

NURSE NAVIGATION TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO BLOOD CANCER CLINICAL TRIAL PARTICIPATION

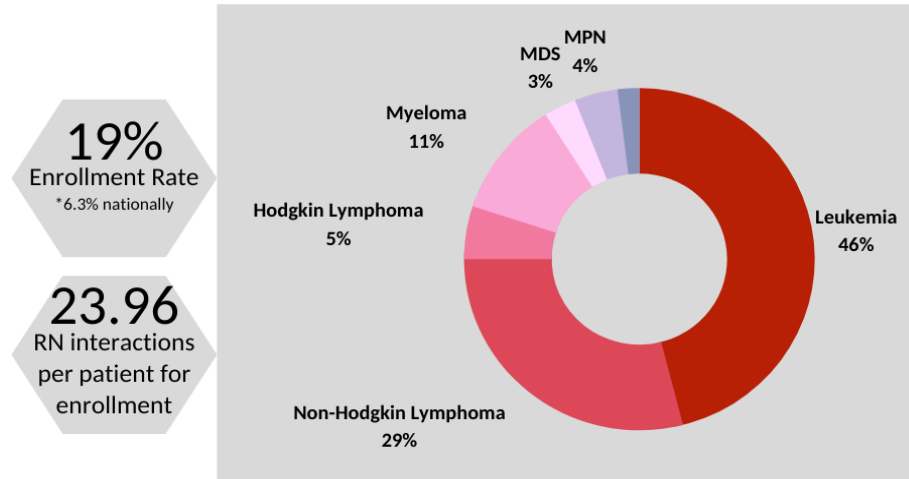
Leah Szumita, MS, RN, ACNS-BC | Ashley Giacobbi, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, AOCNS

BACKGROUND Clinical trials are key to advancing cancer treatment, yet participation rates in the U.S. remain low at an estimated 6.3% across the U.S. (Unger, et al., 2021). Many barriers to clinical trial participation exist and identifying appropriate clinical trials can be overwhelming for patients and resource intensive for healthcare providers. Barriers may include institutional and provider related barriers, barriers related to trial design, and patient related barriers (Sae-Hau et al., 2021).

METHODS The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society developed the Clinical Trial Support Center (CTSC), a free clinical trial nurse navigation service for blood cancer patients, their families and healthcare providers. The CTSC is a team of 9 nurse navigators, with expertise in pediatric and adult hematology/oncology, who work one-on-one with patients, their caregivers or healthcare providers. A dedicated nurse navigator completes comprehensive nursing, educational and psychosocial assessments to understand a patient's diagnosis and treatment history, their understanding of available treatment options and clinical trials, goals of care and supports available to participate in a clinical trial. Taking this information into consideration, the nurse navigator completes an unbiased search, providing an individualized list of potential clinical trials and educational resources. The nurse navigator may also contact principal investigators, study coordinators and sponsors to inquire about a patient's eligibility, referral process and waitlist, travel assistance and other financial resources. The goal of the CTSC is not for every patient to enroll into a clinical trial, but to increase awareness of clinical trials as a treatment option, facilitate informed decision-making between a patient and their healthcare team, and to minimize the barriers to enrollment if a patient decides that a clinical trial is right for them.

PATIENT ENROLLMENT

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022



19%
Enrollment Rate
*6.3% nationally

23.96
RN interactions
per patient for
enrollment

FINDINGS During July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, the CTSC nurse navigators assisted 751 new blood cancer patients with diverse diagnoses and disease states; at presentation, 47% had relapsed/refractory disease. Of patients who were eligible for a clinical trial search, 19% (n=70) enrolled into a clinical trial. On behalf of patients who enrolled on a clinical trial, the average number of phone and email interactions by a CTSC nurse navigator (e.g., to patient/family member, healthcare provider, clinical trial research staff, study sponsor) was 23.96 per patient, compared to 14.82 per patient for those who did not enroll after receiving a search (n=298).

Reasons patient did not enroll into a clinical trial:

- Chose standard of care (68%)
- Restrictive inclusion/exclusion criterion (10.1%)
- Health status deteriorated rapidly (9.5%)
- No trial within preferred geography (6.3%)
- Trial not compatible with patient preferences (2.5%)
- Obtained therapy through off-label/compassionate use (1.6%)
- Insurance restrictions (1.5%)
- Financial constraints (0.5%)

CTSC PROCESS FOR SUPPORTING PATIENTS



IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Clinical Trial Support Center is a free nurse navigation service for blood cancer patients, their caregivers, and healthcare providers. The unique relationship between a patient and their nurse navigator plays a pivotal role in overcoming many barriers to clinical trial enrollment. CTSC nurse navigators work in conjunction with healthcare providers, offloading the time-consuming work of identifying potential clinical trials and clinical trial outreach, and emphasizing the importance of shared decision-making.

IS A BLOOD CANCER CLINICAL TRIAL RIGHT FOR YOU OR YOUR PATIENT?
Get answers, options, & truly personal support.
Call 1 (800) 955-4572 or email ctsc@lls.org