

# CANCER CARE AND THE COVID-19 VACCINES

Amelia Langston, MD

Professor and Executive Vice-chair, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology

Emory University School of Medicine



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE






Serious  
Communicable  
Diseases Program



# COVID-19 and Cancer: It's a bad combination...

## Mortality in Hospitalized Patients With Cancer and Coronavirus Disease 2019: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Cohort Studies

Aakash Desai, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>; Rohit Gupta, BA <sup>2</sup>; Shailesh Advani, MD, PhD <sup>3,4</sup>; Lara Ouellette, MLS<sup>5</sup>; Nicole M. Kuderer, MD<sup>6</sup>; Gary H. Lyman, MD, MPH (Biostatistics)<sup>7,8</sup>; and Ang Li, MD, MS <sup>8,9</sup>

*Cancer*, 2020

## Clinical characteristics and outcomes of COVID-19 in haematopoietic stem-cell transplantation recipients: an observational cohort study

Akshay Sharma\*, Neel S Bhatt\*, Andrew St Martin, Muhammad Bilal Abid, Jenni Bloomquist, Roy F Chemaly, Christopher Dandoy, Jordan Gauthier, Lohith Gowda, Miguel-Angel Perales, Stuart Seropian, Bronwen E Shaw, Eileen E Tuschl, Amer M Zeidan, Marcie L Riches, Gunjan L Shah†

*Lancet Haematology*, 2021



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE



Serious  
Communicable  
Diseases Program



European Journal of Cancer 141 (2020) 92–104



ELSEVIER

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: [www.ejcancer.com](http://www.ejcancer.com)

Review

A systematic review and meta-analysis: the effect of active cancer treatment on severity of COVID-19

Emre Yekedüz <sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Güngör Utkan <sup>a,b</sup>, Yüksel Ürün <sup>a,b</sup>

# General treatment considerations for patients with cancer during the pandemic: “Therapeutic Triage”

- Potentially curative vs palliative therapy
- Essential time sensitive vs deferrable therapy
- Type of malignancy
- On active therapy vs follow-up or surveillance
- Neutropenia, lymphopenia
- Home situation, exposure potential



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE



Serious  
Communicable  
Diseases Program



# Patients with cancer *should* be vaccinated, but timing is everything...

- General cancer population—NCCN guidelines
  - Vaccinate between cycles if on active therapy
  - Wait for neutrophil recovery for pts receiving aggressive regimens
  - Separate major surgery and vaccination by at least a few days
- Stem cell transplant patients
  - TCT guidelines: wait at least 3 mos post-transplant
  - Also consider degree of immune suppression after allogeneic transplantation
- *Must not assume the same protection in cancer patients as reported for the general population*
  - We rely on the protection of the family and close contact for local herd immunity



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE



Serious  
Communicable  
Diseases Program



# Patient, caregiver *and staff* questions/barriers

- Have the vaccines been adequately tested?
- Are the vaccines really safe?
- Are they safe for me as an immune compromised patient?
- Is one vaccine better or safer than the others?
- If I'm about to have my chemo or my transplant, should I get vaccinated beforehand?
- If I've been vaccinated, why do I need to continue precautions?



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE



Serious  
Communicable  
Diseases Program

