

References







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Lymphoma

Primary systemic amyloidosis in patients with Waldenström macroglobulinemia

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Waldenström macroglobulinemia (WM) is a unique IgM-associated, indolent lymphoma with at least 10% marrow

lymphoplasmacytic infiltrate [1]. IgM paraprotein is implicated in 5–7% of patients with light and/or heavy chain immunoglobulin amyloidosis (AL/AHL) [2–4]. However, data regarding AL/AHL in WM are sparse. A greater clonal bone marrow plasma cell (BMPC) burden confers poorer survival in AL, as observed in a study from our institution (median 16 months for patients with >10% BMPCs versus 46 months), underscoring the importance of the degree of

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Table 1a Characteristics of WM patients with and without AL/AHL

Clinical parameters	WM without AL/AHL (n = 922)	WM with synchronous AL/AHL (n = 40)	WM with subsequent AL/AHL (n = 35)	p Value
Median age in years, (range)	65 (31–93)	65 (50–79)	63 (38–78)	0.24
Gender (% males)	65	65	63	0.97
Constitutional symptoms at WM diagnosis (%)	58	61	50	0.67
Lymphadenopathy at WM diagnosis (%)	20	32	22	0.24
Splenomegaly at WM diagnosis (%)	10	3	22	0.03
Symptomatic hyperviscosity (%)	14	2.5	6	0.02
Cryoglobulinemia (%)	17	0	10	0.17
Disease transformation (%)	9	3	3	0.12
Central nervous system involvement (%)	1.5	0	0	0.33
<i>Organ involvement by amyloidosis</i>				
Cardiac (%)	NA	61	54	0.63
Renal (%)	NA	55	54	1.0
Lymph nodes (%)	NA	32	6	0.007
Liver (%)	NA	18	18	1.0
Gastrointestinal (%)	NA	21	15	0.55
Nerves (%)	NA	17	21	0.77
Skin/soft tissue (%)	NA	18	14	0.76
Lung (%)	NA	10	6	0.67
<i>Laboratory parameters at diagnosis of WM, median (range)</i>				
Hemoglobin (g/dL)	10.6 (3.5–16.1)	12.3 (4.8–17.9)	11.5 (8.6–13.5)	0.0004
Platelet count (10 ⁹ /L)	220 (7–1222)	284 (144–473)	260 (92–355)	0.01
Beta 2 microglobulin (µg/mL)	3.2 (0.9–34.1)	3.5 (1.4–16.7)	3.3 (2.9–8.8)	0.46
Serum LDH (U/L)	141 (35–1053)	145.5 (99–325)	178 (154–217)	0.48
Serum IgM (mg/dL)	3200 (68–14,400)	2510 (147–7840)	2350 (705–13900)	0.21
Serum M protein (g/dL)	2.1 (0.1–11.6)	1.9 (0.3–5.7)	1.7 (0.7–4.45)	0.12
Urine M protein (mg/24 h)	63 (0–5150)	68 (0–545)	79 (25–167)	0.86
Involved FLC value	8.4 (0.17–7570)	32.6 (1.5–547)	54.5 (22.9–1016)	0.002
Lambda light chain involved (%)	19	58	50	<0.0001
FLC ratio, involved/uninvolved	7.7 (0.7–1818)	13.2 (2.9–1010)	93.1 (11.5–496)	0.004
Serum IgG (mg/dL)	624 (13–6540)	524 (17–2560)	638 (383–1730)	0.36
Serum IgA (mg/dL)	60 (4–4200)	61 (10–1710)	51 (29–346)	0.93
Bone marrow involvement by LPL (%)	50 (10–100)	30 (10–90)	40 (10–90)	0.04
MYD88 ^{L265P} mutation positive, n (%)	210/257 (82)	8/10 (80)	1/3 (33)	0.19

The text in bold represents a significant difference between the groups

marrow infiltration at diagnosis [5]. Through this study, we attempted to address the impact of AL/AHL on the clinical course of WM and vice versa.

Following Institutional Review Board approval, records of WM patients seen at Mayo Clinic, Rochester between January 1, 1996 and June 30, 2017 were reviewed. We excluded all patients with WHO-defined IgM monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) [$<10\%$ marrow (lympho)plasmacytosis] [6]. A more recent (January 2006–December 2015) cohort of AL patients without WM (non-IgM AL), but with $\geq 10\%$ BMPCs evaluated within 90 days of diagnosis of AL was selected for

comparison with a contemporaneous cohort of WM patients with concurrent AL/AHL. Hematologic response and organ response to frontline therapy for AL/AHL were assessed by Consensus criteria [7]. Nonevaluable patients [difference in free light chain (dFLC) < 5 mg/dL] at therapy initiation were analyzed separately. Overall survival (OS) for WM was calculated from the diagnosis of WM until death or last follow-up. Amyloidosis-specific survival was calculated from the diagnosis of AL/AHL until death due to AL/AHL or last follow-up. All time-to-event endpoints were analyzed using the Kaplan–Meier method and compared by log-rank tests.

Table 1b First-line treatments for patients with WM without AL/AHL and for WM with AL/AHL

Frontline treatment, %	WM without AL/AHL (n = 922)	AL/AHL in WM (n = 75)
Rituximab-alkylator based combination	26	42
Bortezomib-based combination	4	18
Alkylator ± steroids	30	13
ASCT	0	12
Rituximab ± steroids	34	7
Others	5	8
Median lines of therapy (range)	2 (0–11)	1.5 (0–6)

ASCT autologous stem cell transplant; NA not applicable; FLC free light chain; LPL lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma cells; AL/AHL systemic light and/or heavy chain immunoglobulin amyloidosis

Univariate analyses (UVA) and multivariate analyses (MVA) using Cox regression were performed to identify the prognostic factors for amyloidosis-specific survival. For identifying the predictors of subsequent development of AL/AHL, cohorts with WM alone and WM with subsequent AL/AHL were compared using Kruskal–Wallis and two-tailed Fisher's exact test for continuous and categorical variables, respectively. The optimal cutoffs for continuous variables were obtained using receiver operating characteristics (ROC) curve analysis. Variables that were significantly different ($p < 0.05$) between the two groups were incorporated in a logistic regression analysis.

Of 997 WM patients, 75 (7.5%) had coexisting AL/AHL. In 40 (53%) patients, AL/AHL was diagnosed concurrently with WM (AL/AHL established within 2 months of the diagnosis of WM), whereas 35 (47%) patients developed it subsequently at a median duration of 2.7 years (95% CI: 1.3–4.5 years) from the diagnosis of WM. Of 32 patients with mass-spectroscopy data, 26 had AL and 6 had AHL. Table 1a outlines the clinical and laboratory features. Patients in the WM cohort had marrow lymphoplasmacytic infiltration of $\geq 10\%$ while the comparator AL cohort without WM had $\geq 10\%$ BMPCs. Of 75 patients with AL/AHL, 68 (91%) had initial evaluation pertaining to AL/AHL-related symptoms; three patients presented with lymphadenopathy demonstrating lymphoplasmacytic infiltrate plus amyloid deposits, while in four patients evaluated for WM-related symptoms AL/AHL was incidentally diagnosed.

The median follow-up of the entire cohort of WM patients was 8.8 years (95% CI: 8.1–9.6). The median OS from the diagnosis of AL/AHL in patients with WM ($n = 75$) was 2.5 years (95% CI: 1.6–4.2 years). The WM patients with synchronous AL/AHL had inferior OS [median 2.5 years (95% CI: 1.4–4.2 years)] compared to WM without AL/AHL

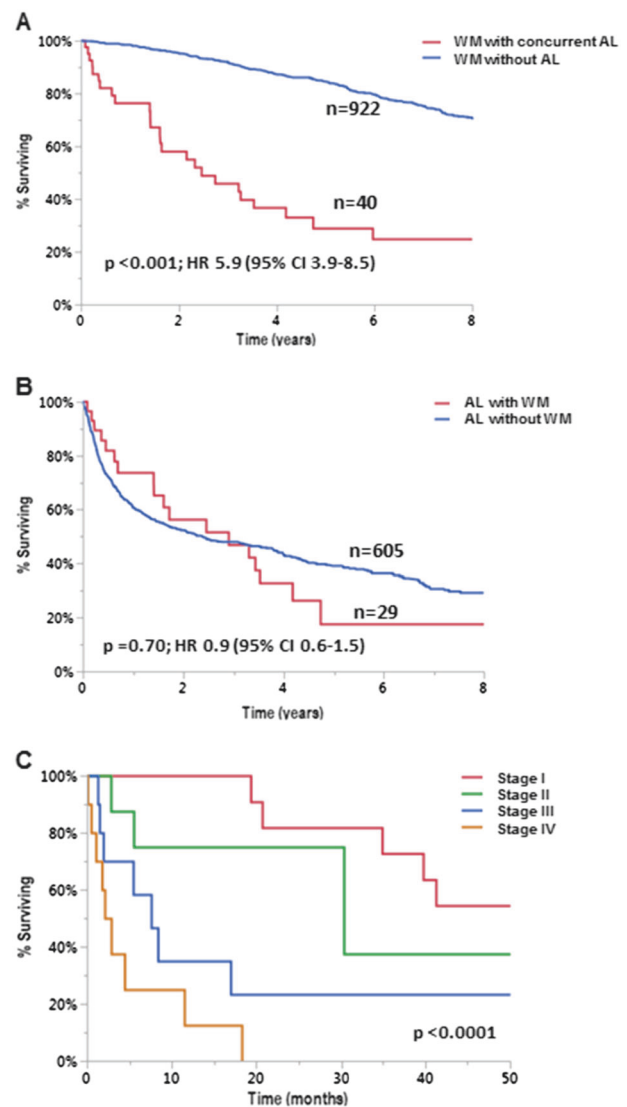


Fig. 1 a Overall survival of WM patients with synchronous AL/AHL was inferior [median 2.5 years (95% CI: 1.4–4.2 years)] compared to WM patients without AL/AHL [median 12.1 years (95% CI: 11.1–13.2 years); hazard ratio (HR) 5.9 (95% CI: 3.9–8.5), $p < 0.0001$]. b No survival difference in OS was noted in AL/AHL patients with $\geq 10\%$ BMPCs, but without associated WM ($n = 605$) compared to the contemporaneous (2006–2015) cohort of WM patients ($n = 29$) with AL/AHL at diagnosis [median 2.4 years (95% CI: 1.7–3.6 years) versus 2.9 years (95% CI: 1.4–4.2 years), respectively; HR 0.9 (95% CI: 0.6–1.5), $p = 0.70$]. c Overall survival based on 2012 Mayo Staging System for AL. The median OS for Mayo 2012 stage 1 ($n = 12$), stage 2 ($n = 9$), stage 3 ($n = 10$), and stage 4 ($n = 10$) was 79.5, 30, 7.5, and 2.5 months, respectively ($p < 0.0001$)

[median 12.1 years (95% CI: 11.1–13.2 years); hazard ratio (HR) 5.9 (95% CI: 3.9–8.5), $p < 0.0001$, Fig. 1a]. No survival difference was noted in non-IgM AL/AHL patients with $\geq 10\%$ BMPCs ($n = 605$) compared to the contemporaneous (2006–2015) cohort of WM patients ($n = 29$) with AL/AHL at diagnosis [median 2.4 years (95% CI: 1.7–3.6 years) versus 2.9 years (95% CI: 1.4–4.2 years), respectively; HR 0.9 (95% CI: 0.6–1.5), $p = 0.70$, Fig. 1b].

A UVA for amyloidosis-specific survival was conducted using the following variables at diagnosis of AL/AHL in WM: age, gender, *MYD88*^{L265P} status, marrow lymphoplasmacytosis, FLC subtype, involved FLC (iFLC), involved to uninvolved FLC ratio (FLCR), elevated β_2 -microglobulin (β_2 M; >2.7 μ g/dL), low albumin (<3.5 g/dL), hemoglobin, platelets, and individual organ involvement. Age ($p = 0.002$), cardiac involvement ($p < 0.001$), gastrointestinal tract involvement ($p = 0.02$), elevated β_2 M ($p = 0.002$), and low albumin ($p = 0.008$) emerged as prognostic markers. On MVA, cardiac involvement [risk ratio (RR) 2.8 (95% CI: 1.1–8.6); $p = 0.03$] and low albumin [RR 3.4 (95% CI: 1.4–10.5); $p = 0.007$] were independent prognosticators. The Revised Mayo 2012 staging system for AL was applicable to this cohort (Fig. 1c).

Of 75 patients with coexisting AL/AHL, 60 (83%) patients received systemic therapy targeting the lymphoplasmacytic clone; 12 had poor performance status and therapy-related data were unavailable in three (Table 1b). In the WM cohort that subsequently developed AL/AHL ($n = 35$), 29% had smoldering WM and were treatment-naïve prior to the diagnosis of AL/AHL. Among evaluable patients with data available for response-assessment ($n = 21$), partial response (PR) or very good PR (VGPR) was achieved in 57% (PR = 28.5%, VGPR = 28.5%), with no response in 9 (38%) and progression observed in one patient. Among the 12 patients with dFLC <5 mg/dL at diagnosis of AL ($n = 12$), response-assessment data were available in 8 patients, 6 (75%) of whom achieved a dFLC <1 mg/dL after initial therapy. Organ response data were available for cardiac ($n = 25$), renal ($n = 20$), and hepatic involvement ($n = 6$), with 12%, 25%, and 0% demonstrating cardiac, renal, and hepatic response, respectively to treatment. On UVA, using variables significantly different in the WM with or without AL cohorts (Table 1a), only iFLC ($p = 0.007$) level and FLCR ($p = 0.008$) at diagnosis of WM were found to be associated with the development of AL/AHL in WM subsequently. Using the cutoffs of iFLC ≥ 25 mg/dL and FLCR ≥ 10 obtained on ROC curve analysis, a MVA involving these two variables was performed among the subset of patients in whom data for FLC at diagnosis of WM was available ($n = 269$; 263 in WM without AL/AHL cohort and 6 in WM with subsequent AL/AHL cohort). On MVA, FLCR ≥ 10 remained independently associated with the subsequent development of AL/AHL ($p = 0.01$).

IgM amyloidosis is a distinct entity with unique prognostic features [8]. AL/AHL is historically associated with worse outcome than WM [9, 10]. Median survival for patients with isolated WM in our cohort was 12 years. By contrast, in a prior study median OS approached 12 years for select AL patients undergoing ASCT (4-year OS: 65–91%) and merely 12 months in the non-ASCT population

(4-year OS: 16–32%) [10]. However, the outcomes associated with the coexistence of these two disorders are not well-established. Our study has three key findings: (1) concurrent presence of WM does not impact the outcome of patients with AL/AHL amyloidosis, i.e., OS of WM-associated and non-WM AL/AHL is comparable. (2) The coexistence of AL/AHL, in contrast, negatively impacted outcome of WM patients, and OS of such patients is markedly inferior (median 2.5 years) to that of WM patients without AL/AHL (median 12.1 years). (3) FLCR ≥ 10 at diagnosis of WM is independently predictive of developing AL/AHL subsequently.

The development of AL/AHL represents an important deflection point in the natural history of WM. A likely explanation for lower amyloidosis-specific survival in our cohort (median 2.5 years) compared to other studies reporting a survival range of 44–76 months for IgM AL patients [3, 4, 11], including the recent European collaborative study by Sachchithanatham et al. [8], is that our study had evaluated only WM patients and excluded patients with <10% marrow infiltration.

Cardiac involvement and low albumin at AL/AHL diagnosis were independent unfavorable predictors of survival, an observation consistent with the findings of previous IgM AL related studies [3, 11]. The Revised Mayo 2012 staging correlated well with OS from the diagnosis of AL/AHL in WM patients as the prognosis in these patients was primarily driven by concurrent AL/AHL [12]. Only 18% (95% CI: 11–29%) of evaluable patients with WM and AL/AHL underwent ASCT during their disease course in our study, comparable to the approximately one-fifth of patients with AL/AHL that are typically eligible for ASCT.

Often, symptoms such as fatigue or dyspnea are attributed to WM-related anemia or chemotherapy, and a subtle cardiac involvement by AL/AHL may be overlooked. Therefore, we attempted to identify any coexisting clues that could aid in raising the suspicion of AL/AHL. In our study, a FLCR ≥ 10 was associated with development of AL/AHL subsequently during the course of WM. A study assessing the pre-diagnosis sera of patients with AL found that the dFLC was higher in AL cases compared to healthy controls and preceded the development of AL by up to 11 years [13]. An abnormal FLCR in patients with MGUS has been associated with increased risk of progression to AL [14]. WM is infrequently associated with elevated FLCs compared to multiple myeloma or AL [15]. Our finding of FLCR ≥ 10 predicting for the development of AL/AHL is limited by incomplete data. Nonetheless, it provides the basis for heightened suspicion for future development of AL/AHL.

In summary, although AL/AHL is an uncommon complication in WM, it confers a significantly poorer survival. In contrast, the survival of AL/AHL patients with or without

associated WM appears comparable. A FLCR of ≥ 10 at diagnosis of WM may predict future development of AL/AHL, but this finding requires external validation. Our study draws its strength from a large size and long follow-up and provides insight into areas with previously limited data.

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Author contributions S.Z., J.P.A. and P.K. designed the study. S.Z., J.P.A. and P.K. collected analyzed and interpreted the data and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. S.M.A., A.D., M.A.G., E.M., S.S., N. T., S.V.R., D.D., R.G., M.Q.L., T.K., T.E.W., D.I., F.B., W.G., T.H., P.J., G.N., R.A. and S.K. interpreted the data, critically revised the manuscript and all authors approved the final version.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest Dr. Ansell has received research funding from Bristol-Myers Squibb, Celldex, Merck, and Seattle Genetics. Dr. Dispenzieri has received research funding from Prothena, Janssen, Pfizer, GSK, Takeda, Alnylam, Celgene, and serves on the advisory board for Takeda and Intellia. Dr. Gertz has received funding from Amgen, Prothena, Annexon, Appellis, Johnson and Johnson, and Celgene. Dr. Kumar has received research grants for clinical trials from Celgene, Takeda, Janssen, BMS, Sanofi, KITE, Merck, Abbvie, Medimmune, Novartis, Roche-Genentech, Amgen. Dr. Leung serves on the advisory board for Takeda and Prothena. Dr. Kapoor is principal investigator on studies for which Mayo Clinic receives funding from Takeda, Sanofi, and Amgen. The remaining authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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