



“Providing an opportunity for multiple myeloma patients and their loved ones to come together to exchange information for mutual support, comfort, and friendship”

Meeting: **Meetings will resume when we are allowed to gather at the address below.**

451 Junction Road  
Madison, WI  
UW West Clinic Room 1287

Enter the clinic... turn left and walk down a short hall...turn left again and conference room 1287 is the last one on the left.

Group Information:

Jayne Schwartz 608- 244-2120  
[schwartzdon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:schwartzdon@sbcglobal.net)

Madison Multiple Myeloma Support Group website  
[madisonmultiplemyeloma.org](http://madisonmultiplemyeloma.org)

Mailing Address: Wisconsin Multiple Myeloma Support Group  
3309 Chicago Avenue Madison, WI 53714-1815

Information Sources :

International Myeloma Foundation (IMF)  
Phone: 800 - 452 - 2873  
Email: [TheIMF@myeloma.org](mailto:TheIMF@myeloma.org)  
Website: [www.myeloma.org](http://www.myeloma.org)

Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation(MMRF)  
Phone: 203 - 972 - 1250  
Email: [info@themmrf.org](mailto:info@themmrf.org)  
Website: [www.multiplemyeloma.org](http://www.multiplemyeloma.org)

## February 2021 Myeloma Newsletter

**Upcoming speaker-** Dr, Aric Hall from the UW Carbone Cancer Center will be our featured speaker for the April virtual meeting. Dr Hall does a Q & A session and it has become one of our favorites. Mark your calendars now not to miss this meeting.

### **Our condolences to the family of Mike Grasee**

Mike passed away on January 16<sup>th</sup> after a 12 year battle with Myeloma. Mike joined our group after his diagnosis. Because of his active work and personal commitments, he did not attend meetings but did read the newsletters. He would share comments and insights via email. It was always appreciated. He was committed to living his best life. Mike developed a mindset that, “I have cancer but cancer does not have me.” He published a book, “The Cancer Chronicles- My eleven year journey to fight the big C”. We send our sincere condolences to his family.

**Very interesting article ...[An On/Off Switch for CAR T Therapy in Multiple Myeloma](#)**

**By Jennifer Ahlstrom | Posted - Jan 7th, 2021 Myeloma Crowd**

CAR T therapy is in development for multiple myeloma, but can come with toxic side effects called

cytokine release syndrome, an overactive inflammatory response. Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Mass General Cancer Center researchers have collaborated to create both an ON-switch and OFF-switch using a common myeloma therapy, lenalidomide, to regulate the activity of CAR T cells.

For the autologous CAR T therapies, T cells are removed from a patient through the blood, then engineered to recognize and attack myeloma cells. These cells can continue to proliferate and kill tumor cells for the next weeks or months, but controlling those responses isn't as easy or consistent as the manipulation of traditional treatments, like lowering the dose of a chemotherapy drug to reduce side effects.

"CAR T cells can be fantastically effective therapies, but they can also have serious toxicities and can cause significant morbidity and mortality," said Ben Ebert, MD, PhD, who is Chair of Medical Oncology at Dana-Farber. "They are currently difficult to control once administered to the patient."

The research, published in *Science Translational Medicine*, showed that CAR T cells could be engineered with both an ON and OFF switch using the same lenalidomide drug, but in two different ways.

### **The OFF Switch**

The researchers used a technique called "targeted protein degradation" to engineer small protein tags that are sent to the cellular garbage disposal by lenalidomide. When this tag was connected to the CAR, it allowed the tagged CAR to be degraded during drug treatment, stopping the T cells from recognizing the cancer cells. This OFF switch allows CAR T treatment to be paused temporarily to prevent cytokine release syndrome.

### **The ON Switch**

The researchers also built an ON-switch CAR by engineering the proteins that interact with lenalidomide. Because lenalidomide is used to treat myeloma, the ON-switch CAR T cells could improve safety "because the T cells only recognize and attack tumor cells during the (lenalidomide) treatment."

### **Two Switches Using the Same Drug?**

Using lenalidomide to both turn off and on the CAR T cell seems a bit confusing but according to Ebert, "The long-term goal is to have multiple different drugs that control different on and off switches" so that scientists can develop "ever-more complex cellular therapies."

### **If you missed this presentation...**

**The IMF's "Best of ASH webinar: What Myeloma Patients & Caregivers Need to Know"**

is now available for replay: <https://www.myeloma.org/videos/best-ash-2020>

Included with this newsletter is the new **Blenrep tip card**. The booklet is also available on the IMF website but not yet available for ordering the paper copies.

Also included is a letter that the **IMF Advocacy** group has sent to all state governors requesting **vaccine priority for cancer patients**. If you have not already reached out to your state representatives, feel free to use this letter as an additional supporting piece to your request. Not enough priority has been given for immune compromised patients. Make your voice heard. And thank you for doing so!

**Our virtual meetings will now be on the Zoom platform. Meeting times will be in the newsletter as these Zoom invitations will be a reoccurring meeting format. Our February meeting will be from 3:30pm to 4:30pm on February 16, 2021.**

**IMF SG Meeting Room 3 is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Topic: Madison, WI SG 3rd Tue Monthly**

**Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**[https://myeloma-org.zoom.us/j/84457667535?](https://myeloma-org.zoom.us/j/84457667535?pwd=V0lJTDNQQU2FOZ1hMUkFaRmJBc0Qzdz09)**

**[pwd=V0lJTDNQQU2FOZ1hMUkFaRmJBc0Qzdz09](https://myeloma-org.zoom.us/j/84457667535?pwd=V0lJTDNQQU2FOZ1hMUkFaRmJBc0Qzdz09)**

**Meeting ID: 844 5766 7535**

**Passcode: 678275**

**One tap mobile**

**+13017158592,,84457667535#,,,,\*678275# US (Washington DC)**

**+13126266799,,84457667535#,,,,\*678275# US (Chicago)**

**Dial by your location**

**+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)**

**+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)**

**+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)**

**+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)**

**+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)**

**+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)**

**Meeting ID: 844 5766 7535**

**Passcode: 678275**

**Find your local number: <https://myeloma-org.zoom.us/u/kyMbCRs05>**

**IMF Info Line** – If you or someone you care for has Myeloma, you have questions. Probably, lots of them. You can search the Internet all you want, but other than asking your doctor, there is no better way to get your questions answered than to call the IMF Info Line. Missy, Judy and Paul know their stuff and they want to share what they know with you. Just ask anyone who has called the IMF Info Line. Patients or caregivers are welcome to contact the Info Line staffed by trained specialists at 800-452-CURE (800-452-2873). The Info Line is staffed between 9am and 4pm Pacific Time, 11am to 6pm Central time or [infoline@myeloma.org](mailto:infoline@myeloma.org).

The Trillium Fund was established by our founding support group members to facilitate Multiple Myeloma research here in Madison at the Wisconsin Institute of Medical Research. If you or your family wish to donate or send a memorial to this program, checks can be made payable to the “UW Foundation – Trillium Fund” and sent to UW Carbone Cancer Center, University of Wisconsin Foundation, 1848 University Ave, Madison, WI 53726. Donations may also be made online at [www.supportuw.org/give](http://www.supportuw.org/give) (Trillium Fund in Multiple Myeloma Research – 112903576). For any questions, please call Daniel Rosen at (608) 264-5437 or email [curecancer@supportuw.org](mailto:curecancer@supportuw.org).