



Does Myelofibrosis Exacerbate Arthritis?

Mark Heaney, MD, PhD
Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine
Columbia University Medical Center

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Andrew Schorr:

So here's a question we got in from Candi in North Tonawanda, New York. Candi writes in, "Does myelofibrosis exacerbate arthritis?"

Dr. Heaney:

That's a really interesting question. I don't think that there's very much information to know the answer to that. But it's an interesting question, because we think that there are a lot of cytokines that are released in patients who have myelofibrosis. And a lot of those cytokines are inflammatory cytokines that could at least in theory make other inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis worse. But I don't think there's a lot of hard clinical evidence to answer that question completely.

Andrew Schorr:

Okay, just one related question then. If you're being treated for myelofibrosis, let's say with a JAK inhibitor, is there any reason why you couldn't be treated with an arthritis medicine at the same time?

Dr. Heaney:

Well, again, one of the interesting things is that the JAK inhibitors are now in advanced clinical development for rheumatoid arthritis. So if you need treatment for myelofibrosis, that treatment may actually help with the arthritis.

Andrew Schorr:

You could get a two for one.

Dr. Heaney:

You could get a two for one. I think you have to be careful about what medicines you're using to treat an inflammatory or autoimmune arthritis. We know that some of the JAK inhibitors can lower resistance to infection, and so I think physicians need to be mindful about what other medicines the patients are getting and have to prepare for the possibility that the patients might be at higher risk for infection. So I think that a discussion between the rheumatologist and the oncologist can probably help that patient.

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