

SPEAKER: Fortunately, in MAC lung disease, many of the patients will convert their sputum to negative and complete successful treatment for one year of negative cultures. Unfortunately, 10% to 15% of the time, this is not the case. And unfortunately, it's the case even when you change their therapy and add the most aggressive drugs that we have to treat MAC lung disease.

In my own practice, what we do is we continue the therapy for as long as we can, provided that the patient does not experience severe side-effects and feels OK. If the patient has stable radiographs and feels like they need to break off the therapy, I will often stop the medication after two years, and just give them a break, and watch for signs of disease progression. I do this by monitoring their symptoms, I still continue to check intermittent sputum samples, and I watch their radiographs.

Certainly, you do not have to check a CAT scan every three to six months on these patients unless you're very concerned. But I do monitor them periodically just to be sure that I'm not seeing some early signs of disease progression, which might prompt me to restart their medications.