MYELODYSPLASTIC SYNDROMES **MEDICAL APPENDIX**

(PRELEUKAEMIA, SMOULDERING LEUKAEMIA)

DEFINITION

1. **Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS)** are acquired, usually progressive, cytopenias associated with a hypercellular bone marrow and ineffective haemopoiesis.

2. Two major types are recognised:

   2.1. **Primary myelodysplastic syndromes**, these being the more common.

   2.2. **Secondary myelodysplastic syndromes**.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

3. The most common presenting features are anaemia, fever or manifestations of bleeding. There are usually few, if any, significant physical signs. Splenomegaly is found in 20 per cent of cases.

AETIOLOGY

4. Myelodysplastic syndromes almost always affect adults over the age of 50 years, the median age of patients with primary myelodysplastic syndromes being between 60 and 70 years. Secondary myelodysplastic syndromes as a rule affect younger patients.

5. **Primary myelodysplastic syndromes** are of unknown aetiology.

6. **Secondary myelodysplastic syndromes** result from the use of alkylating agents with or without radiotherapy for the treatment of lymphomas, multiple myeloma or solid tumours. The aetiology in these cases is that of the underlying condition.

CONCLUSION

7. **Myelodysplastic syndromes** is a term used to describe a group of conditions showing cytopenia and ineffective haemopoiesis. They may be **primary**, in which case the aetiology is unknown, or **secondary**, in which case the aetiology is that of the underlying condition.

REFERENCE

Catovsky D. Myelodysplastic Syndromes. In: (Eds) Weatherall D J, Ledingham J G G, Warrell D A. Oxford Textbook of Medicine. 2nd Ed. 1987. Oxford. Oxford University Press. p19.58-19.62.

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