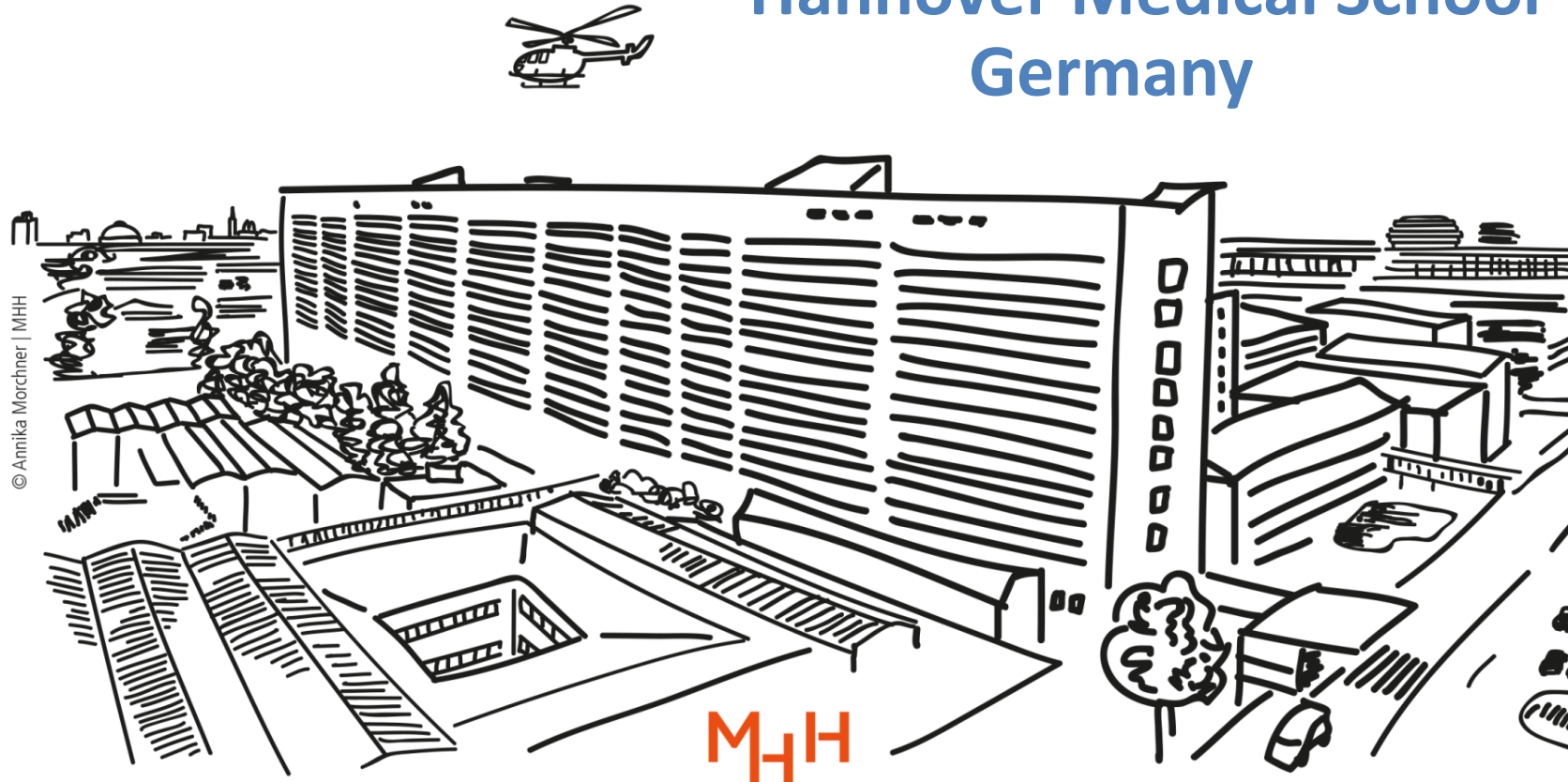


What is New in Autoimmune Liver Disease

Michael Manns
Hannover Medical School
Germany



Deutsche
_Leberstiftung
German Liver Foundation

 **European Reference Network**
for rare or low prevalence complex diseases

-  **Network**
Hepatological Diseases (ERN RARE-LIVER)
-  **Member**
Medizinische Hochschule Hannover – Deutschland

Paris Hepatology Conference, Paris, 18 March 2024

Conflict of interest

Falk Pharma, Freiburg, Germany

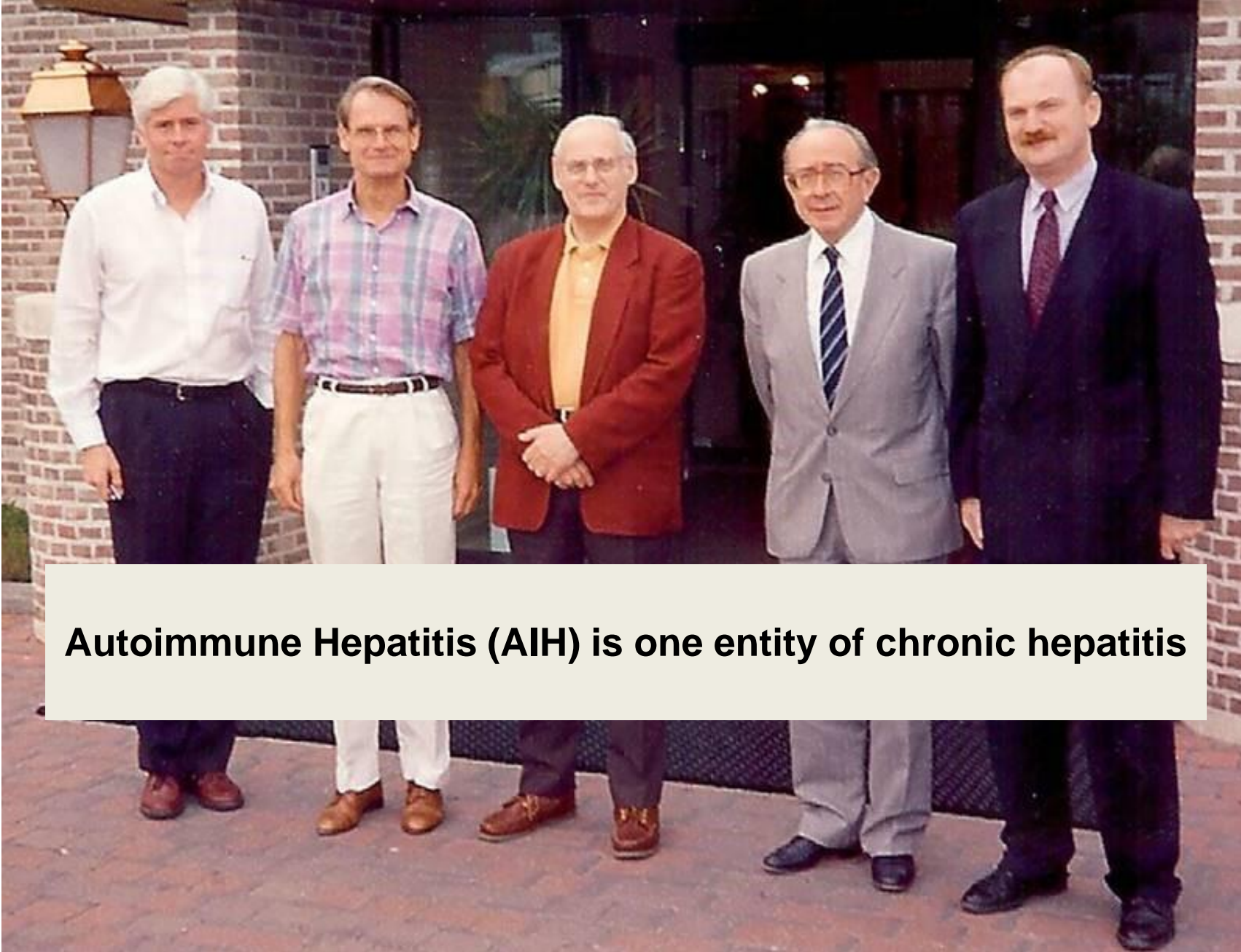
Novartis, Basel , Switzerland

Roche, Basel, Switzerland

Intercept Pharmaceuticals

Acknowledgements

- Richard Taubert, Hannover
- Bastian Engel, Hannover
- Heiner Wedemeyer, Hannover
- The AASLD 2020 AIH Practice Guidance and Guidelines writing committee

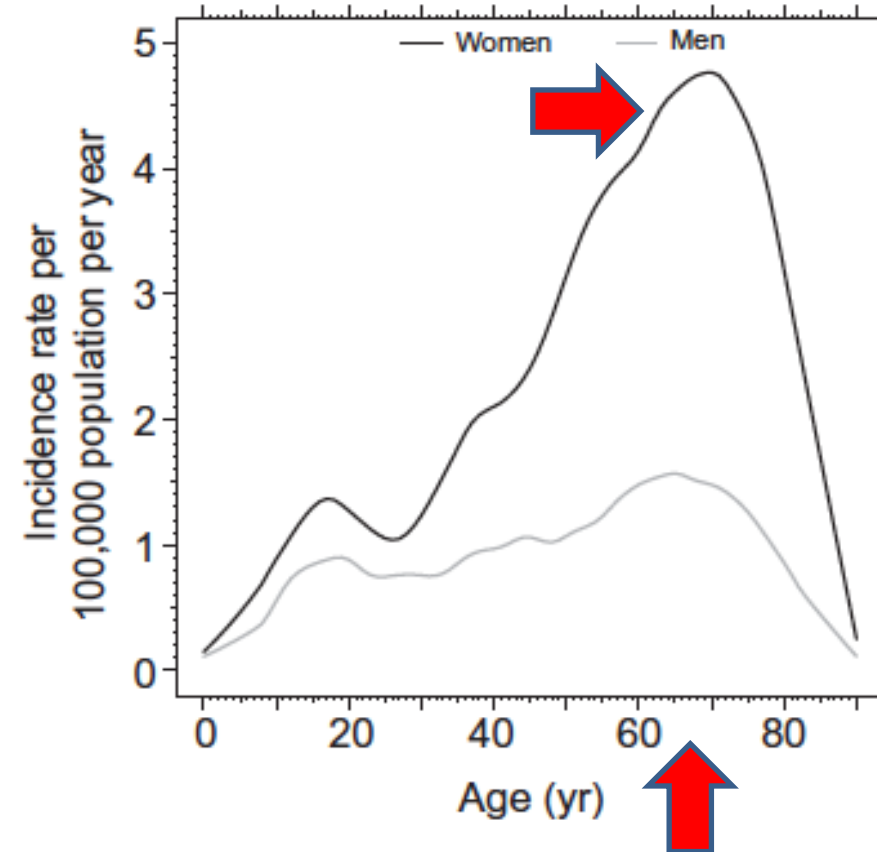
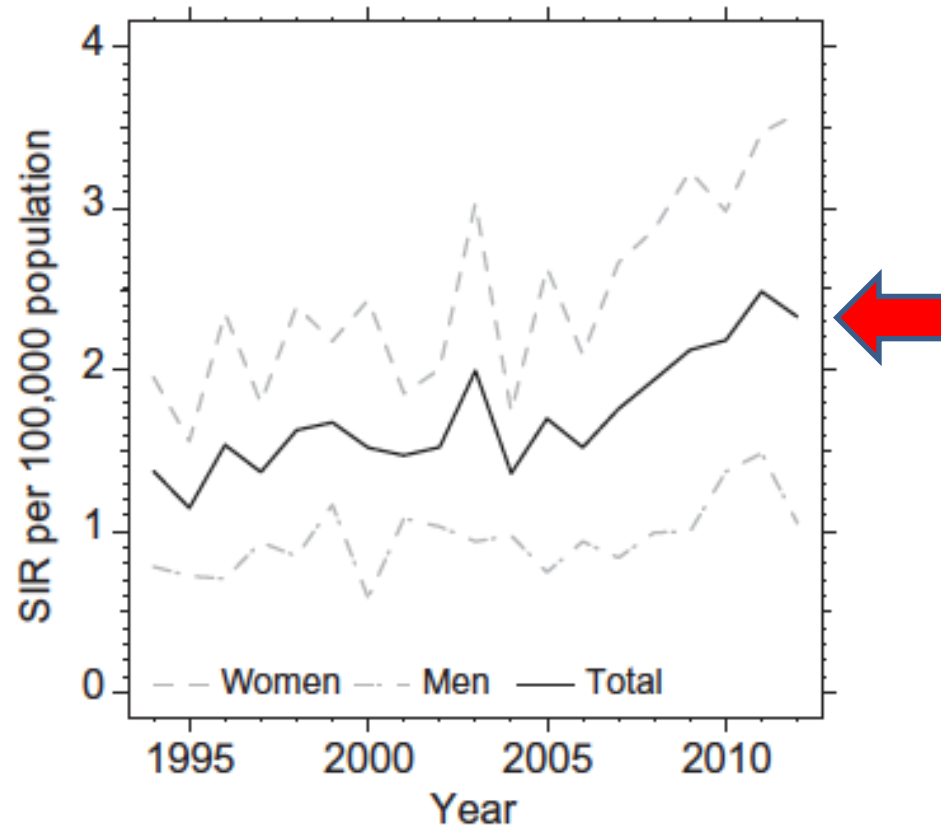


Autoimmune Hepatitis (AIH) is one entity of chronic hepatitis

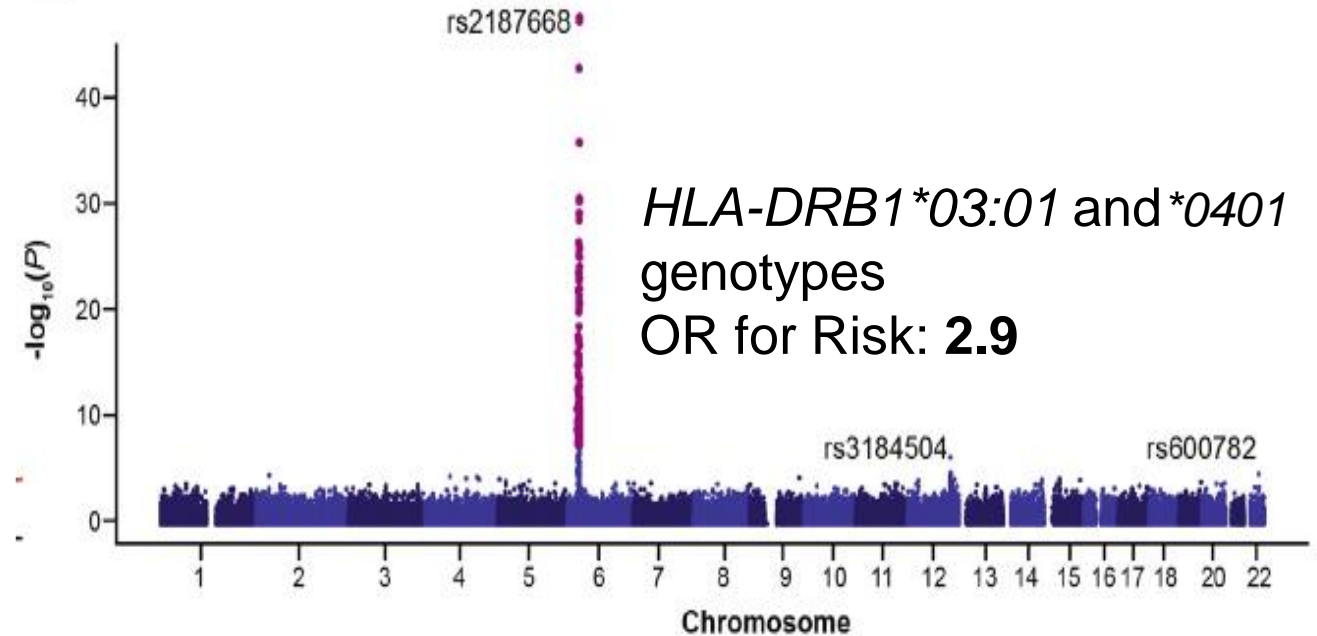
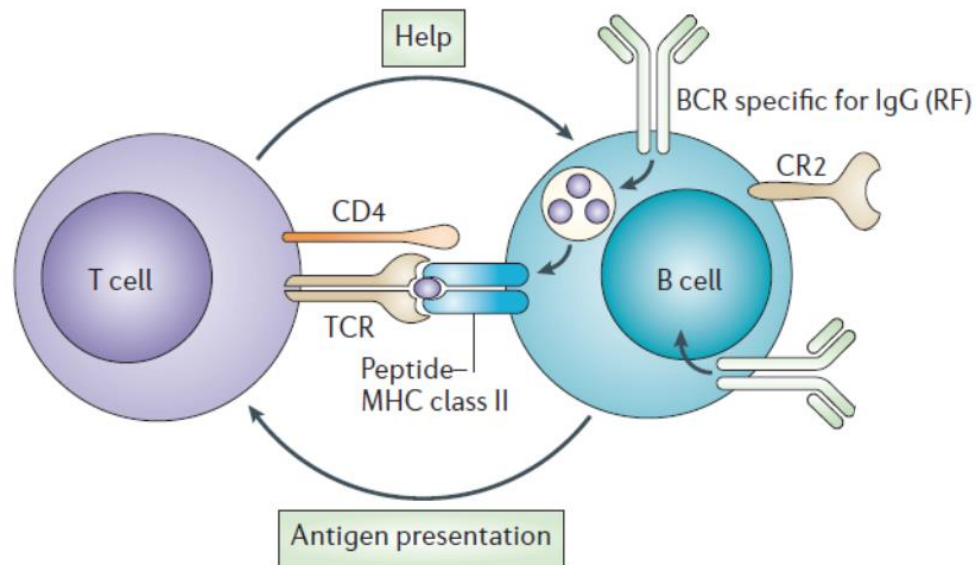
Classification of Chronic Hepatitis:
Diagnosis, Grading and Staging

Epidemiology of AIH

- Near 50% increase in incidence over the last few decades
- Occurs at all ages and within all ethnic groups around the world.



Genetic Background in AIH



Autoimmune Hepatitis Update

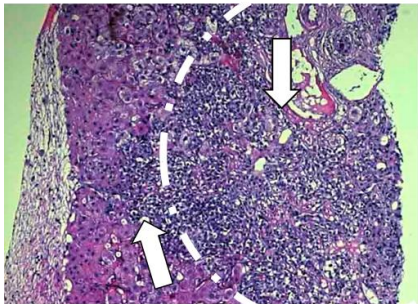
-

Diagnosis

Autoimmune Hepatitis - AIH

Hepatitis

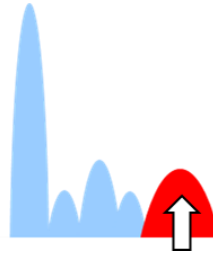
expandierte Portalfelder mit lymphoplasmazellulärem Infiltrat



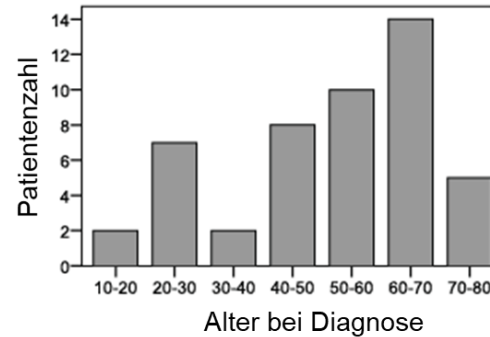
Interface-Hepatitis

zur Verfügung gestellt von Dr. J. Schlue

polyclonal Hypergamma- globulinemia

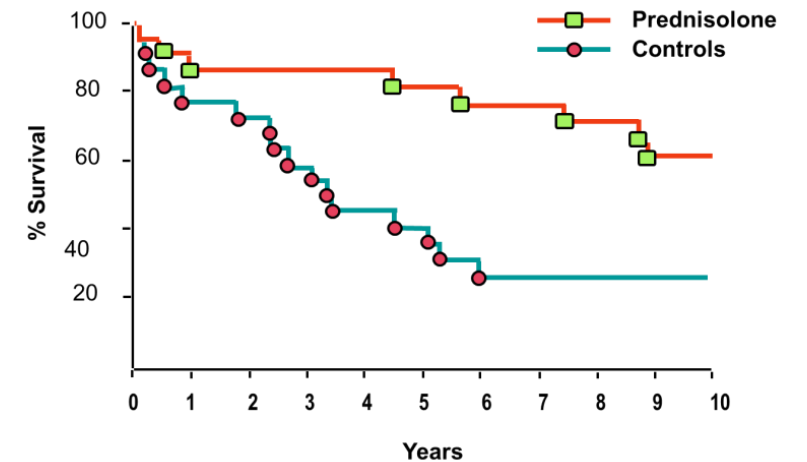


In all age groups!!!

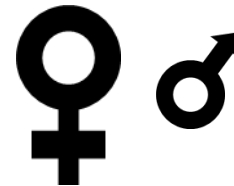
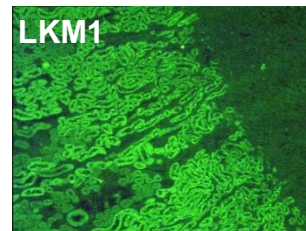
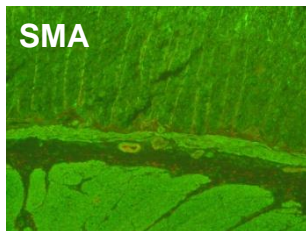
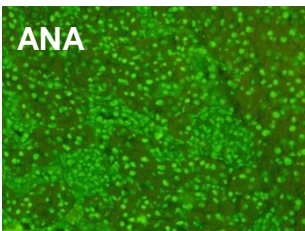


Modifiziert nach Taubert et al.
J Hepatol. 2014;61(5):1106-14

Fatal natural disease course

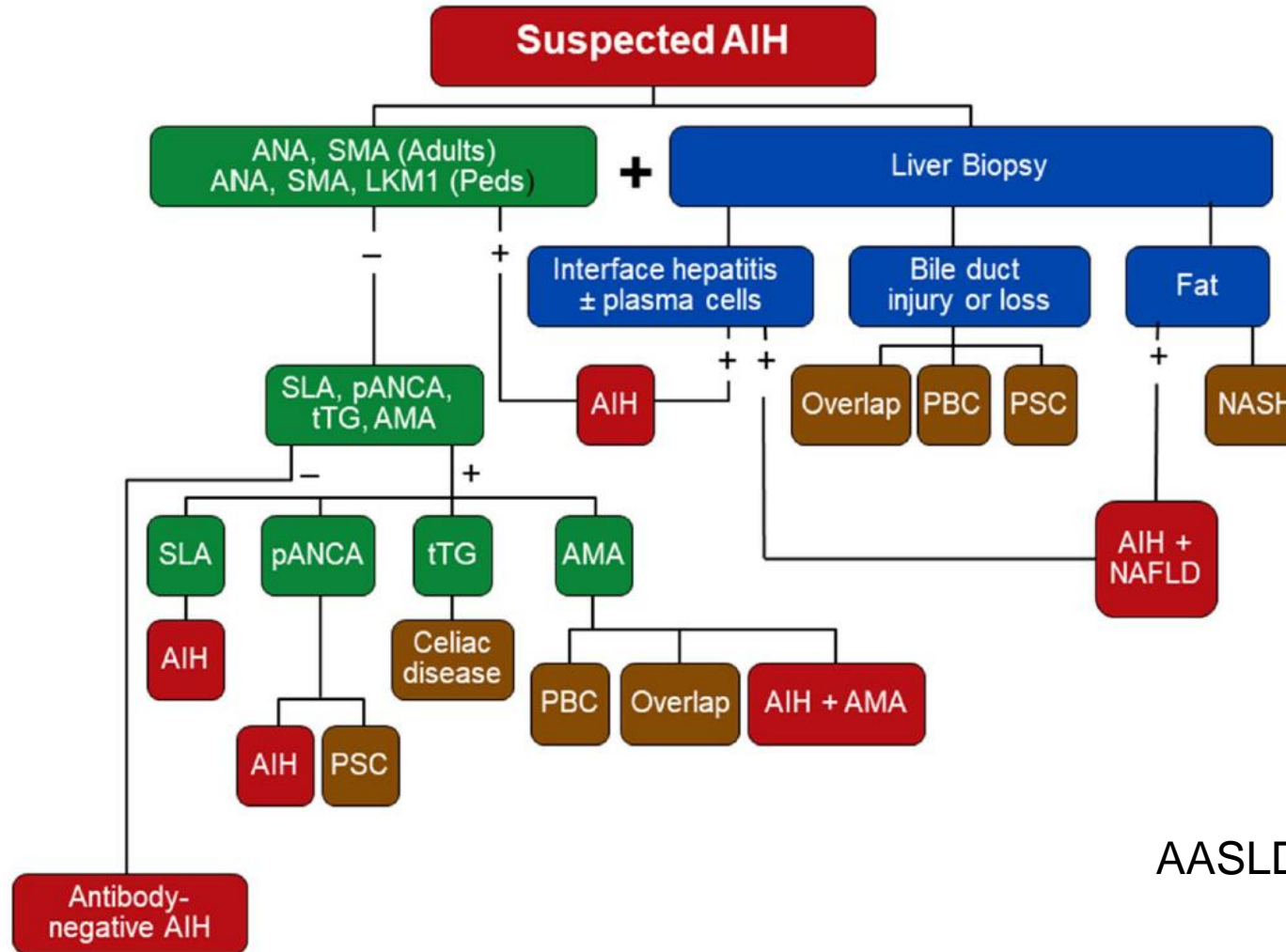


Autoantibodies



3-4:1

Diagnostic Algorithm for Autoimmune Liver Diseases: Autoantibodies and Liver Biopsy

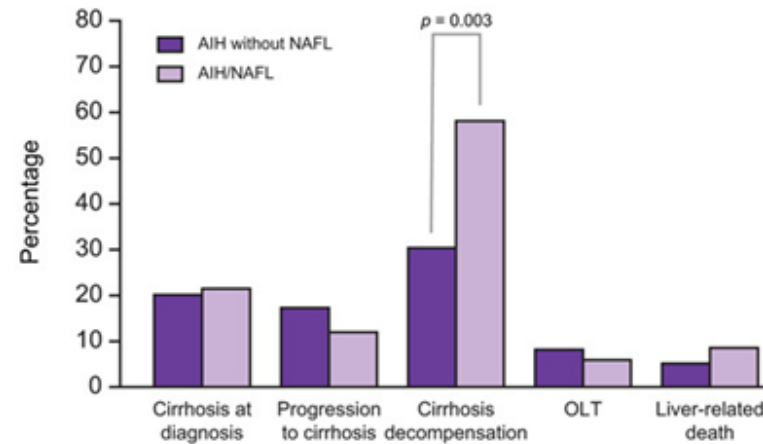
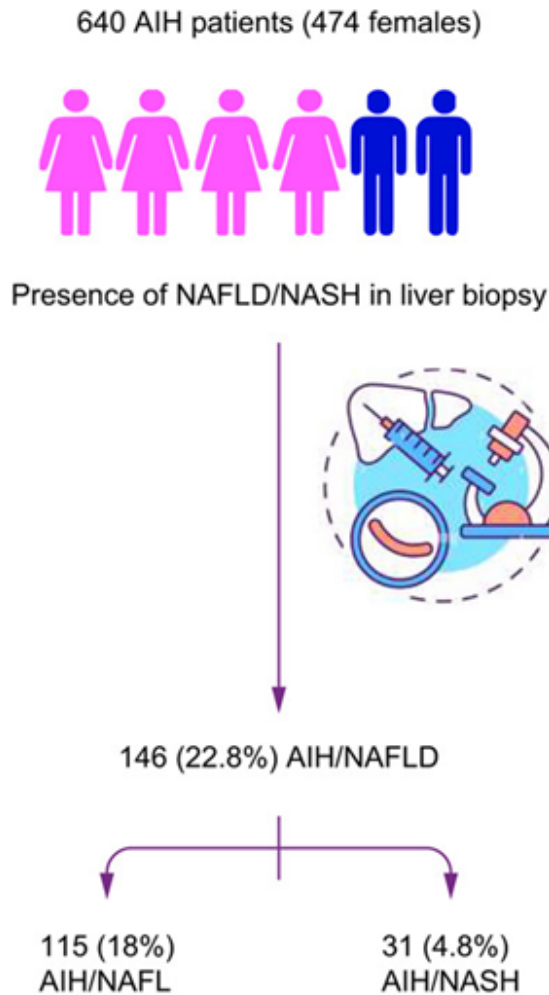


AASLD Guidelines 2020

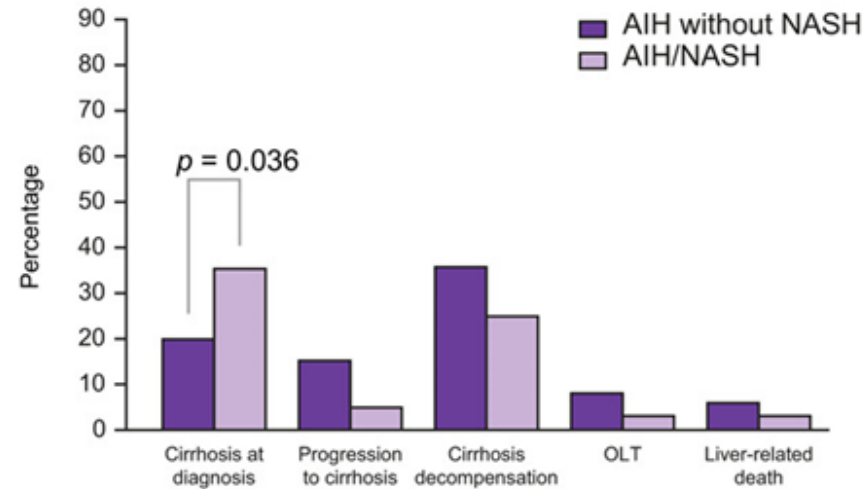
Outcome of patients with autoimmune hepatitis (AIH) and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)

MASLD !

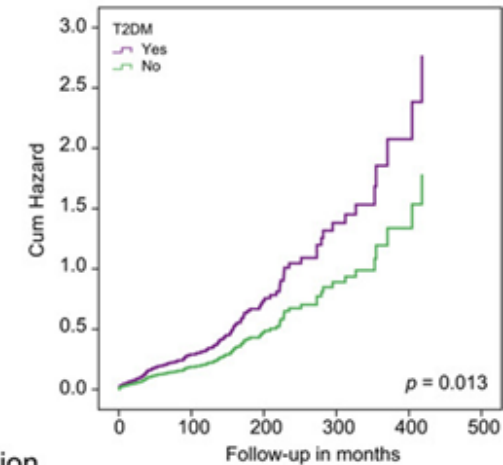
NAFLD presence or even components of MetS in patients with AIH may affect prognosis



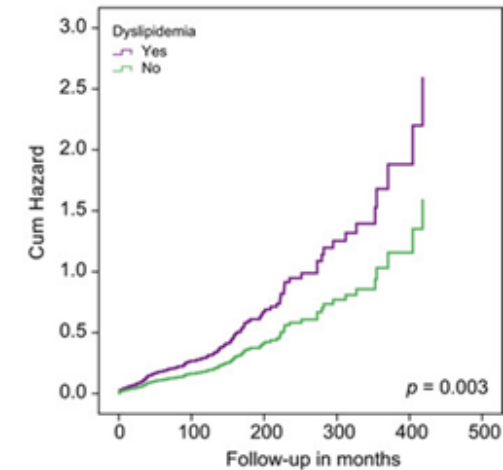
Patients with AIH/NAFL cirrhosis had higher frequency of decompensation



Patients with AIH/NASH had more frequently cirrhosis at diagnosis



Patients with T2DM and dyslipidemia had increased hazard of disease progression

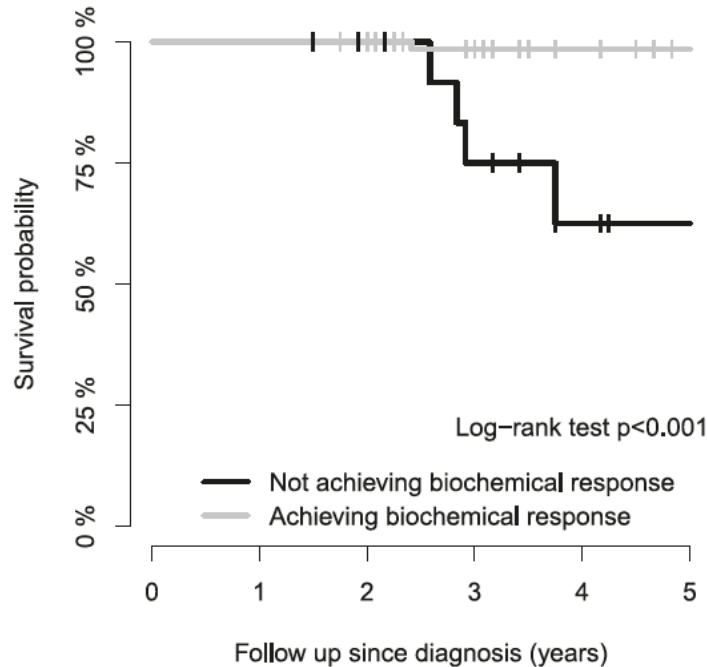


Autoimmune hepatitis

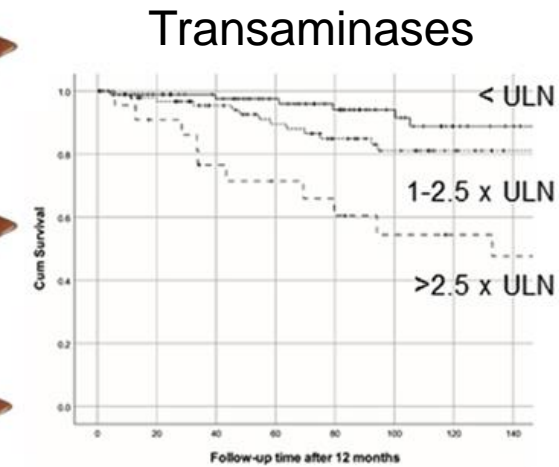
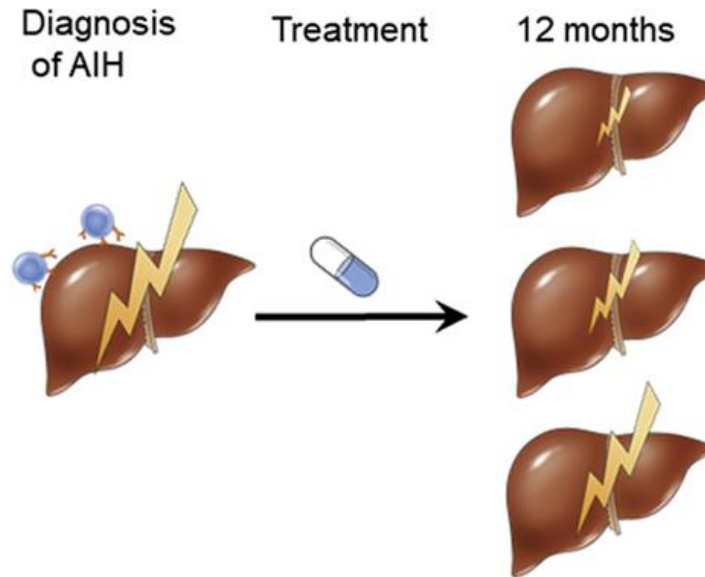
-

Treatment goals

AIH – role of biochemical remission



Not ach. BR:	18	18	18	18	14	12	9	6	4	2	2
Achieving BR:	70	70	70	70	69	64	63	57	55	54	51



Independent of:

Age

Cirrhosis

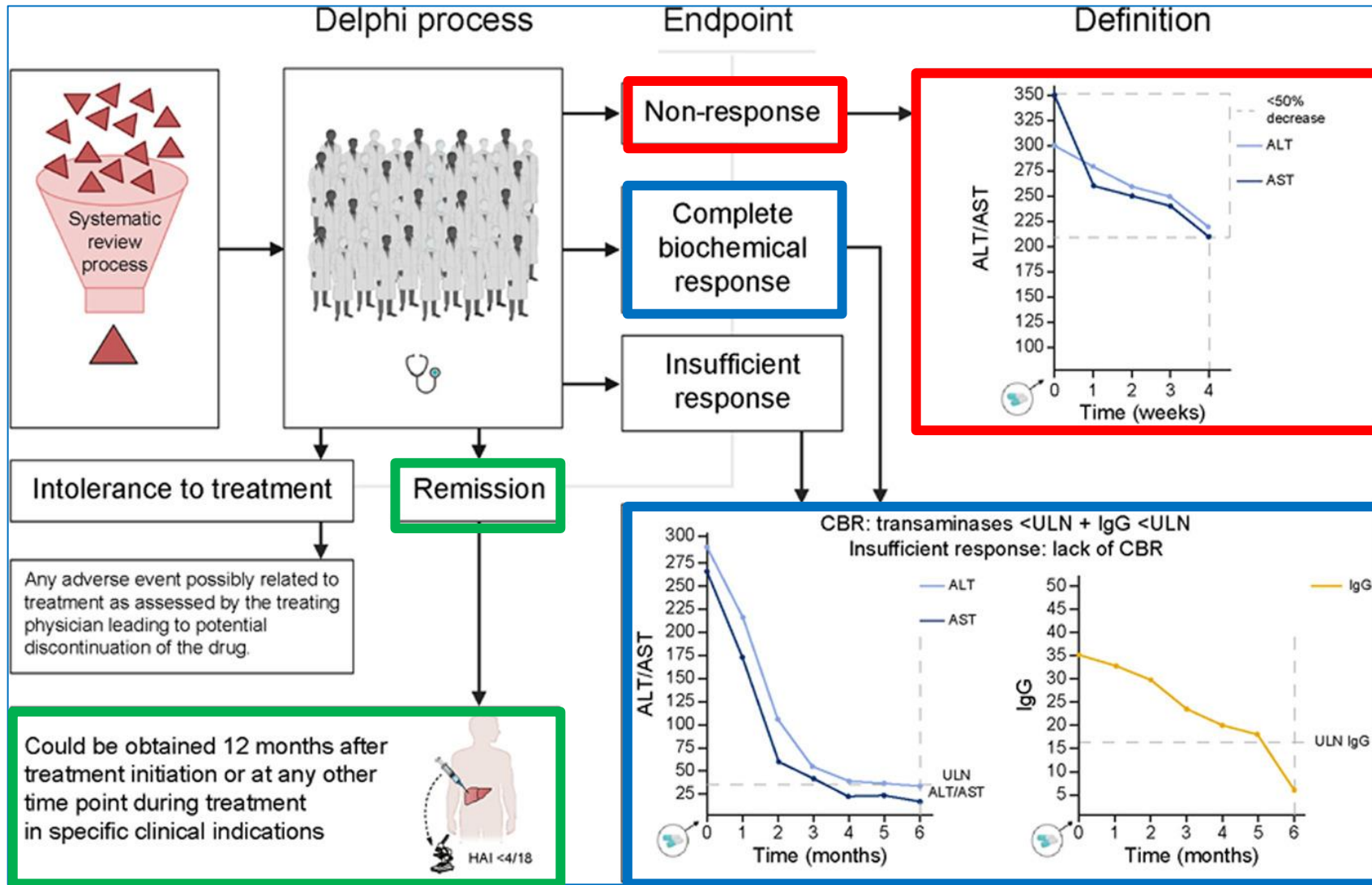
Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Blewenga et al. Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology, 2021.

A. Gerussi, N. Halliday and F. Saffioti et al., Digestive and Liver Disease, 2020.

Goal: Normalization of ALT, AST, IgG*

Definition of treatment endpoints



Lack of complete biochemical response (normal ALT/AST and IgG) at 6 months is associated with liver-related adverse outcome in autoimmune hepatitis

Study design



IAIHG-Retrospective Registry cohort study



2559 AIH patients
38 centers
7 countries

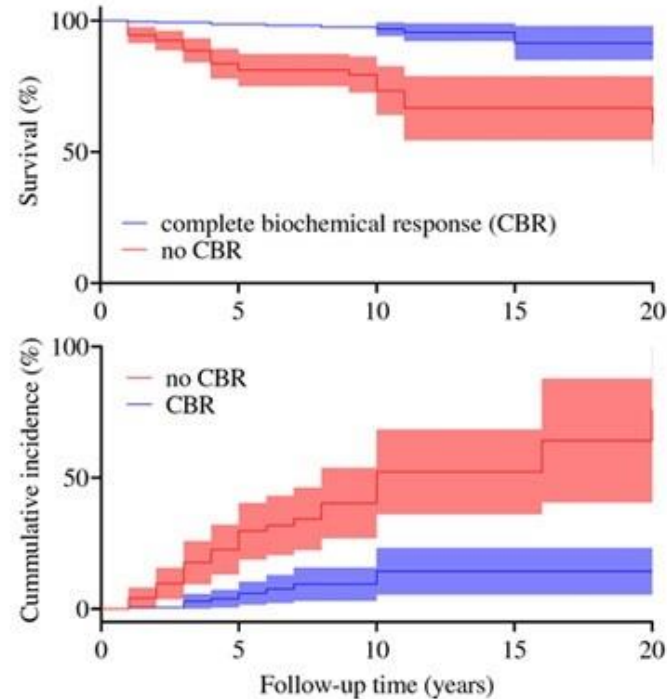


Quality control



Clinical characteristics, treatment response and follow-up

Survival analysis



Key findings



The IAIHG-RR registry is a suitable platform for patient selection in future studies



Lack of complete biochemical response to treatment, non-white ethnicity, cirrhosis and PSC-AIH are associated with liver-related death and liver transplantation

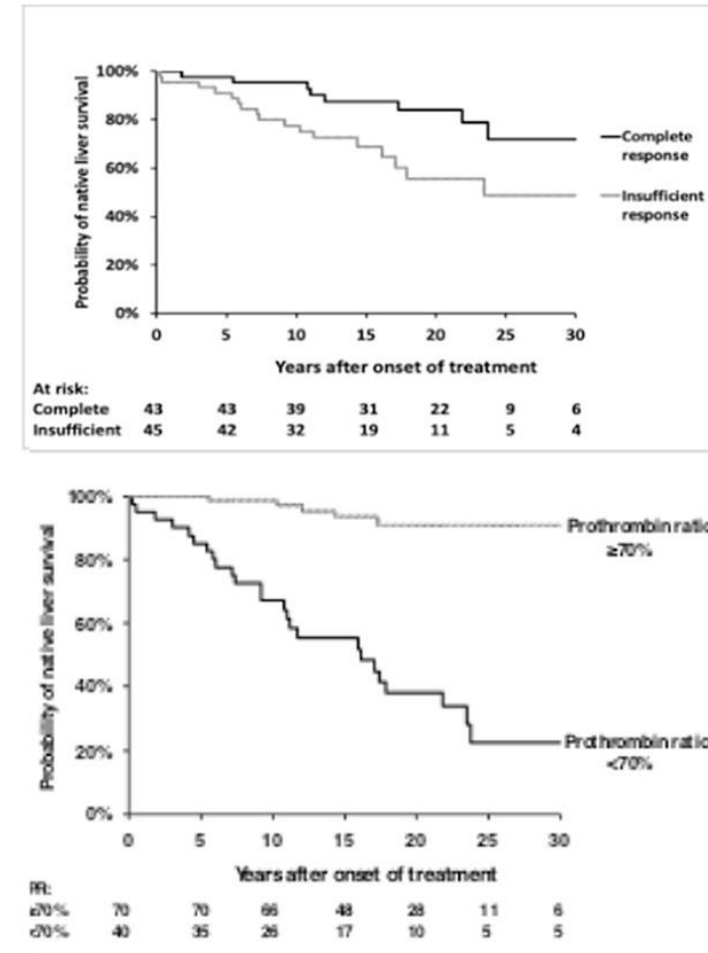
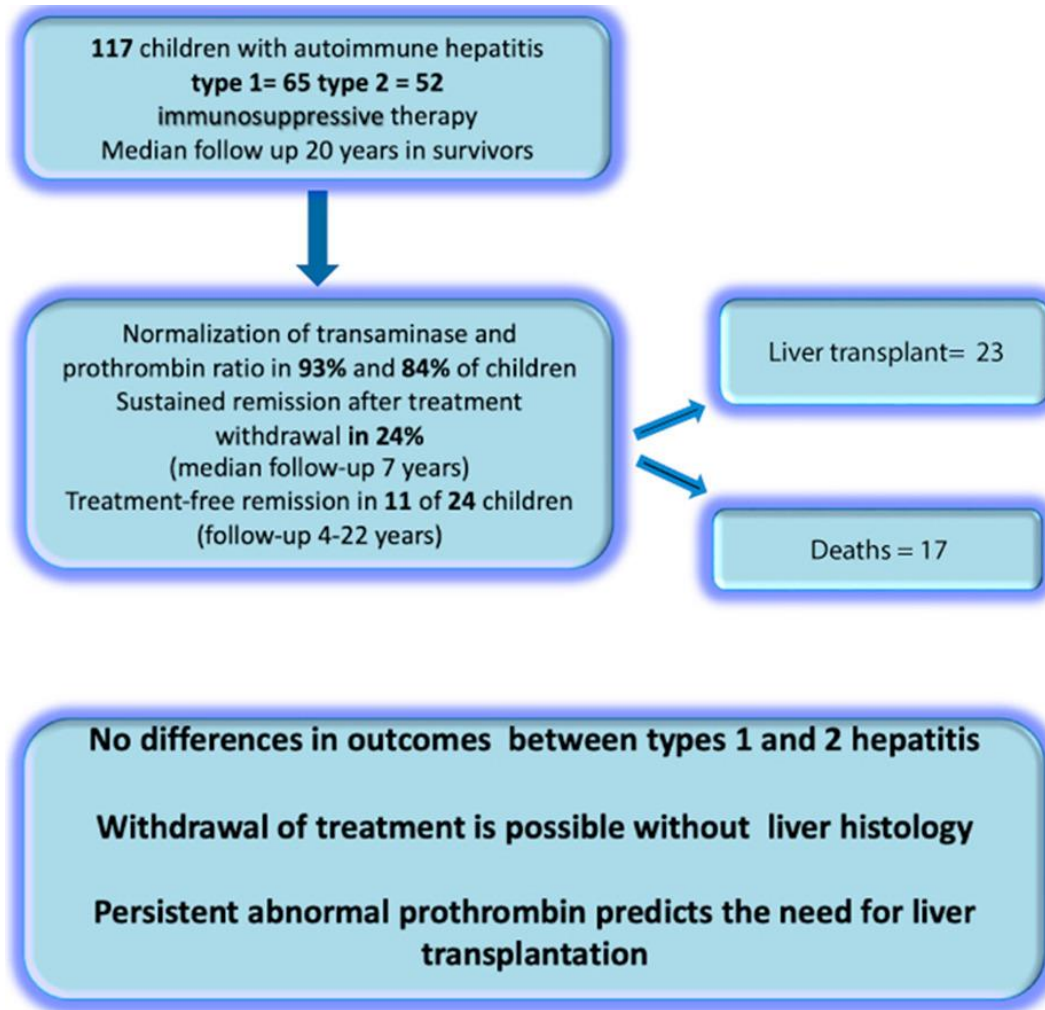


Lack of complete biochemical response to treatment is associated with cirrhosis development

Slooter et al. Hepatology. 2024;79:538–550
DOI: 10.1097/HEP.0000000000000589

HEPATOLOGY

AIH – role of biochemical remission in children



Autoimmune hepatitis

-

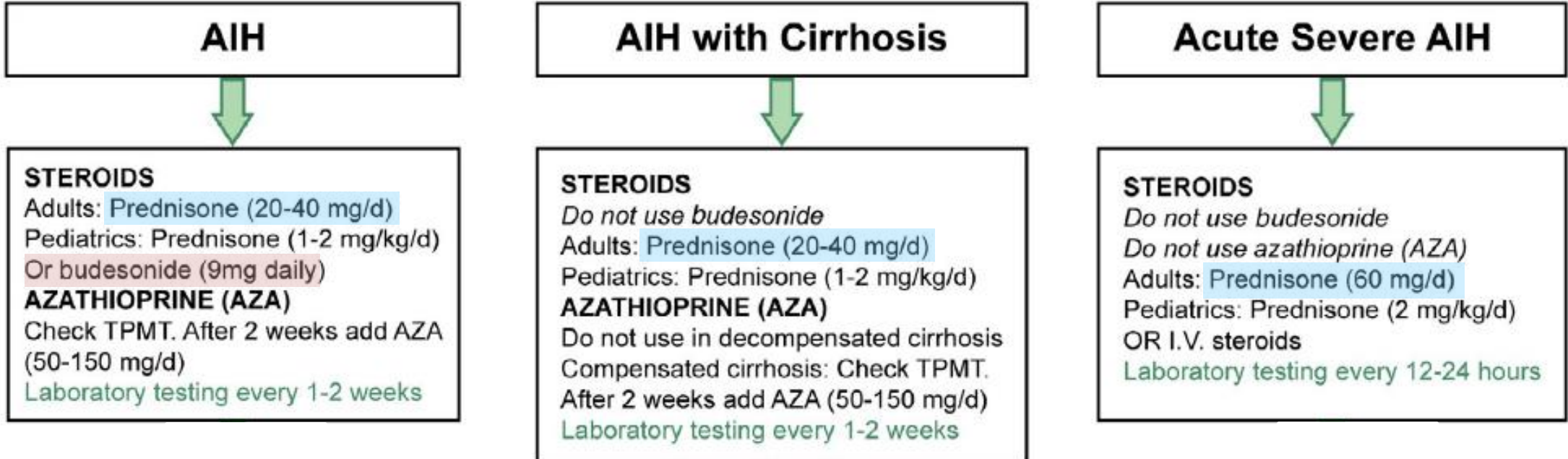
Therapy

-

First line therapy

Induction therapy of AIH

First-Line Treatment of AIH



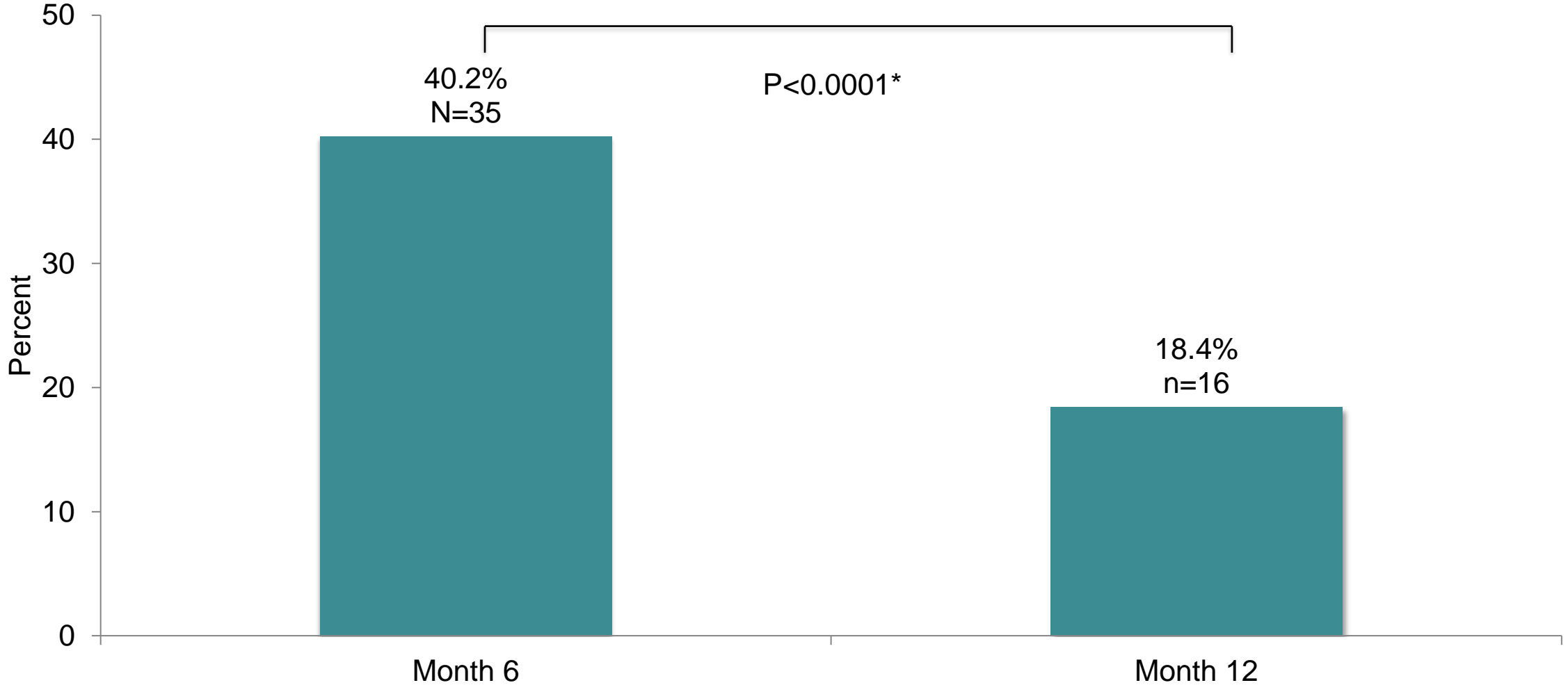
Mack, ..., Manns, ... et al. *Hepatology*, VOL . 72, NO. 2, 2020: 671-722 (AASLD Guideline)

*acute severe AIH
(jaundice, INR 1.5-2,
no HE, first manifestaton)*

Frequency and Nature of Side Effects (Adults)

Prednisone-Related Side Effects		Azathioprine-Related Side Effects	
Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency
<u>Cosmetic (usually mild)</u> Facial rounding, Weight gain, Dorsal hump striae, Hirsutism, Alopecia	80% (after 2 years)	Hematologic (mild) Cytopenia	46% (especially with cirrhosis)
<u>Somatic (usually mild)</u> Emotional Instability, Glucose intolerance, Cataract			
<u>Somatic (severe)</u> Osteopenia, Vertebral compression, Diabetes (brittle), Psychosis, Hypertension (labile)	13% (Treatment ending)	Hematologic (severe) Leukopenia Thrombocytopenia	6% (Treatment ending)
<u>Inflammatory/Neoplastic</u> Pancreatitis, Opportunistic infection, Malignancy	Rare	Somatic (mild) Nausea, Emesis, Rash, Fever, Arthralgias	5%
		Neoplastic	3% (after 10 years)
		Hematologic /enteric Bone marrow failure, villous atrophy, Malabsorption	Rare
		Teratogenic	Rare (theoretical)

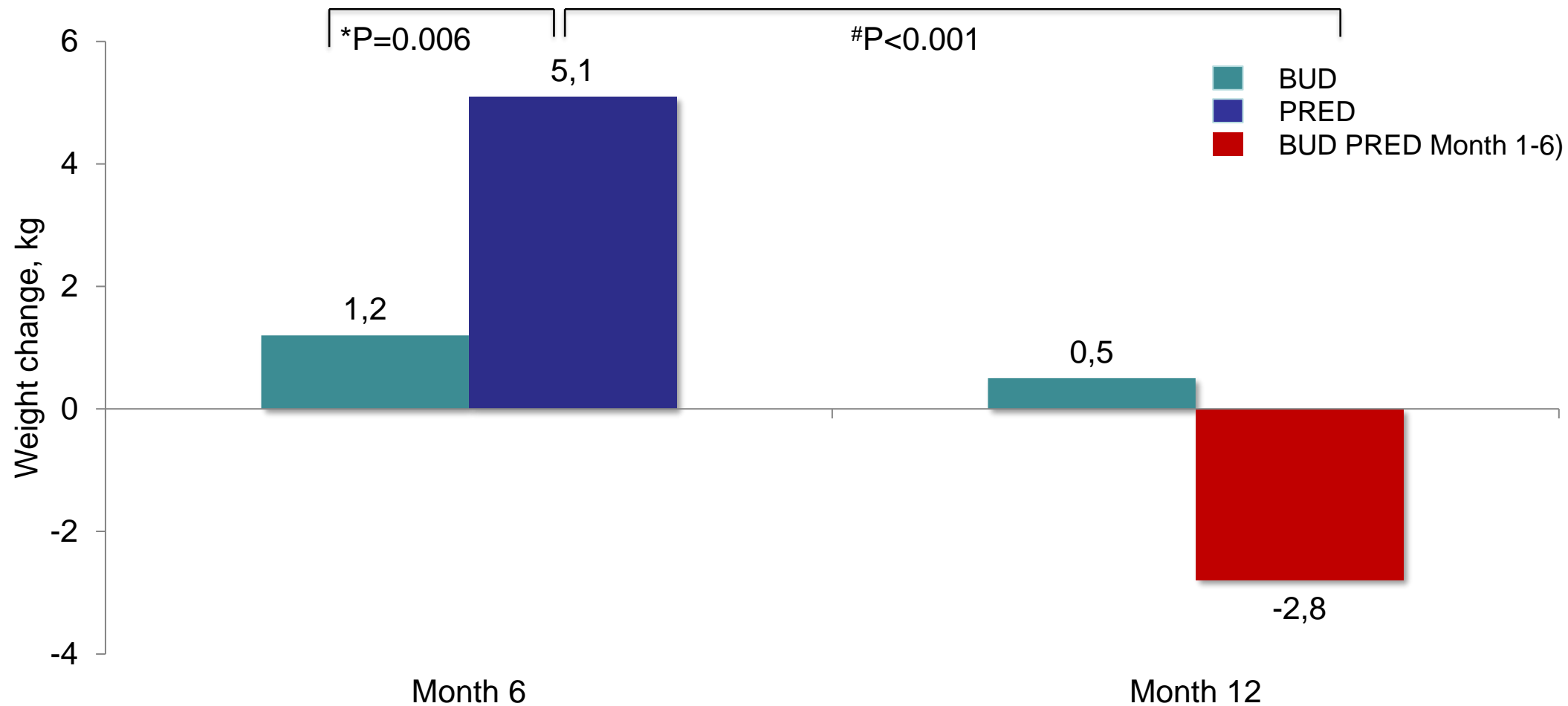
Decrease Of Steroid Specific Side Effects In Patients Switched From Prednisone To Budesonide (n=87)



*McNemar's test for paired proportions

European AIH-BUC Pediatric Subanalysis

Mean weight change at Months 6 and 12

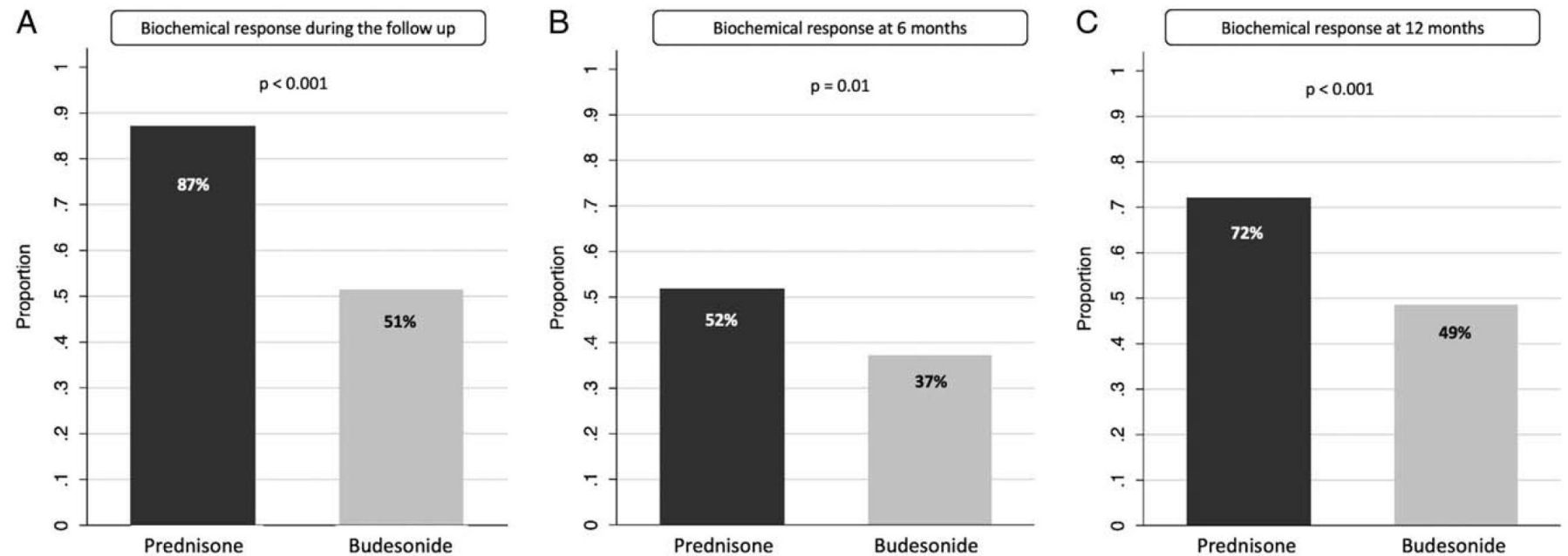


46 pts in 5 Pediatric Centers

*Two sample t-test (two-sided). # Paired t-test

Budesonide in a Spanish real world cohort

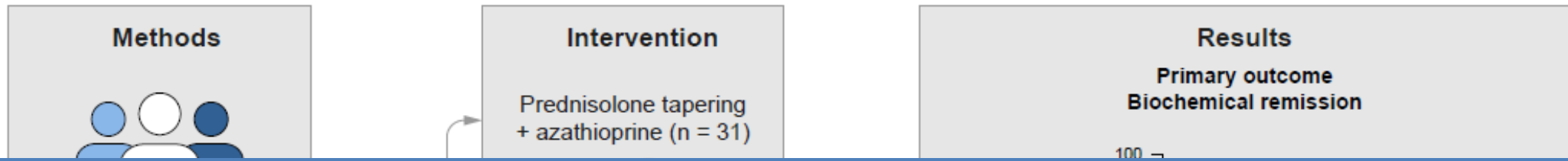
- Retrospective multicenter study
- 105 Budesonide
- 276 Prednisone



Rate of steroid intake	n.a.	79%	68%	66%	41%
		$p=0.057$		$P<0.001$	

- transaminases $<2 \times$ upper limit of normal: similar BR in both treatment groups
- Prednisone with higher adverse events (24.2% vs. 15.9%, $p = 0.047$).

Mycophenolate as superior first line therapy ?



- MMF combined with prednisolone is effective in first-line therapy for achieving biochemical remission
- Inferior efficacy and tolerability of Pred + Aza vs. Pred + MMF in AIH
- MMF has a more favorable tolerability than azathioprine (<SAE, <cessations)



Autoimmune Hepatitis

Second Line Therapy

First Meta-Analyses for AIH 2017-2019

Study	Study cohort	Patients	Drugs	Treatment response	Adverse events (AE)	Conclusion	
Yu et al. 2019	Meta-Analysis of 7 studies	MMF as first line therapy	583	MMF+prednisone Standard of care (SOC)	ALT/AST normalization: 55-89% vs 33-87% (p < 0.05) IgG normalization: 62-89% (p < 0.01) non-response 6-33% (p < 0.01) AST/ALT/IgG normalization: 33-87% non-response 15-67% (p < 0.01)		MMF+Pred superior to SOC
De Lemos-Bonotto et al. 2018	Meta-Analysis of 15 studies	Second line therapy agents	283	MMF+prednisone Tacrolimus+prednisone Ciclosporin+prednisone	improvement of aminotransferases 79% histological remission 89% improvement of aminotransferases 94% improvement of aminotransferases 91%	liver transplantation 11% mortality 7 %	Tac+Pred best for improvement of aminotranferases
Santiago et al. 2019	Meta-Analysis of 12 studies	MMF as second line therapy	397	MMF 0.5-4.0 g/d	pooled response rate 58% (82% intolerance to SOC; 32% in nonresponders)	pooled AE rate 14% pooled discontinuation rate due to side effects 8%	switch to MMF was effective (better for intolerance than for non response)
Zizzo et al. 2017	Meta-Analysis of 15 studies	Second line therapy agents in children	76	MMF Ciclosporin Tacrolimus	normalization of ALT/AST at 6 months: 36% normalization of ALT/AST at 6 months: 83% normalization of ALT/AST at 6 months: 50%	pooled estimates for AE: 45% pooled estimates for AE: 78% pooled estimates for AE: 42%	CsA most effective but most AEs

None of the second line therapies for AIH treatment failure are approved yet !

873-877.
b;30(2):212-216.
) :830-839.
(1):6-15.

AIH Guideline Recommendations : 2nd Line Therapy

*In children or adults with AIH who have treatment failure, incomplete response, or drug intolerance to first-line agents, **the AASLD suggests the use of MMF or TAC to achieve and maintain biochemical remission** (conditional recommendation, low certainty).*

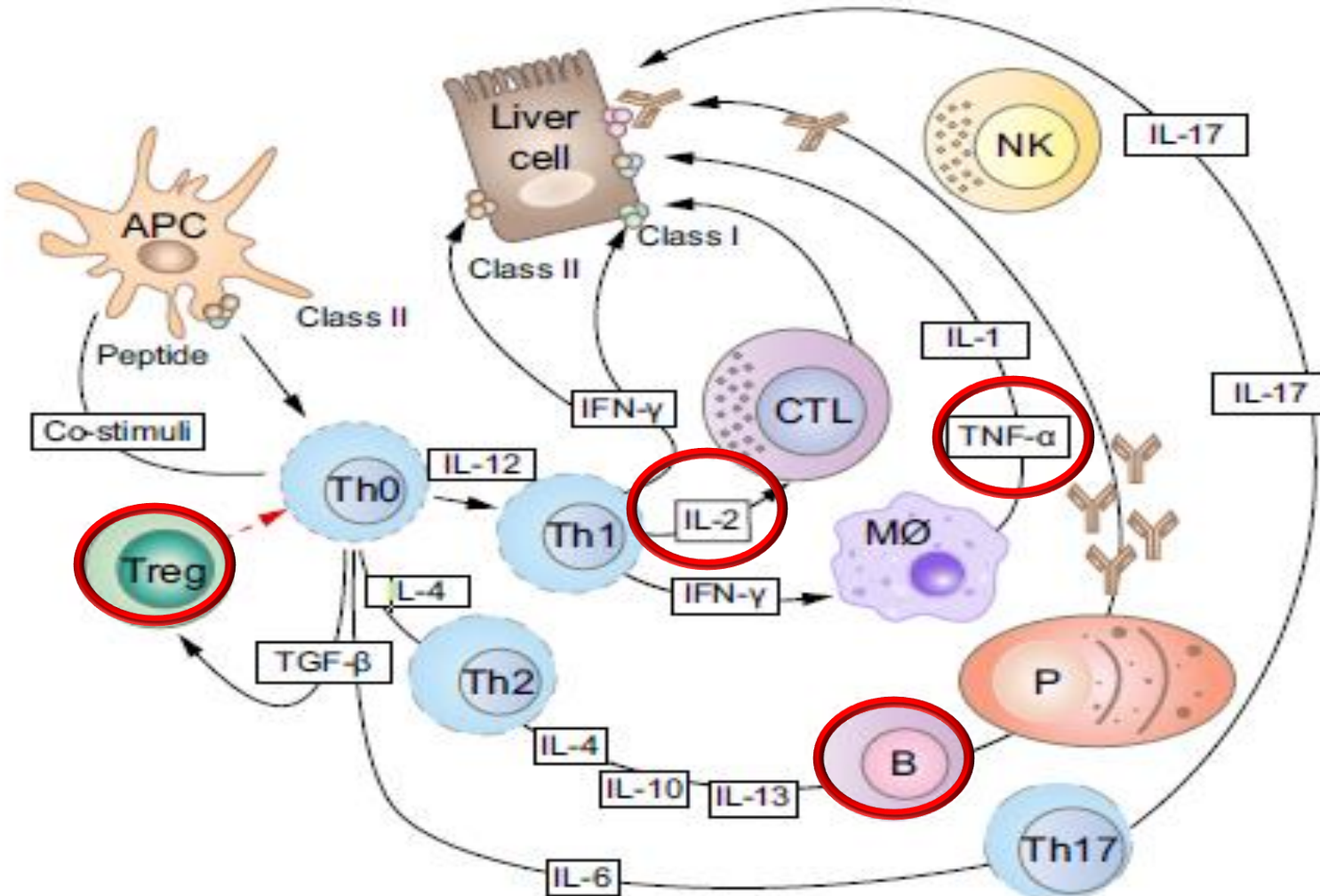
*Based on a superior ease of use and side-effect profile, **the AASLD suggests a trial of MMF over TAC as the initial second-line agent in patients with AIH** (conditional recommendation, very low certainty).*

Mack,...., Manns,.... et al. Hepatology 72, 2020: 671-722 (AASLD Guidelines)

Autoimmune Hepatitis

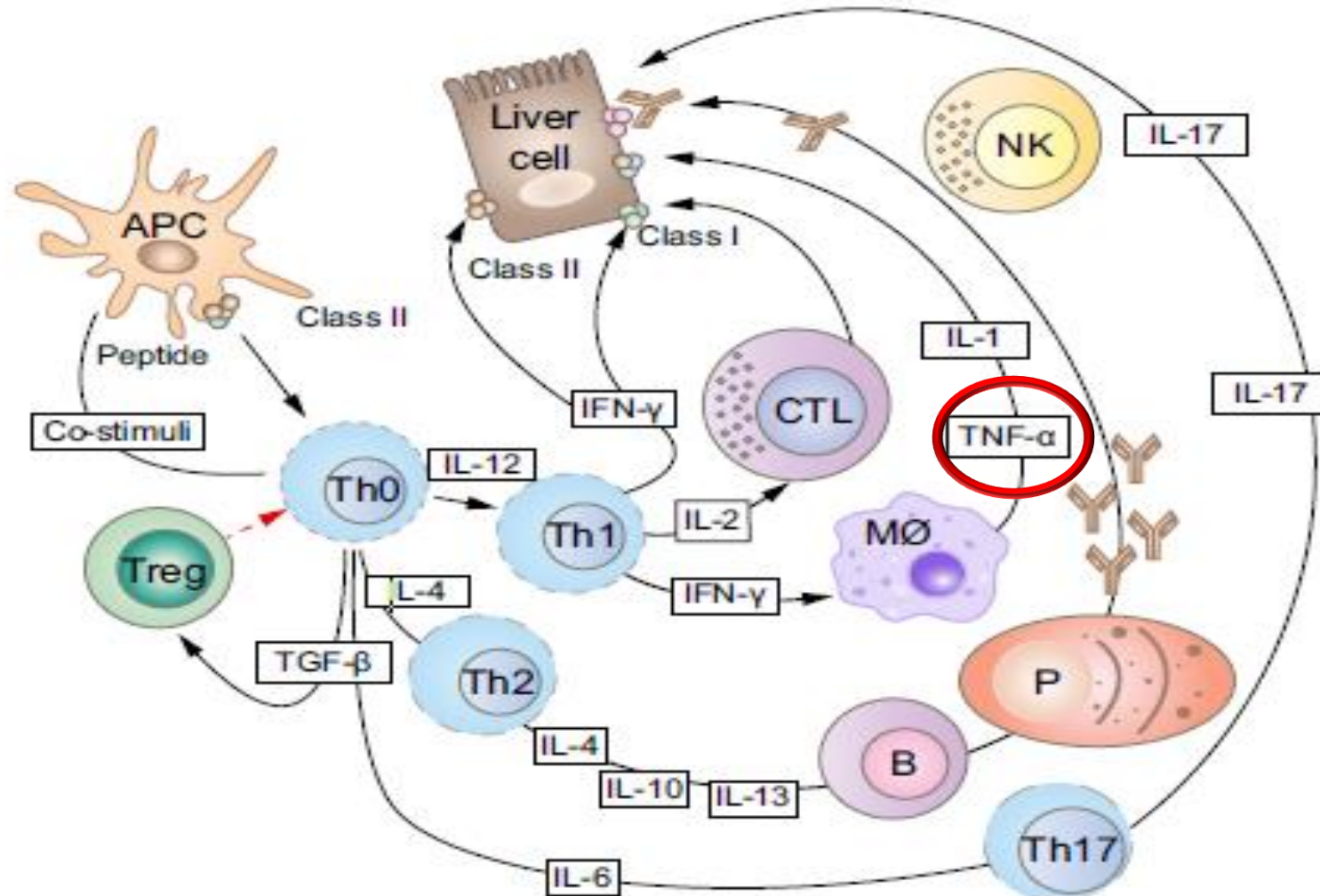
Third Line Therapy

Molecular Pathogenesis of autoimmune hepatitis



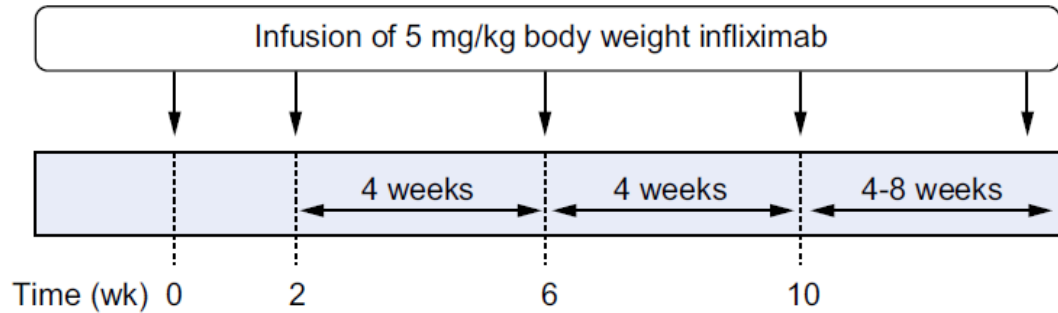
© 2017 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES WWW.AASLD.ORG

Molecular Pathogenesis of autoimmune hepatitis



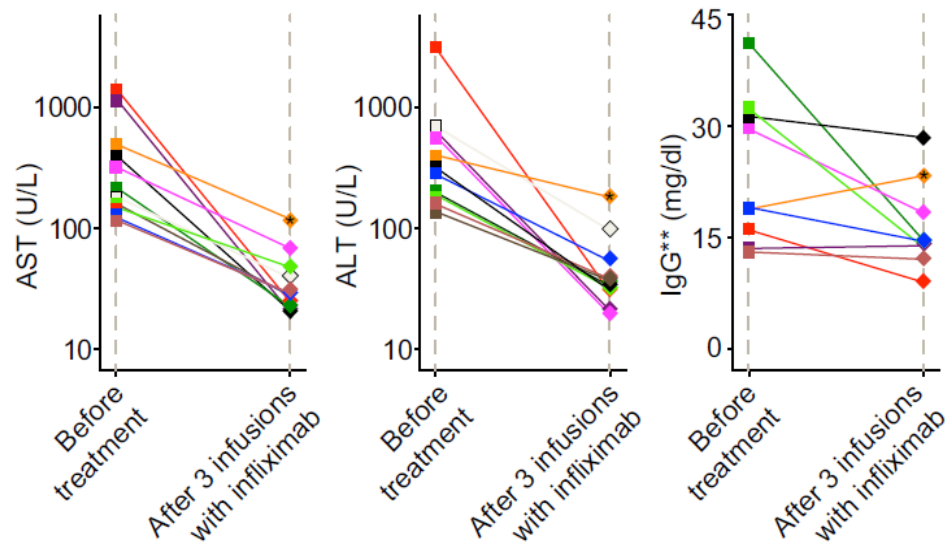
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Infliximab for difficult to manage AIH



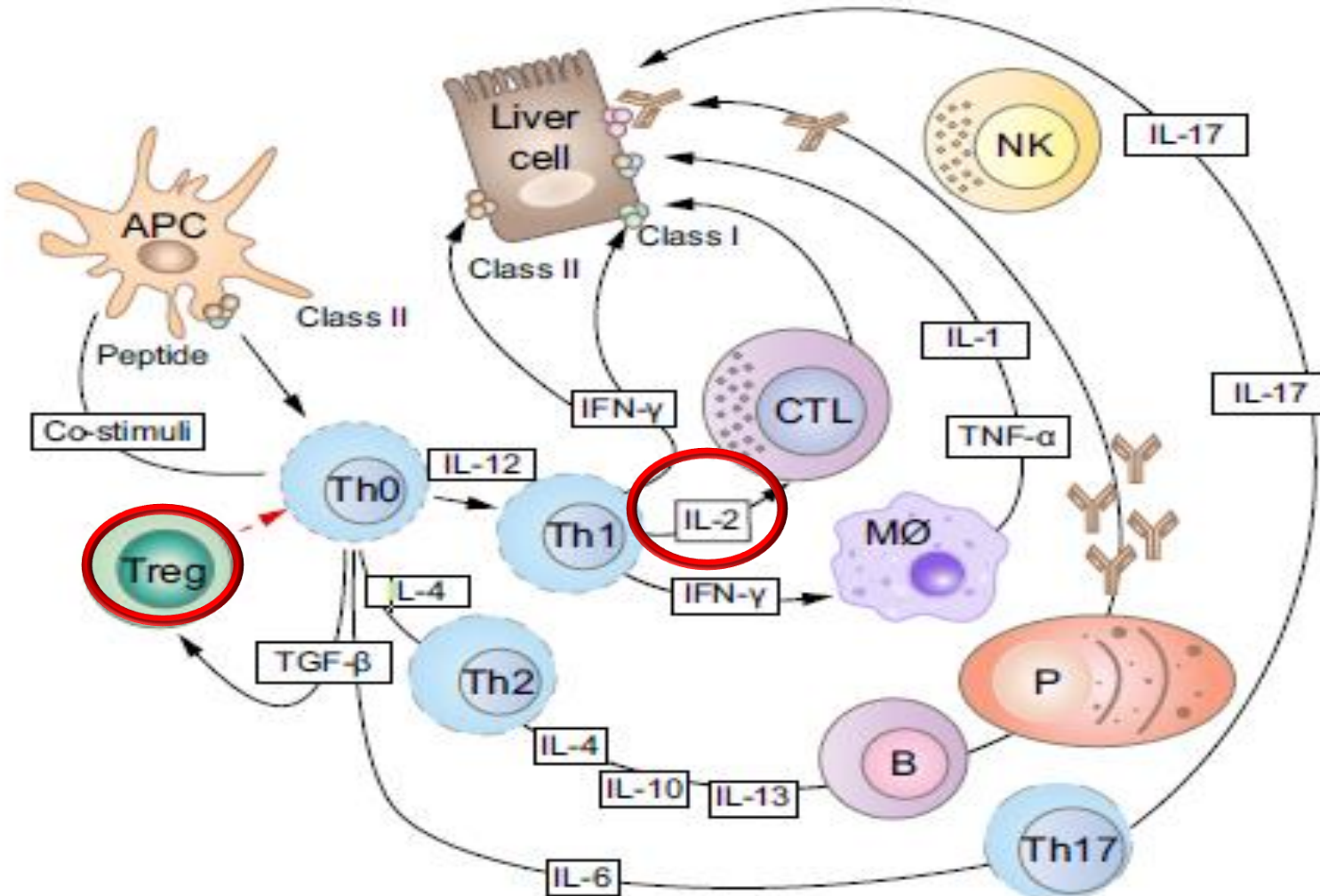
Single center study

- 11 pts. (64% cirrhosis)
- Infections in 55% of pts. (in 67% of cirrhotic pts.)



- 6/11 full remission
- 2/11 incomplete response
- 2/11 repeated full remission (on/off therapy)
- 1/11 flare after initial remission

Molecular Pathogenesis of autoimmune hepatitis

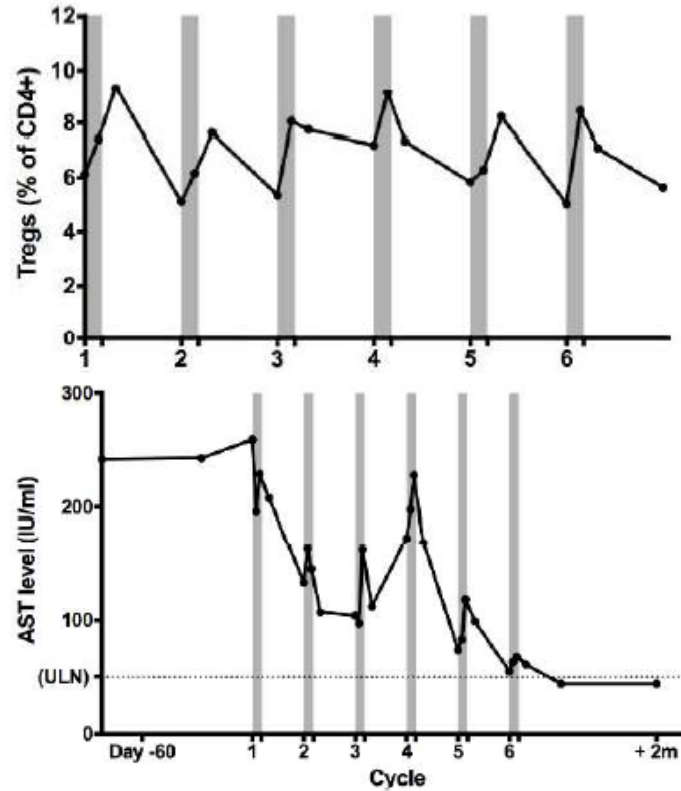
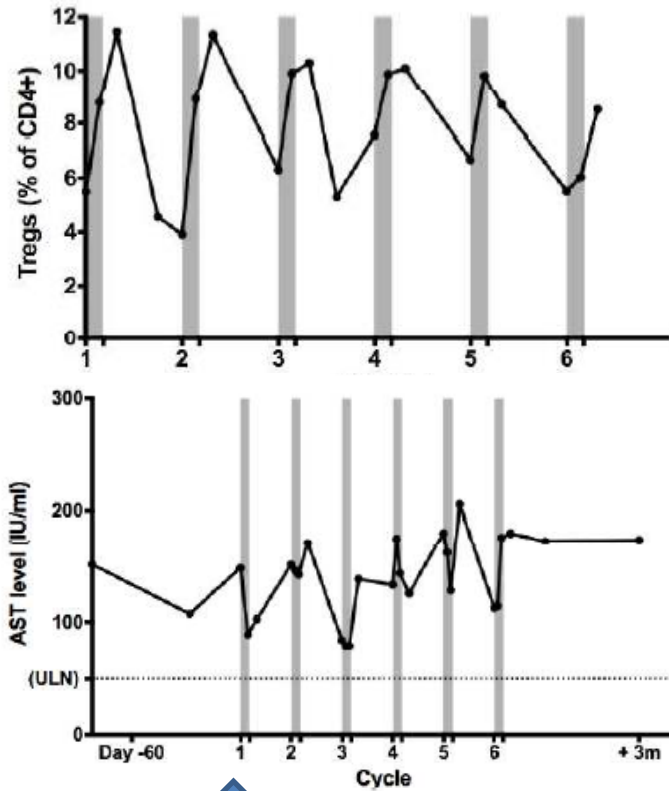


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Low dose IL-2 in AIH

female 20 yrs. with cirrhosis
(pediatric AIH-1)

female 56 yrs. with bridging fibrosis
(adult AIH-3)



IL-2 ↑



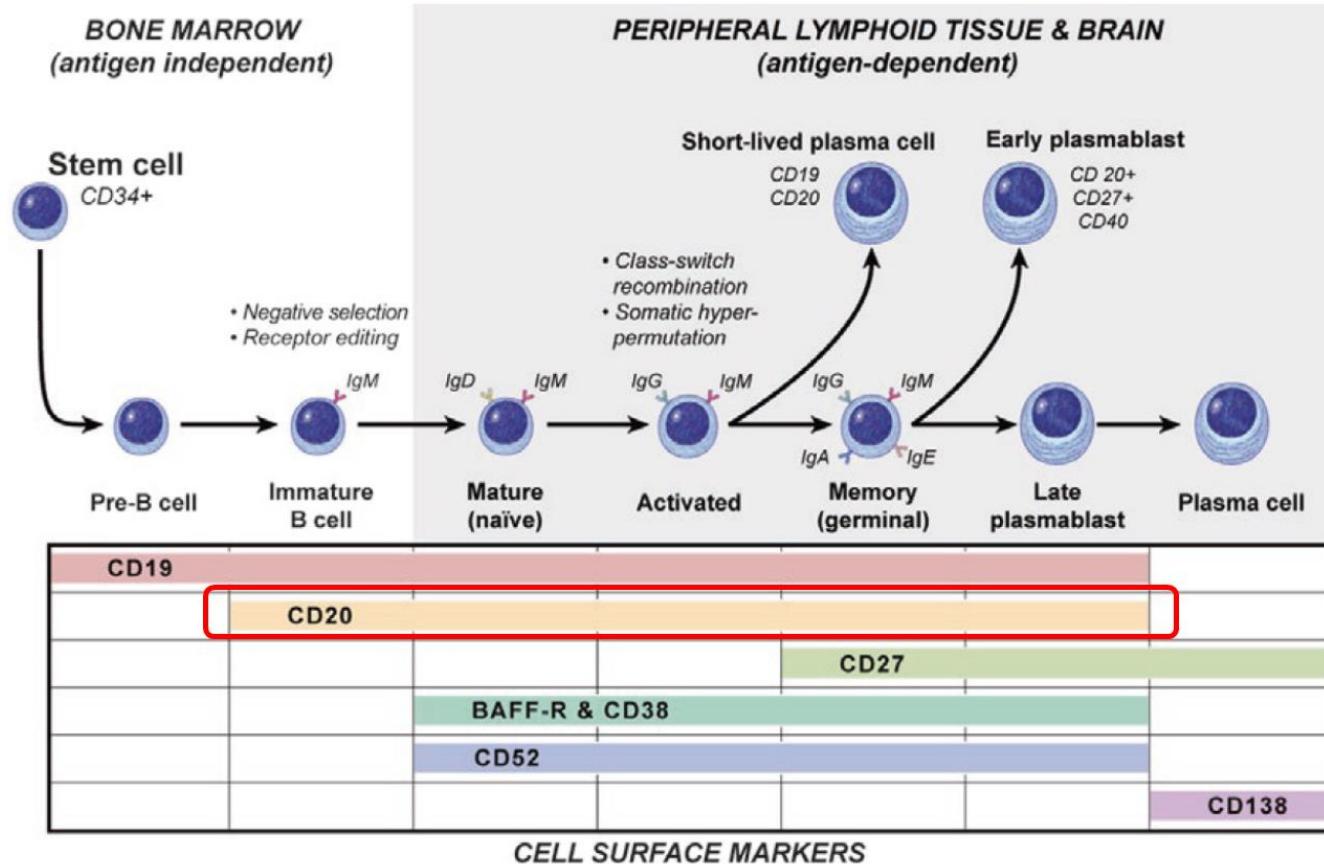
Effect of RO7049665 on the Time to Relapse Following Steroid Tapering in Participants With Autoimmune Hepatitis (AIH) - NCT04790916 (Hoffmann-Roche)

First study on IL-2/mutectin for maintenance of AIH remission after end of therapy.

(1 Mio. Units s.c. 5x/month over 6 months)

Role of B cell depletion in Autoimmune Hepatitis

B cell depletion – anti-CD20 (rituximab)

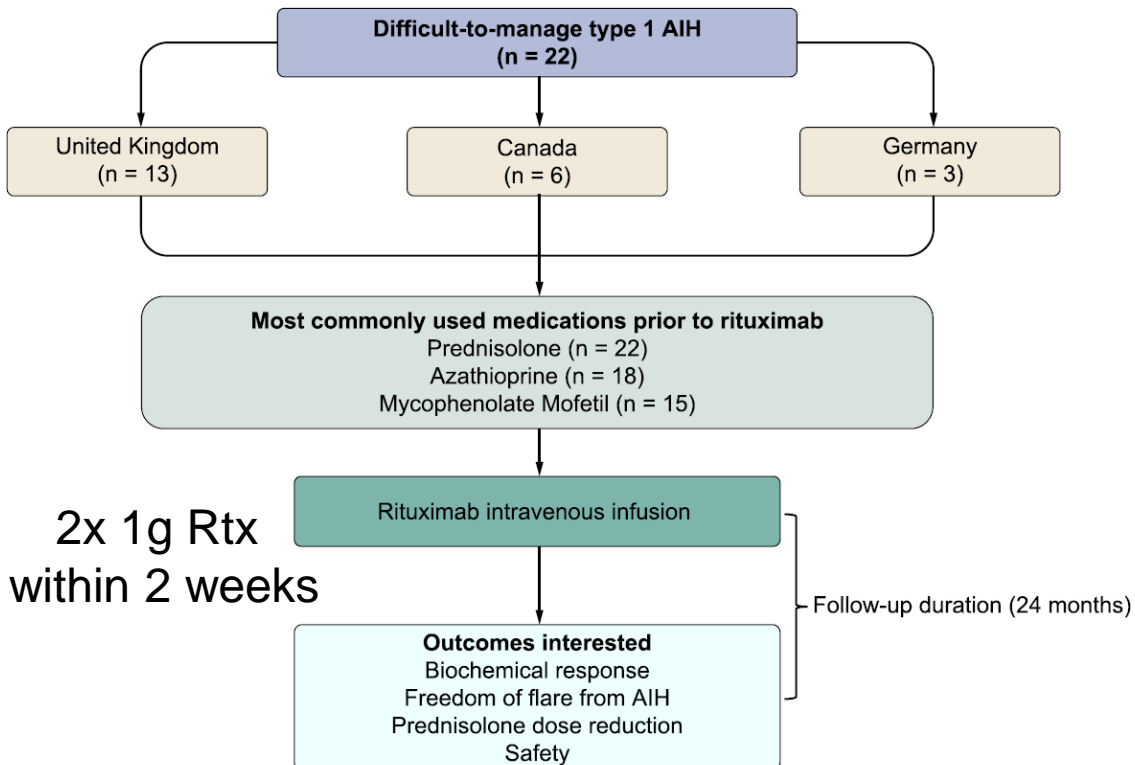


- Good safety profile with regard to infections (anti-HBc testing obligative !!!!)
- Low infection rate e.g. protective antibodies after vaccination usually not affected
- No overall hypogammaglobulinemia

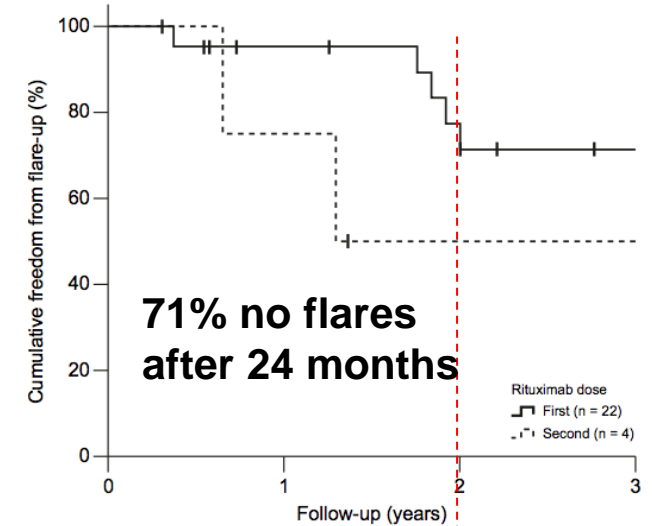
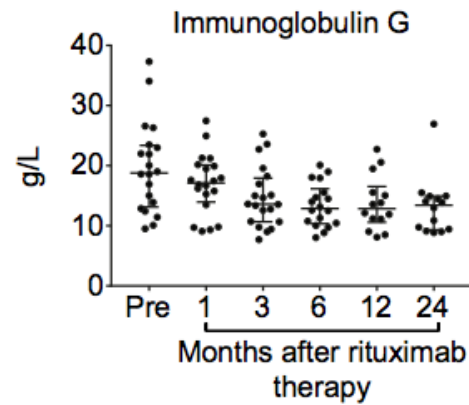
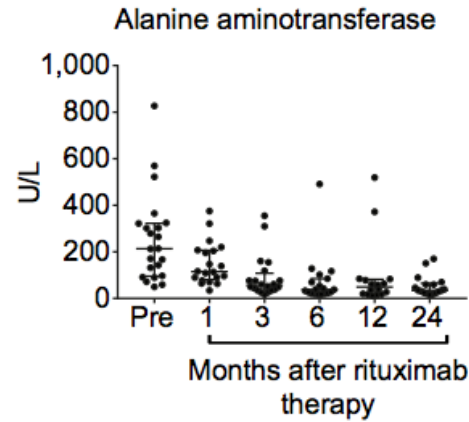
Joscelyn et al. 2020 Clinical Neuroimmunology, Current Clinical Neurology, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24436-1_2
 Ghilardi et al. Annu. Rev. Immunol. 2020.38:249-287

Rituximab for difficult to manage AIH

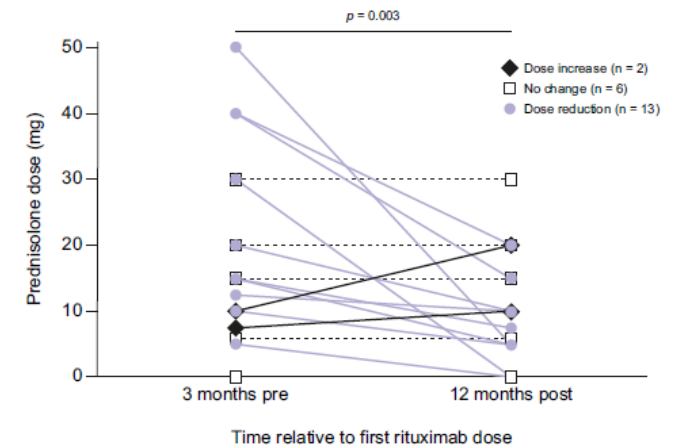
retrospective IAIH group study incl. 3x Cirrhosis (2x CP A; 1x CP C)



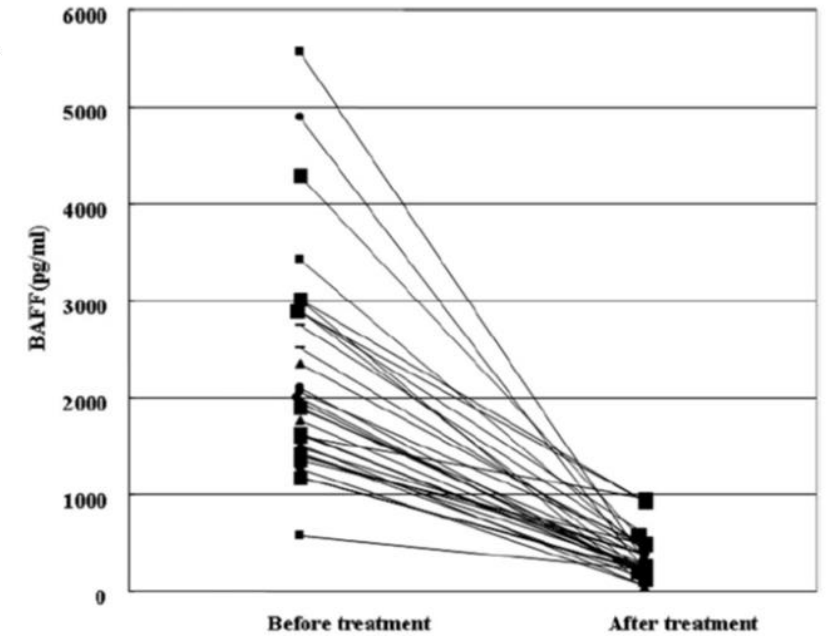
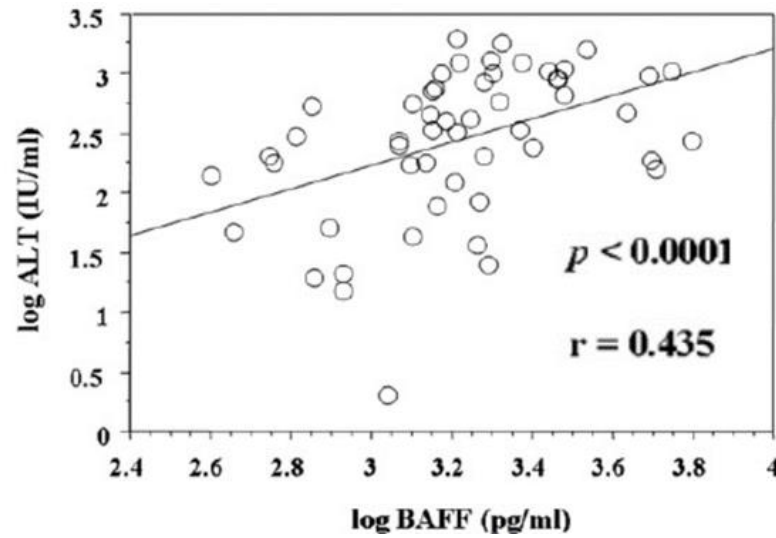
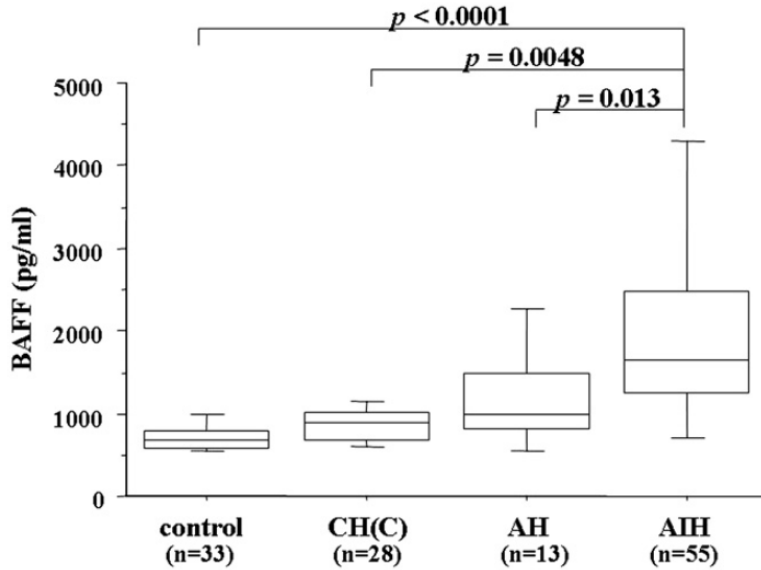
➔ No serious adverse event



62% Steroid dose reduction






BAFF in AIH



BAFF and IL-21 in AIH

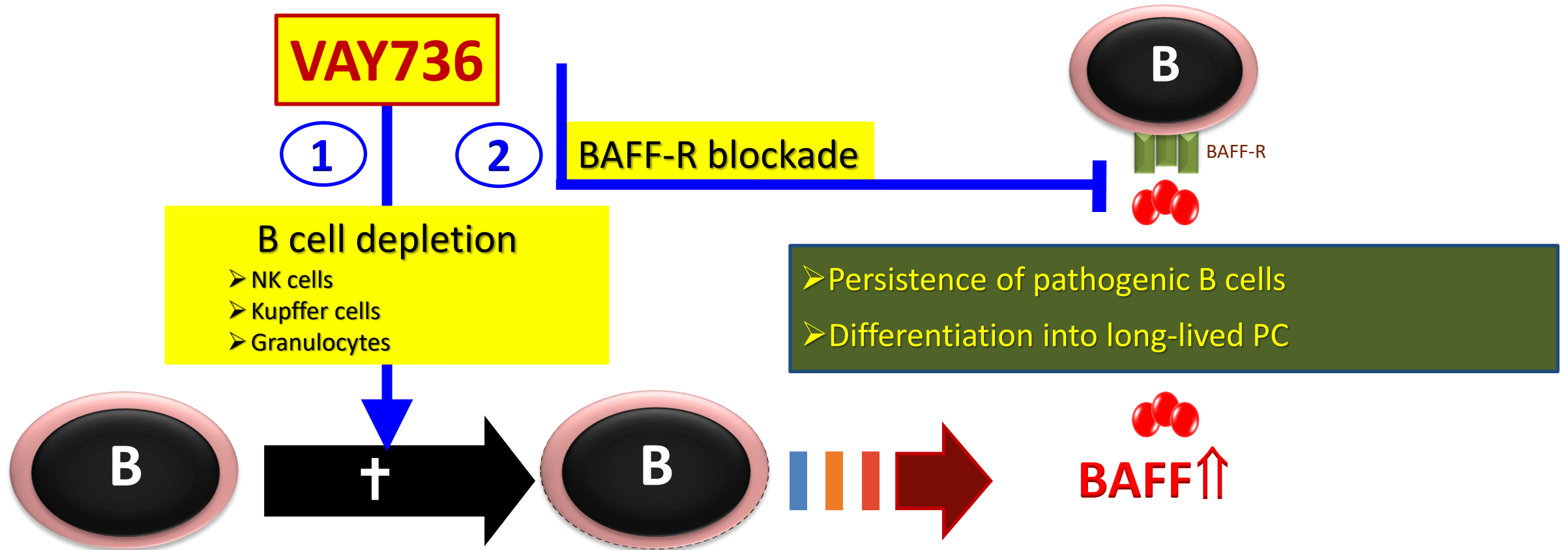
66 untreated
AIH patients
(Netherlands)

Groups of untreated patients with AIH		Remission after 1-year treatment	Outcome
 Normal BAFF and IL-21 (41%)	Normal BAFF	54%	
 High BAFF and normal IL-21 (41%)	High BAFF	34%	Higher bilirubin, indicating more severe liver dysfunction
 High IL-21 (18%)	High IL-21	0%	AIH-PSC variant syndrome developed in 25% of patients

Autoimmune-associated B cells were elevated, and BAFF levels correlated with certain B cells

VAY736 (lanalumab): Anti-BAFF-R antibody with dual action

1) ADCC mediated B cell depletion; 2) Functional BAFF-R blockade



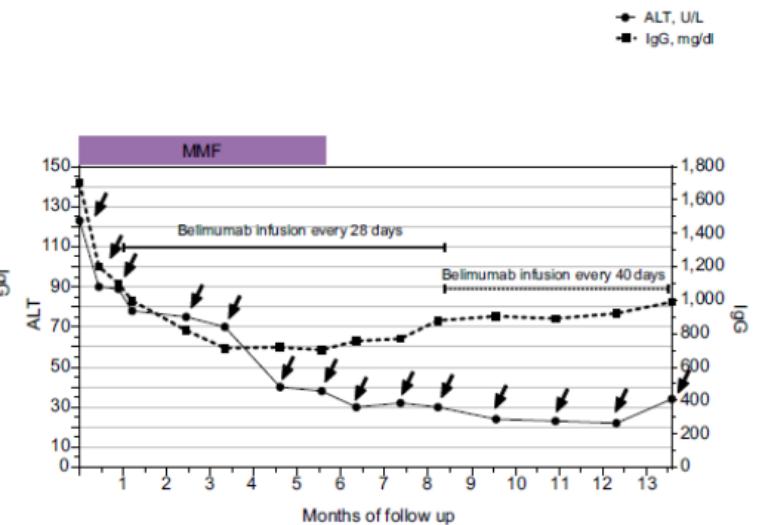
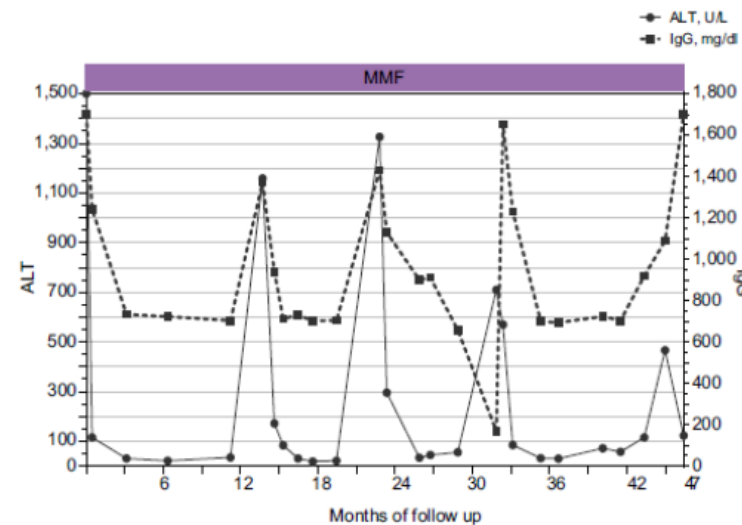
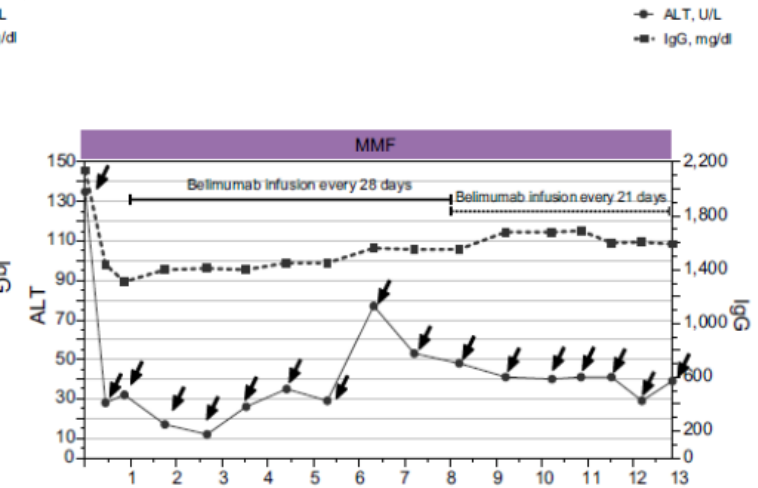
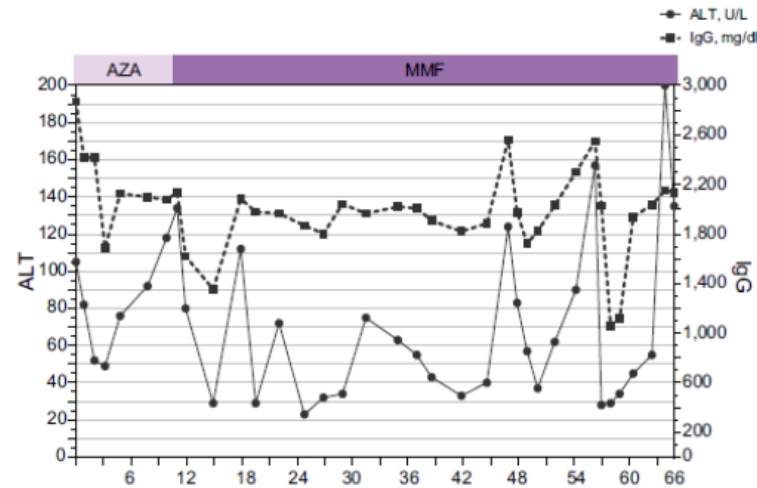
Rapid and profound B cell depletion | Prevention of BAFF-induced hardening of autoimmunity

www.clinicaltrials.gov: NCT03217422

Anti-BAFF-mAb (Belimumab) in difficult to treat AIH

Single center experience:

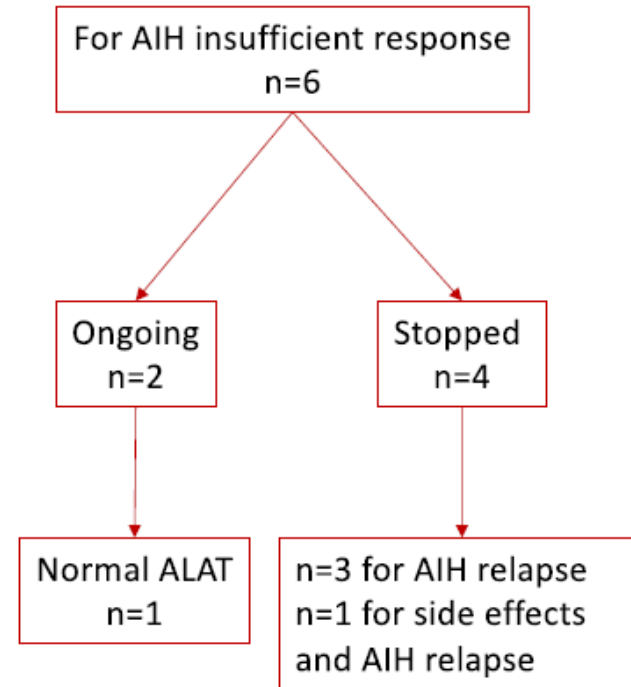
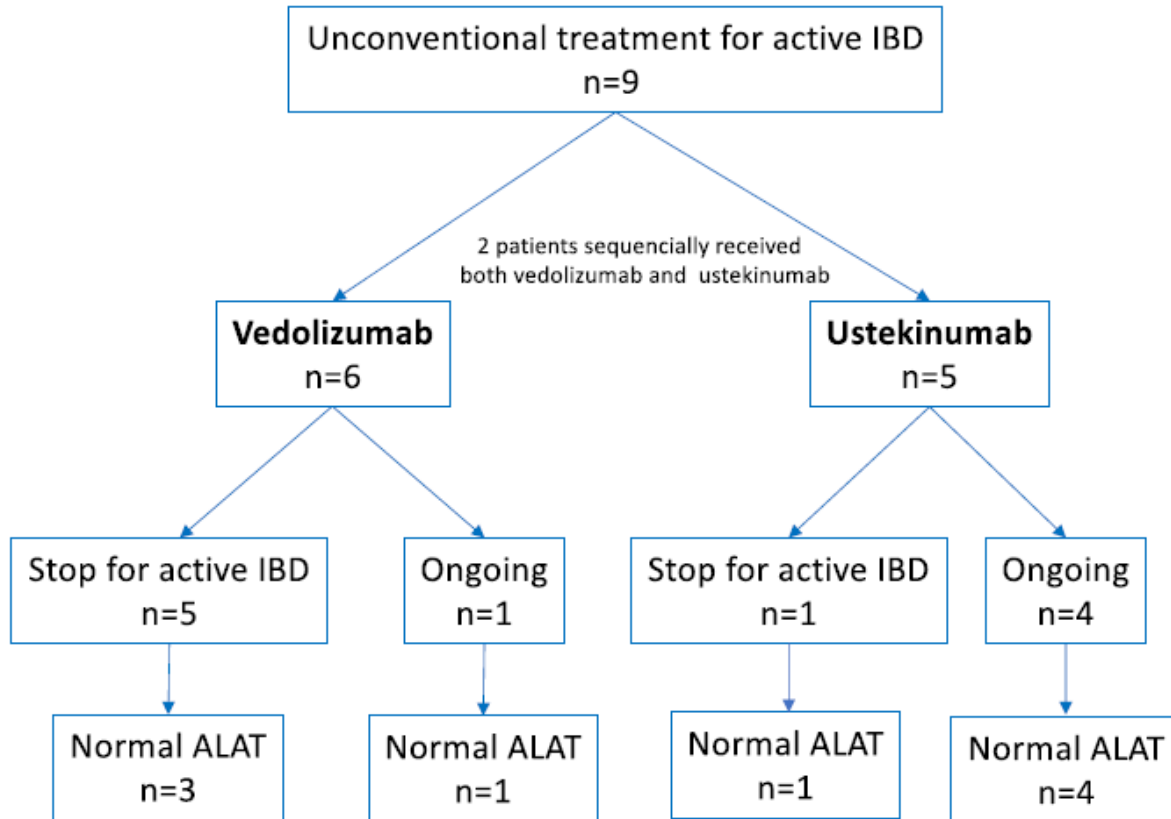
- 2 cirrhotic pts.
- complete response in both pts. with reduced steroids
- no adverse events
- improved liver stiffness
- histological response documented in one patient



Immunomodulatory drugs in AIH

AIH + IBD

Belimumab



Summary – B cell depletion in AIH

- Feasible and rather safe (low infectious complications compared to other biologicals in AIH) in the setting of salvage therapy
 - Rituximab – anti- CD20
 - Belimumab – anti-BAFF
- only small retrospective studies/case reports
- Long term application of B cell depletion not published yet
- RCT with ianalumab (anti-BAFF-R) ongoing: AMBER

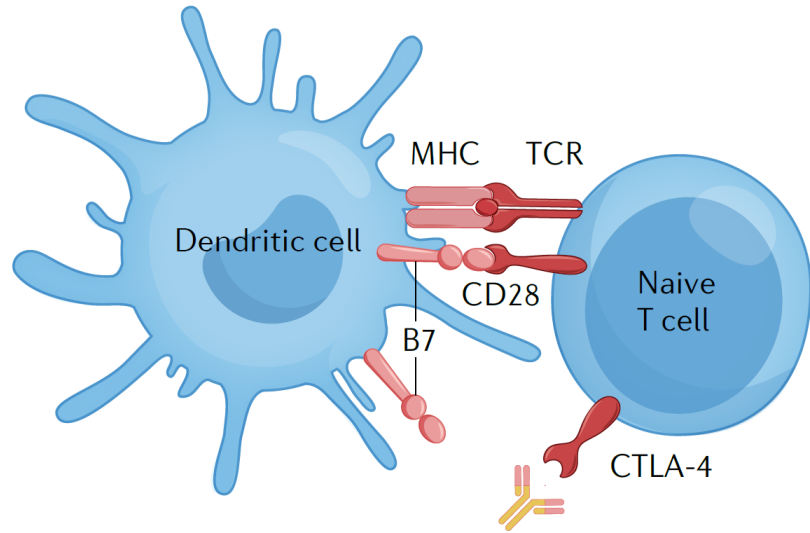
Autoimmune Hepatitis (AIH) versus Drug-Induced Autoimmune-Like Hepatitis (DI-ALH)

Drug-Induced Autoimmune Like Hepatitis (DI-ALH)

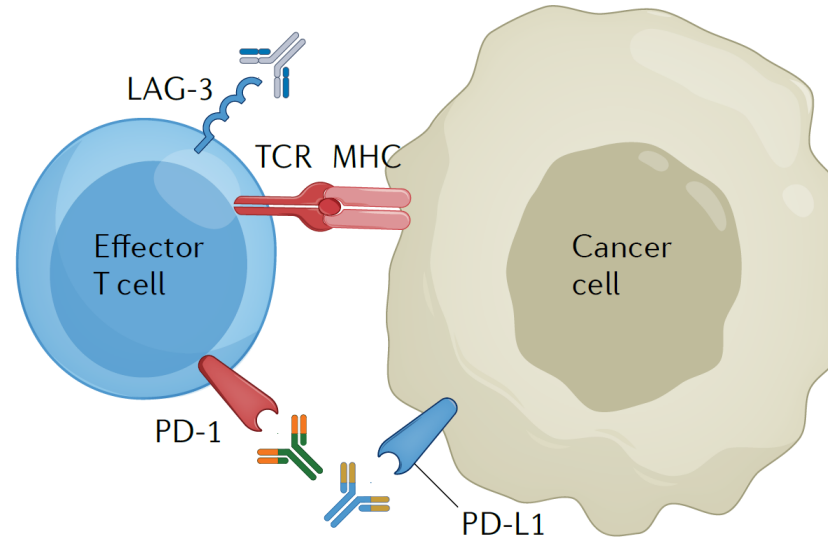
- Immunotherapy of malignancies has improved the therapeutic armamentarium for solid tumors
- Immune check point inhibitors (ICI): anti PD-1/PD-L1 alone or in combination with anti CTLA-4
- DILI can mimic (almost) all liver disorders
- Since the advent of ICI in cancer therapy immune related adverse events (irAEs) are of increasing importance
- irAE can affect all organs including the liver
- irAE of the liver - CHILI: cholestatic, hepatitic, mixed

Mechanisms of action of immune check point inhibitors

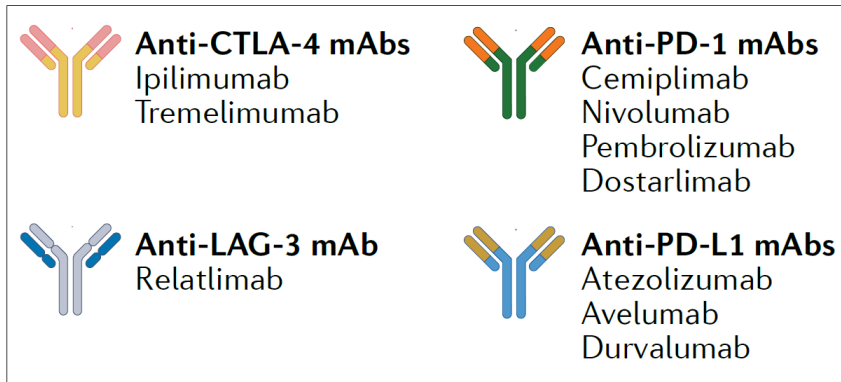
a Lymphoid organs



b Target tissues



c



Tison, A., Garaud, S., Chiche, L. et al. Immune-checkpoint inhibitor use in patients with cancer and pre-existing autoimmune diseases. *Nat Rev Rheumatol* 18, 641–656 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41584-022-00841-0>

DI-ALH vs. AIH

	DI-ALH <i>n</i> = 28	AIH <i>n</i> = 39	<i>p</i> value
Gender			
Female: Male (% female)	21:7 (76)	29:10 (74)	0.96
Age at presentation			
Median (IQR)	49 (21-60)	53 (40-63)	0.27
Other autoimmune disease (no.)	8	9	0.65
Symptoms at presentation (no.)			
Jaundice/Pruritus	20	13	0.004
Antibody (no.)			
ANA	20	13	0.003
ASMA	8	21	0.04
SLA/LP	0	2	0.34
LKM	0	1	0.58
Seronegative	5	1	0.05

Ishak score	DI-ALH <i>n</i> = 28	AIH <i>n</i> = 39	<i>p</i> value
Periportal interface hepatitis	2.4 (±1.2)	3.0 (±0.8)	0.05
Confluent necrosis	2.5(±2.6)	2.3 (±2.2)	0.78
Focal lytic necrosis	2.3 (±0.9)	2.5 (±1.1)	0.51
Portal inflammation	2.1 (±0.7)	2.5 (±0.6)	0.07
Fibrosis	1.9 (±1.1)	3.5 (±1.4)	<0.0001
Plasma cell aggregates	61%	97%	<0.001
Eosinophil aggregates	18%	3%	0.031

Distinction of idiopathic AIH from drug-induced autoimmune-like hepatitis (DI-ALH)

	Idiopathic AIH	DI-ALH
ALT, AST	++	++
IgG	+++	+/-
autoantibodies	ANA, SMA, LKM-2 & 3, SLA	ANA, SMA, (LKM-1, LKM)
autoantibody titers	+++	+
response to steroids	++	+
relapse after steroid therapy	+	-
drug as trigger	?	+
histology	plasma cells, B cells, CD4	T cells: CD8

Nomenclature, diagnosis and management of drug-induced autoimmune-like hepatitis (DI-ALH): An expert opinion meeting report

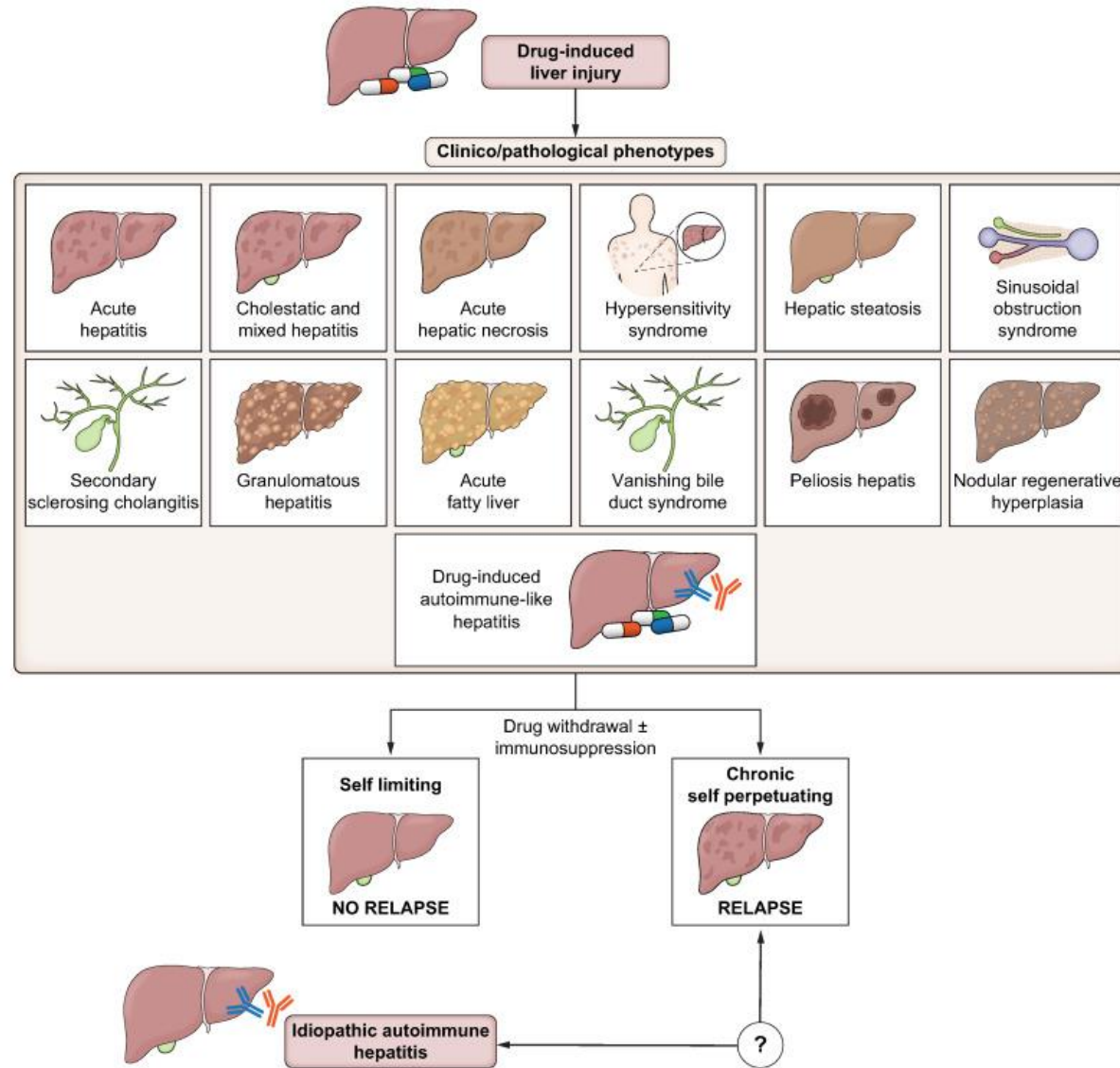
Raúl J. Andrade^{1,2,*†}, Guruprasad P. Aithal^{3,†}, Ynto S. de Boer^{4,†}, Rodrigo Liberal^{5,6,†}, Alexander Gerbes⁷, Arie Regev⁸, Benedetta Terziroli Beretta-Piccoli⁹, Christoph Schramm¹⁰, David E. Kleiner¹¹, Eleonora De Martin¹², Gerd A. Kullak-Ublick^{13,33}, Guido Stirnimann¹⁴, Harshad Devarbhavi¹⁵, John M. Vierling¹⁶, Michael P. Manns¹⁷, Marcial Sebode¹⁸, Maria Carlota Londoño^{2,19}, Mark Avigan²⁰, Mercedes Robles-Diaz^{1,2}, Miren García-Cortes^{1,2}, Edmond Atallah³, Michael Heneghan²¹, Naga Chalasani²², Palak J. Trivedi²³, Paul H. Hayashi²⁴, Richard Taubert²⁵, Robert J. Fontana²⁶, Sabine Weber⁷, Ye Htun Oo²⁷, Yoh Zen²⁸, Anna Licata²⁹, M Isabel Lucena^{1,2,30,*#}, Giorgina Mieli-Vergani^{31,#}, Diego Vergani^{31,#}, Einar S. Björnsson^{32,#}, on behalf of the IAHG and EASL DHILI Consortium



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Drug-induced Autoimmune Like Hepatitis

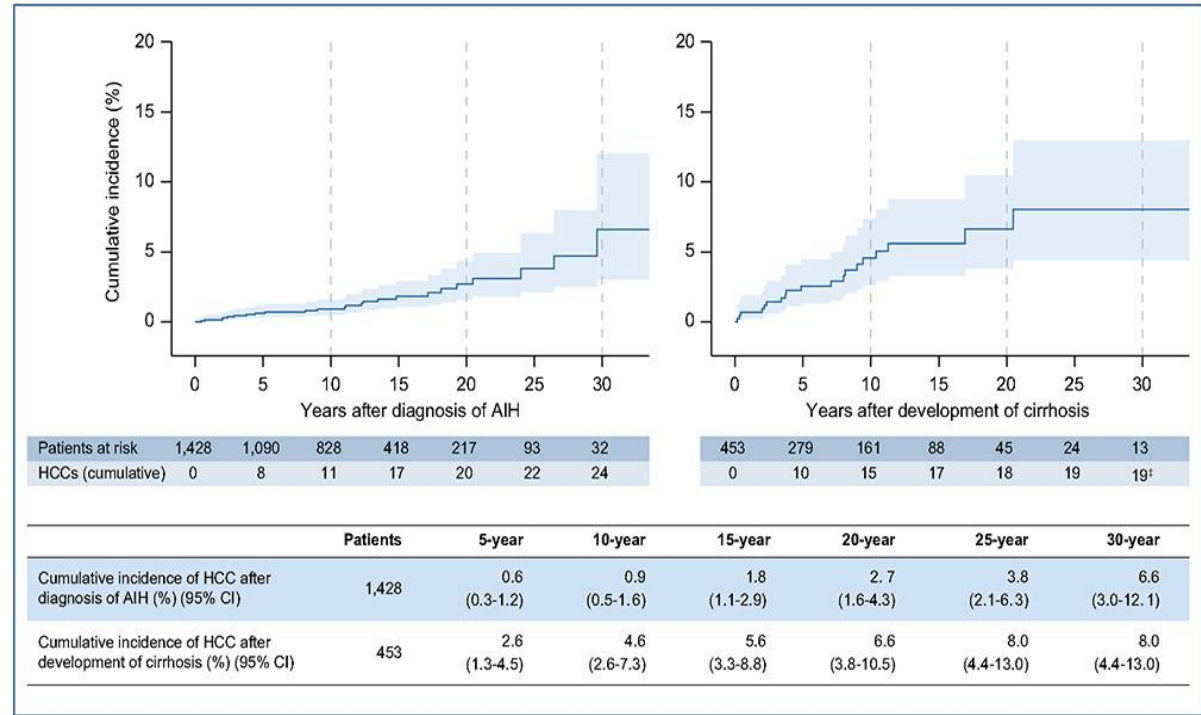
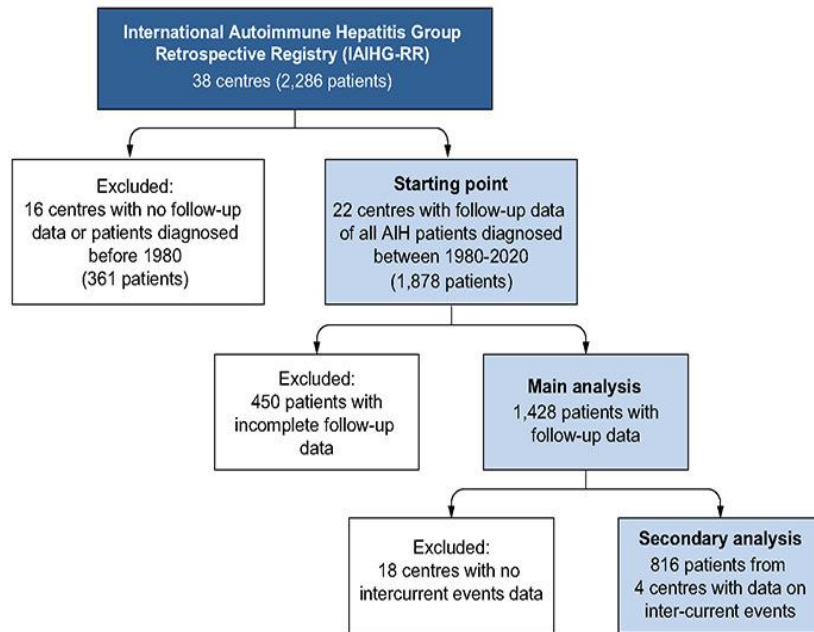


Autoimmune liver disease (AILD) and immune check point inhibitors (ICI)

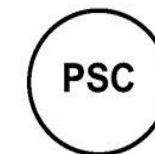
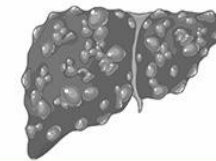
- AILD (AIH, PBC, PSC) are at risk to develop liver cancer

Incidence and predictors of hepatocellular carcinoma in patients with autoimmune hepatitis

International Autoimmune Hepatitis Group (IAIHG) Retrospective Registry



- HCC incidence in AIH patients is low even after cirrhosis development.
- Risk of HCC development in AIH is associated with obesity, cirrhosis, and AIH/PSC variant syndrome at AIH diagnosis.



Autoimmune liver disease (AILD) and immune check point inhibitors (ICI)

- AILD (AIH, PBC, PSC) are at risk to develop liver cancer
- HCC in AIH and PBC at cirrhotic stage
- CCC in PSC develops independent of cirrhosis, highest risk 1st year after diagnosis
- Liver and non-liver tumors develop in AILD patients
- AILD are regarded as increased risk for irAE, therefore excluded from trials with ICI

What do we know on safety of ICI in **non liver** autoimmune disorders ?

Pre-existing rheumatic disease	Flare ^a
Rheumatoid arthritis	55–56%
Polymyalgia rheumatica	57–64%
Psoriatic arthritis	50–79%
Spondyloarthritis	23–31%
Sarcoidosis	19–20%
Systemic lupus erythematosus	27–31%
Systemic sclerosis	11–25%
Sjögren syndrome	25–43%
Myositis	33–50%
Vasculitis	17–46%

De novo irAE in 16 – 90 %

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European Reference Network Rare Liver (ERN Rare-Liver)

- Retrospective
- 22 AILD
 - 4 x AIH, 12 x PBC, 5 x PSC, 1 x AIH/PSC overlap
 - 11 x hepatobiliary cancer, 11 x non-hepatic tumors
 - 5 different anti PD1/PD-L1 monotherapy
 - Atezolizumab (n=7), durvalumab (n=5), pembrolizumab (n=4), nivolumab (n=4), spartalizumab (n=1)
 - 1 nivolumab/ipilimumab
 - No anti LAG-3 (relatlimab)
- **Safety:**
- 8/22 with irAE
- 3/8 DI-ALH, 2 AIH, 1 PBC, within 2 months after ICI start, no discontinuation
- all grade 1 or 2, no decompensation

Recommendations for the use of ICIs in cancer patients with pre-existing AILD

- No contraindication to use ICI +/- anti CTLA-4 in liver and non-liver tumors in patients with underlying preexisting AILD
- Sofar favorable safety profile
- Lack of data on efficacy
- Decision based on individual benefit risk evaluation
- Close follow up, highest risk for AIH with cirrhosis not in stable remission

Thank you for your attention

