



Is a Myeloproliferative Neoplasm (MPN) Cancer?

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Susan Leclair:

Dr. Oh, here [are] a couple of questions we've gotten from our online community. Here's an email we received: Is myelofibrosis cancer? This can be confusing to a lot of patients. What's a neoplasm? What's a cancer? What's not? Is there such a thing as a myeloproliferative cancer?

Dr. Oh:

Yeah, that's a great question, comes up all the time with patients. They ask, you know, do I have cancer? And the short answer is yes. Myelofibrosis and the other myeloproliferative neoplasms are blood cancers. That's in part why the term was changed several years ago from myeloproliferative disorder to myeloproliferative neoplasm.

I think part of the confusion for many patients comes from what is considered cancer in their minds. So I try to make the distinction that this is a blood cancer, but it's not cancer like lung cancer, colon cancer, those kinds of things, and there are many different types of cancers. So cancer, strictly speaking in this case, just means that blood cells are growing out of the normal control mechanisms. But again, the prognosis is very variable depending on the type of cancer, and even within the MPNs, the type of MPN and the specific factors within that.

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