Romidepsin: A New Drug for the Treatment of Cutaneous T-Cell Lymphoma

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Patients with cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL) have a rare, disfiguring, and life-threatening subtype of non-Hodgkin lymphoma primarily localized to the skin. Their immune systems are altered and their skin is compromised. In addition, they are highly prone to infections—the most common cause of death in patients with this disease. Patients presenting with early-stage disease involvement typically are treated with topical therapies; patients with advanced-stage and recurrent disease require systemic treatment. Specialized knowledge is required by oncology healthcare providers to manage the wide array of symptoms experienced by these patients as a part of the natural course of this disease. A new drug, romidepsin, approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, is indicated in the treatment of relapsed CTCL. The authors discuss use of romidepsin in the context of CTCL and the information needed to safely administer romidepsin and manage its side effects.