

23<sup>rd</sup> Ultmann Lymphoma Symposium



Dana-Farber  
Cancer Institute

# Richter's Transformation: Current Considerations and Treatment

**Matthew S. Davids, MD, MMSc**

Clinical Research Director | Division of Lymphoma | Dana-Farber Cancer Institute  
Associate Professor of Medicine | Harvard Medical School

April 10, 2026 | Chicago, Illinois

# Disclosure Information

**I have the following relevant financial relationships to disclose:**

**Consulting:** AbbVie, Ascentage Pharma, AstraZeneca, BeOne Medicines, BMS, Eli Lilly, Genentech, Genmab, Janssen, MSD, Nuvalent, Schrödinger

**Research Support:** Ascentage Pharma, AstraZeneca

**Royalties:** Up-to-Date

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PATHOLOGY

VOLUME IV

JULY, 1928

NUMBER 4

## GENERALIZED RETICULAR CELL SARCOMA OF LYMPH NODES ASSOCIATED WITH LYMPHATIC LEUKEMIA \*

MAURICE N. RICHTER, M.D.

(From the Department of Pathology, Columbia University, and the Pathological Laboratories, Bellevue Hospital, New York, N. Y.)

Leukemia, or even a leukemoid blood picture, is an unusual occurrence in the course of tumors. When the cells in the blood are morphologically identical with those of the tumor, a genetic relationship between the blood picture and the organ changes is generally assumed. If (less frequently) the leukemic cells are of entirely different structure from those of the tumor, a relationship is less firmly established. In every instance the interpretation is difficult, and the diagnosis frequently in doubt.

The case which forms the basis of this communication is one in which lesions thought to be those of an unusual tumor of the lymphatic apparatus, are associated with those of lymphatic leukemia.

### REPORT OF CASE

**Clinical History:** W. H., Shipping clerk, age 46 years. Entered Bellevue Hospital June 14, 1926, complaining of swelling on the left side of neck, duration seven weeks.

**Family History and Past Personal History:** Irrelevant.

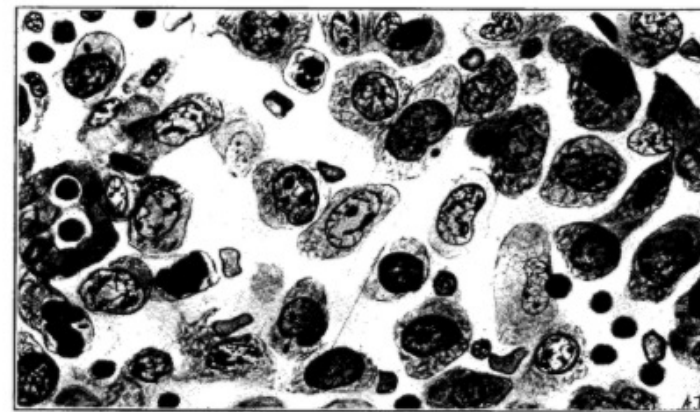
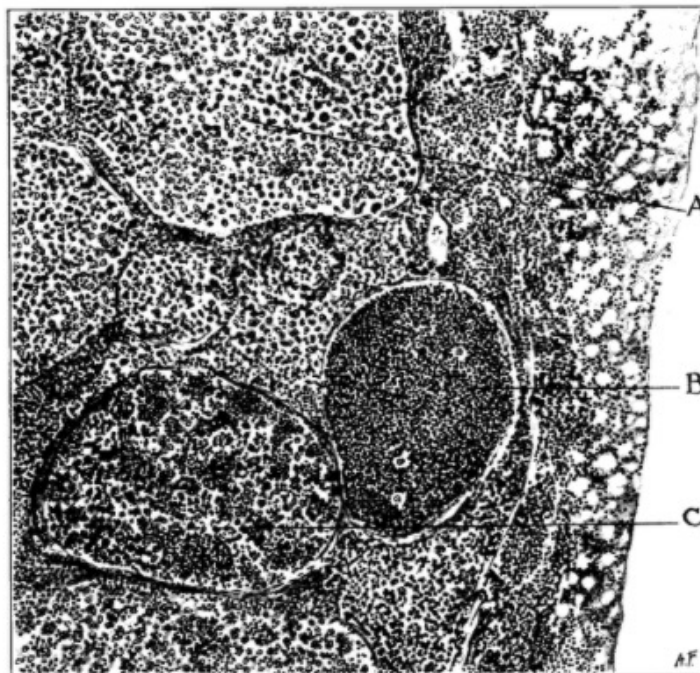
**Present Illness:** Seven weeks ago the patient noticed a swelling on the left side of the neck which increased gradually in size. It was not painful. The patient had occasional pains in the epigastrium and suprapubic regions, of short duration, which had no relation to meals, defecation or exertion. He had lost a great deal of weight in the last two months.

**Physical Examination:** (Positive findings only.) Adult white male, appears chronically ill. Marked emaciation. Eyes: Petechial hemorrhages in palpebral conjunctivae. Neck: Masses of nodes in left cervical region, anterior and posterior chains. The individual nodes appear to be about 2 cm. in diameter. There are smaller ones in both supraclavicular regions. The nodes are firm and

\* Received for publication March 20, 1928.

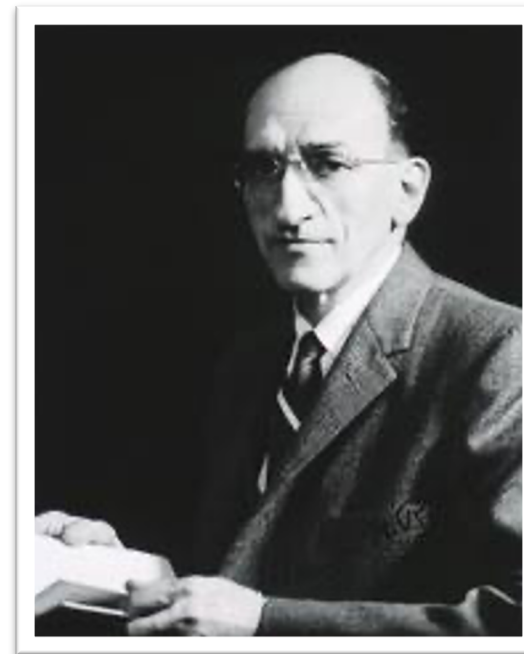
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PATHOLOGY. VOL. IV

PLATE 70



Richter

Reticular Cell Sarcoma and Lymphatic Leukemia



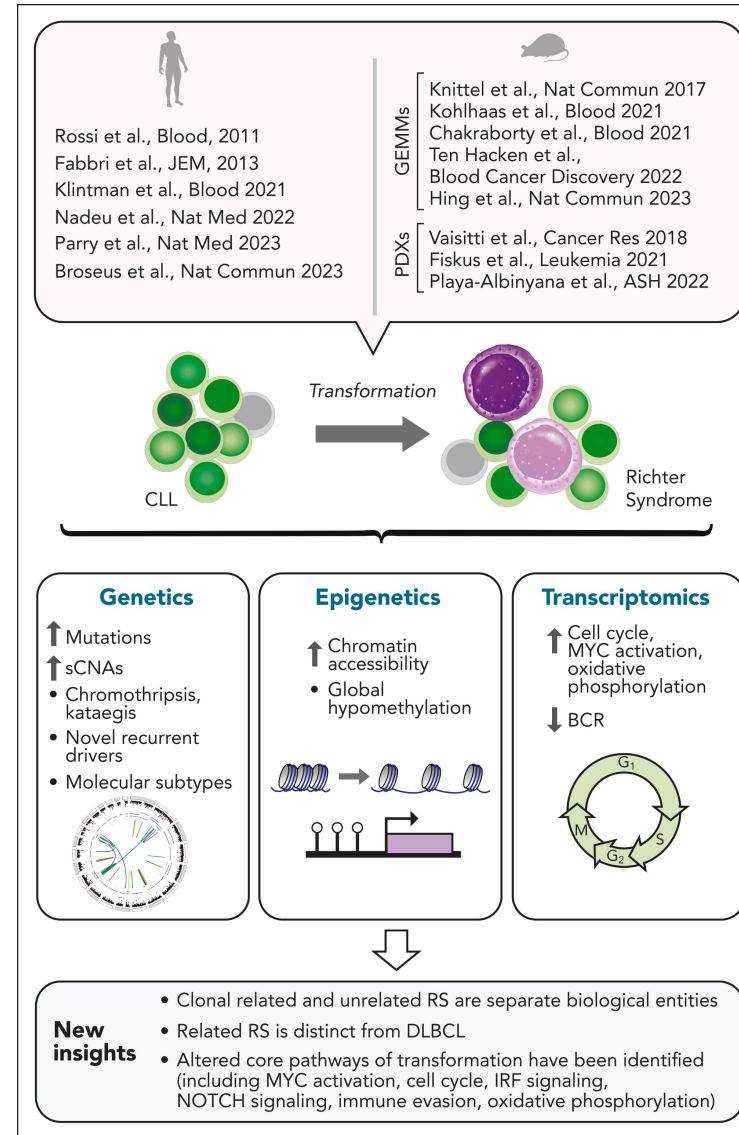
Maurice N. Richter (1959)

„Leucemie lymphoto chronique  
secodairement associee a une  
reticulopathie maligne, **syndrome de  
Richter**“

Lortholary P, Boiron M, Ripault J, Levy JP,  
Manus A, Bernard J. *Nouv Rev Fr Hematol.*  
**1964;78:621– 644**

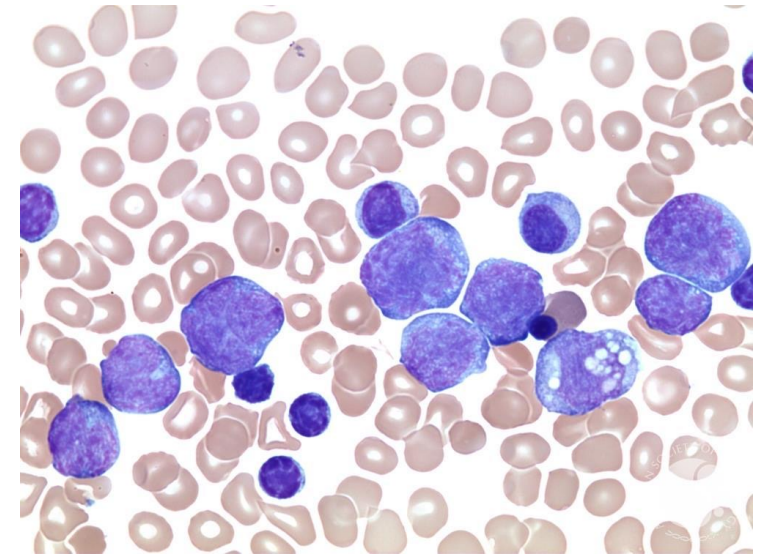
(slide adapted from O. Al-Sawaf)

# RT pathophysiology



# RT Diagnosis

- Suspect RT in CLL/SLL if patient shows physical deterioration, fever in the absence of infection, rapid and discordant growth of lymph nodes, and/or sudden and excessive rise in LDH levels
- Bone marrow biopsy,  $^{18}\text{F}$ FDG PET/CT of lesions, however:
- PET-FDG avidity provides insufficient sensitivity and specificity
- Histological diagnosis mandatory: PET-guided biopsy
- CLL FISH,  $TP53^{mut}$ , clonal relationship with CLL



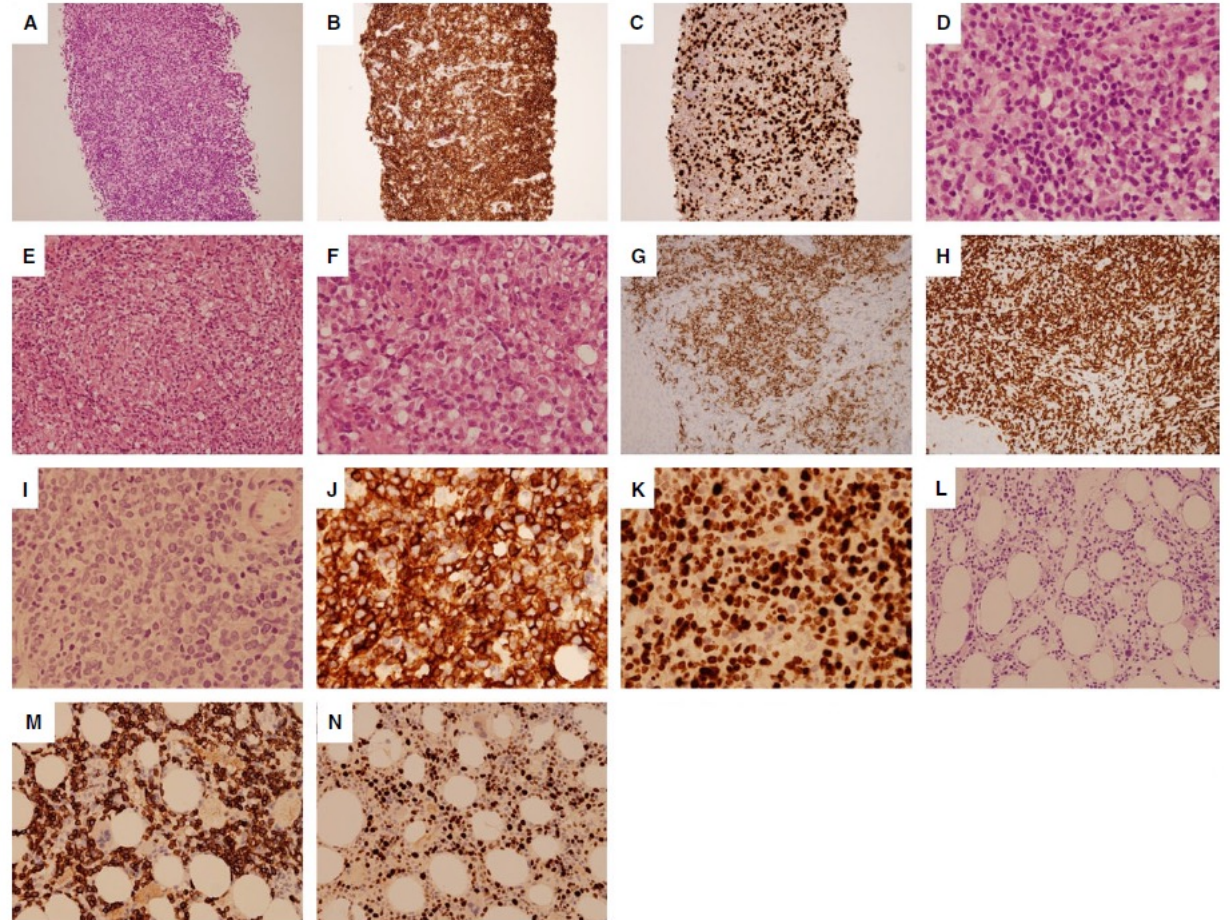
# Diagnosis of RT can be challenging

Diagnostic dilemmas of high-grade transformation (Richter's syndrome) of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia: results of the phase II National Cancer Research Institute CHOP-OR clinical trial specialist haemato-pathology central review

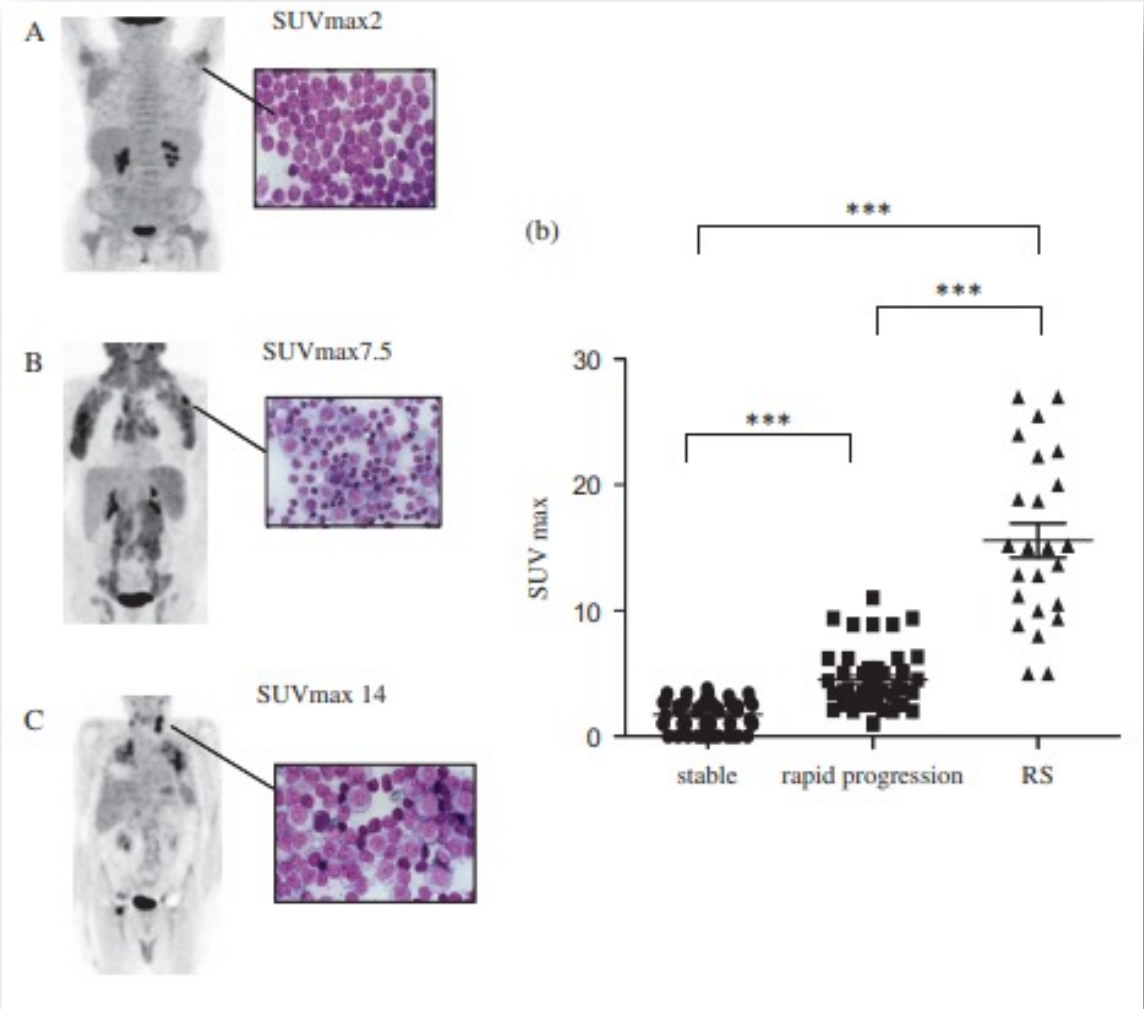
Elizabeth J Soilleux<sup>1</sup>, Andrew Wotherspoon<sup>2</sup>, Toby A Eyre<sup>3,4</sup>, Ruth Clifford<sup>3</sup>, Maite Cabes<sup>5</sup>, Anna H Schuh<sup>3,5</sup>

17.5% of alleged RT cases could not be confirmed

Central histopathologic review is helpful when possible



# PET/CT is useful to predict risk of RT post CIT



**SUVmax >10 predictive of RT (n=240 -> n=24 RT)**

# Utility of PET/CT post-BCRi may be less



## Utility of positron emission tomography-computed tomography in patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia following B-cell receptor pathway inhibitor therapy

Anthony R. Mato,<sup>1</sup> William G. Wierda,<sup>2</sup> Matthew S. Davids,<sup>3</sup> Bruce D. Cheson,<sup>4</sup> Steven E. Coutre,<sup>5</sup> Michael Choi,<sup>6</sup> Richard R. Furman,<sup>7</sup> Leonard Heffner,<sup>8</sup> Paul M. Barr,<sup>9</sup> Herbert Eradat,<sup>10</sup> Sharanya M. Ford,<sup>11</sup> Lang Zhou,<sup>11</sup> Maria Verdugo,<sup>11</sup> Rod A. Humerickhouse,<sup>11</sup> Jalaja Potluri<sup>11</sup> and John C. Byrd<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup>CLL Program, Leukemia Service, Division of Hematologic Oncology, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY; <sup>2</sup>University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX; <sup>3</sup>Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA; <sup>4</sup>Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, DC;

Haematologica 2019  
Volume 104(11):2258-2264

Table 1. Positron emission tomography-computed tomography findings and baseline characteristics for screened patients.

	Screened patients N=167
<b>PET-CT findings at screening</b>	
Number of FDG-avid nodes,* median (range)	5 (1–12)
SUVmax, median (range)	5 (0–73)
SUVmax ≥10	25 (15)
<b>Baseline patient characteristics</b>	
Age, median (range), years	67 (28–85)
N. of prior therapies, median (range)	4 (1–15)
Ibrutinib, n (%)	104 (62)
Idelalisib, n (%)	55 (33)
Ibrutinib and idelalisib, n (%)	37 (22)
Purine analogs, n (%)	104 (62)
Rituximab/other monoclonal antibodies, n (%)	146 (87) / 56 (34)
Bendamustine/other alkylating agents, n (%)	75 (45) / 124 (74)
Bulky nodes ≥5 cm, n (%)	69 (41)
Bulky nodes ≥10 cm, n (%)	17 (10)
β-2 microglobulin,‡ median (range), mg/L	3.4 (0–59.6)
Lactate dehydrogenase above the upper limit of normal,‡ n/N (%)	111/164 (68)
<b>Prognostic factors,‡ n/N (%)</b>	
Unmutated IGHV	93/118 (79)
del(17p)	69/166 (42)
del(11q)	56/165 (34)
TP53 mutation	48/161 (30)
CD38 positive	70/155 (45)
ZAP-70 positive	45/125 (36)

PET-CT: positron emission tomography-computed tomography; FDG: 18-F-fluorodeoxyglucose; SUVmax: maximum standardized uptake value of FDG. \*PET-avid defined as SUV >3 per nuclear medicine ranges provided by participating institutions. †Site reported data; presented for all patients with available data. N/n: number.

Table 3. Detection of biopsy-confirmed Richter's transformation (RT) versus chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) progression based on positron emission tomography-computed tomography and clinical factors.

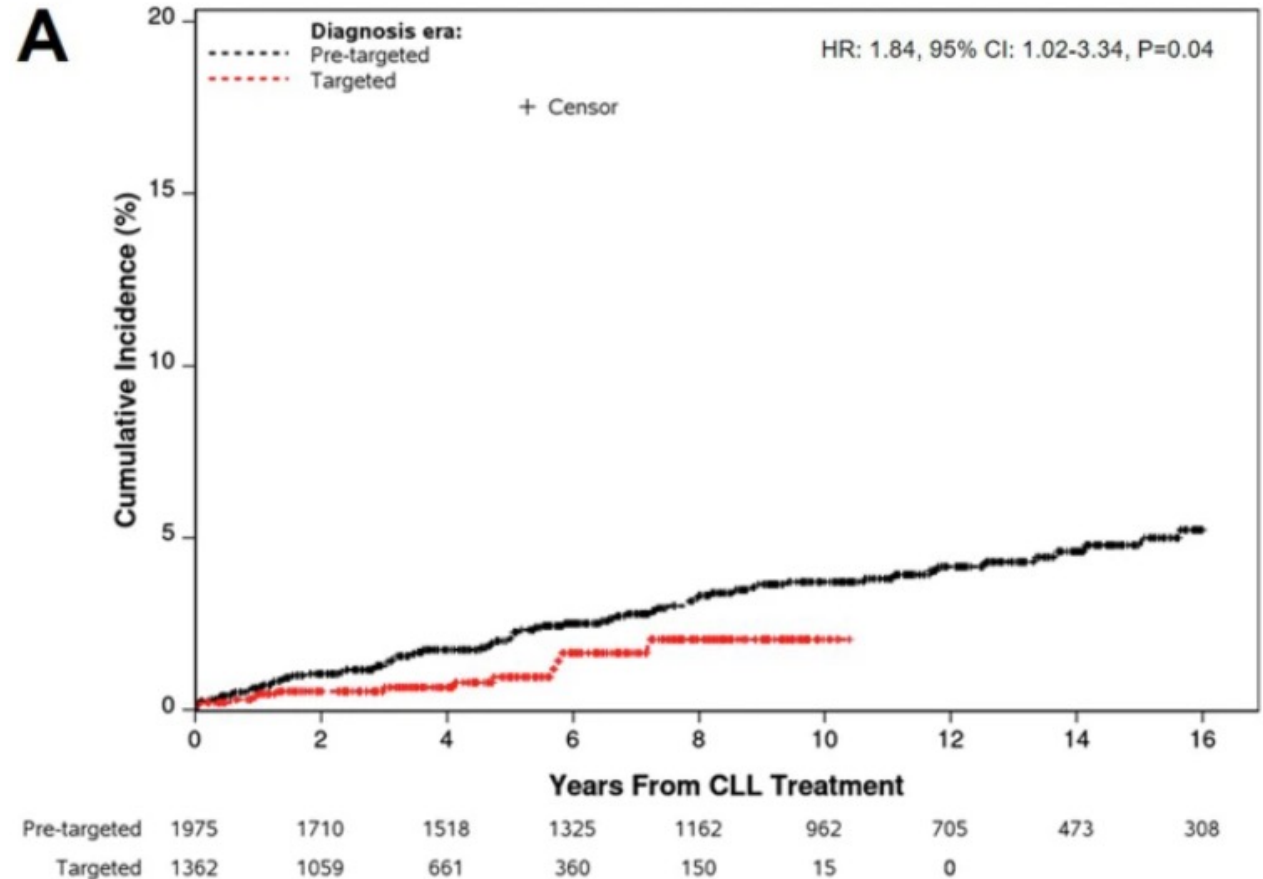
	Sensitivity	Specificity	Logistic regression analyses			
			PPV	NPV	ROC area	Odds ratio [95% CI], logistic P
PET-CT SUVmax <10/≥10	71%	50%	26%	88%	61%	2.5 [0.4–15], P=0.318
PET-CT SUVmax <5/≥5	71%	4%	16%	33%	63%	0.09 [0.01–1.2], P=0.071
PET-CT SUVmax <11/≥11	71%	61%	31%	89%	66%	3.8 [0.6–24], P=0.143
PET-CT SUVmax <12/≥12	57%	68%	31%	86%	63%	2.8 [0.5–15], P=0.231
Lactate dehydrogenase ≤/>>ULN	83%	29%	20%	89%	56%	2 [0.2–20], P=0.554
SPD at baseline	67%	48%	24%	86%	59%	1 [1–1], P=0.244
TP53* mutated/unmutated	60%	63%	25%	88%	61%	2.5 [0.35–18], P=0.362
IGHV* mutated/unmutated	25%	86%	25%	86%	56%	2.1 [0.16–28], P=0.569
CD-38* positive/negative	25%	40%	6%	77%	68%	0.22 [0.02–2.5], P=0.220
ZAP-70* positive/negative	50%	23%	9%	75%	64%	0.3 [0.01–6.4], P=0.440
β2 microglobulin * </>≥3 mg/L	75%	25%	20%	80%	50%	1 [0.08–13], P=1.0

PPV: positive predictive value; NPV: negative predictive value; ROC: Receiver Operator Characteristic; PET-CT: positron emission tomography-computed tomography; SUVmax: maximum standardized uptake value of 18-F-fluorodeoxyglucose; ULN: upper limit of the normal range; SPD: sum products of the greatest transverse diameters (tumor size). \*Site-reported data. The logistic regression analyses only included patients with available data.

**N=167 -> n=8 RT**

# Incidence of RT may be less in the targeted therapy era

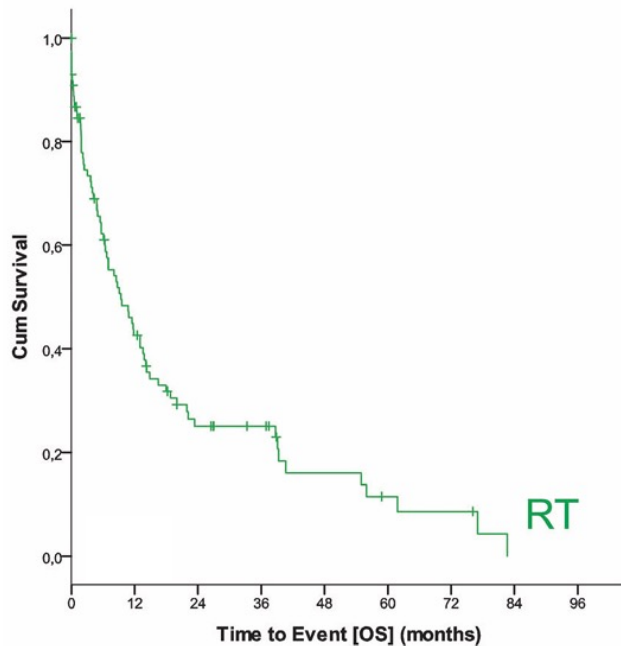
The incidence of RT from time of CLL diagnosis was significantly different between the 1975 patients diagnosed with CLL in the pre-targeted therapy era and the 1362 patients diagnosed with CLL in the targeted therapy era ([HR] 1.84, 95% CI: 1.02–3.34, P = 0.04)



Both cohorts had prior CIT

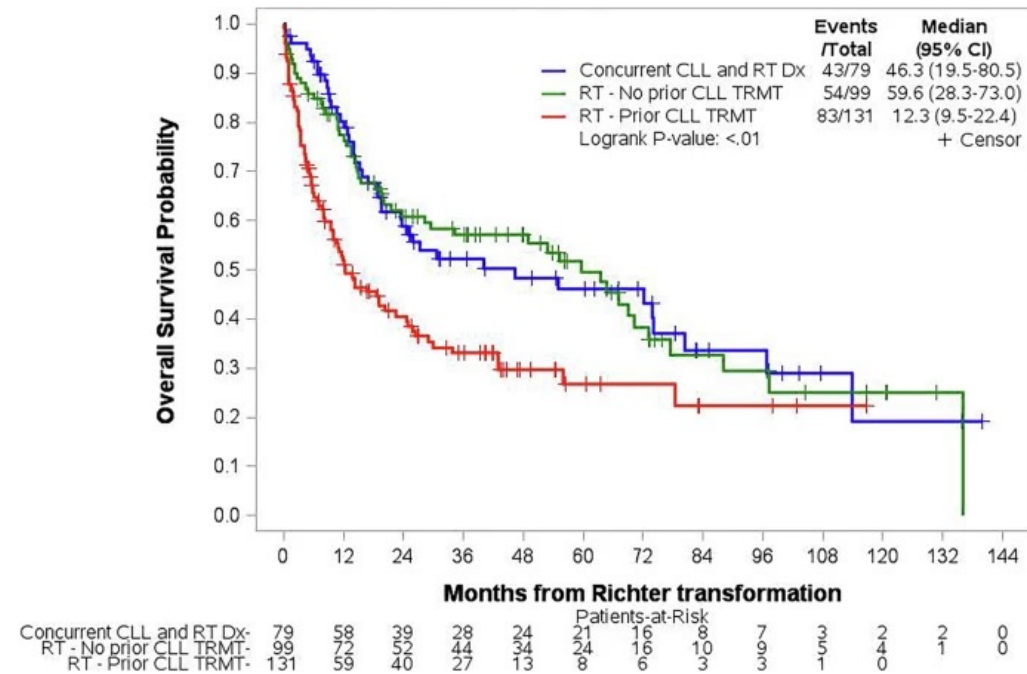
# RT prognosis has been poor historically, and remains so today

## RT in the CIT Era



Al-Sawaf et al., *Leukemia*, 2021

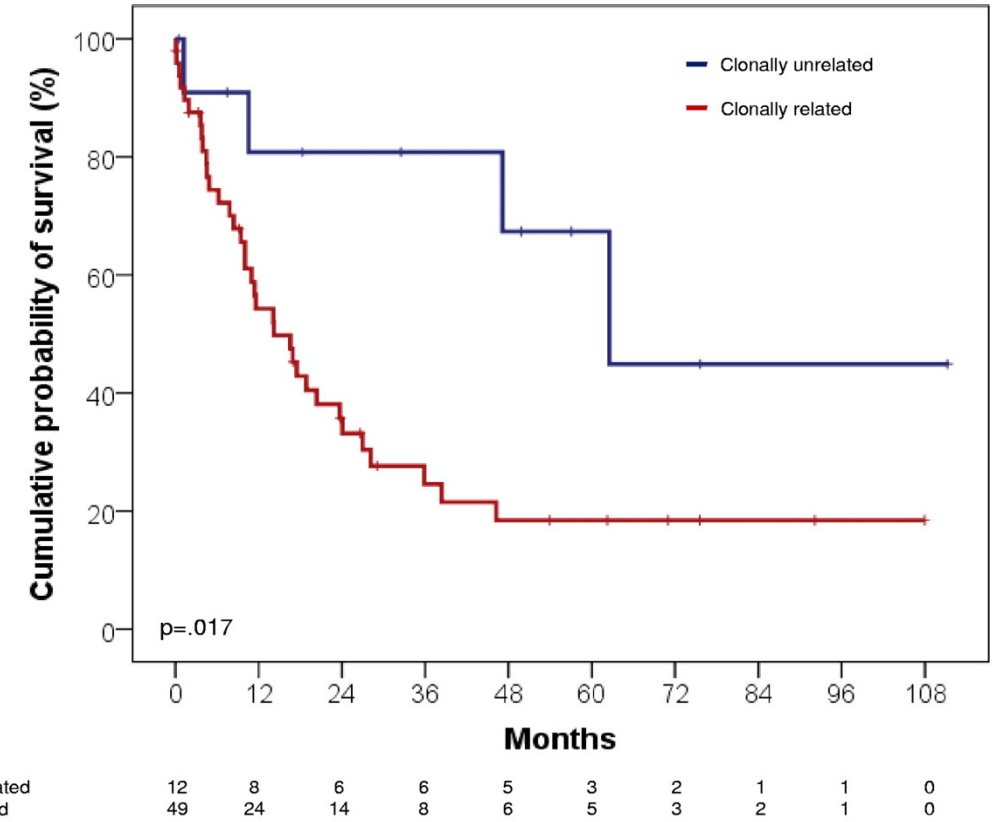
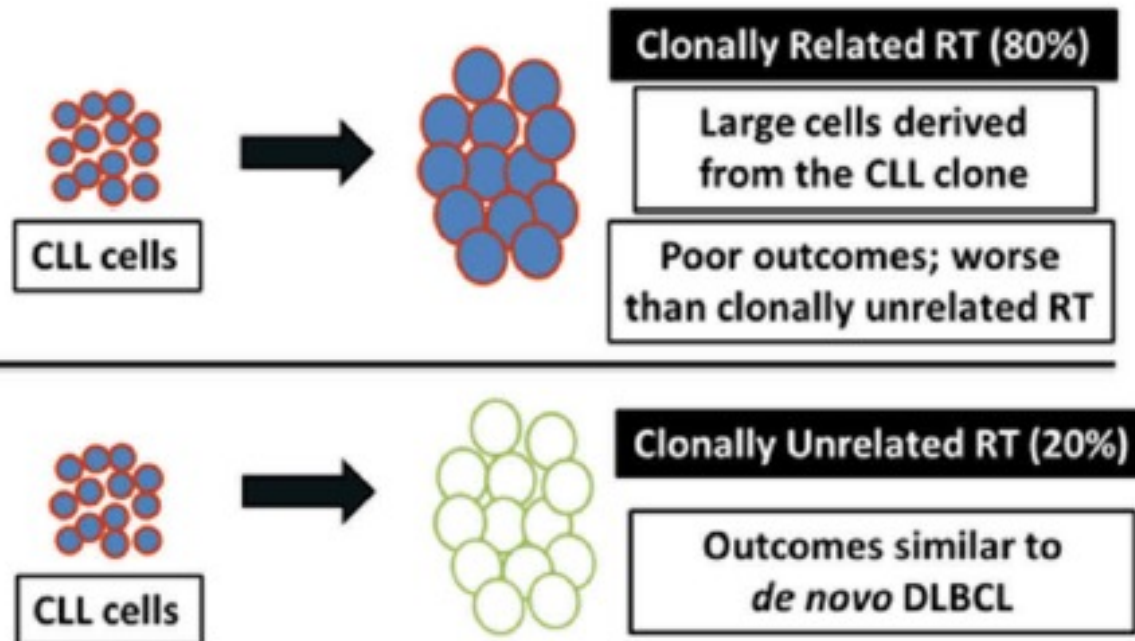
## RT in the Targeted Therapy Era



Kittai et al., *Blood Cancer J*, 2025

# RT etiology affects prognosis

## Clonally Related vs. Unrelated RT



# Treatment of Richter transformation: patient considerations

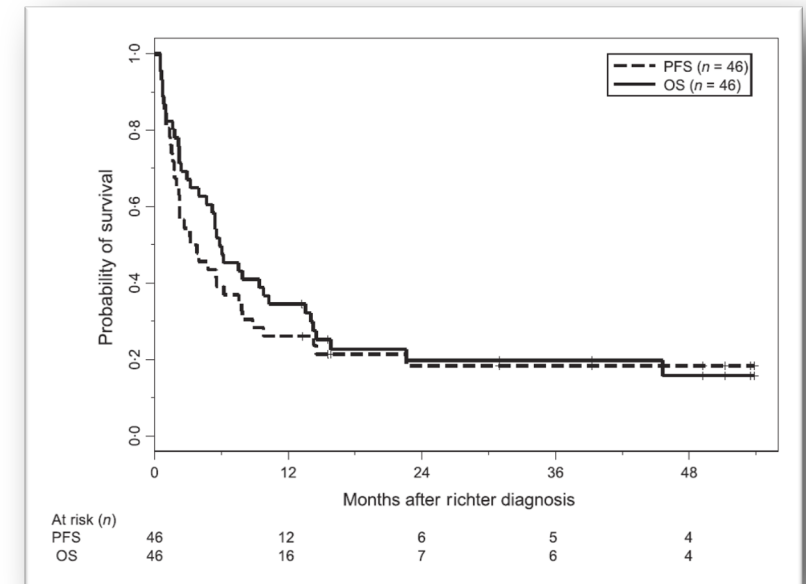
---

- **Age, fitness, medical co-morbidities**
  - Are they a candidate for anthracycline-chemoimmunotherapy?
- **Prior CLL therapies**
  - Previously untreated vs. prior treatments
- **CLL genetics**
  - *TP53* status, clonal relatedness (if known)
- **Availability of clinical trials**

# Chemoimmunotherapy

- Treatment for DLBCL RT has been based on treatment regimens for *de novo* DLBCL<sup>1</sup>
- For most patients with DLBCL RT, combination chemoimmunotherapy with anthracycline- or platinum-based regimens is recommended<sup>1</sup>:
  - R-CHOP
  - R-DA-EPOCH
  - R-hyperCVAD
  - OFAR
- CR with chemoimmunotherapy is rare and typically short-lived for RT, and a clinical trial is the preferred approach<sup>1</sup>
  - ORR ~40% and CR rates ~5%-20%<sup>2</sup>

## R-EPOCH for Richter's Syndrome

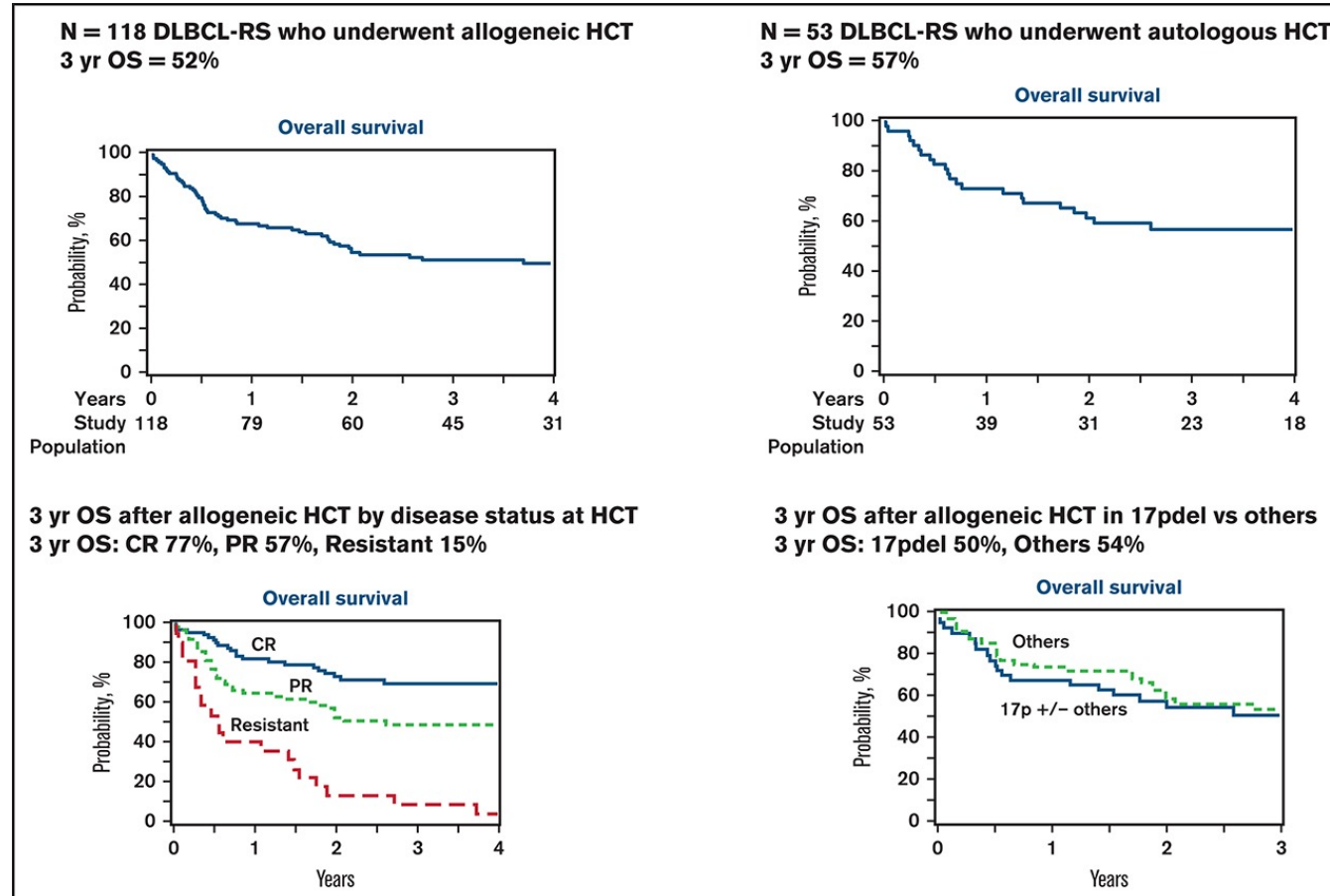


Rogers et al. *Br J Haematol.* 2017.

OFAR, oxaliplatin, fludarabine, cytarabine, and rituximab; R-CHOP, rituximab, cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine, and prednisone; R-DA-EPOCH, dose-adjusted etoposide, prednisone, vincristine, cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, and rituximab; R-hyper-CVAD, rituximab, hyperfractionated cyclophosphamide, vincristine, adriamycin, and dexamethasone.

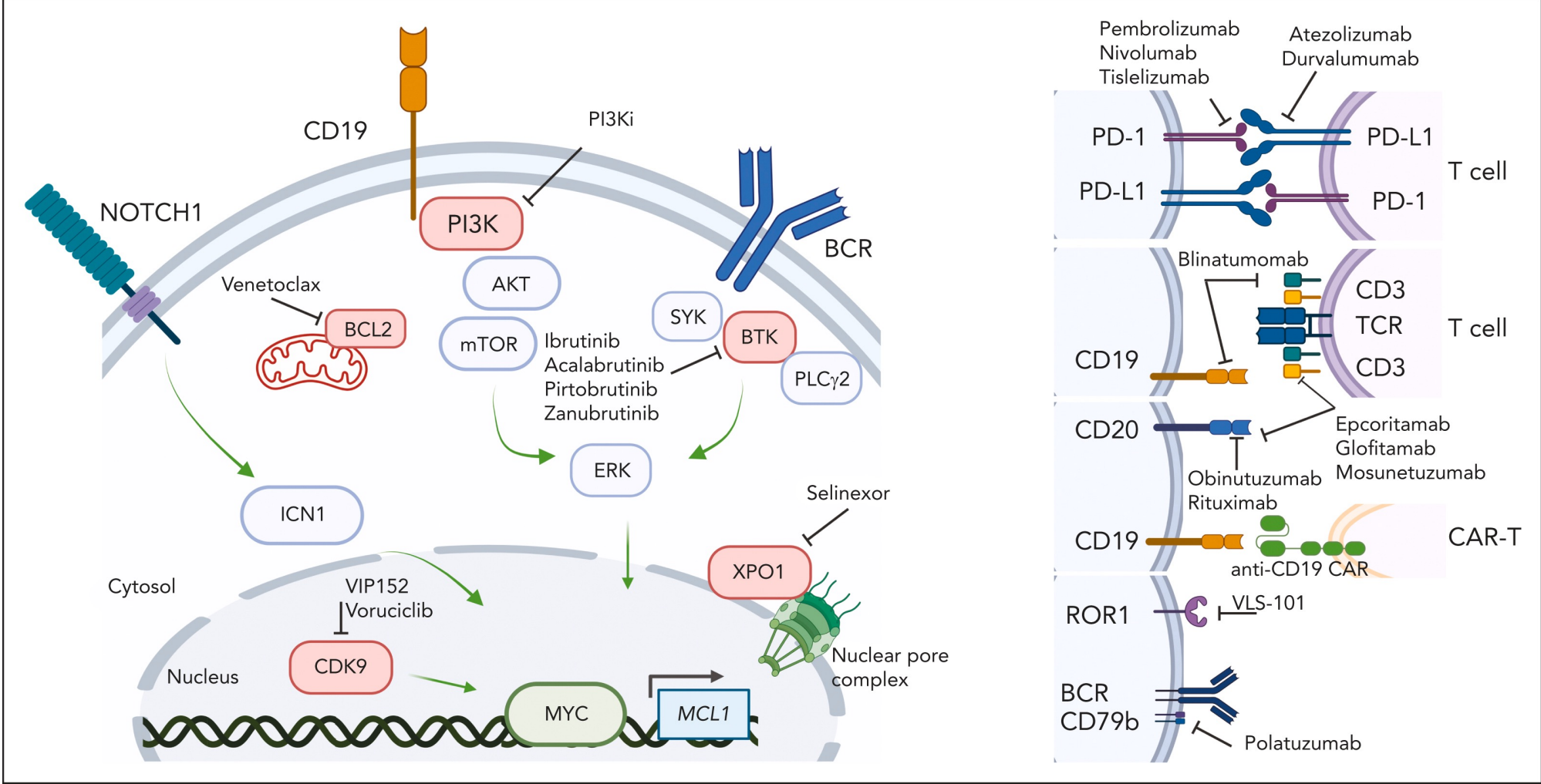
1. NCCN. Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology. CLL/SLL. 2. Allan JN, Furman RR. *Int J Hematol Oncol.* 2019;7(4):IJH09.

# Transplantation for RT



- Allo-HCT and auto-HCT produce durable remissions in patients with DLBCL-RT
- Outcomes after allo-HCT are associated with remission status at HCT but not with receipt of prior novel agents or 17p status

# Targeted Therapy for RT



Parry, ten Hacken, Wu, *Blood*, 2023

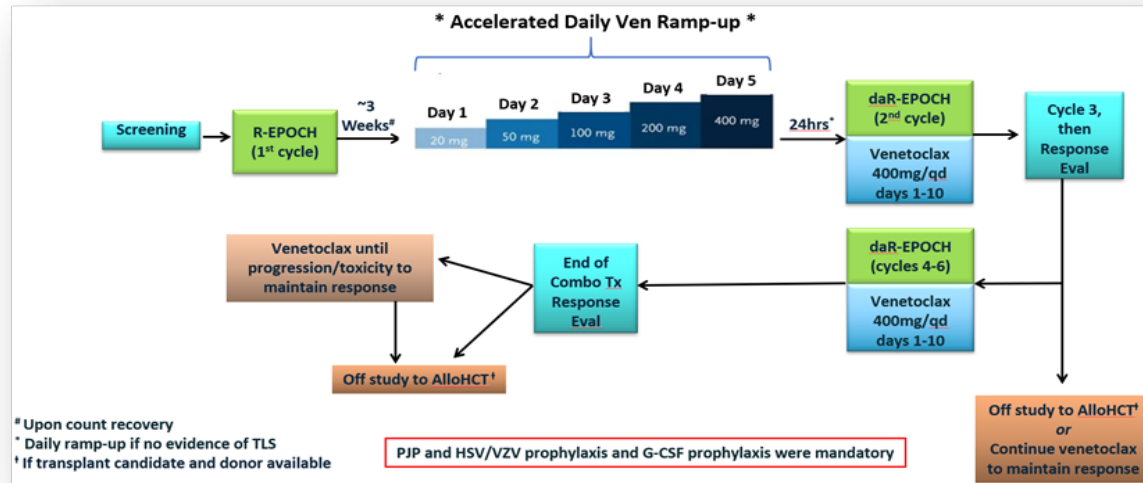
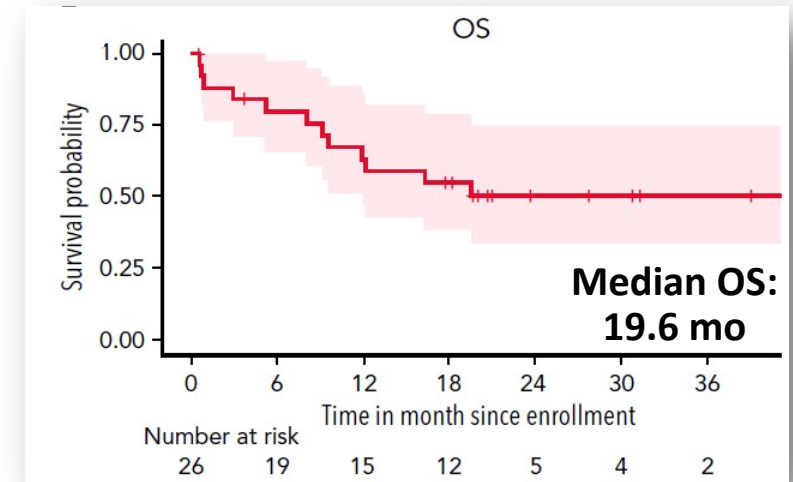
# Venetoclax may enhance the efficacy of CIT in RT: VR-EPOCH

## CLINICAL TRIALS AND OBSERVATIONS

### Venetoclax plus dose-adjusted R-EPOCH (VR-EPOCH) for Richter syndrome

Matthew S. Davids,<sup>1,\*</sup> Kerry A. Rogers,<sup>2,\*</sup> Svitlana Tyekucheva,<sup>3</sup> Zixu Wang,<sup>3</sup> Samantha Paziienza,<sup>1</sup> Sarah K. Renner,<sup>4</sup> Josie Montegaard,<sup>1</sup> Udochukwu Ihuoma,<sup>1</sup> Timothy Z. Lehmborg,<sup>1</sup> Erin Parry,<sup>1</sup> Catherine J. Wu,<sup>1,5</sup> Caron A. Jacobson,<sup>1</sup> David C. Fisher,<sup>1</sup> Philip A. Thompson,<sup>4,†</sup> and Jennifer R. Brown<sup>1,†</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA; <sup>2</sup>Division of Hematology, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; <sup>3</sup>Department of Data Science, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA; <sup>4</sup>Department of Leukemia, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX; and <sup>5</sup>Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge, MA



#### Efficacy summary

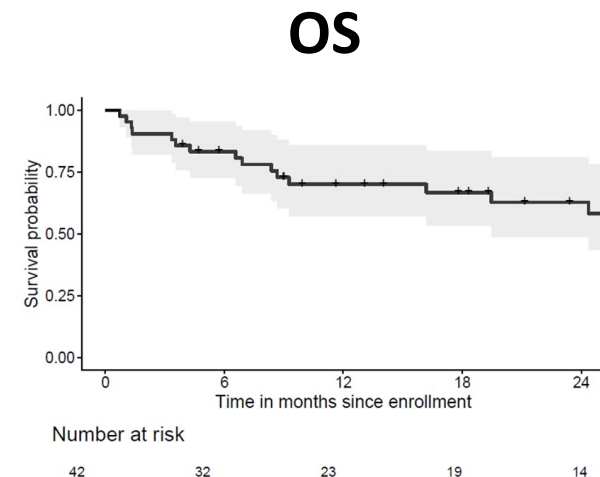
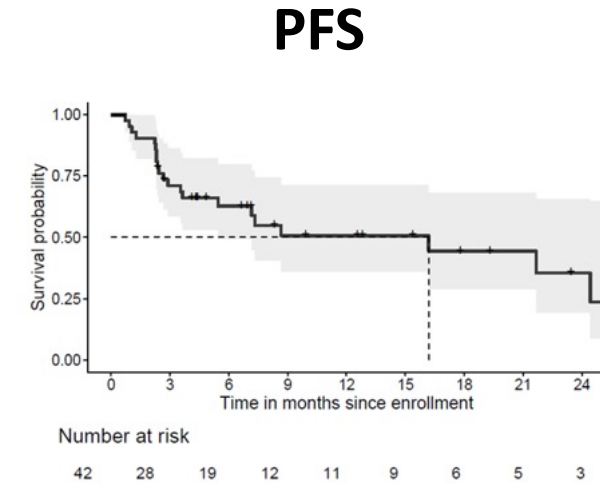
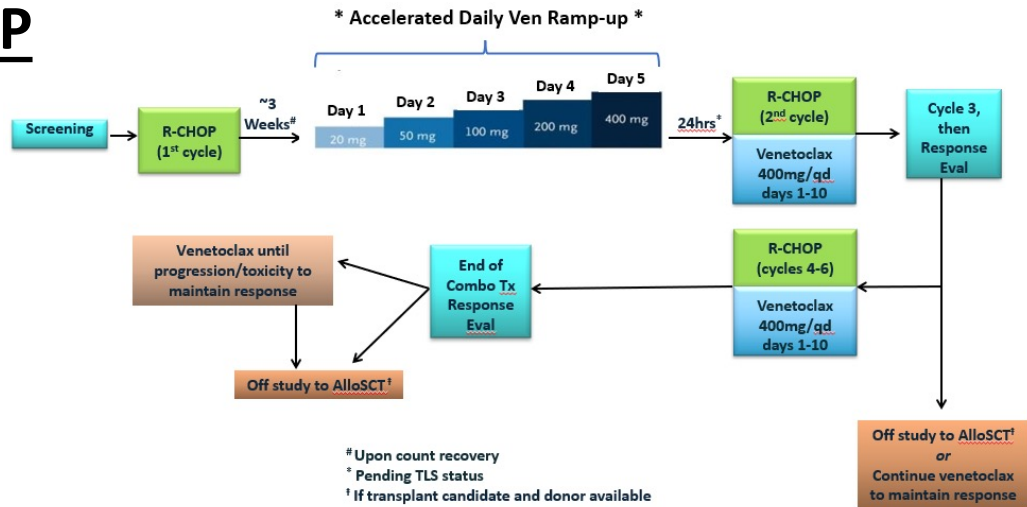
- CR at end of combination: (primary endpoint): 13/26 (50%)
- Best response in evaluable patients: ORR: 16/26 (62%)
- 11 patients with CR were BM-uMRD for CLL

#### Safety summary

- Rates of cytopenias, infections were typical for aggressive chemoimmunotherapy in this population
- No TLS occurred with daily venetoclax ramp-up

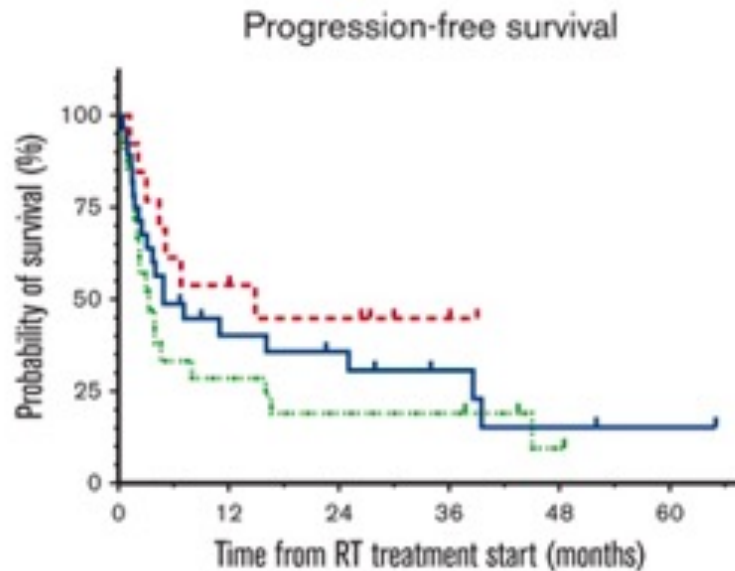
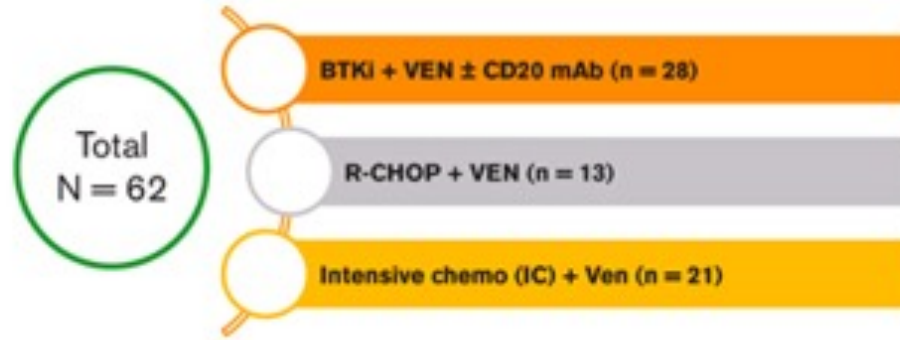
# VR-CHOP may allow similar efficacy but less toxicity

## VR-CHOP

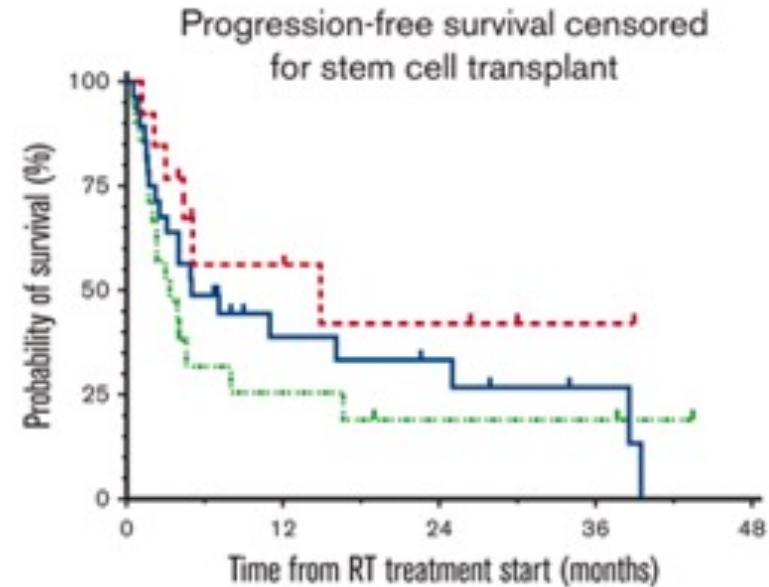


- The toxicity profile of VR-CHOP appears favorable relative to VR-EPOCH:
  - Gr 3/4 neutropenia (50% vs. 65%), febrile neutropenia (24% vs. 38%)
  - Gr 3/4 infection (19% vs. 42%)
- 57% of patients completed full course of combination therapy (27% with VR-EPOCH)
- TLS was not observed with daily venetoclax ramp-up (after 1 cycle of R-CHOP debulking)
- CR rate of 52% is favorable in light of historical rates with R-CHOP alone (20-30%)

# VR-CHOP is also effective in clinical practice



	N	Events	Median
- - - R-CHOP + VEN	13	7	14.9 mo
— BTKi + VEN +/- CD20 mAb	28	20	4.9 mo
- · - IC + VEN	21	18	3.3 mo



	N	Events	Median
- - - R-CHOP + VEN	13	6	14.9 mo
— BTKi + VEN +/- CD20 mAb	28	20	5 mo
- · - IC + VEN	21	16	3.3 mo

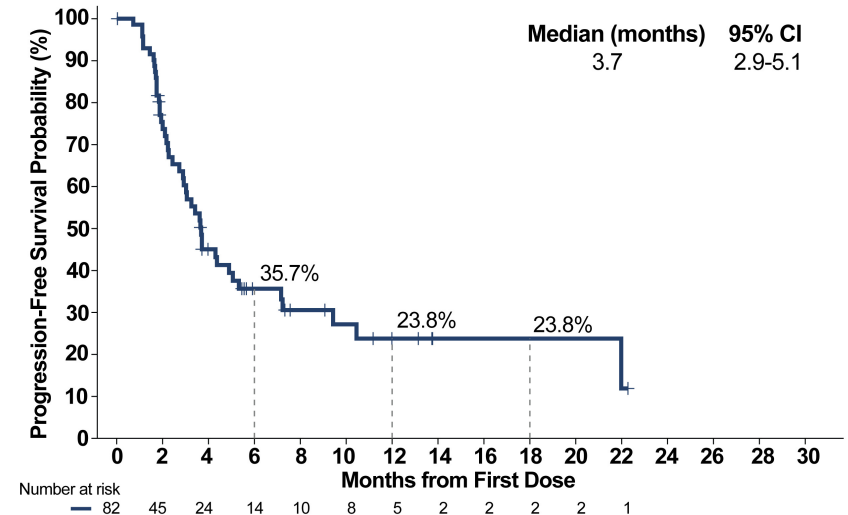
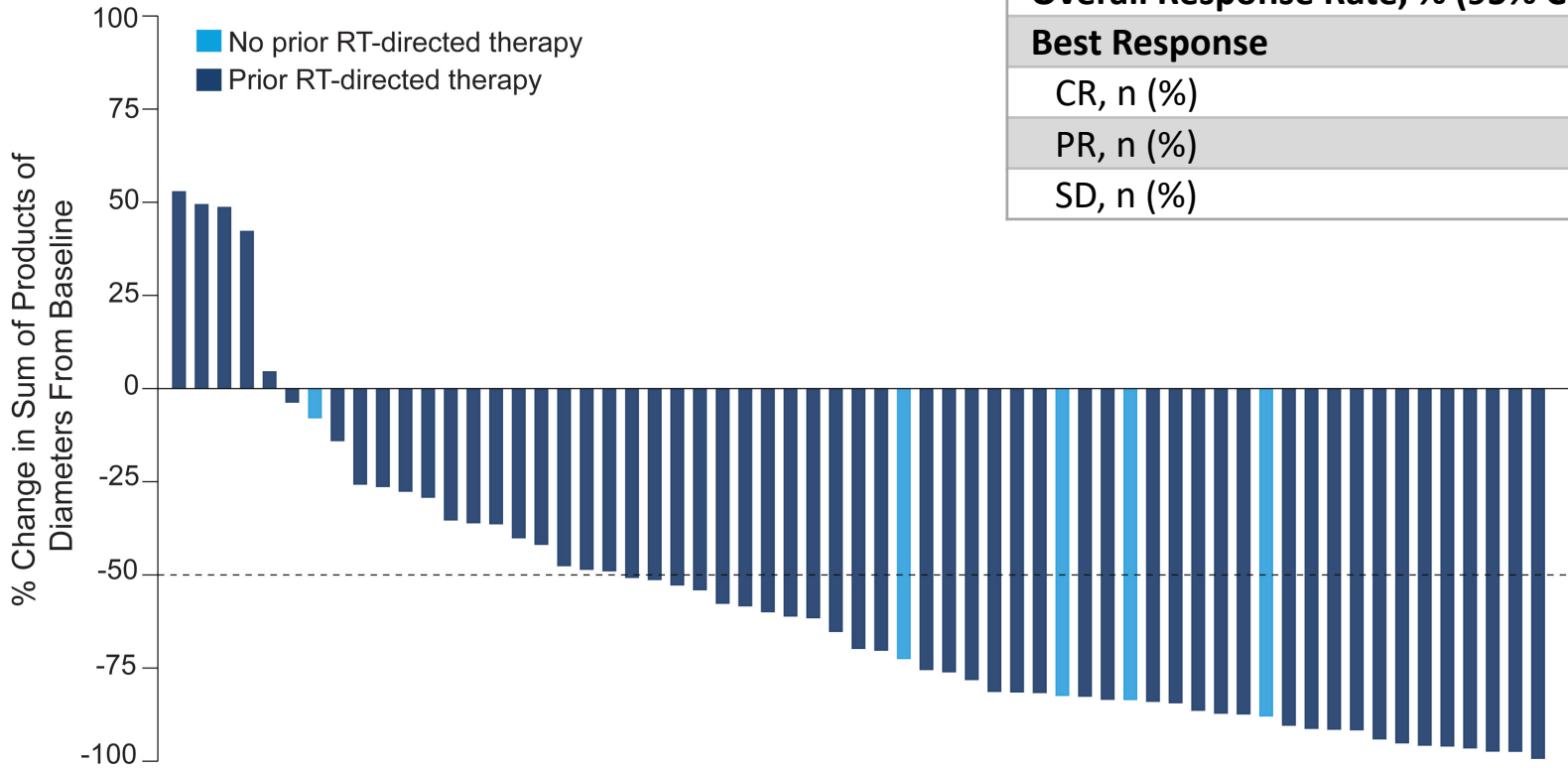
# Novel treatment options: BTK inhibitor monotherapy

---

- In a single-institution, open-label study, 4 patients with DLBCL RT were treated with **ibrutinib**<sup>1</sup>
  - 3 of the 4 responded, including 1 CR
  - Among responders, DOR ranged from 2.8 to 10.8 months (median, 6.1 months)
- In the RT arm of the phase ½ ACE-CL-001 clinical trial, **acalabrutinib** was evaluated in 29 patients with RT (efficacy population, n = 21)<sup>2</sup>
  - ORR: 38% (CR: 14%)
  - Among responders, median DOR was 5.7 months, and 2 patients went on to HSCT
- Non-covalent BTKi: **Nemtabrutinib** (ARQ-531/MK-1026) led to response in 3 of 6 RT patients<sup>3</sup>

# Novel treatment options: Pirtobrutinib

	All n=75	Prior RT Therapy n=68
<b>Response Evaluable RT Patients<sup>a</sup></b>		
<b>Overall Response Rate, % (95% CI)</b>	<b>52.0 (40.2-63.7)</b>	<b>50.0 (37.6-62.4)</b>
<b>Best Response</b>		
CR, n (%)	10 (13.3)	9 (13.2)
PR, n (%)	29 (38.7)	25 (36.8)
SD, n (%)	10 (13.3)	10 (14.7)

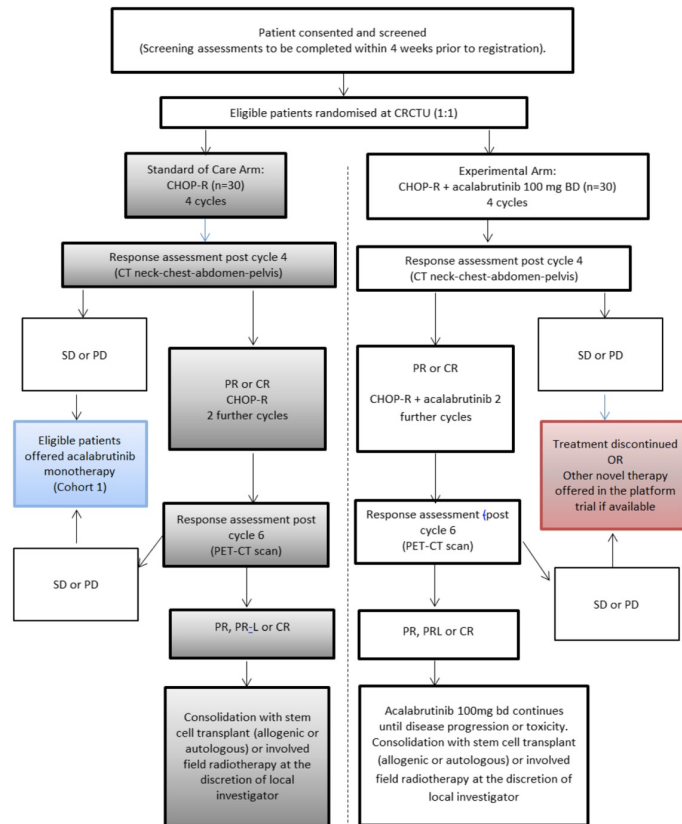


- Among 75 response-evaluable patients, the median time-to-response was 1.8 months (range, 0.9-9.2), median time on study was 6.7 months (range, 0.7-29.1), and median time on treatment was 3.4 months (range, 0.2-26.7)

Data cutoff date of 29 July 2022. Data for 14 patients are not shown in the waterfall plot due to no baseline or post-baseline assessment. <sup>a</sup>Response evaluable patients are those who had at least 1 post-baseline response assessment or had discontinued treatment prior to first post-baseline response assessment. Response as assessed by investigator based on Lugano criteria.

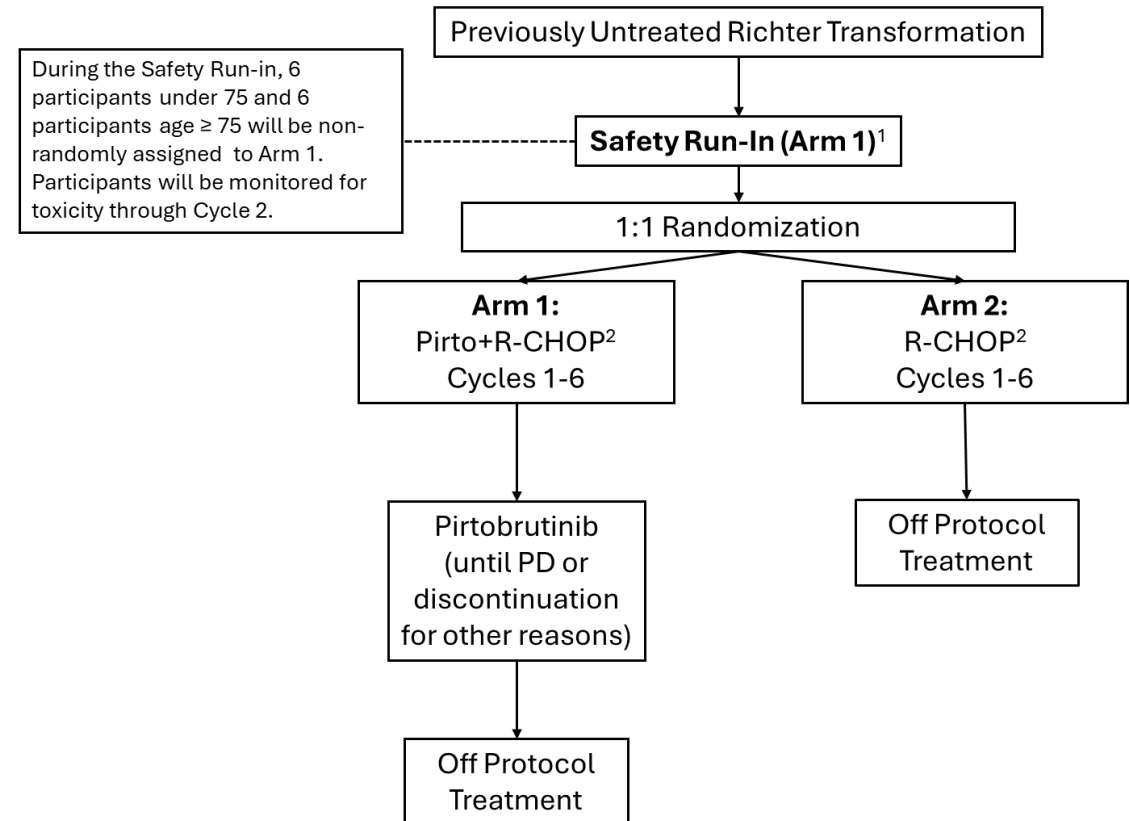
# Randomized data for RT are on the horizon

## UK Stellar study: R-CHOP vs. R-CHOP plus Acalabrutinib



Appleby et al, BMC Cancer 2019

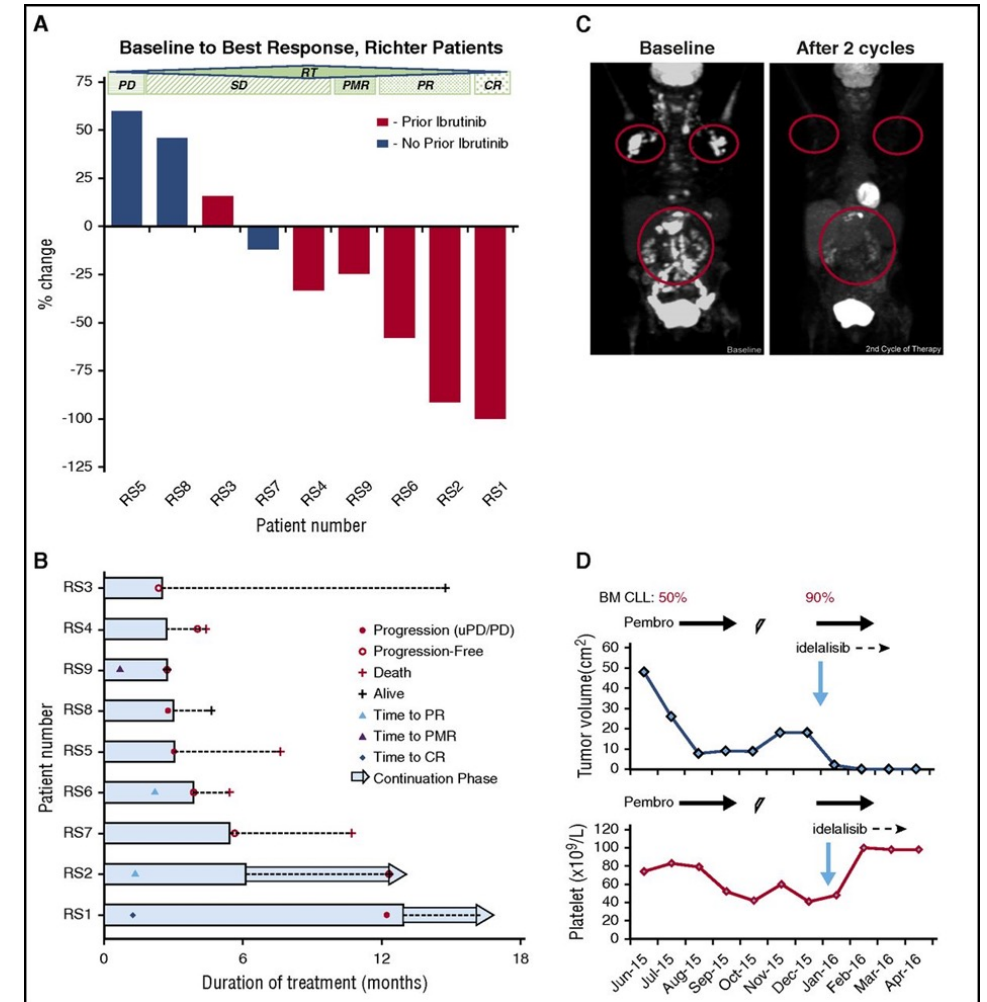
## US SWOG S2504: R-CHOP vs. R-CHOP plus pirtobrutinib



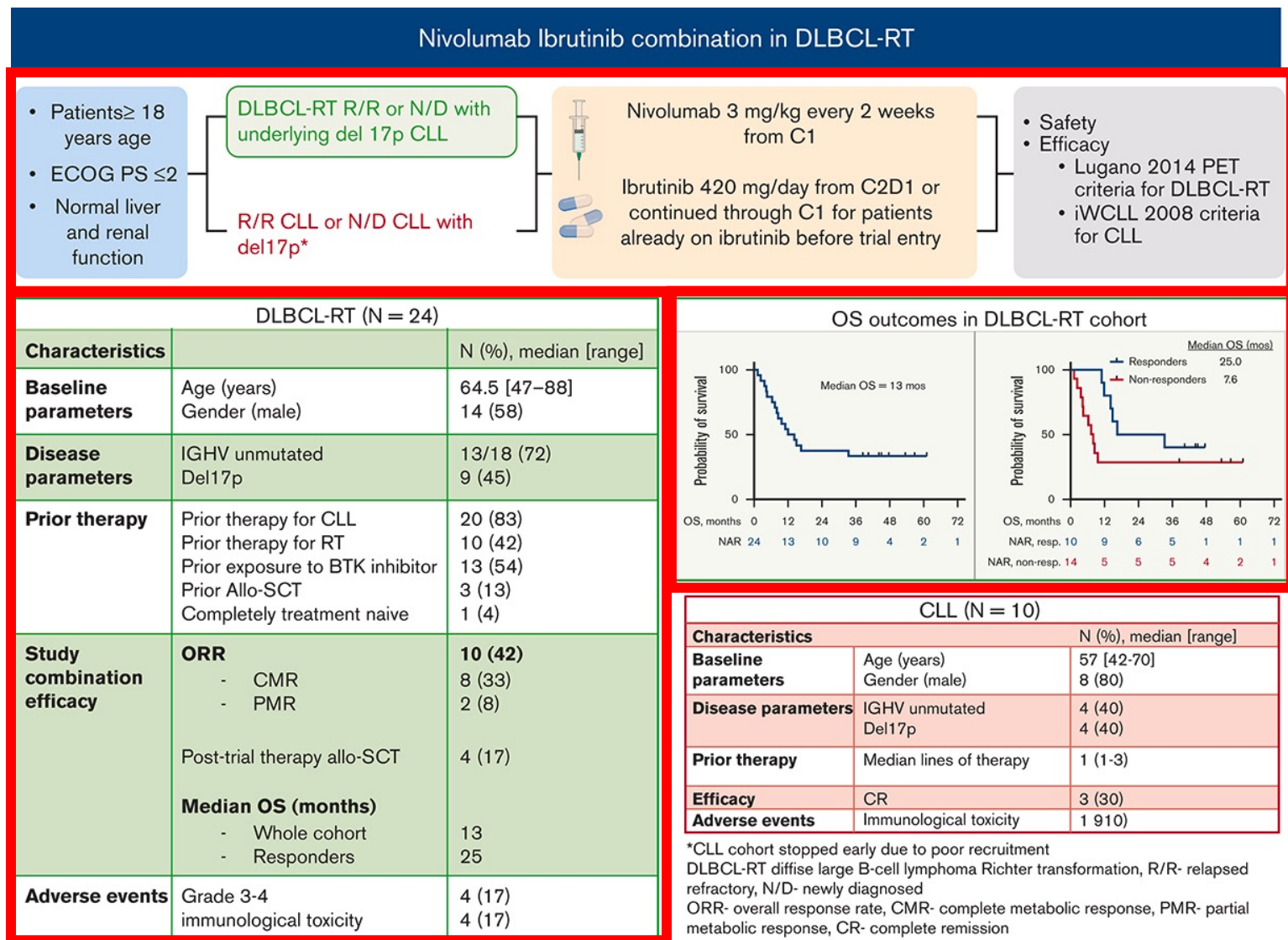
Courtesy of Alexey Danilov

# Novel treatment options: PD-1 blockade monotherapy

- Initial promising data for **pembrolizumab** monotherapy, with 4/9 (44%) responses (though only 1 CR)<sup>1</sup>
  - Median OS 11 months
- Subsequent larger study was disappointing,<sup>2</sup> with 3/23 (13%) responses and only 1 (4.3%) CR
  - Median PFS/OS 1.6/3.8 months



# Novel treatment options: PD-1/BTK blockade

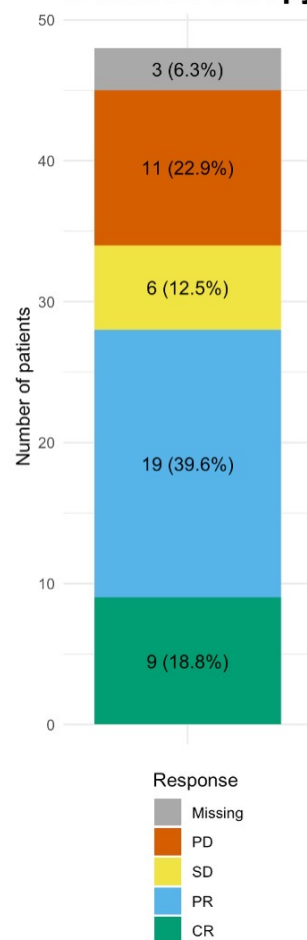


# RT1 trial: Tislelizumab Plus Zanubrutinib Efficacy in RT Patients

N=59 enrolled  
N=48 efficacy population  
75% prior CLL Rx  
27% prior RT Rx

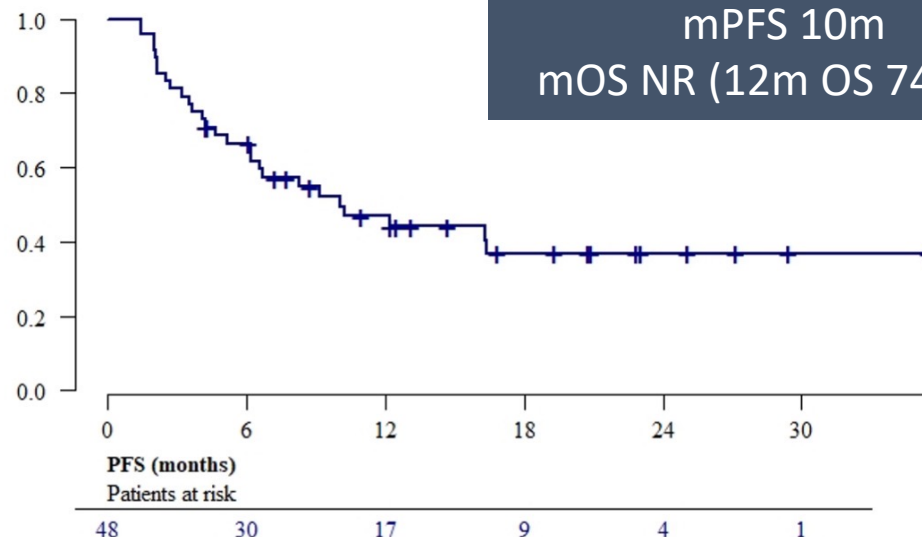
ORR 58%  
CR 19% in N=48

**A** Response after induction therapy



**B**

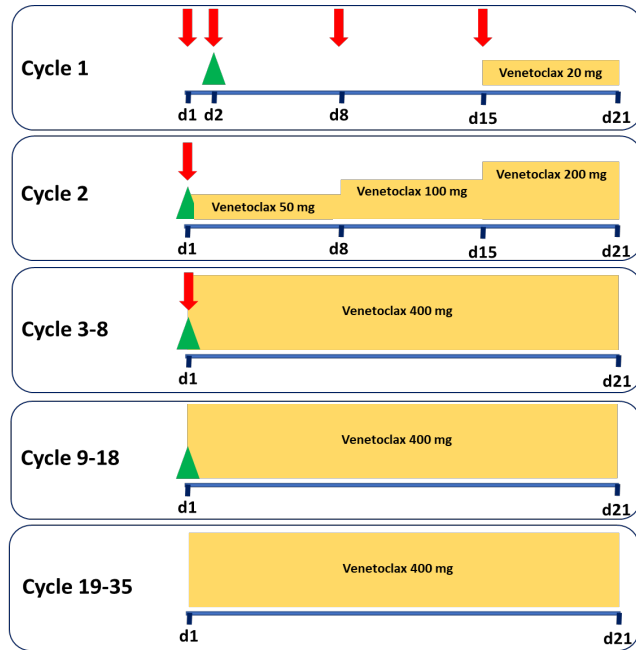
Progression-free survival



AE  $\geq$ G3 28.5%  
SAE 21.3%  
3 d/c due to toxicity  
Most common AEs infection 17.7%

Ongoing study extension with the addition of sonrotoclax (BGB-11417): n = 26

# MOLTO trial: Venetoclax-Obinutuzumab-Atezolizumab



**Obinutuzumab:**  
 ↓ 100 mg C1D1;  
 900 mg C1D2;  
 1000 mg C1D8, 15 and C2-8 D1

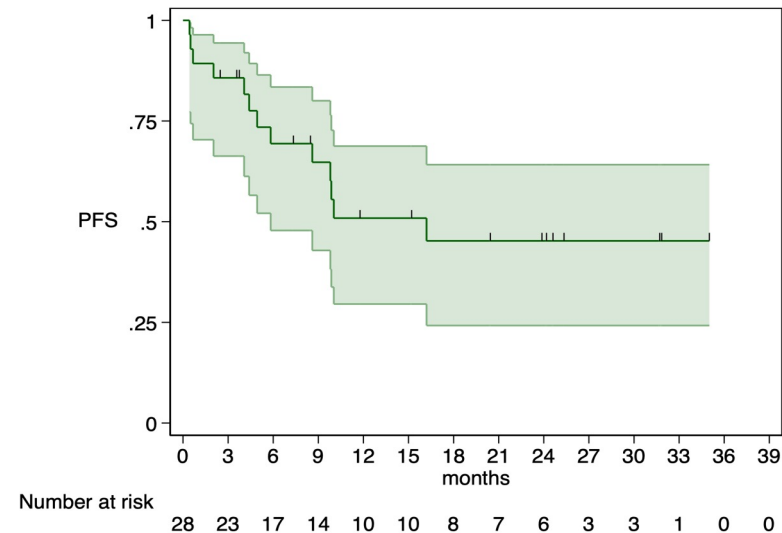
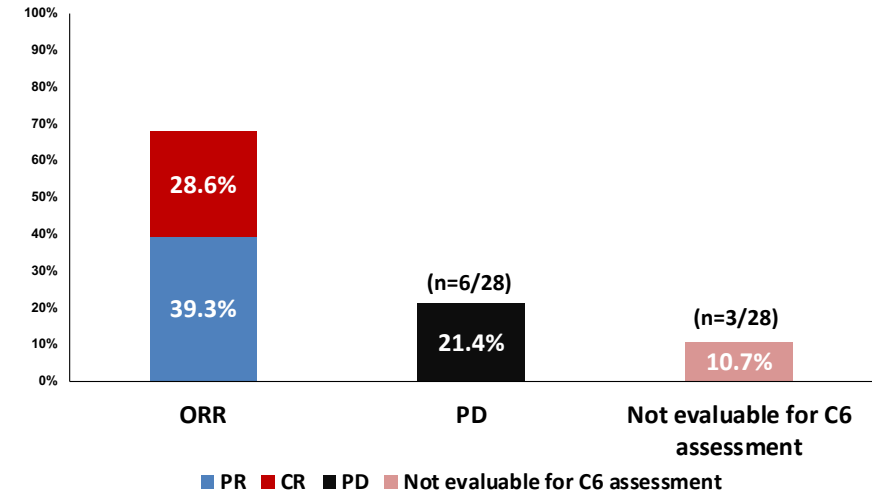
**Atezolizumab:**  
 ▲ 1200 mg C1D2 and C2-18 D1

**Venetoclax:**  
 ■ 5 w ramp-up from C1D15,  
 then 400 mg C3D1-C35D21

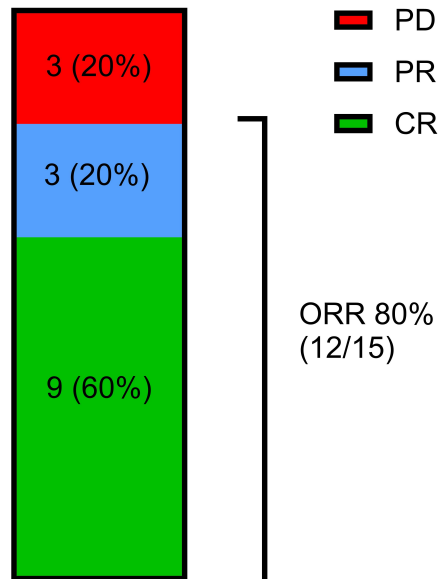
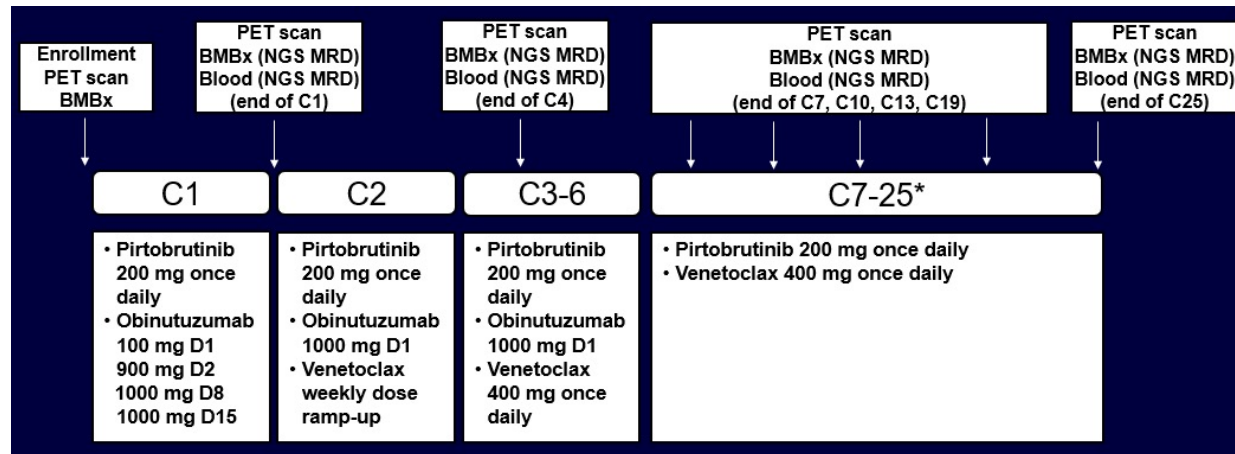
**1 cycle = 21 days**

**ORR 68%, CRR 29%**  
**1-year-PFS 51%**

ORR based on Lugano Classification

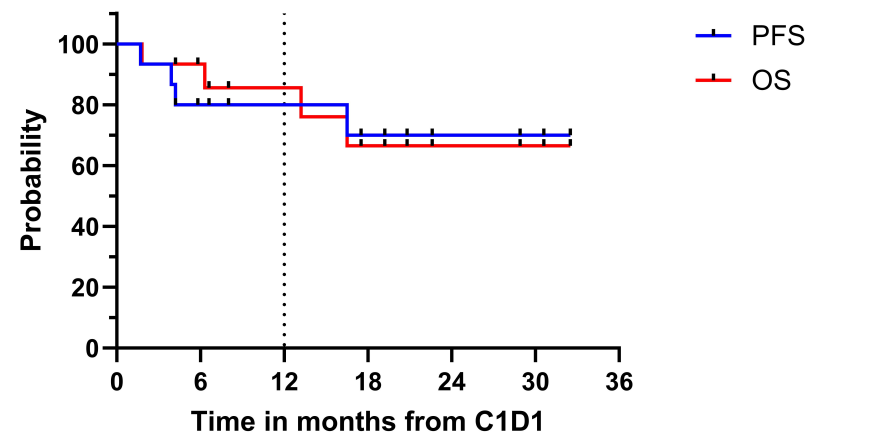


# PVO: Pirtobrutinib-Venetoclax-Obinutuzumab in RT



Responses

PFS and OS of whole cohort

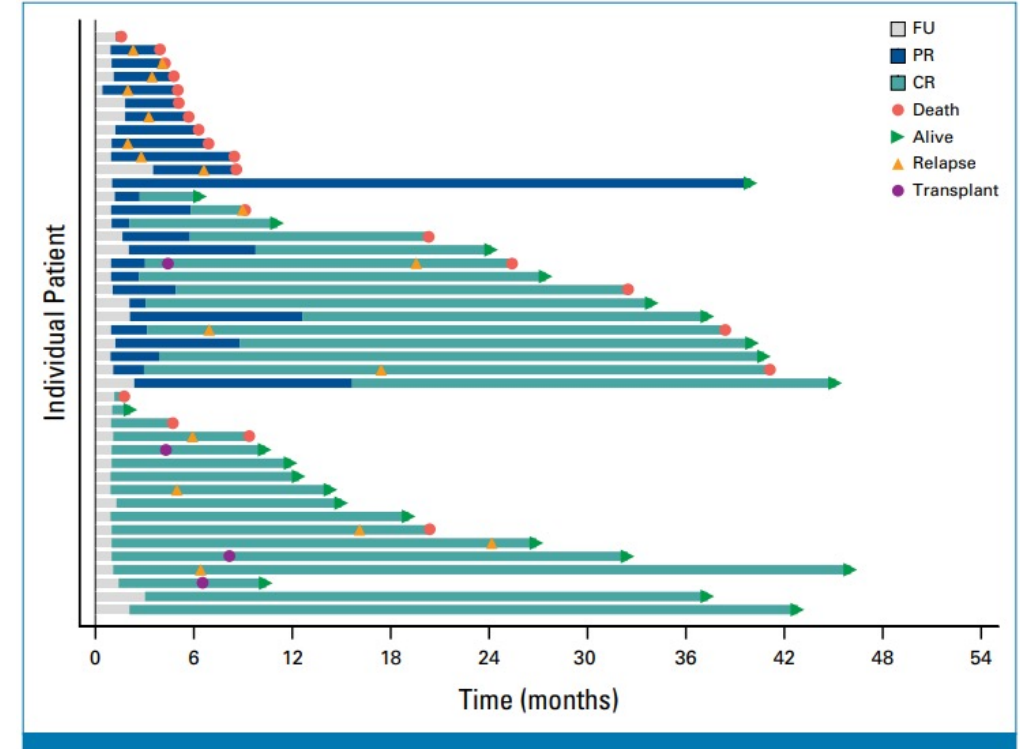
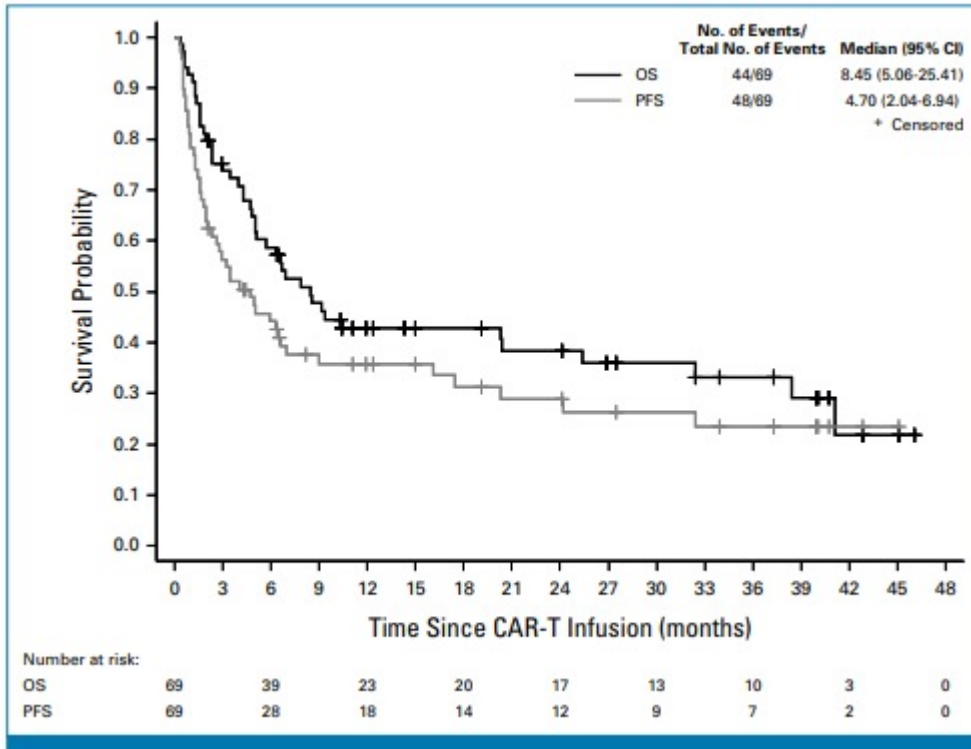


Number of Risk

No of events

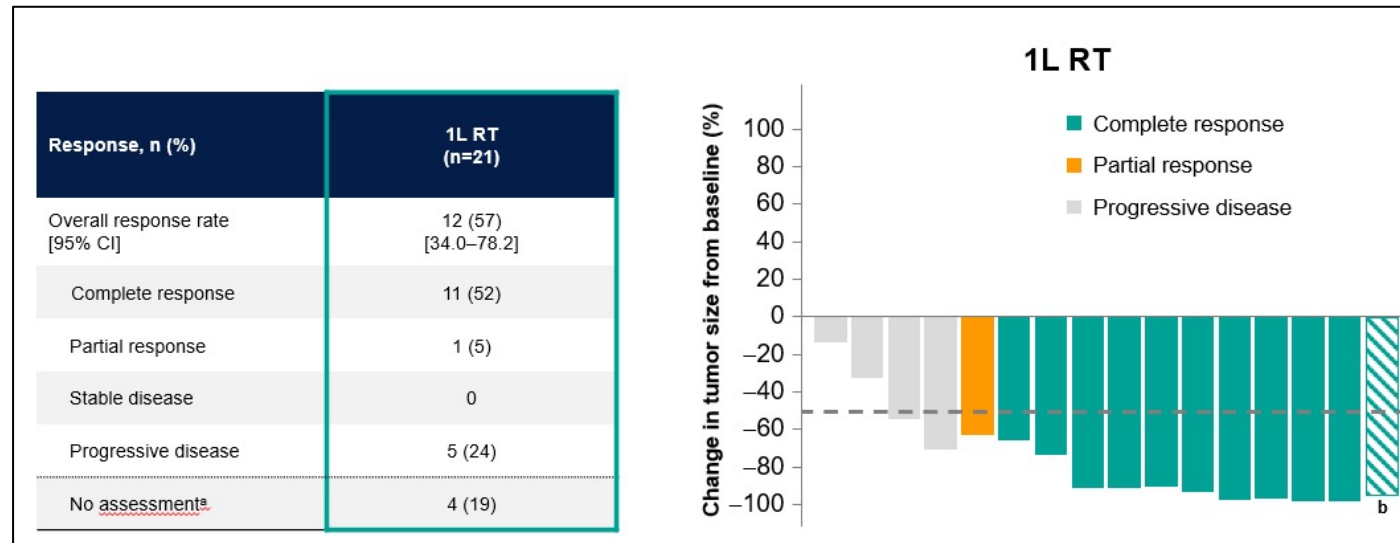
PFS	15	10	8	6	3	2	0	4
OS	15	12	9	6	3	2	0	4

# CD19 CAR-T in RT: retrospective data suggest limited benefit



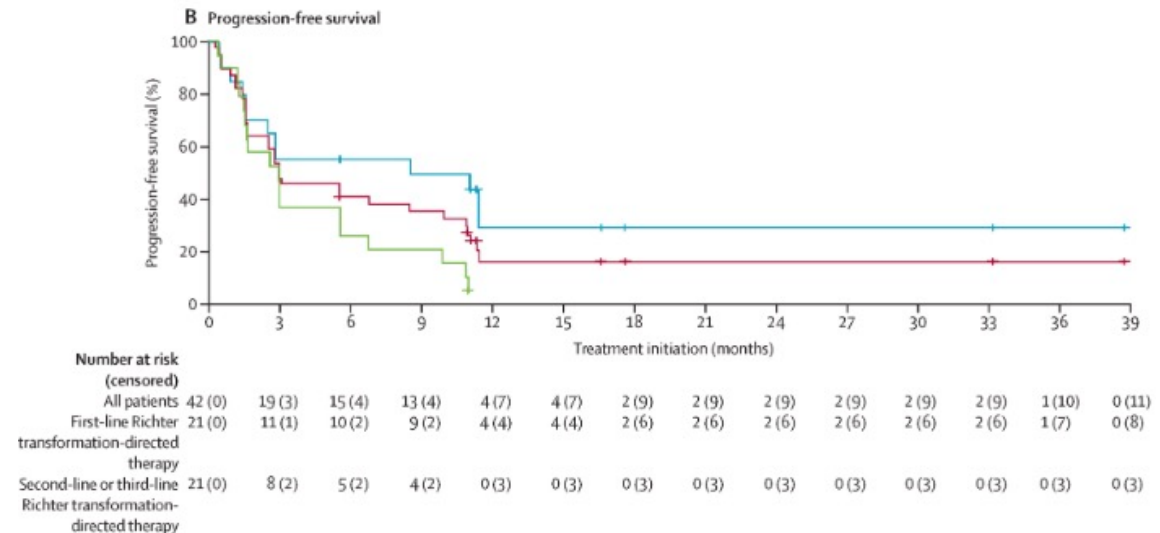
- 69 patients with median 4 prior lines of therapy
- ORR 63%, CR 46%, median PFS 4.7 mo., median DOR 27.6 mo
  - Grade 3+ CRS and ICANS in 16% and 37%, respectively

# Bispecific Antibodies: Epcoritamab

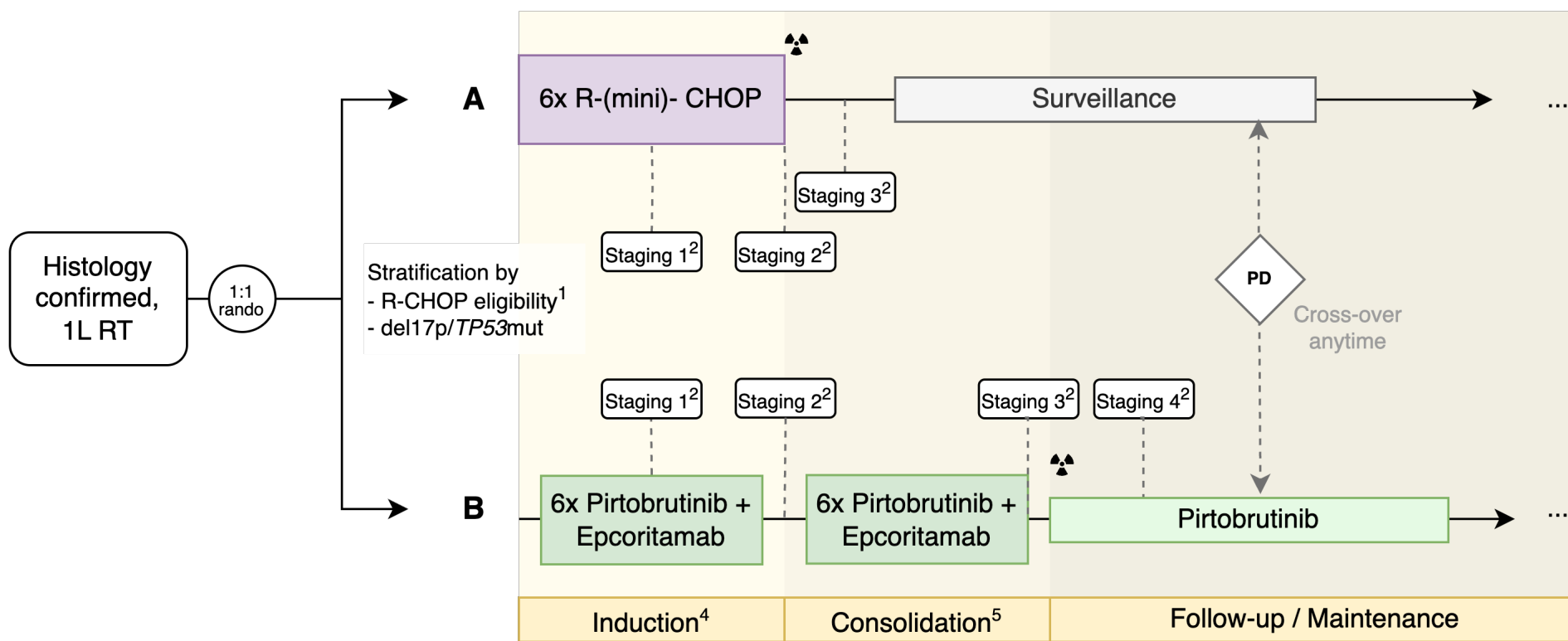


	1L RT (n=21)
PFS events, n	13
Median PFS, (95% CI)	8.5 (1.5–NR)

- CRS in 86% (7% Gr3),
- ICANS in 12% (all Gr1/2)



# RT2 Randomized Trial: Epcor + Pirto vs. R-CHOP



**Primary endpoint:**  
PFS<sup>3</sup>

Median PFS assumptions:  
Arm A: 4 months  
Arm B: 7 months

HR 0.571

**Sample size**  
58 pts per arm (116 total)

**Accrual time**  
33 months (3.5/mo)

<sup>1</sup> fit pts receive R-CHOP, unfit pts R-mini-CHOP  
<sup>2</sup> if PD: Cross-over  
<sup>3</sup> PFS event: PD, death  
<sup>4</sup> 1 cycle à 21 days  
<sup>5</sup> 1 cycle à 28 days

☢ Radiation at end of (combination) treatment if residual PET-positive lesions

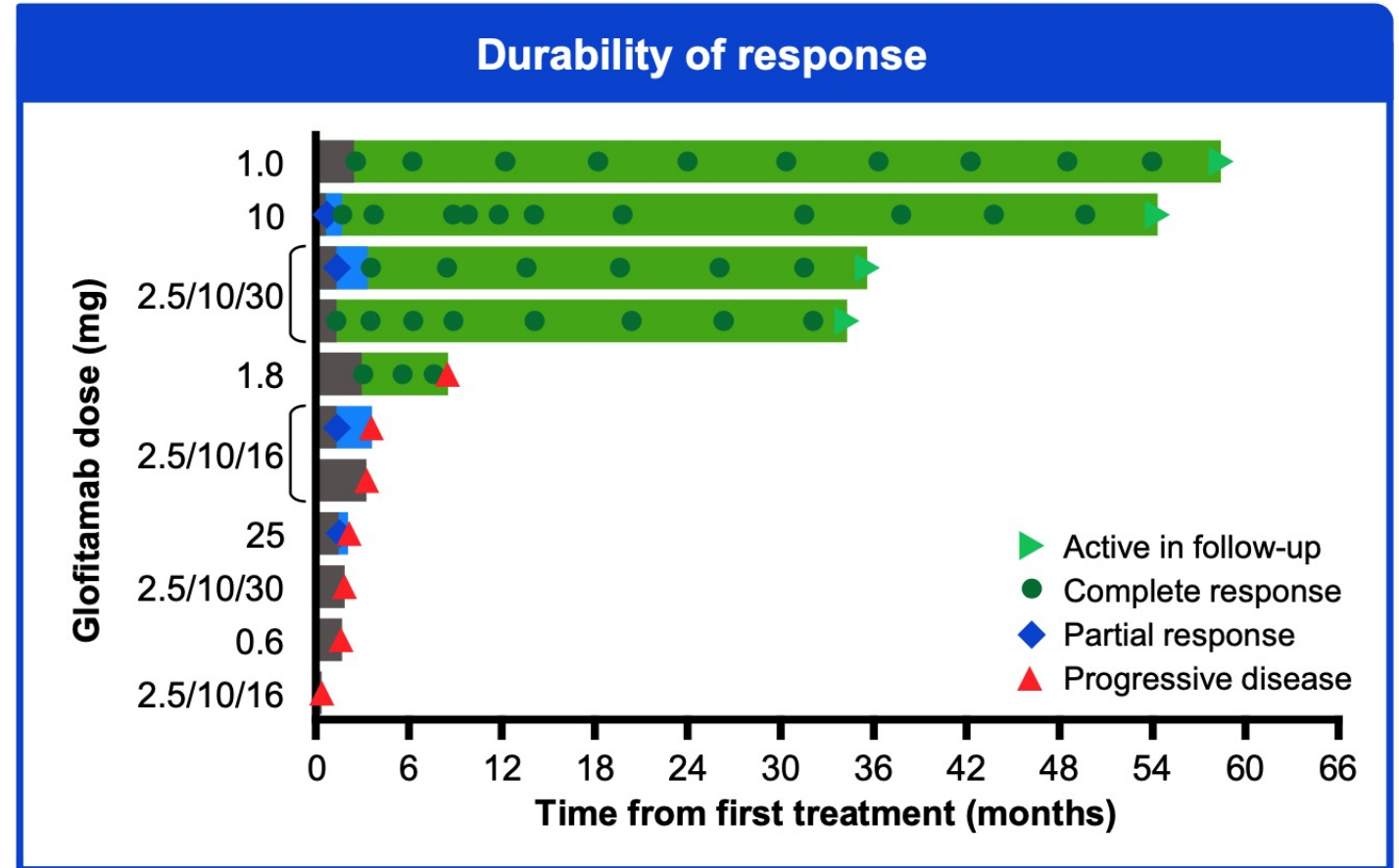


# Bispecific Antibodies: Glofitamab

11 patients with RT treated with Glofitamab Monotherapy<sup>2</sup>

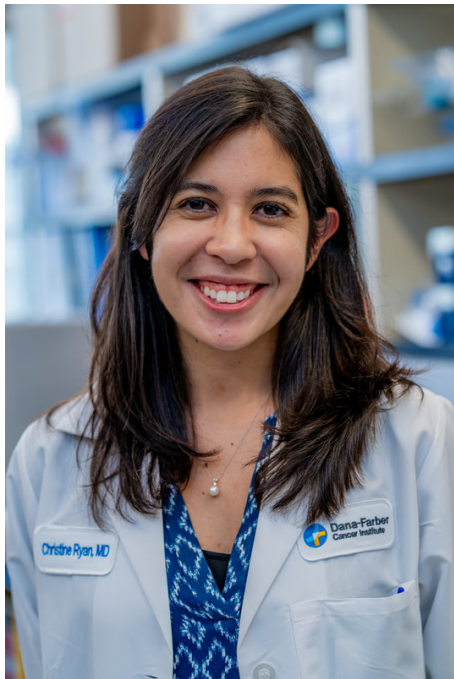
## In RT:

- ORR: 64% (7/11)
- **CR rate: 46% (5/11)**
- 4 of 5 patients who achieved CR with ongoing response > 33 months
- Median time to CR: 2.5 months
- CRS: 73% (n=1 each Gr3, Gr4)

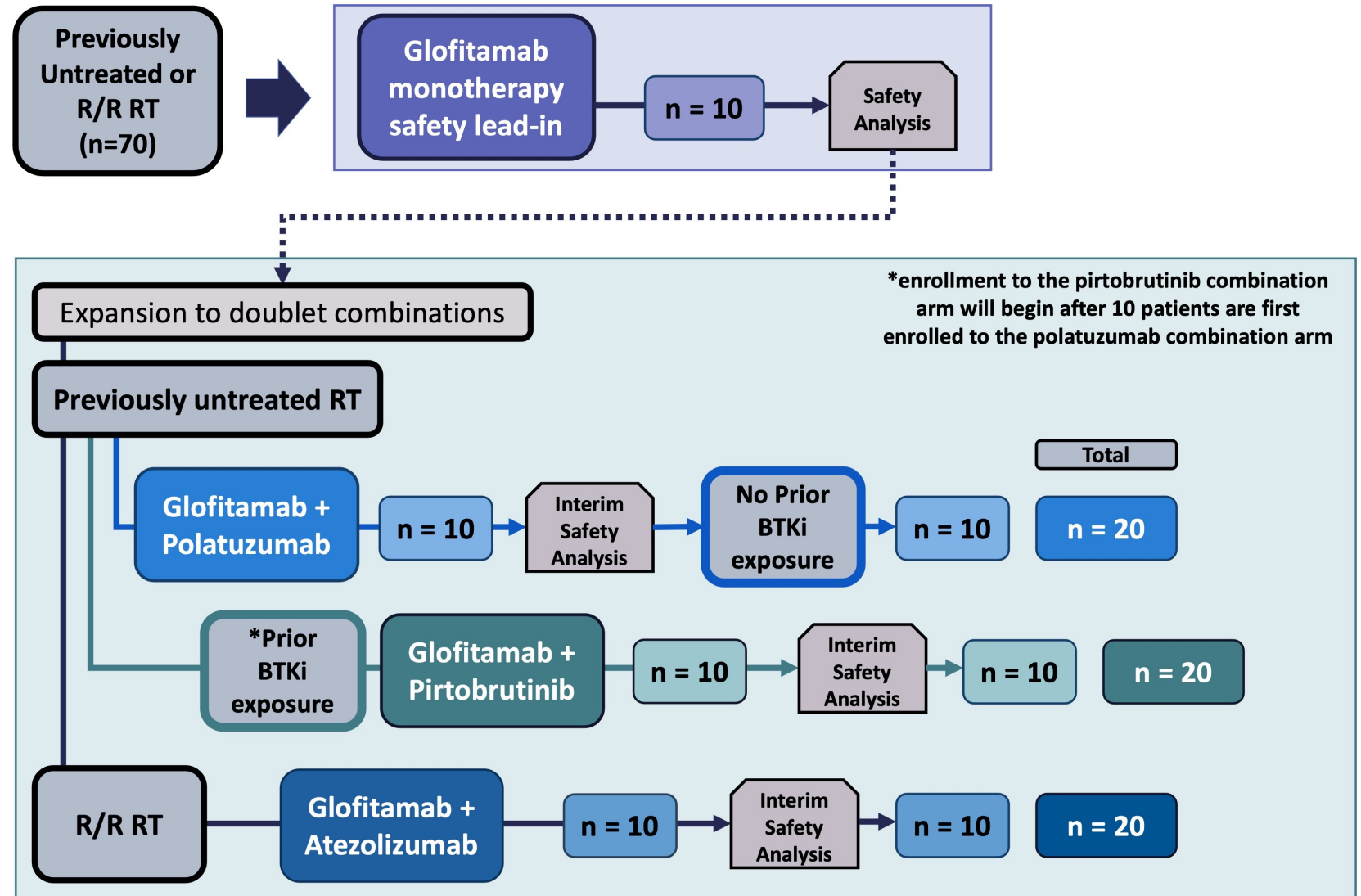


# Bispecific Antibodies: Glofitamab

## Ph2, Multicenter IIT: Glofitamab in RT



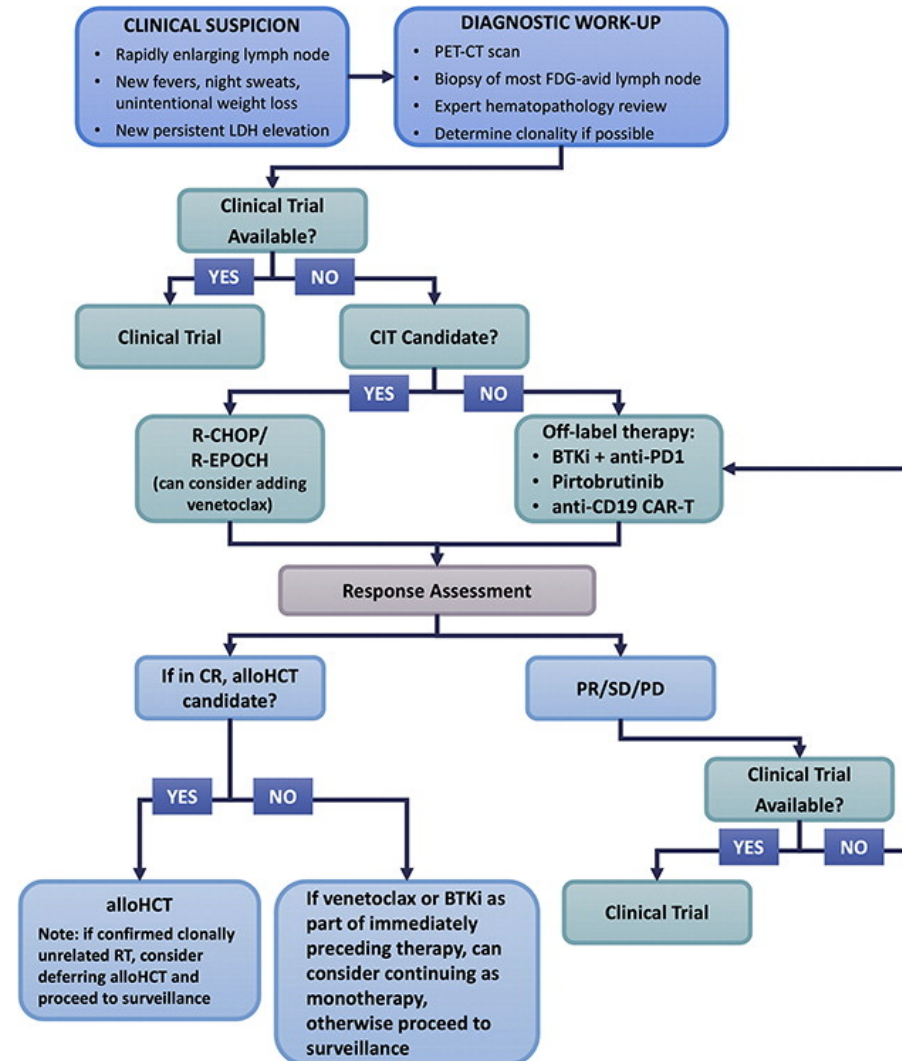
PI: Christine Ryan, MD  
DFCI



# Selected ongoing clinical trials for Richter transformation

Combination Regimen	CIT		Mono-clonal Ab	Small-Molecule Inhibitors						Immunotherapy				ADC		
	R-EPOCH	R-CHOP		BTKi				BCL2i	PI3Ki		Immune Checkpoint Blockade				CAR-T	
			OBIN	IBR	ACALA	ZANU	PIRTO	VEN	DUV	COPA	Anti-PD-1	Anti-PD-L1	Anti-CTLA-4	Anti-CD19	POLA	
<b>IBR + NIVO</b> <i>NCT02329847, NCT02420912</i>				IBR								Anti-PD-1				
<b>IBR + NIVO + IPI</b> <i>NCT04781855</i>				IBR								Anti-PD-1		Anti-CTLA-4		
<b>IBR + NIVO + Liso-Cel</b> <i>NCT05672173</i>				IBR								Anti-PD-1			Anti-CD19	
<b>ACALA + R-CHOP</b> <i>NCT03899337</i>		R-CHOP			ACALA											
<b>ACALA + VEN + DURVA</b> <i>NCT05388006</i>					ACALA			VEN					Anti-PD-L1			
<b>ZANU + TISLE</b> <i>NCT04271956</i>						ZANU						Anti-PD-1				
<b>PIRTO + VEN + OBIN</b> <i>NCT05536349</i>			OBIN				PIRTO	VEN								
<b>VEN + R-EPOCH/ VEN + R-CHOP</b> <i>NCT03054896</i>	R-EPOCH	R-CHOP						VEN								
<b>VEN + OBIN + ATEZO</b> <i>NCT02846623, NCT04082897</i>			OBIN					VEN					Anti-PD-L1			
<b>VEN + DUV</b> <i>NCT03534323</i>								VEN	DUV							
<b>COPA + NIVO</b> <i>NCT03884998</i>										COPA		Anti-PD-1				
<b>POLA + R-EPOCH</b> <i>NCT04679012</i>	R-EPOCH															POLA

# Summary of algorithm for RT treatment in 2026



# Toward a Consensus on Richter Transformation



## International consensus statement on diagnosis, evaluation, and research of Richter transformation: the ERIC recommendations

Adam S. Kittai,<sup>1,\*</sup> Monia Marchetti,<sup>2,\*</sup> Othman Al-Sawaf,<sup>3</sup> Ohad Benjamini,<sup>4,5</sup> Alexey V. Danilov,<sup>6</sup> Matthew S. Davids,<sup>7</sup> Barbara Eichhorst,<sup>3</sup> Toby A. Eyre,<sup>8</sup> Anna Maria Frustaci,<sup>9</sup> Michael Hallek,<sup>3</sup> Paul J. Hampel,<sup>10</sup> Yair Herishanu,<sup>11</sup> Rodney J. Hicks,<sup>12</sup> Amon P. Kater,<sup>13</sup> Rebecca L. King,<sup>14</sup> Jose I. Martin-Subero,<sup>15,16</sup> Carolyn Owen,<sup>17</sup> Erin Parry,<sup>7</sup> Maurilio Ponzoni,<sup>18,19</sup> Davide Rossi,<sup>20</sup> Tanya Siddiqi,<sup>6</sup> Stephan Stilgenbauer,<sup>21</sup> Constantine S. Tam,<sup>22</sup> Elisa ten Hacken,<sup>23</sup> Philip A. Thompson,<sup>24,25</sup> William Wierda,<sup>26</sup> Gianluca Gaidano,<sup>27,†</sup> Jennifer A. Woyach,<sup>28,†</sup> and Paolo Ghia<sup>19,29,†</sup>

## International Consensus Statement on Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Research of Richter Transformation of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)

### Context of Research

Richter transformation (RT) remains a rare entity and is associated with dismal outcomes. There is no consensus on the study or management of RT currently published.

### Aim of This Study

We convened a group of 29 international experts on RT to establish consensus recommendations on the diagnosis, evaluation, and research of RT.

### Recommendations

#### Diagnosis/Prognosis



- We strongly recommend attaining an excisional biopsy on the most metabolically active, accessible lymph node for diagnosis
- Current standard of care treatment with RCHOP-like regimens has poor efficacy

#### Prognostication/Staging



- Clonality should be determined by comparing IG gene rearrangements from the RT tissue and the CLL cells
- We recommend using a pretreatment PET-CT to establish the extent of the disease

#### Clinical Trial Recommendations



- If at all possible, patients with RT should be treated in clinical trials
- Response of RT and CLL should be objectively assessed and reported based on both Lugano criteria as well as iwCLL guidelines

**Conclusions:** Given the poor outcomes associated with RT, participation in clinical trials should be encouraged. Prospective clinical studies along with the collection of primary longitudinal samples are needed to develop rational therapeutic strategies for this disease.

Kittai et al. DOI: 10.1182/*blood*.2024028064



# Conclusions

- **RT is rare, but carries a poor prognosis**
- **PET is not diagnostic, and specialized path confirmation critical**
- **Clonal relationship informs risk stratification**
- **Chemo has poorer outcomes than DLBCL, but allo HCT may confer long term survival**
- **Promising new treatment options are under investigation, including:**
  - Chemosensitization with ven
  - PD-1 blockade in combination with BTKi
  - Non-covalent BTKi combinations
  - CAR-T, bispecific antibody combinations
- **Active participation in clinical trials remains crucial**

# Dana-Farber Lymphoma

