

Event: 6th Annual International Congress of Blood and Marrow Transplantation, ICBMT 2022

Venue: BEXCO, BUSAN, South Korea

Dates: 1st to 3rd September 2022

I had the privilege to attend this year International Congress of Blood and Marrow transplantation, ICBMT 2022 which was held in Busan, South Korea. This is one of the world-renowned transplant meeting attended by transplant physicians, nurses, scientist and researchers involved in hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. This congress included a wide range of academic program on state-of-the art topics with world-renowned scholars, including plenary sessions, scientific sessions, joint symposium, oral and poster presentations. It was a great honor for me to present my abstract entitled outcome of autologous stem cell transplantation in multiple myeloma during the poster exhibition session.

On the first day of the meeting, I attended the plenary session on treatment of steroid refractory GVHD by Paul J. Martin from Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, USA. He highlighted the approach of selecting the best second line therapy for both acute and chronic steroid refractory GVHD. There are 3 FDA approved drugs for steroid refractory chronic GVHD including Ibrutinib, Ruxolitinib and Belumosudil. Ibrutinib is the first FDA approved drug but data from randomized study is still lacking. Subsequently I attended the luncheon symposium by Novartis presented by Robert Zeiser from University Medical Center Freiburg, Germany. The presentation focused on the result of REACH-2 and REACH-3 trials on the usage of Ruxolitinib in steroid refractory acute and chronic GVHD. He addressed several questions from the participants including concern of Ruxolitinib's absorption in extensive gut GVHD, tapering schedule and optimal dose in acute GVHD due to untoward cytopenia. This was followed by the scientific session on strategies to prevent leukemia relapse after HSCT. During this session, various strategies of preventing relapse including early withdrawal of immunosuppressant, donor lymphocyte infusion (DLI) and maintenance therapy were discussed. The option of second allogeneic stem cell transplant versus DLI also being debated in a separate session. In the late afternoon, I attended the joint symposium highlighting the recent advances in haploidentical HSCT which is my major interest in this meeting. The speakers addressed both ex vivo T cell depletion and T cell repletion with post-transplant cyclophosphamide as the methods of GVHD prophylaxis. Prof Ho Joon Im from University of Ulsan College of Medicine presented different graft manipulation strategies used in Korea for haploidentical stem cell transplantation.

The second day of meeting started off with a very informative education session on practical problems related with CAR-T Cell Therapy. There are 3 main topics in this session, with 3 different speaker spoke on recognizing and managing CRS and ICANS, importance of fludarabine pharmacokinetics and practical consideration for preparing CAR-T cell therapy. I found the talk on practical consideration for preparing CAR-T cell therapy particularly useful. This was followed by Luncheon Symposium on role of rATG as GVHD prophylaxis in the setting of haploidentical stem cell transplantation by Prof Dennis Kim from Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. He presented some interesting data on dual T cell depletion of PTcy and ATG. He stressed on the importance of ATG in preventing chronic GVHD. Hence dual T cell depletion should be considered in the setting of haploidentical stem cell transplantation for prevention of both acute and chronic GVHD.

Overall, it has been a fruitful experience for me. I am thankful for given a chance to attend this meeting physically.

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