The BACOP regimen for aggressive histologic forms of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was designed to address problematic clinical scenarios that were largely unsolved at the time. This regimen, developed by a team of investigators, was a five-drug combination that included bleomycin, vincristine, procarbazine, and prednisone. The regimen was designed to offer long-term disease-free survival and cure, particularly in patients with advanced-stage non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

In the past, diffuse large-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (diffuse histiocytic lymphoma in previous terminology), typically presenting in advanced stage, was an almost invariably fatal disease. A new form of combination chemotherapy, described in this manuscript, was designed to combat the pattern of early relapse that thwarted efforts of tumor control with other regimens. The results of this trial confirmed that complete remissions with chemotherapy could not only be achieved, but that such responses are associated with long-term disease-free survival in most cases.

The BACOP regimen has been largely superseded by the other forms of combination chemotherapy that have come into favor during the years. Whether any of the new regimens provide a significantly higher level of efficacy relative to BACOP is a subject of discussion. One of the problems that plague this area of clinical investigation is the lack of properly designed controlled trials that compare therapies in patient groups with equivalent prognostic features.

The publication of our results with BACOP provided confirmatory evidence that complete remission in the aggressive forms of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, of very advanced stage, could be achieved with combination chemotherapy. In addition, long-term disease-free survival, indeed cure, could be offered for what had in the past been regarded as an almost invariably fatal disease.