

CORRESPONDENCE

Age at diagnosis of chronic myeloid leukaemia

It has long been a clinical impression among Malaysian haematologists that chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) occurs in younger patients in Malaysia compared to the West. We have reviewed our CML data from the department registry. A total of 182 patients were diagnosed to have CML between 1977 to 1988. Their mean age at presentation was 34.9 years (Fig. 1). The overall mean age at diagnosis of CML in 6 major series from various European and North American groups was 43.34 years.¹ Comparing the mean age at diagnosis of the combined series and our own using the Z-test, the Z-value was 7.17 and $P < 0.001$. Hence,

our CML patients were younger. The reason for this is not clear but could be due to the lower average age of the Malaysian population as compared to the western population. The practical management problem is that palliative treatment which is acceptable for older patients is a poor choice for younger patients. The only potentially curative modality, i.e. bone marrow transplantation (BMT), is currently not available for adult patients in Malaysia. As 120 (69.5%) patients of our series were < 40 years old and would have been considered for BMT if HLA compatible donors had been available, the urgency of having local BMT facilities for adult patients is apparent.

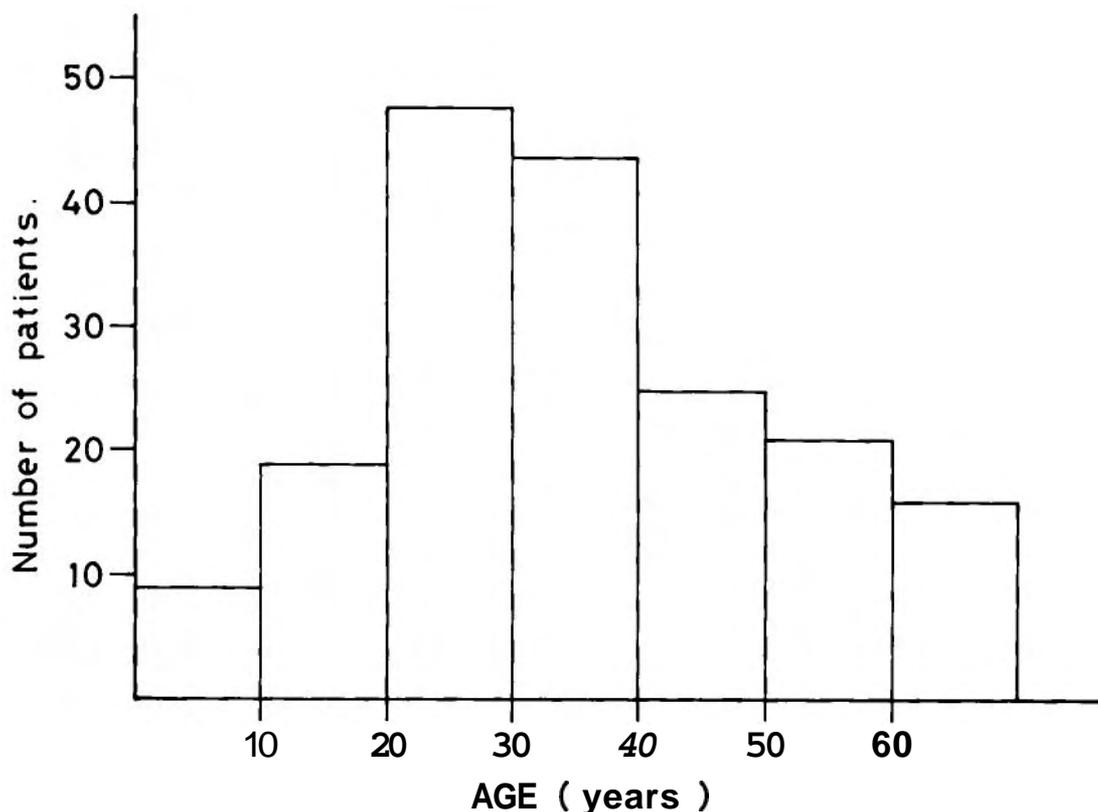


Fig 1 : Age of CML patients at diagnosis

REFERENCES

1. Sokal JE, Cox EB, Baccarani M, *et al.* Prognostic discrimination in good risk chronic granulocytic leukaemia. *Blood* 1984; 63, 789-99.

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