

1 **Myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with eosinophilia and tyrosine kinase gene fusions:**

2 **Reevaluation of the defining characteristics in a registry-based cohort**

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35 **ABSTRACT**

36 In a registry-based analysis of 135 patients with “myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with eosinophilia
37 and tyrosine kinase gene fusions” (MLN-TK; *FIP1L1::PDGFRA*, n=78; *PDGFRB*, diverse fusions, n=26;
38 *FGFR1*, diverse, n=9; *JAK2*, diverse, n=11; *ETV6::ABL1*, n=11), we sought to evaluate the disease-
39 defining characteristics. In 81/135 (60%) evaluable patients, hypereosinophilia ($>1.5 \times 10^9/l$) was
40 observed in 40/44 (91%) *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* and 7/7 (100%) *ETV6::ABL1* positive patients but only in
41 13/30 (43%) patients with *PDGFRB*, *FGFR1* and *JAK2* fusion genes while 9/30 (30%) patients had no
42 eosinophilia. Monocytosis $>1 \times 10^9/l$ was identified in 27/81 (33%) patients, most frequently in
43 association with hypereosinophilia (23/27, 85%). Overall, a blast phase (BP) was diagnosed in 38/135
44 (28%) patients (myeloid, 61%; lymphoid, 39%) which was at extramedullary sites in 18 (47%)
45 patients. The comparison between patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* vs. *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1*
46 fusion genes revealed a similar occurrence of primary BP (17/104, 16% vs. 8/31 26%, $p=0.32$), a lower
47 frequency (5/87, 6% vs. 8/23, 35%, $p=0.003$) of and a later (median 87 vs. 19 months, $p=0.053$)
48 progression into secondary BP, and a better overall survival from diagnosis of BP (17.1 vs. 1.7 years,
49 $p<0.0008$). We conclude that hypereosinophilia with or without monocytosis and various
50 phenotypes of BP occur at variable frequencies in MLN-TK.

51

52 **INTRODUCTION**

53 The recently published World Health Organization (WHO) 2022 classification and the International
54 Consensus Classification of Myeloid and Lymphoid Neoplasms (ICC-MLN) define a distinct subcategory
55 of myeloid neoplasms as “myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with eosinophilia and tyrosine kinase gene
56 fusions” (MLN-TK) (1, 2). This category name has changed from the previous “myeloid/lymphoid
57 neoplasm with eosinophilia and rearrangement of *PDGFRA*, *PDGFRB* or *FGFR1*, or with *PCM1::JAK2*”
58 (MLN-eo) (3), to specify the underlying molecular genetic changes and to include cases with
59 *ETV6::ABL1*, *FLT3* fusions or other tyrosine kinase (TK) fusion genes. MLN-TK are driven by
60 rearrangements/fusion genes with involvement of *PDGFRA*, *PDGFRB*, *FGFR1*, *JAK2*, *ABL1* or *FLT3*. This
61 definition implicates eosinophilia as a recurrent finding, which therefore serves as the main trigger for
62 initiation of distinct cytogenetic and molecular analyses conferring to the identification of disease-
63 defining underlying TK fusion genes. Beside eosinophilia, blast phase (BP) in bone marrow (BM) or at
64 extramedullary sites (extramedullary disease, EMD) of myeloid or lymphoid origin, initially often
65 diagnosed as “myelosarcoma” or “high-grade lymphoma”, is present at diagnosis (primary BP) or
66 develops during follow-up (secondary BP).

67

68 To date, more than 70 different TK fusion genes with recurrent involvement of at least six TK (*PDGFRA*,
69 *PDGFRB*, *FGFR1*, *JAK2*, *ABL1*, *FLT3*) have been identified in clinically and morphologically distinct MLN
70 with or without eosinophilia (4). Targeted treatment with TK inhibitors (TKI) such as imatinib is highly
71 effective in patients with *PDGFRA* and *PDGFRB* fusion genes, e.g. *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* or *ETV6::PDGFRB* (5-
72 8), resulting in excellent long-term survival. In contrast, TK fusion genes with involvement of *FGFR1* or
73 *JAK2* are associated with a more aggressive phenotype and clinical course with variable sensitivity to
74 currently available TKI (4, 9-14).

75

76 Single case reports and small series described absence of eosinophilia and/or presence of monocytosis
77 in association with distinct TK fusion genes. Due to the absence of eosinophilia, the diagnosis of a TK-
78 fusion driven MLN may therefore be delayed or even completely missed. Within the “German Registry

79 for Disorders of Eosinophils and Mast Cells (GREM)”, we sought to evaluate incidence, phenotype and
80 prognosis of BP and the incidence of eosinophilia and monocytosis within this distinct subcategory of
81 myeloid neoplasms.

82

83 **PATIENTS AND METHODS**

84 *Patients*

85 Within the “German Registry for Disorders of Eosinophils and Mast Cells (GREM)”, we identified 135
86 patients with diagnosis of a MLN-TK. The involved TK included *PDGFRA* (all *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* positive,
87 *n*=78), *PDGFRB* (diverse fusion partners, *n*=26), *FGFR1* (diverse fusion partners, *n*=9), *JAK2* (*PCM1* or
88 *BCR* as fusion partners, *n*=11) and *ABL1* (*ETV6::ABL1*, *n*=11, **Table 1**). Patients with primary *ETV6::ABL1*
89 positive ALL were not included. The 135 patients were recruited from approximately 60 participating
90 hematology centers and hematologists in private practice. Fifteen patients had been diagnosed with a
91 suspected eosinophilia-associated myeloid neoplasm prior to 2002 and were subsequently tested
92 *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* positive in 2003. Sixty-seven patients were recruited between 2003 and 2012, 53
93 patients between 2013 and 2022. We repeatedly reported on treatment of various MLN-TK with
94 specific TKI, e.g. *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes with imatinib (7, 15), *JAK2* fusion genes with ruxolitinib
95 (10, 16) and *ETV6::ABL1* with imatinib, nilotinib and dasatinib (16).

96

97 In the current analysis, OS was analyzed in the cohort of 135 patients (male 126/135; median age 49
98 years, range 19-80), in either chronic phase (CP) from time of diagnosis (*n*=110, including 13 patients
99 with progression to secondary BP) or in BP from time of diagnosis of BP (*n*=38, primary BP, *n*=25;
100 secondary BP, *n*=13). Of note, the 13 patients with secondary BP are included in both cohorts (**Table**
101 **2**). Data on absolute and relative counts of eosinophils and monocytes at time of diagnosis were
102 available for 81 patients: *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* (*n*=44), *PDGFRB* (*n*=16), *FGFR1* (*n*=6), *JAK2* (*PCM1::JAK2*, *n*=7,
103 *BCR::JAK2*, *n*=1) or *ETV6::ABL1* (*n*=7, **Table 1**). All patients gave written informed consent. Data
104 collection was compliant with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the ethics committee of the
105 Medical Faculty Mannheim at the University Heidelberg, Germany.

106

107 *Cytogenetics and molecular analyses*

108 Cytogenetics and fluorescence *in situ* hybridization (FISH) analyses were performed on BM according
109 to standard procedures. Specific nested reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) was
110 performed for confirmation of suspected fusion genes in all patients (9, 17, 18).

111

112 *Statistical analyses*

113 All clinical and laboratory parameters including peripheral blood cell counts are expressed as median
114 and range. Overall survival (OS) was determined from date of diagnosis to date of death or last contact
115 and calculated by using the Kaplan-Meier method. Pearson correlation analysis was performed for the
116 correlation between two parameters. Differences in the distribution of continuous variables between
117 categories were analysed by Mann-Whitney test (for comparison of two groups). For categorical
118 variables, Fisher's exact test was used. *P*-values <0.05 (two-sided) were considered significant. All
119 statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism Software, Inc. version 7 and SPSS (version
120 28.0; IBM-Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

121

122 **RESULTS**

123 **Incidence and phenotype of blast phase**

124 A BP of myeloid (23/38, 61%) or lymphoid (15/38, 39%) origin was diagnosed in 38/135 (28%) patients
125 (**Table 1** and **2**). BP in BM ($\geq 20\%$ blast cells, n=20, 53%; myeloid, n=14; lymphoid, n=6) was primary in
126 10/20 (50%) or secondary in 10/20 (50%) patients while EMD (n=18) was primary in 15/18 (83%;
127 myeloid, n=7; lymphoid, n=8) or secondary in only 3/18 patients (17%; myeloid, n=2; lymphoid, n=1,
128 **Table 3**). Independent of phenotype or time point of occurrence of EMD, the phenotype in BM or
129 peripheral blood (PB) was myeloid in all cases. A lineage discordance between BM/PB and EMD was
130 therefore observed in 9/18 (50%) patients (**Table 2**). Compared to patients with *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and
131 *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes, *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion positive patients had a lower frequency of primary
132 (17/104, 16% vs. 8/31 26%, p=0.32) and secondary BP (5/87, 6% vs. 8/23, 35%, p=0.003), which
133 occurred at later time points (median 87 months, range 9-189 vs. 19 months, range 10-36; p=0.053).

134

135 **Survival**

136 In MLN with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes, 16/104 (15%) patients had died after a median follow-up
137 of 9.2 years (range 0-28.6, **Figure 1A** and **B**). While in CP (n=87), 8 patients died because of comorbidity
138 (n=5; *PDGFRA*, n=2, *PDGFRB*, n=3), resistance/progression (n=1; *PDGFRB*, n=1), resistance/allogeneic
139 SCT/GvHD (n=1) and cardiac involvement (n=1). Five patients progressed into secondary BP (*PDGFRA*,
140 n=4, *PDGFRB*, n=1). Causes of death in BP (n=8; primary, n=6; secondary, n=2) included
141 resistance/relapse (n=4; *PDGFRA*, n=2, *PDGFRB*, n=2), comorbidity (n=3; *PDGFRA*, n=2, *PDGFRB*, n=1)
142 and intracerebral bleeding (n=1; *PDGFRA*, n=1). Mutations conferring resistance to imatinib were
143 identified in 2 patients (*PDGFRA* T674I, n=2).

144

145 In MLN with *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes (n=31; BP, n=16), 11 patients died of which 10
146 patients were previously diagnosed with BP. The median OS from diagnosis of BP was 1.7 years (range
147 0.1-5.5, **Figure 1C**). Overall, the incidence of BP was significantly lower (22/104, 21% vs. 16/31, 52%;

148 $P=0.002$) and overall survival from diagnosis of BP was significantly better (17.1 vs. 1.7 years, $P<0.0008$)
149 in patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusions than with other TK fusion genes (**Table 1, Figure 1C**).

150

151 **Allogeneic stem cell transplantation**

152 Allogeneic stem cell transplantation (SCT) was performed in 25 patients (**Table 4**) at a significant lower
153 frequency in patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes (9/104, 9%, CP, n=3; BP, n=6) than in patients
154 with *FGFR1, JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes (16/31, 52%, CP, n=9; BP, n=7). After allogeneic SCT,
155 10/12 CP patients are alive at median 3.0 (range 0.3-10.5) years and 2/12 patients (*PDGFRA*, n=1; *JAK2*,
156 n=1) died because of relapse at 0.5 and 1.5 years. In BP, 7/13 patients are alive at median 4.7 (range
157 0.1-6.5) years and 6/13 patients died at median 0.9 (range 0.6-1.4) years (**Figure 1D**).

158

159 **Age, gender, partner genes and eosinophilia in association with various TK fusion genes**

160 ***FIP1L1::PDGFRA***. At diagnosis, the median age was 45.5 years (range 19-70), 43/44 (98%) patients
161 were male. Leukocytosis $>10 \times 10^9/l$ was present in 29/44 (66%) patients (median $14 \times 10^9/l$, range 5-
162 156), eosinophilia (median $6.4 \times 10^9/l$, range 0.9-30.1) was $>0.5 \times 10^9/l$ or $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ in 44/44 (100%)
163 and 40/44 (90%) patients, respectively (**Table 5**).

164

165 ***PDGFRB* fusion genes**. In 16 patients (male 14/16; median age 53 years, range 20-80), eleven different
166 partner genes of *PDGFRB* were identified. Only *ETV6* was a recurrent fusion partner (*ETV6*, n=5;
167 *CDCC88C*, n=1; *CCDC6*, n=1; *CEP120*, n=1; *CPSF6*, n=1; *GIT2*, n=1; *GPIAP1*, n=1; *MYO18A*, n=1; *PRKG2*,
168 n=1; *SPECC1*, n=1; *TP53BP1*, n=1; uncharacterized partner, n=1). Leukocytosis $>10 \times 10^9/l$ was present
169 in 13/16 (81%) patients (median $28 \times 10^9/l$, range 4-127). Eosinophils (median $1.6 \times 10^9/l$, range 0.2-
170 12.0) were $\leq 0.5 \times 10^9/l$, $>0.5 \times 10^9/l$ and $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ in 4/16 (25%), 12/16 (75%) and 8/16 (50%) patients,
171 respectively.

172

173 ***FGFR1* fusion genes**. In six patients with *FGFR1* fusion genes (male 5/6; median age 58 years, range 49-
174 77), *ZMYM2* (n=3) and *BCR* (n=2) were recurrent partner genes (*FGFR1OP::FGFR1*, n=1). Leukocytosis

175 >10 x 10⁹/l was observed in 5/6 (83%) patients (median 64.5 x 10⁹/l, range 4.8-173.0). Eosinophils
176 (median 0.6 x 10⁹/l, range 0-2.5) were ≤0.5 x 10⁹/l, >0.5 x 10⁹/l and >1.5 x 10⁹/l in 3/6 (50%), 3/6 (50%)
177 and 2/6 (33%) patients, respectively.

178

179 **JAK2 fusion genes.** All 8 patients with JAK2 fusion genes (*PCM1*, n=7; *BCR*, n=1; male 7/8; median age
180 69 years, range 29-73) presented with leukocytosis (median 25.9 x 10⁹/l, range 10.5-55.0). Eosinophils
181 (median 1.5 x 10⁹/l, range 0-4.6) were ≤0.5 x 10⁹/l, >0.5 x 10⁹/l and >1.5 x 10⁹/l in 2/8 (25%), 6/8 (75%)
182 and 4/8 (50%) patients, respectively.

183

184 **ETV6::*ABL1* fusion gene.** All *ETV6::*ABL1** positive patients (n=7; male 6/7; median age 30 years, range
185 20-74) presented with leukocytosis >10 x 10⁹/l (median 62 x 10⁹/l, range 20.9-143). Hypereosinophilia
186 >1.5 x 10⁹/l (median 5.6 x 10⁹/l, range 2.0-7.1) was observed in 7/7 (100%) cases.

187

188 **Hypereosinophilia >1.5 x 10⁹/l**

189 Overall, hypereosinophilia >1.5 x 10⁹/l was observed in 60/81 (74%) evaluable patients, most
190 frequently in patients with *FIP1L1::*PDGFRA** (40/44, 90%) and *ETV6::*ABL1** (7/7, 100%) fusion genes. In
191 contrast, it was only observed in 13/30 (43%) patients with *PDGFRB*, *FGFR1* or *JAK2* fusion genes
192 Absence of eosinophilia was restricted to 9/30 (30%) patients with *PDGFRB*, *FGFR1* and *JAK2* fusion
193 genes (**Table 5**). In those 9 patients, primary diagnoses included atypical chronic myeloid leukemia
194 (*PDGFRB*, n=1; *FGFR1*, n=1), myelodysplastic/myeloproliferative neoplasm (*PDGFRB*, n=1; *FGFR1*, n=1),
195 myeloproliferative neoplasm unclassified (*PDGFRB*, n=2; *JAK2* n=1), myelofibrosis (*JAK2*, n=1) and
196 mixed phenotype acute leukemia (*FGFR1*, n=1). In all 9 patients, the underlying fusion gene was
197 indicated by a characteristic reciprocal translocation.

198

199 **Monocytosis >1.0 x 10⁹/l**

200 Irrespective of the underlying TK fusion gene, monocytosis >1.0 x 10⁹/l was observed in 27/81 (33%)
201 patients (*FIP1L1::*PDGFRA**, 12/44, 27%; *PDGFRB*, 5/16, 31%; *FGFR1*, 2/6, 33%; *JAK2*, 2/8, 25%;

202 *ETV6::ABL1*, n=6/7, 85%) with relative monocytosis $\geq 10\%$ being present in 6/27 (22%) patients (**Table**
203 **5**). In *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* positive patients, a significant association was noted between the absolute
204 number of eosinophils and monocytes ($r=0.52$, $p=0.0002$). Monocytosis was present in 6/7 (85%)
205 *ETV6::ABL1* positive patients, all 6 patients also had hypereosinophilia $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$. Overall,
206 monocytosis $>1.0 \times 10^9/l$ was significantly associated with hypereosinophilia $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ (23/27, 85%)
207 but was without significant impact on progression or OS after a median follow-up of 7.2 years (range
208 0.1-33.1).

209

210 **Serum tryptase**

211 Due to the known association between increased basic serum tryptase levels (normal $<11.4 \mu\text{g/l}$) and
212 *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes, serum tryptase levels were available from 43/104 *PDGFRA/PDGFRB*
213 positive patients. The serum tryptase level was $\geq 11.4 \mu\text{g/l}$ in 31/43 (72%) and $\geq 20 \mu\text{g/l}$ in 23/43 (53%)
214 patients, the median level was $22.9 \mu\text{g/l}$ (range 3-183). The formal need to adjust normal ranges in
215 patients with hereditary alpha-tryptasemia (HaT) could not be performed because none of the patients
216 was retrospectively tested (19).

217 **DISCUSSION**

218 Common features of the vast majority of TK-fusion driven myeloid neoplasms include an underlying
219 chronic myeloid neoplasm with a high incidence of concurrent primary BP or progression to secondary
220 BP. BP can be myeloid or lymphoid and is identified in the BM or at extramedullary sites (EMD). In the
221 EMD, initial diagnosis frequently states “myelosarcoma” or “T-cell lymphoma”, while in the BM, the
222 differentiation between a *de novo* myeloid/lymphoid/biphenotypic acute leukemia and a myeloid or
223 lymphoid BP also remains challenging. We have reported on several patients with suspected primary
224 lymphoma or *de novo* acute leukemia in which the underlying TK fusion gene was only identified
225 because of poor response to intensive chemotherapy or even allogeneic SCT and persisting
226 eosinophilia (7).

227

228 In the currently reported cohort of 135 MLN-TK patients, incidence, phenotype and prognosis of BP
229 was highly variable within the various cohorts of MLN-TK. BP occurred equally distributed either in the
230 BM or as EMD in approximately 30% of patients. It was primary in approximately 70% of patients with
231 a lower relative frequency of 16% in patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes as compared to 26%
232 in patients with *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes. In patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion
233 genes, secondary BP only occurred in 6% of patients after a median of 87 months because >90% of
234 patients achieved durable complete hematologic, complete cytogenetic (*PDGFRB*) and complete
235 molecular (*FIP1L1::PDGFRA*) remissions on imatinib.

236

237 In contrast, neither ponatinib on *FGFR1* (20), ruxolitinib on *JAK2* (10, 16) nor
238 imatinib/nilotinib/dasatinib on *ETV6::ABL1* fusions (16) have shown a similar efficacy than imatinib on
239 *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusions (Figure 1A-C). Of interest, the FIGHT-203 study presented promising results
240 on pemigatinib in patients with *FGFR1* fusions in CP and to a lesser extent in BP (21). In a recent
241 literature review of a heterogenous cohort of 66 *PCM1::JAK2* positive patients, Kaplan *et al.* reported
242 on 11 ruxolitinib-treated patients (12). However, authors did not draw conclusions on its effect on
243 survival because of the small cohort and because analysis on survival was complicated by the fact that

244 5 of these patients received a subsequent allogeneic SCT with a 5-year survival of 75% (12). In
245 consequence, patients with *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes progressed more often (35%)
246 and faster (median 19 months) into secondary BP than patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* fusion genes.
247 The inferior prognosis of patients with *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes with a median 5-year
248 survival of approximately 50-60% is therefore related to the more aggressive phenotype and the lack
249 of effective and durable conventional treatment (16, 22-26). In line with recently published data on
250 patients with *FGFR1* (25) and *JAK2* fusion genes (12), data confirm that the poor prognosis of primary
251 and secondary BP can only be overcome by allogeneic SCT (**Table 4, Figure 1A-D**).

252

253 Consistent hypereosinophilia $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ in more than 90% of patients was only observed in association
254 with *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes, although we acknowledge an obvious
255 ascertainment bias in that only cases with eosinophilia are routinely screened for distinct TK fusion
256 genes, particularly *FIP1L1::PDGFRA*. In patients with *PDGFRB* fusion genes, hypereosinophilia
257 $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ was present in only 50% of patients and even absent ($\leq 0.5 \times 10^9/l$) in 25% of patients. Lack of
258 eosinophilia was also evident in patients with *FGFR1* fusions (**Table 5**). These findings are in line with
259 literature reports on the impact of the *FGFR1* partner gene on phenotype (27). While *ZMYM2::FGFR1*
260 positive patients frequently present with the combination of a T-cell lymphoma/T-ALL/mixed
261 phenotype acute leukemia and eosinophilia, *BCR::FGFR1* positive patients usually present with a
262 MPN/CML-like phenotype but a much lower incidence of hypereosinophilia $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$, in the
263 literature overall only reported in 3/21 evaluable patients (11, 28-50).

264

265 Diagnosis of a TK fusion gene driven MLN may be missed due to the lack of eosinophilia and subsequent
266 diverse morphological diagnoses (5). A significant proportion of patients were not initially diagnosed
267 as MLN-TK or chronic eosinophilic leukemia but rather as subtype of MDS/MPN or MPN unclassified
268 and decisive diagnostic assays such as cytogenetic analysis, FISH analysis or specific RT-PCR were not
269 performed or only with delay. Moreover, newly available NGS technologies such as targeted RNA-
270 sequencing, whole transcriptome or whole genome sequencing have revealed an increasing number

271 of cytogenetically cryptic (51) or cytogenetically difficult to identify fusion genes, e.g. *ETV6::ABL1* and
272 several fusion genes with involvement of *PDGFRB* (52).

273

274 A rarely recognized feature of MLN-TK is monocytosis $>1.0 \times 10^9/l$ which was identified in about one
275 third of patients. It was clearly clustered in patients with hypereosinophilia $>1.5 \times 10^9/l$ and
276 consequently in patients with *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* or *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes. However, only
277 approximately 20% of these patients also had relative monocytosis $\geq 10\%$. Even with taking into
278 account the new cut-off values for diagnosis of chronic myelomonocytic leukemia with absolute
279 monocytosis of $\geq 0.5 \times 10^9/l$ and relative monocytosis of $\geq 10\%$, these numbers did not substantially
280 change. The data therefore clearly indicate that a MLN-TK may cause monocytosis but accompanying
281 features include hypereosinophilia and relative monocytosis $<10\%$ in the vast majority of patients
282 **(Table 5)**.

283

284 Besides MLN-TK, the concurrent presence of significant eosinophilia and monocytosis is also a typical
285 feature in patients with advanced systemic mastocytosis (53, 54). While being the disease-defining
286 characteristic for chronic myelomonocytic leukemia, monocytosis is also identified in other myeloid
287 neoplasms, potentially as marker of poor prognosis, e.g. in polycythemia vera, myelofibrosis and
288 systemic mastocytosis (55, 56). These data therefore also underscore the current guidelines for
289 diagnosis of chronic myelomonocytic leukemia, other myelodysplastic/myeloproliferative neoplasms
290 and myeloproliferative neoplasms unclassified that the primary genetic work-up should not only
291 exclude *BCR::ABL1* positive chronic myeloid leukemia but also cases of MLN-TK. Due to the excellent
292 prognosis of imatinib-treated patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* (5, 57, 58) fusion genes, monocytosis had
293 no obvious impact on progression and survival.

294

295 *FIP1L1::PDGFRA* and *ETV6::ABL1* fusion genes share striking clinical and morphological similarities
296 including male predominance, the relative frequency of eosinophilia and monocytosis, the median
297 absolute number of eosinophils, and presentation or progression to BP including EMD. Of interest,

298 progression to lymphoid BP in the BM seems to be a rare event for both fusion genes. Compared to
299 *FIP1L1::PDGFRA*, the responses of *ETV6::ABL1* positive patients to imatinib, nilotinib or dasatinib are
300 less frequent and less durable (16). In the current update of our own cohort, 6/11 patients were initially
301 treated with imatinib but more durable remissions were only observed on primary or secondary
302 treatment with nilotinib (n=2), dasatinib (n=3) or after allogeneic SCT (n=1). Not included in our series,
303 but important to note is that the MLN-TK subcategory also includes very rare fusion genes with
304 involvement of other TK such as *FLT3* (52, 59).

305

306 In summary, the relative frequency of the defining characteristics of MLN-TK such as myeloid or
307 lymphoid BP and/or eosinophilia occur at markedly variable frequencies according to the underlying
308 fusion gene. Monocytosis is a potentially important marker which frequently occurs in association with
309 significant eosinophilia. Careful attention must be paid to these subtle characteristics to avoid missing
310 a diagnosis of a TKI-sensitive MLN-TK.

311

312

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316

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318 G.M. and A.R. wrote the manuscript. All authors contributed to the manuscript, provided major
319 intellectual contributions, reviewed and revised its content, and approved the final version.

320

321 **Competing Interests:** none

322

323 **Data Availability Statement:** freely available to any researcher

324

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- 492
- 493

494 **Table 1:** Patients' characteristics of 135 patients with myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with eosinophilia
 495 and tyrosine kinase fusion genes.

496

	No. of patients	Partner genes	Eosinophilia (n) >0.5 / >1.5 x 10 ⁹ /l (%)	Monocytosis >1x10 ⁹ /l	Overall survival
<i>FIP1L1::PDGFRA</i>	78	1	44 100% / 91%	44 27%	92% at 5 years 92% at 10 years
<i>PDGFRB</i>	26	11	16 75% / 50%	16 31%	78% at 5 years 78% at 10 years
<i>FGFR1</i>	9	3	6 50% / 16%	6 33%	57% at 5 years
<i>JAK2</i>	11	2	8 75% / 50%	8 25%	55% at 5 years
<i>ETV6::ABL1</i>	11	1	7 100% / 100%	7 85%	58% at 4 years

497

498

499 **Table 2:** Phenotype of blast phase in 38 patients diagnosed with myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with
 500 eosinophilia and tyrosine kinase fusion genes (n=135). BM, bone marrow; CP, chronic phase; BP, blast
 501 phase; EMD, extramedullary disease. ¹Various fusion partners.

502

Fusion gene	n	Primary BP	CP at diagnosis	Secondary BP	Myeloid		Lymphoid	
					BM (primary/secondary)	EMD (primary/secondary)	BM (primary/secondary)	EMD (primary/secondary)
<i>FIP1L1::PDGFRA</i>	78	13	65	4	10 (8/2)	4 (3/1)	-	3 (2/1)
<i>PDGFRB</i> ¹	26	4	22	1	1 (0/1)	1 (1/0)	1 (1/0)	2 (2/0)
<i>FGFR1</i> ¹	9	6	3	1	-	2 (2/0)	2 (1/1)	3 (3/0)
<i>JAK2</i> ¹	11	0	11	3	1 (0/1)	-	2 (0/2)	-
<i>ETV6::ABL1</i>	11	2	9	4	2 (0/2)	2 (1/1)	1 (0/1)	1 (1/0)
Overall	135	25	110	13	14 (8/6)	9 (7/2)	6 (2/4)	9 (8/1)

503

504

505 **Table 3:** Anatomic localization and phenotype of histologically confirmed myeloid and lymphoid
 506 extramedullary disease (EMD) in 18 patients. In several cases, the presence of the fusion gene was
 507 confirmed by FISH analysis. M, myeloid; T-LBL, T-lymphoblastic lymphoma.

508

Anatomic localization	Myelosarcoma (M) Lymphoma	Primary	Secondary	FISH
<i>FIP1L1::PDGFRA</i>				
Femur	M	x		x
Pharynx	M	x		
Bone, meningeal	M	x		
Lymph nodes, paraspinal	M		x	x
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		x
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		x
Lymph nodes	T-LBL		x	x
<i>PDGFRB</i>				
Pleural, cerebral	M	x		x
Lymph nodes, liver	T-LBL	x		
Lymph nodes	T-cell lymphoma	x		
<i>FGFR1</i>				
Lymph nodes, bladder	M	x		
Lymph nodes, bone, spine	M	x		x
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		
<i>ETV6::ABL1</i>				
Parotid gland, bone (multiple sites)	M	x		
Humerus	M		x	
Lymph nodes	T-LBL	x		

509

510

511 **Table 4:** Outcome after allogeneic stem cell transplantation according to fusion gene and disease phase
 512 (n=25; CP, n=12; BP, n=13). BP, blast phase; CHR, complete hematologic remission; CMR, complete
 513 molecular remission; CP, chronic phase, GvHD, Graft versus Host Disease; SCT, stem cell transplantation.
 514

Fusion gene	Disease phase	Allogeneic SCT	Phenotype	Alive (years after allogeneic SCT)	Death (years after allogeneic SCT)
<i>FIP1L1::PDGFRA</i>	CP	3/65 (4.6%)	- PDGFRA T674I mutation, n=2; unknown (n=1) - Primary myeloid BP in BM (n=3)	- n=2 - +10.5, +1.2	- n=1 (GvHD while in CHR) - +1.5
	BP	3/17 (17.6%)		- n=2 - +6.5, +4.7	- n=1 (relapse) - +1.4
<i>PDGFRB</i> ¹	CP	0/22	- Primary lymphoid BP in BM (n=1) - Primary lymphoid EMD (n=1), - Secondary myeloid BP in BM (n=1)		
	BP	3/5 (60%)		- n=1 - +8.7	- n=2 (relapse) - +1.2, +0.7
<i>FGFR1</i> ¹	CP	2/2 (100%)	- Primary lymphoid in EMD (n=3) - Primary myeloid in EMD (n=1)	- n=2 - +2.9, +6.0	
	BP	4/7 (57.1%)		- n=3 - +5.2, +0.4, +0.3	- n=1 (relapse) - +1.1
<i>JAK2</i> ¹	CP	6/11 (54.5%)	- Secondary lymphoid BP in (n=1)	- n=5 - +0.5, +1.7, +3.1, +3.8, +4.8	- n=1 (relapse) - +0.5
	BP	1/3 (33.3%)		- n=1 (relapse) - +0.6	
<i>ETV6::ABL1</i> ¹	CP	1/9 (11.1%)	- Secondary myeloid BP (n=1) in BM or EMD (n=1)	- n=1 - +0.3	
	BP	2/6 (33.3%)		- n=1 - +0.1	- n=1 (GvHD while in CMR) - +0.6
Overall		25			

515
 516
 517

518 **Table 5:** Frequency of eosinophilia and monocytosis in myeloid/lymphoid neoplasms with eosinophilia
 519 and tyrosine kinase fusion genes (MLN-TK, n=81) in relation to various fusion genes. ¹ Various fusion
 520 partners.

Fusion gene	n	Eosinophils				Monocytes >1x10 ⁹ /l		
		x10 ⁹ /l median, (range)	≤0.5 x10 ⁹ /l	>0.5-1.5 x10 ⁹ /l	>1.5 x10 ⁹ /l	n	Eosinophils 0.5-1.5 x10 ⁹ /l	Eosinophils >1.5 x10 ⁹ /l
<i>FIP1L1::PDGFRA</i>	44	6.4 (0.9-30.1)	0/44	4/44 (9%)	40/44 (91%)	12/44 (27%)	-	12/12
<i>PDGFRB</i> ¹	16	1.6 (0.2-12.0)	4/16 (25%)	4/16 (25%)	8/16 (50%)	5/16 (31%)	1/5	3/5
<i>FGFR1</i> ¹	6	0.6 (0-2.5)	3/6 (50%)	2/6 (33%)	1/6 (16%)	2/6 (33%)	2/2	-
<i>JAK2</i> ¹	8	1.5 (0-4.6)	2/8 (25%)	2/8 (25%)	4/8 (50%)	2/8 (25%)	-	2/2
<i>ETV6::ABL1</i>	7	5.6 (2.0-7.1)	-	-	7/7 (100%)	6/7 (85%)	-	6/6
Overall	81	-	9/81 (11%)	12/81 (15%)	60/81 (74%)	27/81 (33%)	3/27 (11%)	23/27 (85%)

521

522 **Figure legend:**

523 **Figure 1A:** Overall survival (OS) from time of diagnosis of 135 patients with various tyrosine kinase
524 fusion genes (*PDGFRA*, n=78; *PDGFRB*, n=26; *FGFR1*, n=9; *JAK2*, n=11; *ETV6::ABL1*, n=11) independent
525 of disease phase. **Figure 1B:** OS of patients with *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* (*FIP1L1::PDGFRA*, n=65; *PDGFRB*,
526 n=22) and *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* (*FGFR1*, n=3; *JAK2*, n=11; *ETV6::ABL1*, n=9) fusion genes in
527 chronic phase (including 13 patients with progression into secondary blast phase), median follow-up
528 9.7 years (0-34.0) and 2.2 years (0.1-6.3), respectively ($p < 0.0001$). **Figure 1C:** OS of patients with
529 *PDGFRA/PDGFRB* (*FIP1L1::PDGFRA*, n=17; *PDGFRB*, n=5) and *FGFR1*, *JAK2* and *ETV6::ABL1* (*FGFR1*, n=7;
530 *JAK2*, n=3; *ETV6::ABL1*, n=6) fusion genes from diagnosis of blast phase (primary BP, n=25, secondary
531 BP, n=13), median OS 17.1 years (range 0.2-22) vs. 1.7 years (range 0.1-5.5; $p = 0.0008$). **Figure 1D:** OS
532 of patients after allogeneic stem cell transplantation in prior chronic (n=12) or blast phase (n=13)
533 independent of underlying TK fusion gene.

534

535



