# **CLINICAL DECISION-MAKING IN FEBRILE NEUTROPENIA MANAGEMENT: CURRENT FINDINGS AND UNMET MEDICAL NEEDS**

#### C. Prebet<sup>1</sup>, C. Chouaid<sup>2</sup>, T. Lecomte<sup>3</sup>, K. Menia<sup>4</sup>, C. Falandry<sup>5</sup>

1. Hôpital Tenon, AP-HP, Sorbonne Université, Digital Medical Hub Académique, Paris, France ; 2. CHI Créteil, Inserm U955, UPEC, IMRB, Créteil, France ; 3. CHU de Tours, Inserm UMR 1069, Nutrition, Croissance et Cancer, Université de Tours, Hôpital Trousseau, CHRU de Tours, Tours, France ; 4. Chugai Pharma France, Tour Pacific, 11-13 Cours Valmy, Puteaux, France ; 5. CH Croix-Rousse Dugoujon, Hospices Civils de Lyon, Laboratoire CarMeN, Université Lyon 1, INSERM U.1060, Université Lyon 1, INRAE U.1397, Hospices Civils Lyon, Pierre-Bénite, France.

# BACKGROUND

Despite clinical practice guidelines and risk index scores in predicting adverse outcome of febrile neutropenia (FN), chemotherapy-induced FN remains a serious complication in oncology (10%–50%) in solid tumors<sup>(1)</sup> and 80% in hematologic malignancies<sup>(2)</sup>). Moreover, FN compromises chemotherapy dose-intensity/efficacy and is associated with a mortality rate of almost 10%<sup>[3]</sup>. Another concern is the heterogeneity in clinical practice, underlying the need to improve existing tools for accurate patient's risk factor evaluation. In this context, we aimed to identify clinicians' pain points (PP) and unmet needs, understand how & when is performed the FN risk assessment and describe the decision flow throughout the patient care journey.

### **METHODS**

We used the **Design Thinking methodology** which is an innovative approach to fully understand issues and pain points (PP) during FN assessment process and explore a wide range of possible solutions. We ran, from February to June 2023, 10 semi-structured interview series (1 to 1.5 hour) with a panel of 10 French onco-hematologists (4 Oncologists, 3 Hematologists, 1 Pulmonologist, 1 Gastroenterologist, 1 Geriatric-oncologist) having a decision-maker role within a Multidisciplinary Tumor Board meeting across different types of clinical practices.

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The FN risk assessment remains a challenging process that needs to be simplified and systematized. It could be performed throughout the patient care journey, before, during and after the Multidisciplinary Tumor Board meeting. A well-designed decision support solution could provide the ability to better capture, organize and present key and critical information, enabling more advanced analyzes and flow optimizations in assessing FN risks between healthcare professionals.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

HCP Participants : M. Andriantsoa, Clinique de l'Estrée Stains ; C. Chouaid, CHI Créteil ; C. Falandry, CHU Lyon-Sud ; **0. Fitoussi**, Clinique Bordeaux-Nord ; **T. Lecomte**, CHU Tours ; **S. Lepretre**, CRLCC Becquerel Rouen ; **G. Manson**, CHU Rennes, C. Prebet, Hôpital Tenon AP-HP; M. Saghatchian, Hôpital Américain Paris; F. Scotté, Institut Gustave Roussy Villejuif Supplier: MyPL, 12 Av des Prés 78180 Montigny-le-Bretonneux. France.

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#### RESULTS $\bigcirc$

Although panel's heterogeneity, 7 pain points were identified during the FN risk assessment process as shown on the radar graph 1 representing the number of HCP's quotation per pain point (PP) identified. The FN risk assessment was perceived as a complex task requiring access to multiple variables fragmented within hospital information systems. Moreover, existing tools like guidelines and FN predictive scores were underused due to gaps between existing and current needs. Finally, clinicians raised liability and communication issues with their patients when performing the FN risk-assessment.

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

**RESULTS GRAPH 1\*:** Key findings identified around the FN assessment process

PP #1. The patient risk-assessment

is complex, non-systematic, heterogeneous

and based mainly on the clinican's

intuition and experience

**PP #7.** Increasing awareness of medical responsibility and quality assurance issues

**PP #6.** Difficulties of interpretation for FN risk range between 10% to 20%

**PP #5.** Patients face misunderstanding of FN issues, in monitoring their symptoms and communicating them to the healthcare team

\*Graph 1 is a graphical representation of the results and not a weighted method analysis of the results

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Please contact Coralie Prebet at Coralie.Prebet@dmh-aphp.fr

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PP #2. Guidelines are not specific enough and don't evolve at the same rate as the registration of new targeted therapies

> **PP #3.** FN Risk index scores are underused and require assistance in their interpretation

PP #4. Critical data needed for the risk-assessment are unstructured and fragmented across different Information Systems within the hospitals



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