Patients with myeloma have numerous and complex medical needs

Multiple myeloma (MM) is the second most common blood cancer and accounts for 1% of all malignancies.\(^1\) In more developed regions approximately 4.9/100,000 patients are affected with MM per year.\(^2\) Although commonly considered a disease of the elderly, a substantial proportion of patients (37%) are aged <65 years at diagnosis.\(^3\)

Over the last 10 years, MM has evolved into a chronic disease; many patients are now living with MM for a decade or more.\(^3,4\) Therefore, patients now face the long-term challenges of managing MM, its treatment and, consequently, its long-term impact on quality of life.

- If MM is undetected, and/or remains untreated, patients can suffer serious complications including:
  - Hypercalcaemia, renal failure, anaemia and bone lesions\(^5\)
  - The presence of these features indicates a need for intervention\(^5\)
- Despite improving outcomes, management of MM can be complex and challenging\(^6,7\)
  - In some patients, side effects of treatments can reduce health-related quality of life\(^6\)
  - Patients may spend a lot of time in hospital\(^6\)
  - Patients may require supportive care from family\(^8\)
- Having a disease that is, for most patients, incurable is very stressful\(^9\)
  - Patients feel uncertainty about their future\(^9\)
  - They may suffer long-term anxiety and depression\(^9\), along with feelings of isolation\(^7\)
- MM patients will often relapse several times\(^1,7,10\)
  - As the MM progresses, the biology of the disease changes and, as such, different treatment approaches may be needed with each relapse\(^1,6,7,11\)
  - Patients may experience increased psychological and emotional stress with each relapse that will require additional support\(^12\)
Multiple myeloma – the medical need

Great advances have been made...

Since the 1950s, when just one treatment was available, significant progress has been made in the management of MM. As such, MM has become a potentially curable disease.\textsuperscript{12,14}

- The introduction of novel therapies, such as immunomodulatory drugs and proteasome inhibitors, has drastically improved outcomes compared with the era of chemotherapy (Figure 1)\textsuperscript{1,6,7}

- The past decade has also seen increasing interest in optimum combinations and sequencing of treatments, strategies to optimise autologous and allogeneic stem cell transplantation, and the use of maintenance therapy\textsuperscript{1,6,7}

- In addition, important advances in the understanding of the biology of the disease, including the complexity and dynamics of the MM genomic landscape, have generated interest in risk-adapted strategies, with the potential for serial genetic tests to guide treatment decisions\textsuperscript{13}

...but despite these advances, responses still diminish over time

Despite the significant advances made in the management of MM, for most patients the disease remains incurable.\textsuperscript{15}

- As MM progresses, each line of treatment become less effective (Figure 2)\textsuperscript{15}

- Most patients relapse several times before treatments fail to work and palliative care is the only option (Figure 2)\textsuperscript{15}

- Each relapse brings with it significant physical and emotional challenges for the patient\textsuperscript{12}

- In addition, with each relapse, the biology of MM changes and so treatments must be carefully planned and options may become limited as the disease progresses\textsuperscript{10,11}

Consequently, there remains a great unmet need for more effective therapies and treatment strategies that can provide long-term responses in patients at all stages of their disease journey, but in particular those with relapsed or refractory disease.\textsuperscript{16,17}
Multiple myeloma – the medical need

Summary points

- Advances in treatment have significantly improved survival and MM is now moving towards being a chronic disease
- Patients face many physical and emotional challenges throughout the course of their disease, related both to the disease itself and its treatment
- Despite the progress made in MM, the disease remains, for most patients, incurable and response to treatment diminishes with each line of therapy

References