mixed with some studies demonstrating a survival advantage and other studies not, and we await longer follow up for these studies. It is important to remember of course that none of these therapies are curative, and therefore, patients need to be monitored closely for toxicity so that the benefits of maintenance therapy are not outweighed by significant compromise of quality of life.

Reference

Ludwig H, et al. IMWG Consensus on Maintenance Therapy in Multiple Myeloma. *Blood*. 2012;19(13):3003-3015.