

DISCONTINUATION OF IMATINIB TREATMENT IN PATIENTS WITH CML IN PATIENT WITH DEEP MOLECULAR RESPONSE—SINGLE CENTRE EXPERIENCE.

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Introduction: Tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs) represent a major breakthrough in the treatment of patients with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). These agents have transformed CML from a disease with a dismal prognosis into a more indolent disease with survival comparable to that of the general population. Studies in CML patients with a sustained deep molecular response have demonstrated that stopping TKI therapy is feasible and safe. Current available data show that 40% to 60% of patients who stop therapy relapse and molecular relapses typically occur within first 6 months after treatment discontinuation, but nearly all relapsing patients regain molecular response upon reinitiating of the TKI.

Materials and methods: In our Clinic we have attempted to stop Imatinib treatment in 18 patients in the last 6 years. Median age of this group of patients was 48.4 years (range 21-74 years), and 77% were female (14 females, 4 male). Median duration of CML before stopping Imatinib treatment was 8.6 years (range 2-19 years), while median duration of TKI treatment before stopping Imatinib was 6.5 years (range 1-13 years).

Results: Successful stop of Imatinib treatment was registered in 11(61%) of patients. Median duration of the period without treatment in our group of patients is 23.3 months (range 3-76 months). All patients who restarted therapy with Imatinib after unsuccessful stop, achieved deep molecular remission 6 months after reintroducing Imatinib treatment.

Conclusion: Our results are similar to already reported data in other studies and confirmed that stopping of Imatinib treatment is safe and possible in selected number of cases of CML patients in sustained deep molecular response.