

The Benefits of Seeking an Expert Opinion in Myeloma

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Multiple myeloma is an awful disease to face, but thankfully there are an increasing number of resources available to patients and caregivers as you can see from this newsletter! One of the potential resources available is seeking a consultation with an expert in the field to partner with your current medical team. There are approximately 250 myeloma experts worldwide. In addition to these, there are many centers of excellence that provide outstanding care to their patients and the oncology community.

This specialization in myeloma is critical as oncology becomes such a massive field. Literally every week new drugs and approaches are developed and approved for cancer patients. With this increasing complexity, especially in a rare disease like myeloma (accounts for only 1-2% of all cancers) having experts is critical. The relationship you have with your physician and health team is vital – but often it can be enhanced by a consultation with a myeloma expert.

This kind of advice is equally true for other forms of cancer - you are entitled to ask your oncologist/hematologist for a referral to a specialist for a consultation or '2nd opinion'.

Here are some reasons why this approach may be of help to you:

1. Cutting edge results – there is an incredible amount of information to take in about all the recent clinical trials and studies in oncology and a myeloma expert will be up to date on the latest in myeloma
2. Collaboration with your team – a second opinion is not expressing a lack of confidence in your physician or their team; the expert consultation is to facilitate and enhance your care. The consultant should have open and honest communication with you and your team. I have particularly found this partnership to be most valuable for both patients and their providers.
3. Education – this is an opportunity to take time to more deeply educate you and your caregivers about this complex disease. Education is empowerment.
4. Practical advice about current therapies – I have often found the most beneficial feature of being a consultant is giving practical tips about dosing of drugs, measuring the disease and a host of other issues that heavily impact a patient's care and their wellbeing.
5. Reassurance – often the consultation is a reassurance of the great care one is already receiving – this peace of mind is critical in one's health.
6. Establishing contact - a consultation will have an immediate benefit, but can also allow for ongoing contact in the event that things become more challenging and more urgent advice is required.
7. Access to clinical trials – there are an incredible number of exciting new drugs and approaches in myeloma and having access to these may have a profound impact on your myeloma and life.

If you would like more details about a consultation or information about clinical trials, you can reach me at the HonorHealth Research Institute where I now see patients one day a week: Intake office 480 323 1339 or hri.intake@honorhealth.com.