



Patient Power

What CLL Drug Approvals Are Underway?

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Andrew Schorr:

So, venetoclax (Venclexta) now has been approved also first line with an infused monoclonal antibody, obinutuzumab, or Gazyva. So, that's new. Like, even from just a few days ago.

Dr. Sharman:

Wednesday.

Andrew Schorr:

This is Saturday.

Dr. Sharman:

Yeah.

Andrew Schorr:

So, the idea is you have more tools. Then under ibrutinib (Imbruvica), we see acalabrutinib, same class. Calquence is the trade name. That's approved for mantle cell lymphoma, and the question will be does the FDA approve it for CLL.

Dr. Sharman:

So, a couple things—access to drugs is oftentimes predicated on what's approved. So, if it's approved, insurance companies have to cover it, but there are also guideline panels, the most prominent out there being what's called the NCCN. If NCCN guidelines endorse the medication under specific circumstances, often there too insurance companies will pay for it. So, currently, Calquence is not approved in CLL. However, I probably have maybe a dozen or two dozen patients I take care of with CLL on it because the NCCN guidelines endorse it under specific circumstances. It is not approved.

However, we have a press release already out that they had to close the study early because it met its end points. Calquence will be approved presumably soon in relapsed CLL and I am leading the study to get it approved in the frontline setting. So, we should be hearing some news about that towards the end of this year.

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