

Dear members,

For some time, we have been anticipating the publication of two new haematological malignancy diagnostic classifications: the World Health Organisation (WHO) 5th edition^{1,2} and the International Consensus Classification (ICC)^{3,4}, the outlines of which have recently been published in *Leukemia and Blood*, respectively. They provide comprehensive updates as a continuation of the 2016 revision of the 4th edition of the WHO classification and are authored by multi-professional international groups of experts based on the best scientific evidence. While for the most part they agree and overlap with each other, the two classifications do differ in some areas. This includes varied terminology used for the same conditions, exclusion or reclassification of some entities, recognition of new classification groups which are not always fully overlapping and, in some instances using different defining diagnostic criteria for the same diseases. The WHO 5th edition is now available as full text online while the printed version is expected next year. Further illustrated publication of the ICC is expected next year.

Forthcoming international scientific meetings, most notably the European Association of Haematopathology and American Society of Haematology, will intensely focus on comparative analysis of the two classifications and their routine diagnostic and clinical applicability. The outcomes of these discussions will be invaluable in guiding pathologists, allied scientists, haematologists and oncologists as they care for patients. However, at present, there is considerable uncertainty amongst our members as to how to safely, robustly and reproducibly apply the two new classifications until more formal guidance becomes available.

The British Society for Haematology (BSH) and British Lymphoma Pathology Group (BLPG) have been asked to help with this issue. We jointly aim to aid the process of better understanding of the new classifications and their clinical application. Our two "sister" organisations include most diagnosticians and treating clinicians of haematological malignancies in the United Kingdom. We want to provide some interim guidance for members, whilst planning formal definitive guidance. At present, based on the perception of the situation amongst our membership, we jointly feel that the safest practice in the immediate future would be to continue using the established 2016 revision of the WHO 4th edition, whilst as far as possible providing indicative diagnoses based on the two new classifications, particularly if relevant to clinical care, guidelines or clinical trials. We understand this may be burdensome, but there is as yet no simple alternative.

In order to facilitate better understanding and future practical applicability of the two classifications, the BSH and BLPG aim to organise future educational events and workshops to discuss implications of both classifications. In addition, the BSH and BLPG will work with the Royal College of Pathologists to update the relevant RCPATH datasets that will ultimately provide definitive guidance on the diagnostic reporting of haematological malignancies. These will refer to the newly published classifications, as well as other relevant guidance such as NICE. In addition, we will aim to work with the NHSE Genomic Medicine Service and related genomic services in the devolved nations to ensure that the National Genomic Test Directory is aligned with the new classifications and the dataset. We hope that the RCPATH dataset will provide that

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definitive support our members need in order to use the new classifications to help care for our patients

The new classifications are being discussed widely and we welcome comments, please contact the BSH Laboratory SIG or BLPG Council if you have comments.

Chairs of the British Lymphoma Pathology Group and British Society for Haematology Laboratory Specialist Interest Group

References

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- 2. The 5th edition of the World Health Organization Classification of Haematolymphoid Tumours: Myeloid and Histiocytic/Dendritic Neoplasms Leukemia. 2022 Jul;36(7):1720-1748. doi: 10.1038/s41375-022-01620-2. Epub 2022 Jun 22.*
- 3. International Consensus Classification of Myeloid Neoplasms and Acute Leukemia: Integrating Morphological, Clinical, and Genomic Data. Blood. 2022 Jun 29 ; 10.1182/blood.2022015850. Online ahead of print*
- 4. The International Consensus Classification of Mature Lymphoid Neoplasms: A Report from the Clinical Advisory Committee; Blood. 2022 Jun 2;blood.2022015851.doi: 10.1182/blood.2022015851. Online ahead of print.*