MANAGING DLBCL IN A RESOURCE-LIMITED SETTING: CHALLENGES AND REALITIES FROM PANAMA'S LARGEST REFERRAL CENTER

A SALEHJI BHANA [1]

1. CAJA DE SEGURO SOCIAL. CIUDAD DE LA SALUD. HEMATOLOGY DEPARTMENT. PANAMA CITY, PANAMA.

INTRODUCTION

-Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) is the **most common type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.**
-While therapeutic advances have improved outcomes in high-income settings, **data from resource-constrained countries remain scarce.**
-Findings reflect key **challenges in managing** aggressive lymphomas in low-resource environments.

AIM

To describe the baseline characteristics, treatment received, and disease outcomes of patients with DLBCL treated at Panama's largest public referral center.

OBJECTIVES

- Characterize the **demographic and clinical features at diagnosis.**
- Assess **disease stage, and prognostic indices**
- Evaluate **initial treatment response and relapse rates**
- **Explore associations** between clinical variables and relapse risk

METHODS

Retrospective, descriptive study with patients with DLBCL treated between 2018 and 2023.

- Clinical data were extracted from medical records and hospital registries.
- Descriptive statistics and comparative analyses (Chi-square test, t-test) were performed to evaluate associations.
- Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.
- All cases were treated at Complejo Hospitalario Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid, Panama's main national referral center.

102 PATIENTS

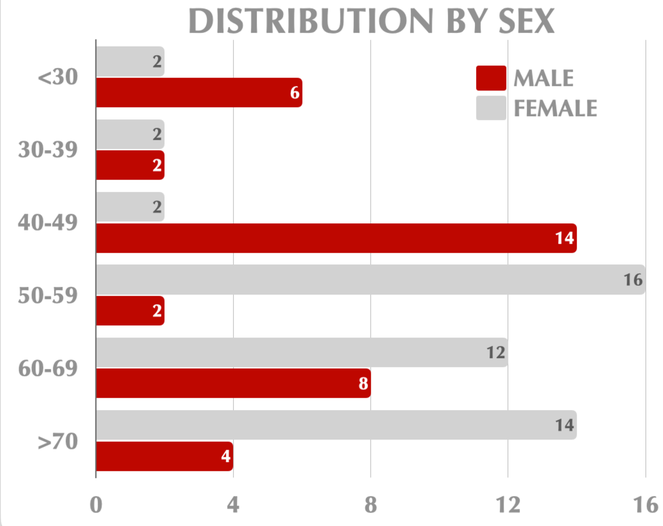
-12: WRONG DIAGNOSIS

-7: NO RECORDS

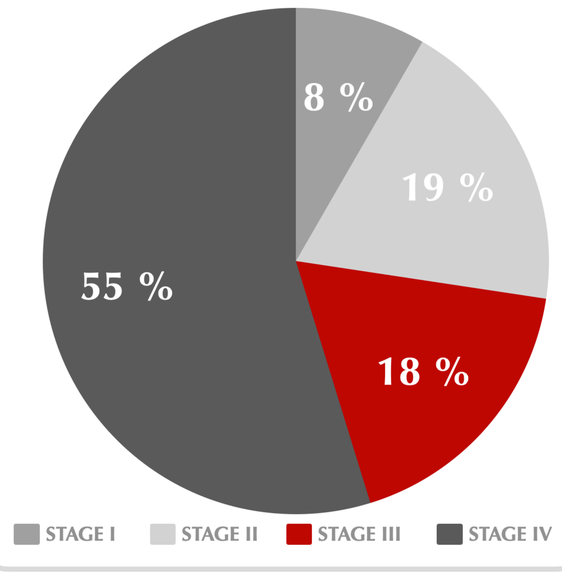
83 PATIENTS

RESULTS

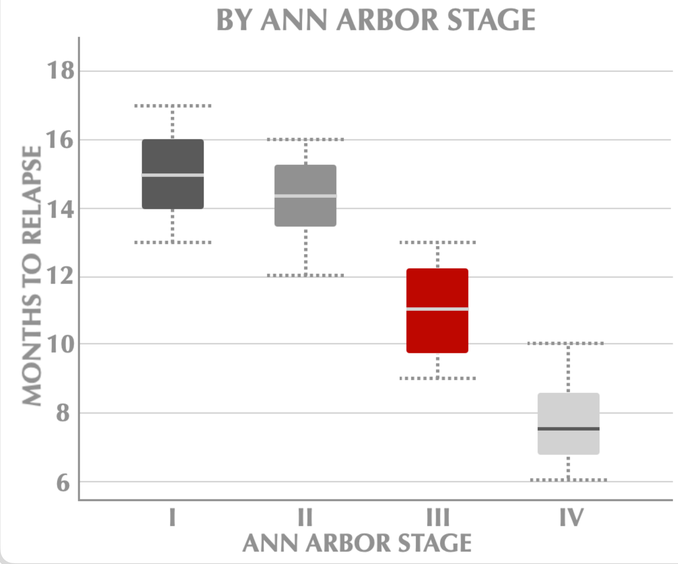
GRAPHIC 1. AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION BY SEX



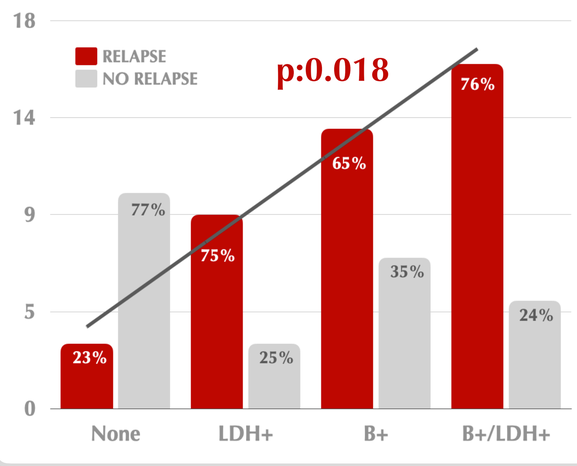
GRAPHIC 2. STRATIFICATION BY ANN ARBOR STAGE



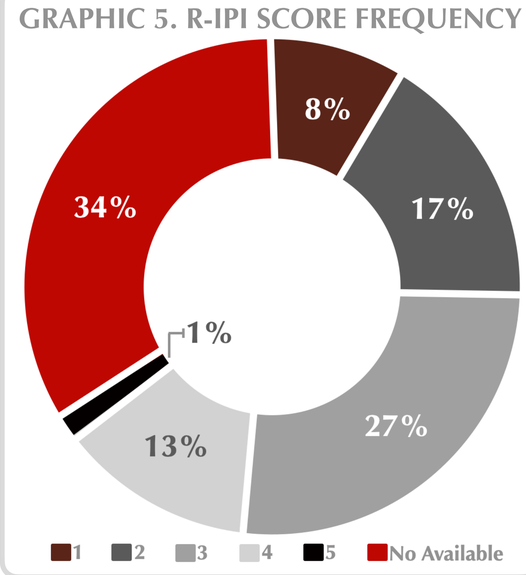
GRAPHIC 3. TIME TO RELAPSE BY ANN ARBOR STAGE



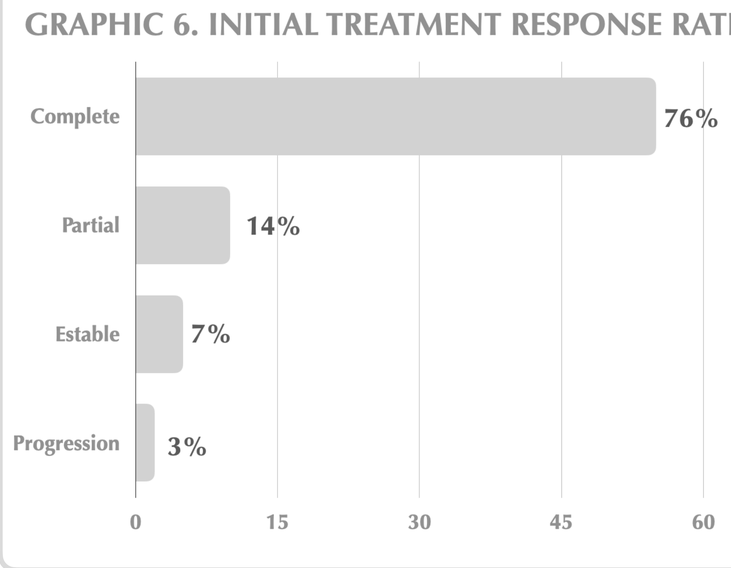
GRAPHIC 4. RELAPSE RATES BY COMBINED B SYMPTOMS AND ELEVATED LDH



GRAPHIC 5. R-IPI SCORE FREQUENCY



GRAPHIC 6. INITIAL TREATMENT RESPONSE RATE



-Overall mean age was **56.4 years (±17.3),** females had a mean age of **61.7**, while males had a mean age of **49.4** (p<0.01).
-**Only 56.6%** of patients underwent echo evaluation.
-73% were diagnosed at **advanced stages.**

CHALLENGES

DIAGNOSTIC DELAY
Patients presenting with advanced-stage disease

LIMITED TESTING
Incomplete prognostic evaluation

THERAPY GAP
Restricted access to salvage therapies

DISCUSSION

-The average age of our cohort is consistent with reports from Latin America and **notably younger** than in the US (56 vs 66 y). Interestingly, the average age at diagnosis was lower in males.
-A high proportion of patients presented with **advanced-stage disease,** considerably higher than what has been reported in other Latin American series.
-Higher relapse rates were observed among patients with **elevated LDH and B symptoms,** underscoring the continued relevance of these classic clinical factors, particularly in settings where access to molecular profiling remains limited.

REFERENCES

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