

Daratumumab Pre-Treatment Blood Screening

BC Cancer protocols containing daratumumab require pre-treatment blood screening. In particular, “Red Blood Cell (RBC) phenotype & Group and Screen” are required at baseline. What are these tests and why is it important they are drawn prior to starting treatment?

What are these tests?

Pre-transfusion testing is done to ensure compatibility between the patient and the blood components intended for future transfusion.¹ Pre-transfusion testing ensures the most compatible blood can be given if transfusion is required. This minimizes the risk of hemolytic transfusion reactions.²

Compatibility testing can include blood antigen typing and antibody screening, and further “cross-matching” to confirm compatibility with available transfusion blood as required. A cross-match order is generally done when a transfusion is definitely required. If a transfusion is possible but not certain, a “Type and Screen” (also called “Group and Screen”) is ordered. This ensures blood will be available for patients who may require a transfusion in a surgical or medical setting.¹

The *Group and Screen* test (i.e., “Blood Type and Indirect Ab Screen” in CareConnect) includes ABO and Rh typing of the patient’s RBC antigens and an antibody screen with the patient’s blood components.¹ The ABO test shows if patients have one of four blood types: A, B, AB, or O. This is determined based on the type of antigens present on the patient’s RBCs – A antigen, B antigen, neither antigen (O) or both antigens (AB). Compatible blood for transfusion should have the same antigens in order to prevent transfusion reactions.⁹

The antibody screen determines if the patient’s plasma/serum contains antibodies that could react with antigens on transfused RBCs.³ The presence of antibodies could potentially cause hemolysis.³ Antibodies may develop in patients who have been

exposed to RBC antigens different from their own through pregnancy or prior transfusion.¹ An extended *RBC phenotype* antigen test (i.e., “Blood Group Ag” in CareConnect) can be done in patients who were not transfused in the prior three months, to further establish a patient’s baseline blood phenotype beyond ABO and assist in providing more closely matched blood.

The Coombs tests can be used to screen for antibodies. The direct Coombs test, also known as the direct antiglobulin test (DAT), looks directly at the patient’s red blood cells to see if there are antibodies attached to them. The indirect Coombs test, also known as the indirect antiglobulin test (IAT), utilizes a reagent to detect antibodies in the patient’s serum or plasma that can attach to RBCs.³

Why is it important for these tests to be done prior to starting daratumumab treatment?

Blood transfusions are an important part of the supportive care of patients with myeloma given the frequency of developing anemia.⁴

Daratumumab binds to CD38, a protein which is expressed in low levels on RBCs. When plasma from patients on the anti-CD38 monoclonal antibody is used in the IAT antibody screen, positive results (agglutination) can occur.⁵ Additional testing is then required to identify if foreign RBC antigens are present, which can lead to delays in providing RBCs to patients in routine transfusion.⁸ This effect can persist for up to 6 months after treatment.⁶

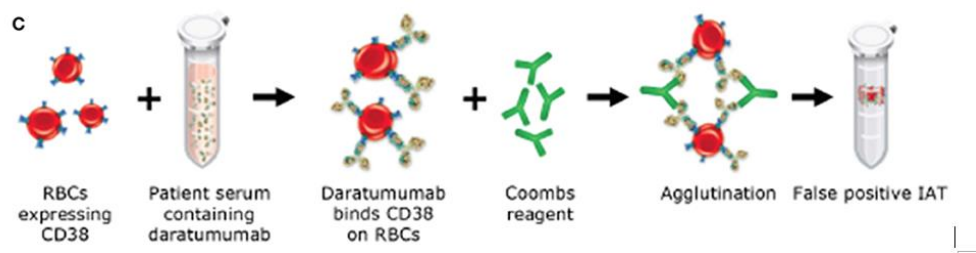


Figure 1. Mechanism of daratumumab interference with the indirect antiglobulin test (IAT)⁴

Masking the detection of antibodies in the patient’s serum and subsequent interference with blood bank testing can lead to compromised transfusion safety, redundant testing, increased laboratory costs, and may cause significant delays in transfusions posing a serious threat to patient safety.^{5,7} It is important to ensure pre-transfusion testing is complete prior to patients starting treatment with daratumumab.

At times it can be difficult to determine if RBC phenotype testing is in process, depending on how the lab results are reported. Transfusion Medicine, at the relevant laboratory, can be contacted with any patient-related queries.

References:

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