



Initiation of dialysis for medication-refractory hyperkalemia in an elderly patient with small lymphocytic lymphoma



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Background

- Small lymphocytic lymphoma (SLL) is a hematologic malignancy characterized by proliferation of immature B lymphocytes primarily in the lymph nodes but also in the bone marrow and peripheral blood.
- Tumor lysis syndrome (TLS) is an oncologic emergency that occurs when massive numbers of malignant cells lyse and leads to release of intracellular material. Common complications include arrhythmias due to hyperkalemia and/or hypocalcemia, renal failure due to hyperuricemia or hyperphosphatemia, and seizures.

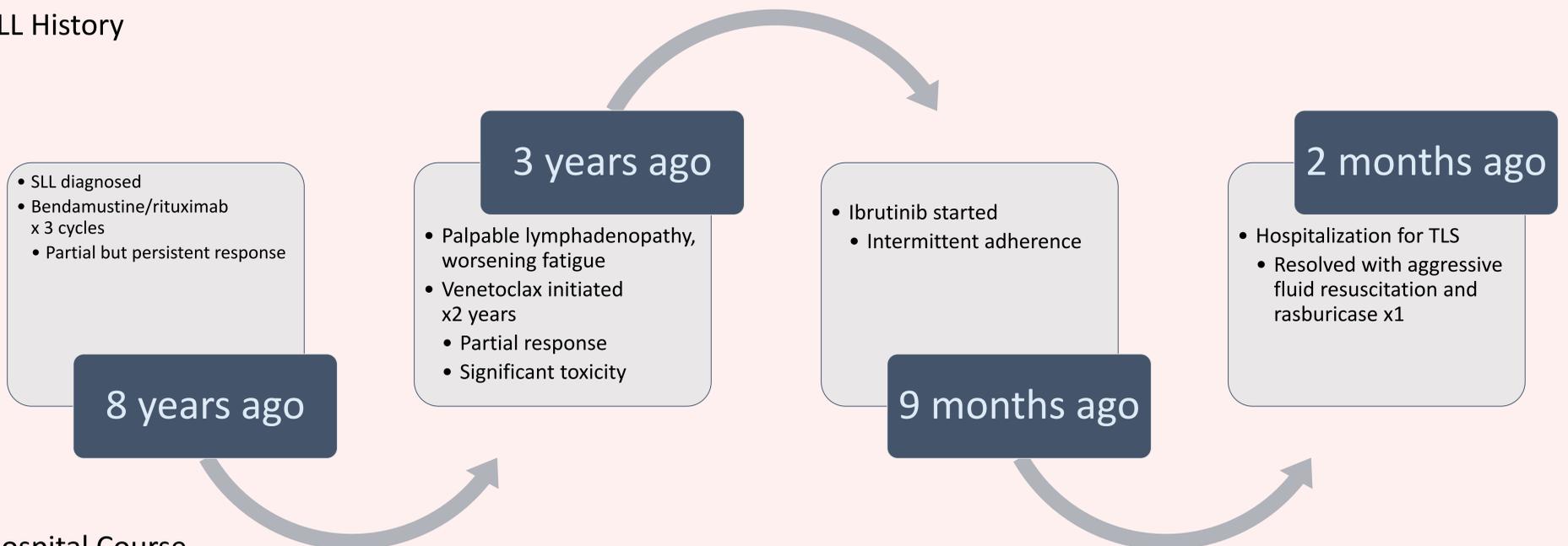
Clinical Question

- When elderly patients are admitted to the hospital with advanced malignancies, when is the right time to recommend comfort-focused treatment rather than life-prolonging treatment?

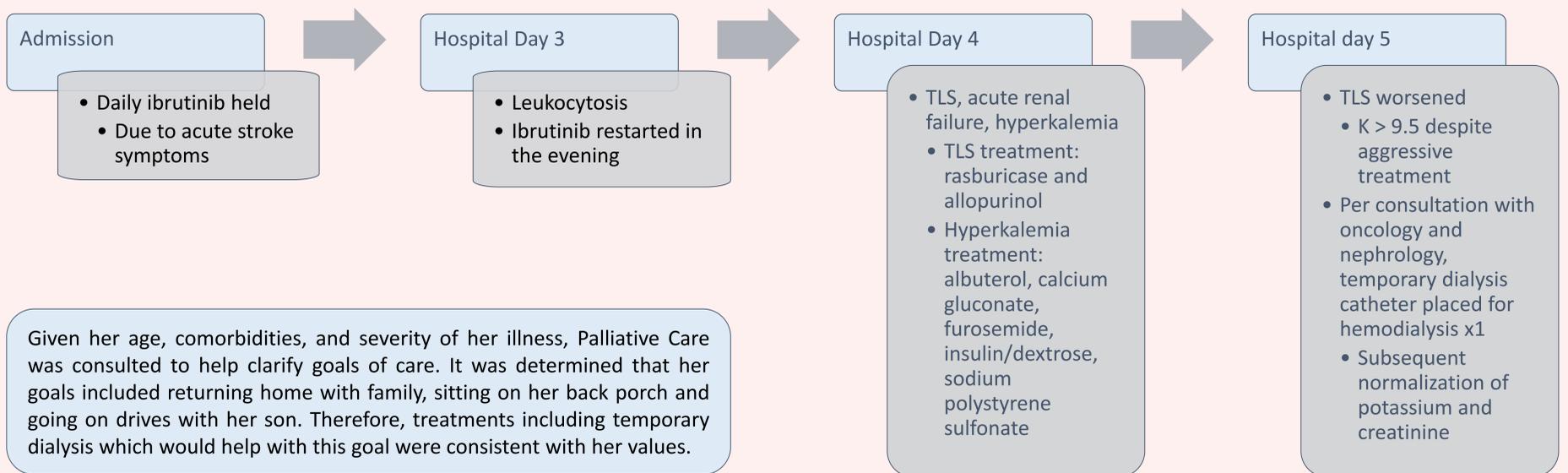
Case Description

A 98-year-old woman with clinical stage IIIA SLL on ibrutinib, recent hospitalization within the past week for right thalamic stroke, prior transient ischemic attack, atrial fibrillation on apixaban complicated by sick sinus syndrome status post pacemaker, type II diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and hypothyroidism, was admitted for headache, nausea, and persistence of left eyelid and mouth droop since recent stroke admission.

SLL History



Hospital Course



Clinical Outcome

Ultimately, she recovered following her severe acute illness, and was discharged home with family. Now, in her 99th year, she has continued to enjoy her current quality of life.

Conclusions

- Elderly patients with hematologic malignancies who present with TLS may respond well to aggressive treatment including temporary hemodialysis if needed.
- Prior to recommendation of comfort-focused care, we recommend:
 - Oncology consult to determine appropriateness given patient and cancer characteristics, and
 - Clarification of the patient's values and goals either by the primary inpatient team or palliative care specialists.

References

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2. Rahmani B, Patel S, Seyam O, et al. Current understanding of tumor lysis syndrome. *Hematol Oncol.* 2019;37(5):537-547. doi:10.1002/hon.2668