

Immunological Non Responders: Quale Terapia?

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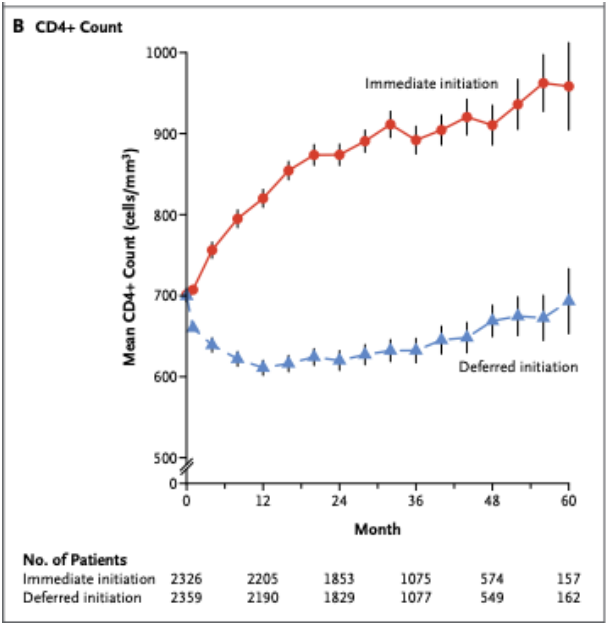
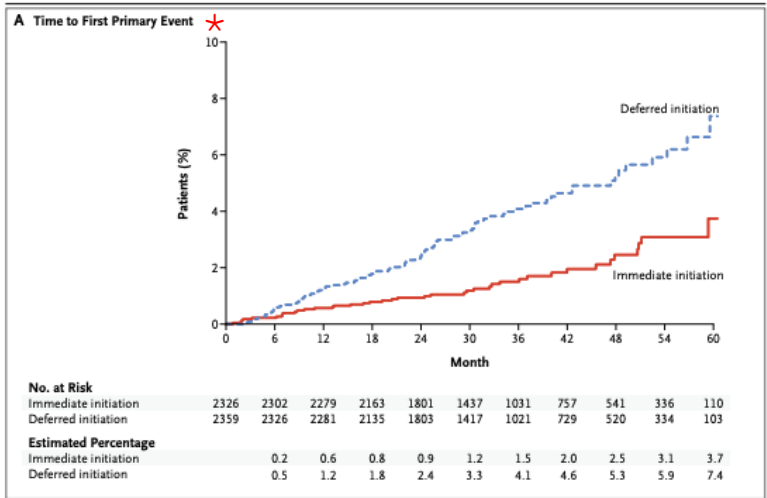
Università degli Studi di Milano

Background

- **Definition of INR**

- confine CD4+ T cell count
- increased CD4+ T- cell counts from baseline
- confine percentage of CD4+ T cell increase over baseline

- **Clinical risk of INR**



★ Primary Event:
a serious AIDS-related or serious non-AIDS-related event, including death

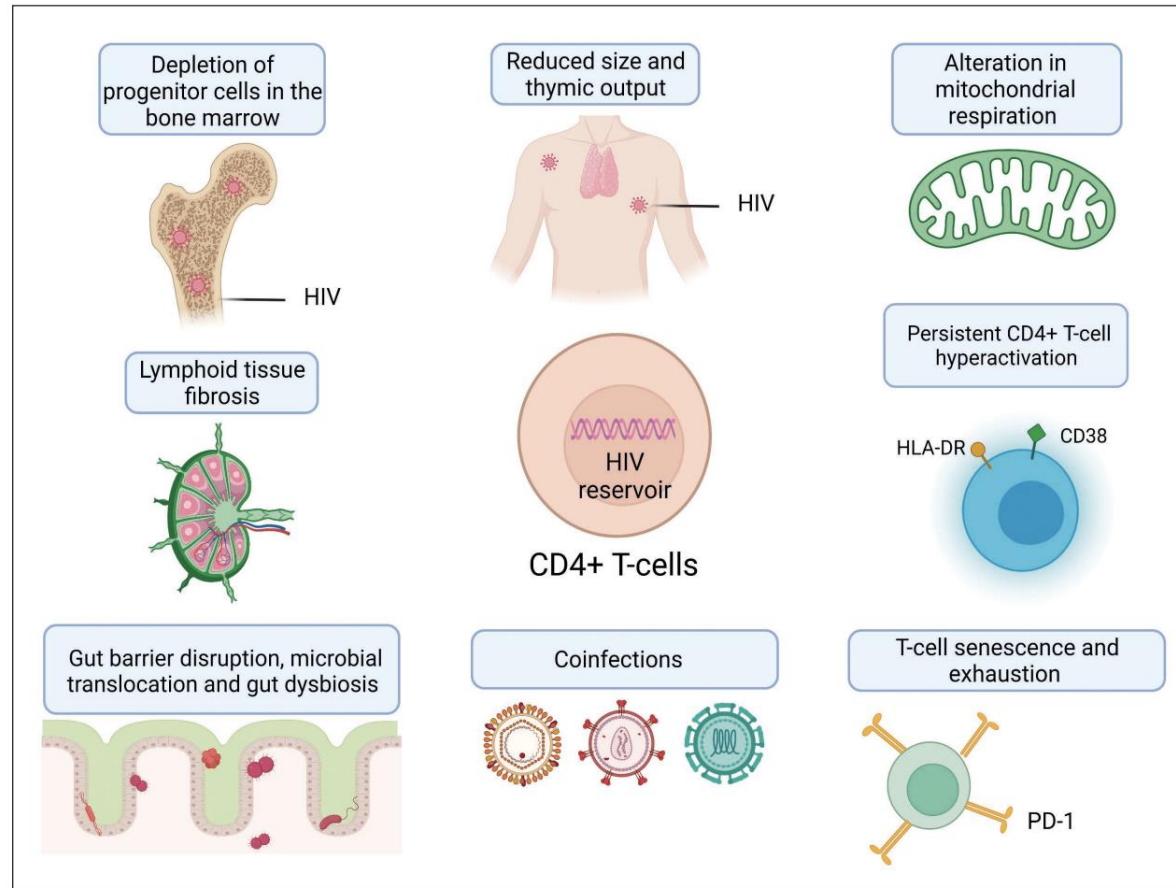
TABLE 1 Definitions of INR from the literature and guideline.

Definition of INRs	References
Increase in the CD4 ⁺ T cell count <200 cells/μl from baseline at 2 years after cART initiation, with an undetectable plasma VL	García et al. (2019)
Total CD4 ⁺ T cell counts <200 cells/μl at 2 years after cART initiation, with an undetectable plasma VL	Xie et al. (2021)
Total CD4 ⁺ T cell count <350 cells/μl 2 years after cART initiation, with an undetectable plasma VL	Dai et al. (2021) , Rousseau et al. (2021) , Shive et al. (2021)
Total CD4 ⁺ T cell count <350 cells/μl 2 years after cART initiation, with plasma HIV-1 RNA < 50 copies/ml	Geng et al. (2021) , Malazogu et al. (2021) , Vlasova et al. (2021)
Total CD4 ⁺ T cell count <350 cells/μl 2 years after cART initiation, with plasma HIV-1 RNA < 50 copies/ml at least 12 months	Bandera et al. (2018)
Total CD4 ⁺ T cell counts <350 cells/μl 8 years after cART initiation, with an undetectable plasma VL	Luo et al. (2022)
Increase in the CD4 ⁺ T cell count <20% from baseline at 1 year after cART initiation, with an undetectable plasma VL	Lv et al. (2021)
CD4/CD8 ratio < 1 at 24 weeks after cART initiation, with plasma HIV-1 RNA < 50 copies/ml	Russo et al. (2022)

VL, viral load.

Zhang et al. Front Microbiology 2023

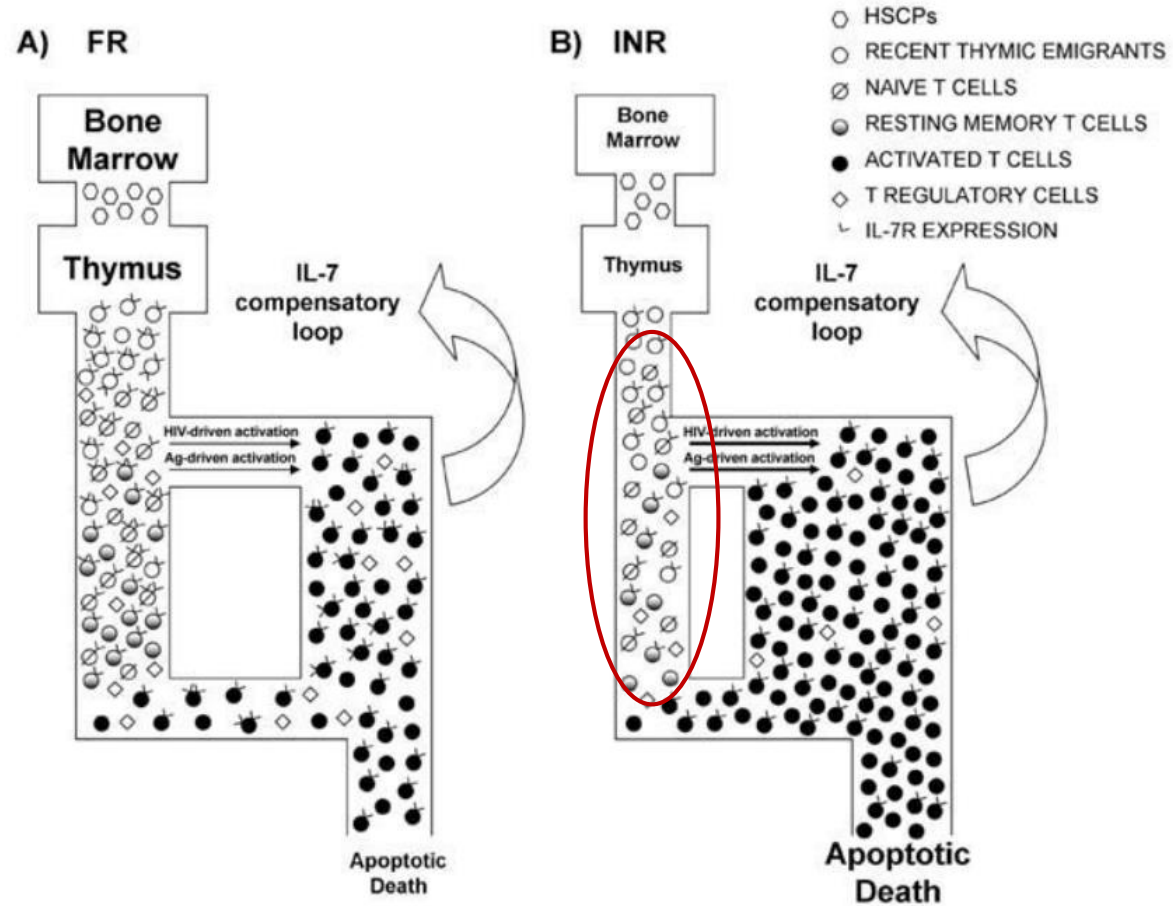
Pathogenesis of INR



The Absence of CD4⁺ T Cell Count Recovery Despite Receipt of Virologically Suppressive Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy: Clinical Risk, Immunological Gaps, and Therapeutic Options

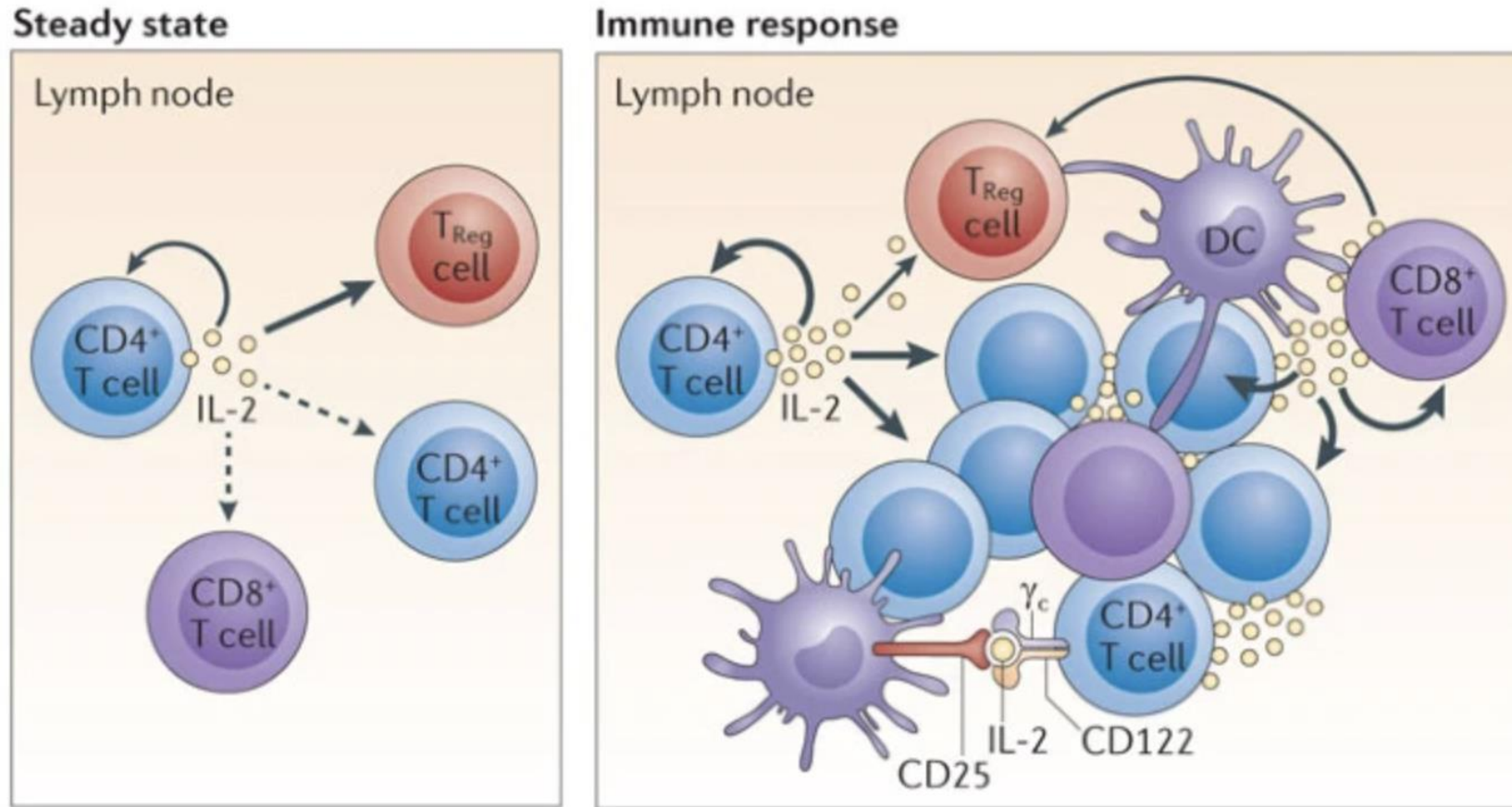
Lidia Gazzola, Camilla Tincati, Giusi Maria Bellistri, Antonella d'Arminio Monforte, and Giulia Marchetti

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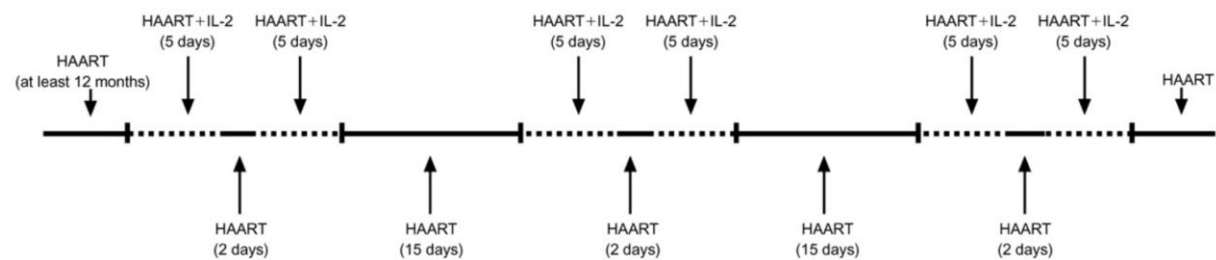


Adjuvant therapeutic strategy #1:
increase peripheral CD4+ T-cell
proliferation/survival

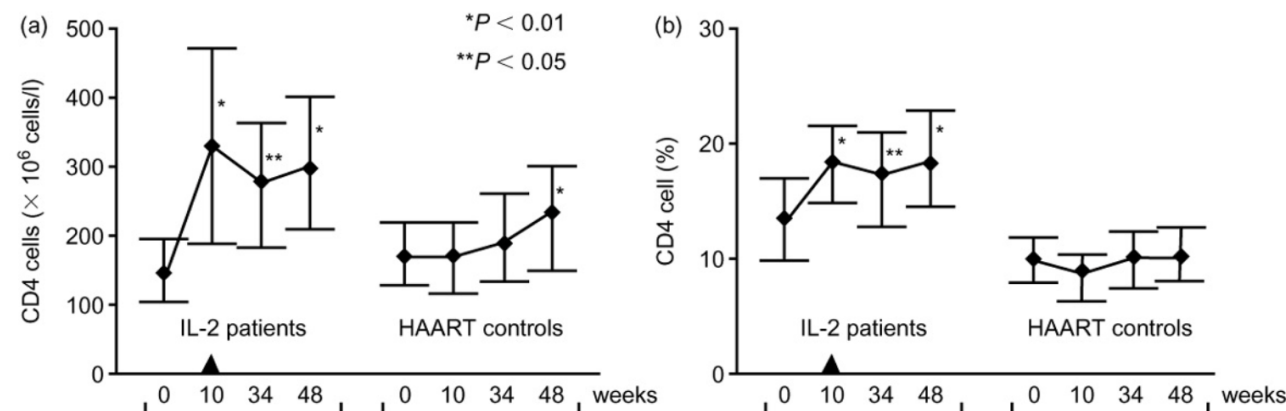
IL-2 induces T-cell proliferation



Immune benefit of IL-2 adjuvant therapy vs cART alone in HIV



Schedule of low-dose prolonged intermittent interleukin-2 (IL-2) immunotherapy in association with highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART).



Median value (IQR)

Variable	Week 0	Week 10	Week 34	Week 48
CD4/CD8 ratio				
IL-2	0.20 (0.14–0.30)	0.31 (0.29–0.41)**	0.32 (0.20–0.39)**	0.28 (0.23–0.42)**
HAART	0.14 (0.13–0.20)	0.15 (0.09–0.18)	0.14 (0.14–0.20)	0.17 (0.14–0.23)
CD8+CD38+ (%)				
IL-2	14.5 (8.3–22)	8.8 (5.9–24)	6.2 (5.5–9.2)**	11.4 (7.7–13.5)*
HAART	26 (7.5–37)	nd	nd	20 (12.3–26.5)
CD4+45RA+62L+ (per μ l)				
IL-2	31 (15–37)	60 (37–93)**	65 (22–147)**	90 (26–145)**†
HAART	23 (10–77)	nd	nd	25 (9–83)
CD4+45RA– (per μ l)				
IL-2	129 (68–163)	185 (152–332)**	196 (141–263)**	224 (165–319)**†
HAART	112 (105–156)	nd	nd	125 (114–215)**

Partial immune reconstitution following highly active antiretroviral therapy: can adjuvant interleukin-2 fill the gap?

Giulia Marchetti*, Fabio Franzetti and Andrea Gori

Institute of Infectious Disease and Tropical Medicine, University of Milan, 'Luigi Sacco' Hospital, Milan, Italy

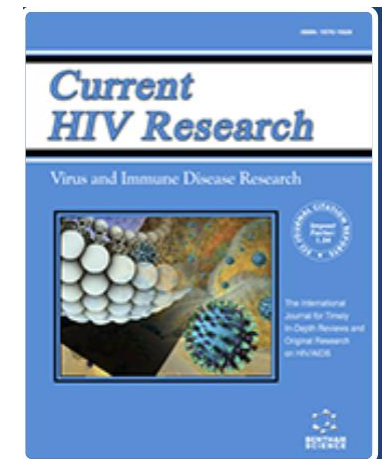
The Challenge of IL-2 Immunotherapy in HIV Disease: “No through Road” or Turning Point?

Author(s): Giulia Marchetti, Camilla Tincati, Antonella d'Arminio Monforte and Andrea Gori

Volume 6, Issue 3, 2008

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DOI: [10.2174/157016208784325029](https://doi.org/10.2174/157016208784325029)



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

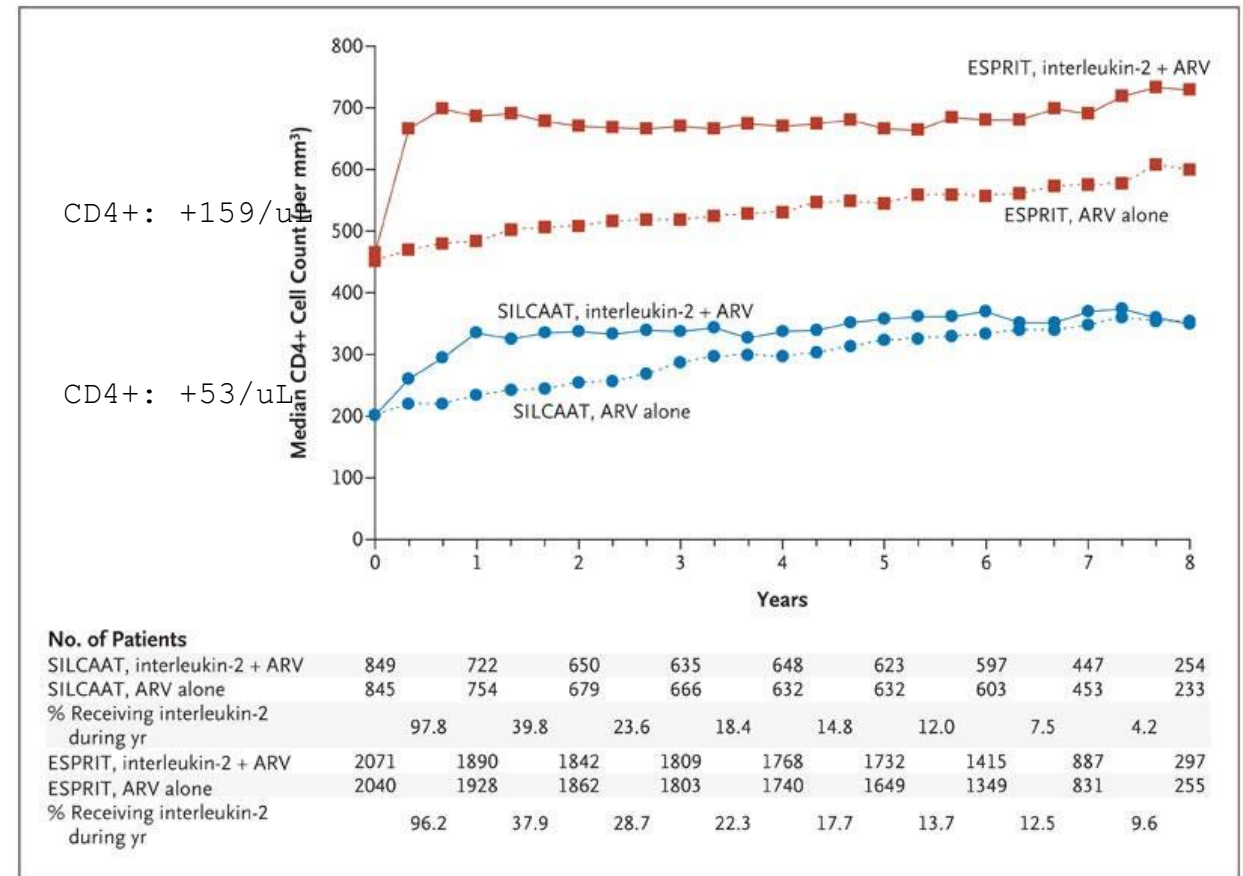
Interleukin-2 Therapy in Patients with HIV Infection

The INSIGHT–ESPRIT Study Group and SILCAAT Scientific Committee*

- Subcutaneous Recombinant, Human Interleukin-2 in HIV-Infected Patients with Low CD4+ Counts under Active Antiretroviral Therapy (**SILCAAT**); CD4+ cell counts of 50 to 299/uL, **n=1695**
- Evaluation of Subcutaneous Proleukin in a Randomized International Trial (**ESPRIT**); CD4+ cell counts of ≥ 300 /uL, **n=4111**

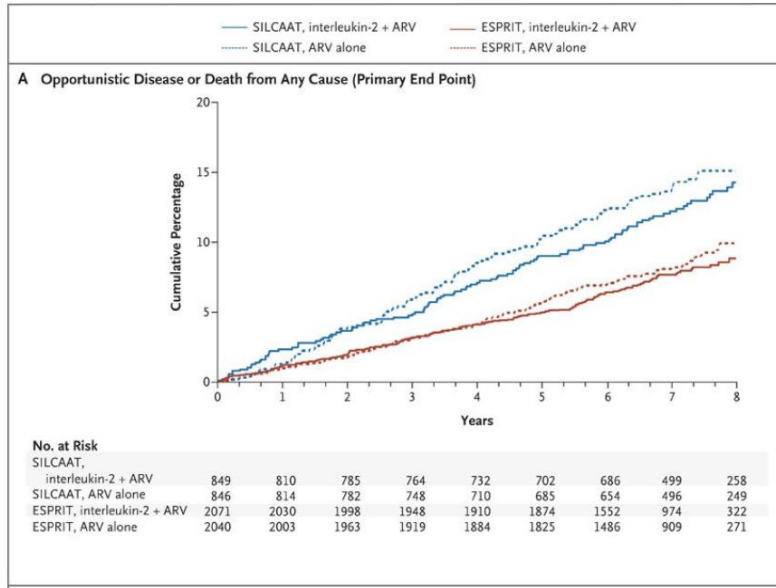
Randomly assigned to receive interleukin-2 plus antiretroviral therapy or antiretroviral therapy alone

The primary end point of both studies was opportunistic disease or death from any cause

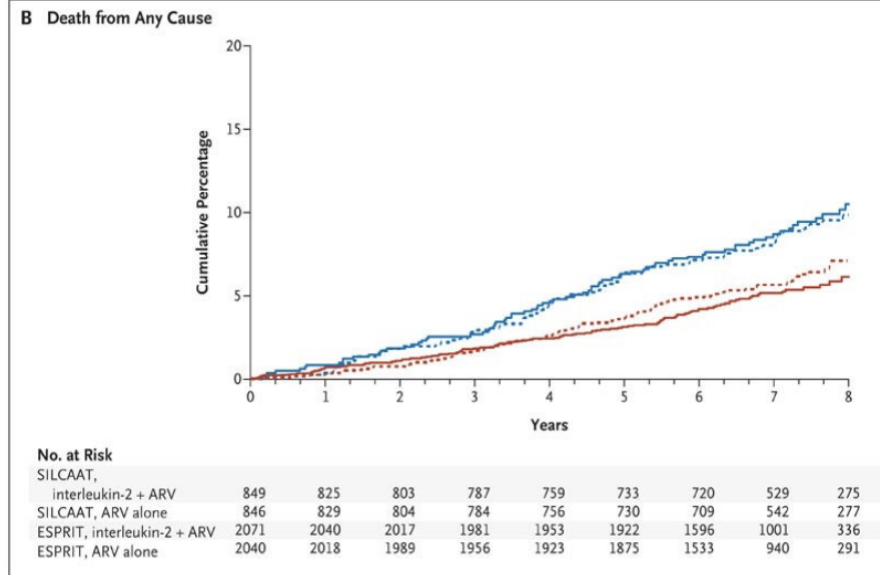
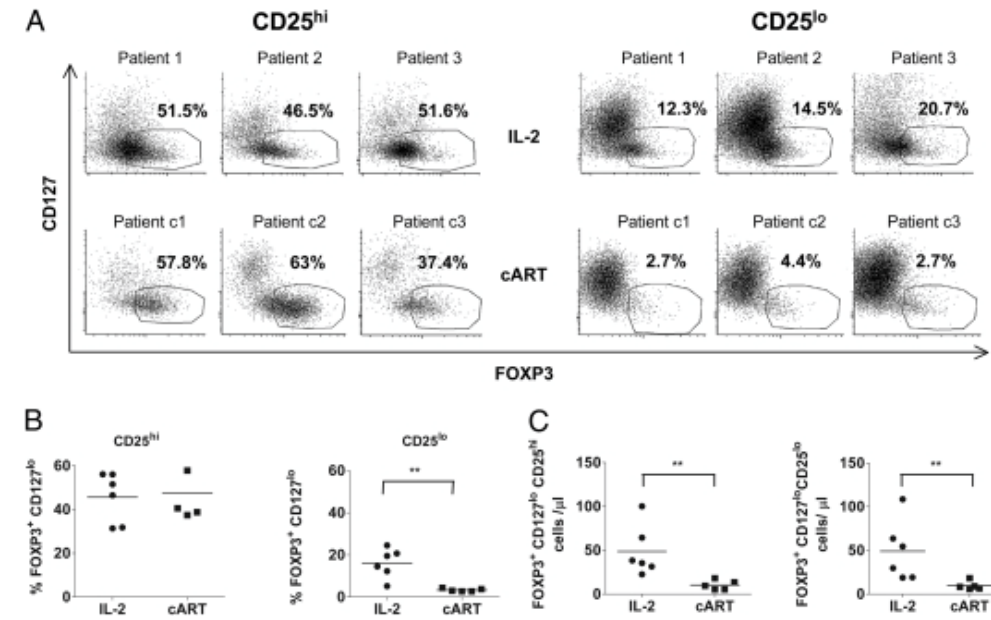


Over a median follow-up period of 7 to 8 years, the CD4+ cell count was higher in the interleukin-2 group than in the group receiving antiretroviral therapy alone

IL-2 + cART yielded no clinical benefit



Increase in Treg cells in IL-2 recipients

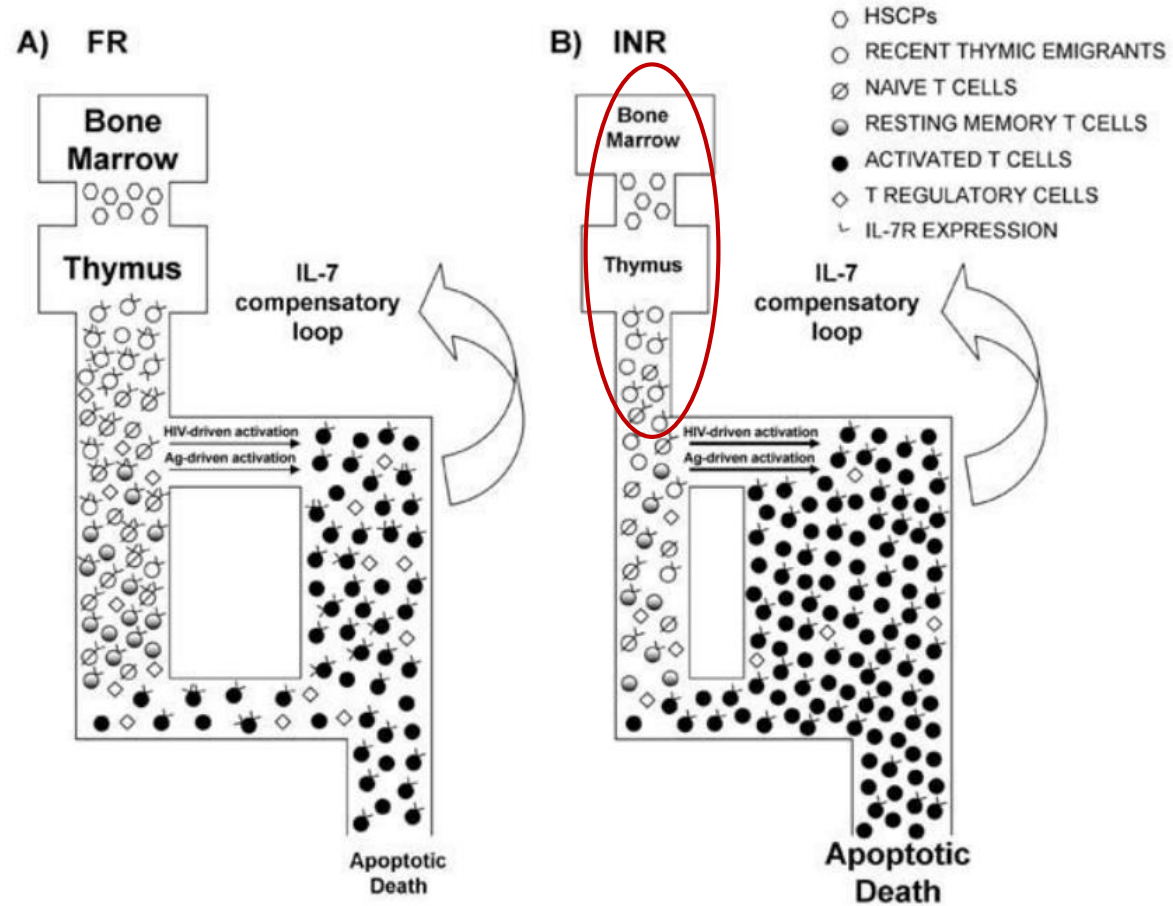


Weiss, PNAS, 2010

The Absence of CD4⁺ T Cell Count Recovery Despite Receipt of Virologically Suppressive Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy: Clinical Risk, Immunological Gaps, and Therapeutic Options

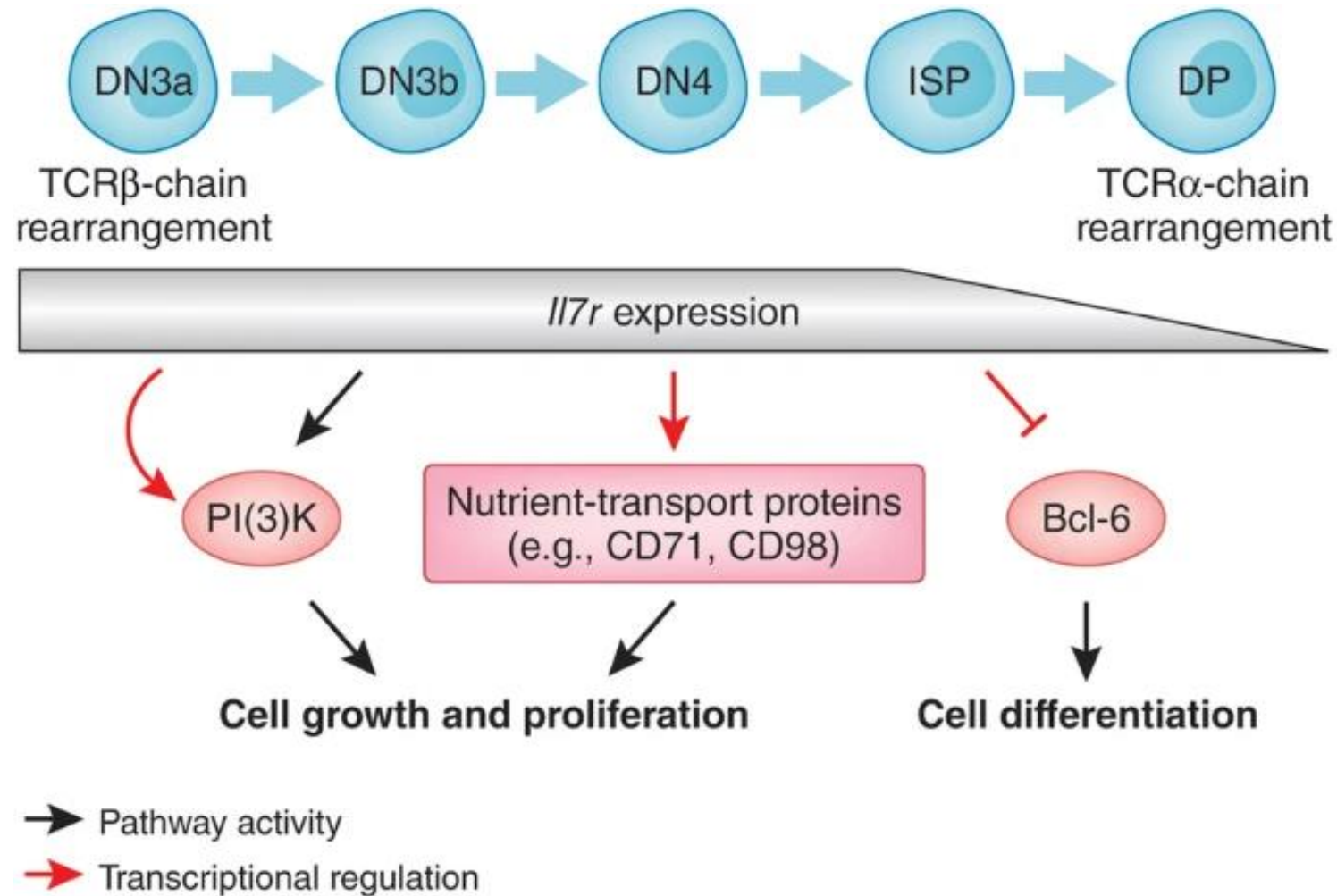
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Adjuvant therapeutic strategy#2:
increase thymic output/*de novo*
CD4+ T-cell production

IL-7 e timopoiesi



Repeated Cycles of Recombinant Human Interleukin 7 in HIV-Infected Patients With Low CD4 T-Cell Reconstitution on Antiretroviral Therapy: Results of 2 Phase II Multicenter Studies

Rodolphe Thiébaud,¹ Ana Jarne,¹ Jean-Pierre Routy,¹ Irini Soretti,² Margaret Fischl,² Prudence Iwe,² Roberto F. Speck,¹¹ Gianpiero D'Offizi,¹² Salvatore Casari,¹³ Daniel Commenges,¹ Sharné Foulkes,¹⁴ Ven Natarajan,⁵ Thérèse Croughs,² Jean-François Delfrayssy,² Giuseppe Tambussi,¹⁴ Yves Levy,² and Michael M. Lederman¹

- Eligible participants had to be receiving ART for ≥ 1 year with plasma HIV RNA levels < 50 copies/mL and CD4 counts between 101 and 400 cells/ μ L
- Patients received a cycle of 3 weekly subcutaneous injections of r-hIL-7 20 μ g/kg
- The study was amended 12 months after its initiation to include repeated cycles of CYT107 administration in order to maintain CD4 counts > 500

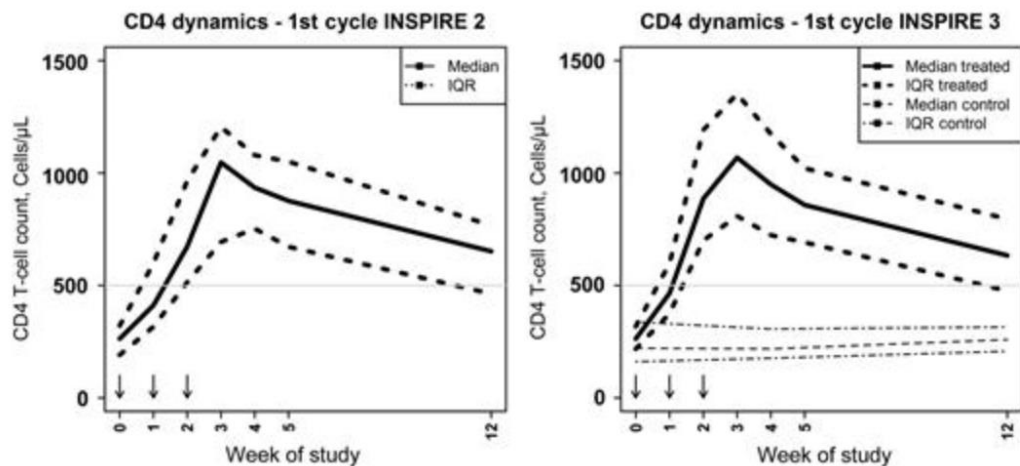
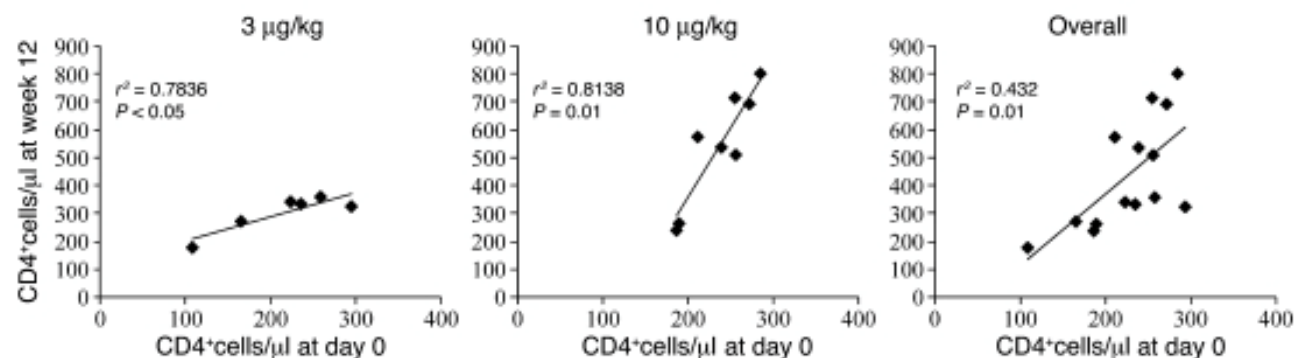


Table 3. Factors Associated With CD4 T-Cell Counts Decreasing to < 550 Cells/ μ L^a

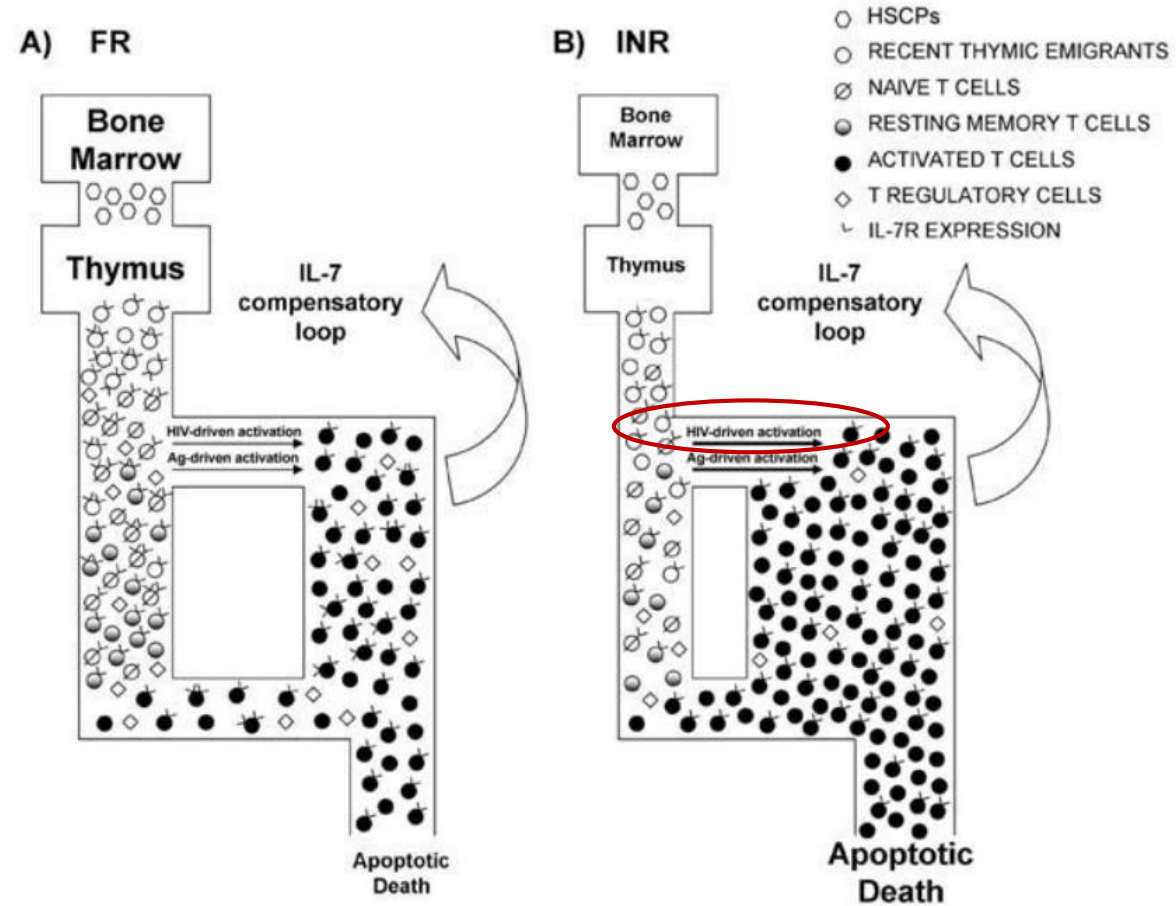
Factor	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value
Baseline CD4 T-cell count, cells/ μ L		
> 200	1	$< .001$
≤ 200	11.10 (4.02–30.66)	
Type of IL-7 cycle		
Initial	1	.57
Maintenance	0.86 (.51–1.46)	
Injections in a given cycle		
3	1	.02
2	2.27 (.79–6.55)	
1	4.29 (1.32–13.90)	



The Absence of CD4⁺ T Cell Count Recovery Despite Receipt of Virologically Suppressive Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy: Clinical Risk, Immunological Gaps, and Therapeutic Options

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Adjuvant therapeutic strategy

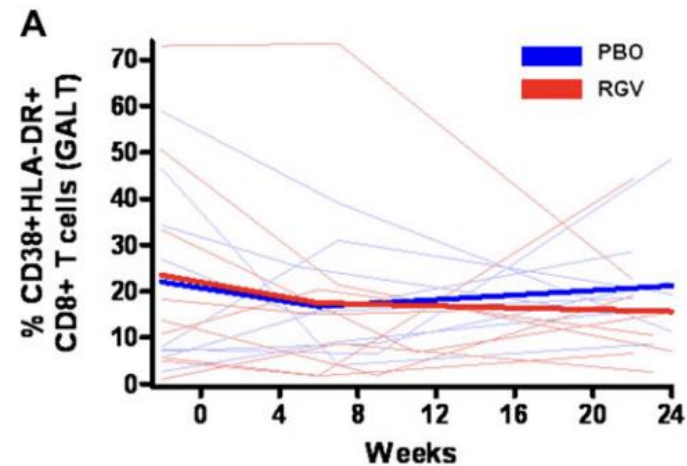
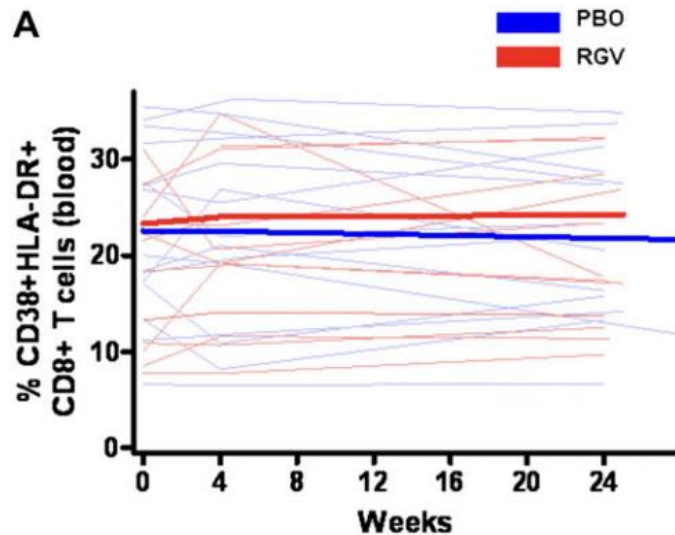
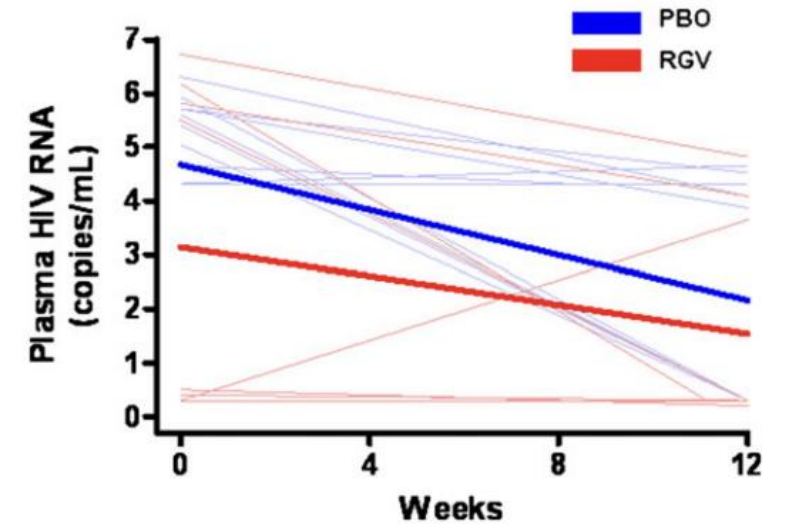
#3:

reduce reservoirs/productive
infection

No effect on RAL intensification in INR

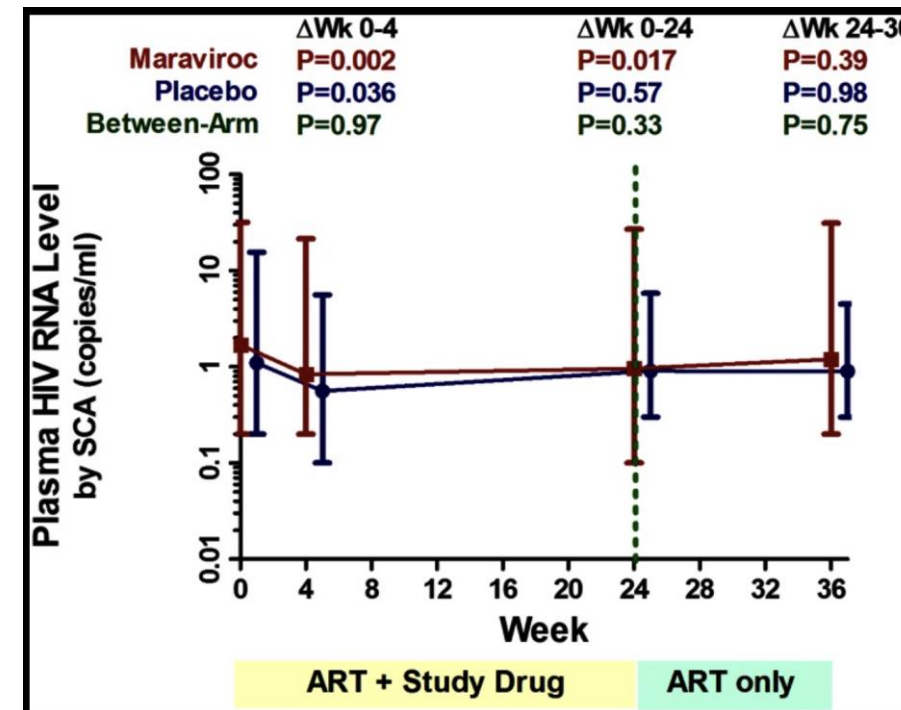
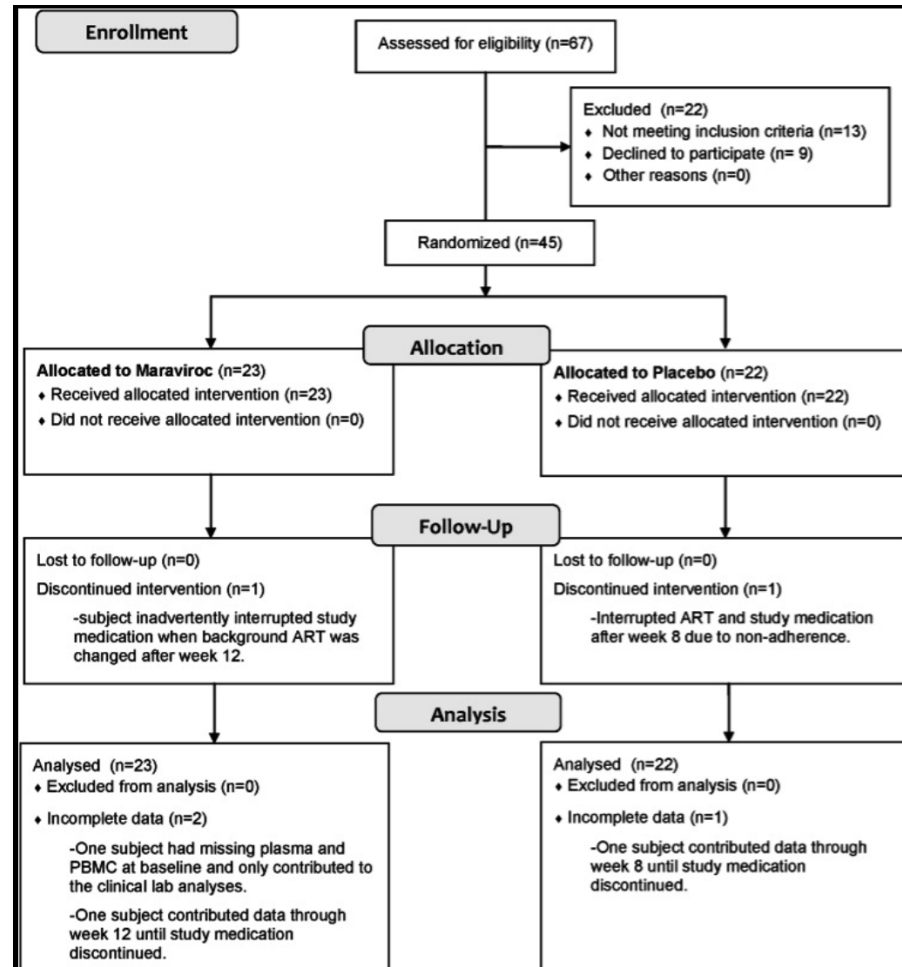
Table 1. Baseline Characteristics for Subjects in Raltegravir and Placebo Treatment Groups^a

Baseline Characteristic	Raltegravir (<i>n</i> = 15)	Placebo (<i>n</i> = 15)	<i>P</i>
Age, median, years	48	49	.72
Sex	15 male	14 male, 1 MTF	
CD4 ⁺ T cell count, median, cells/mm ³	233	231	.56
Nadir CD4 ⁺ T cell count, median, cells/mm ³	17	90	.13
Plasma HIV-1 RNA, median, copies/mL ^b	2.6	5.5	.52
Time since HIV diagnosis, median, years	15	18	.23
Duration of HAART suppression, median, years	3.1	2.1	.76
Treatment with PI-containing HAART, no. of subjects	10/15	8/15	.71
HCV coinfection, no. of subjects	4/15 ^c	4/15	1.00

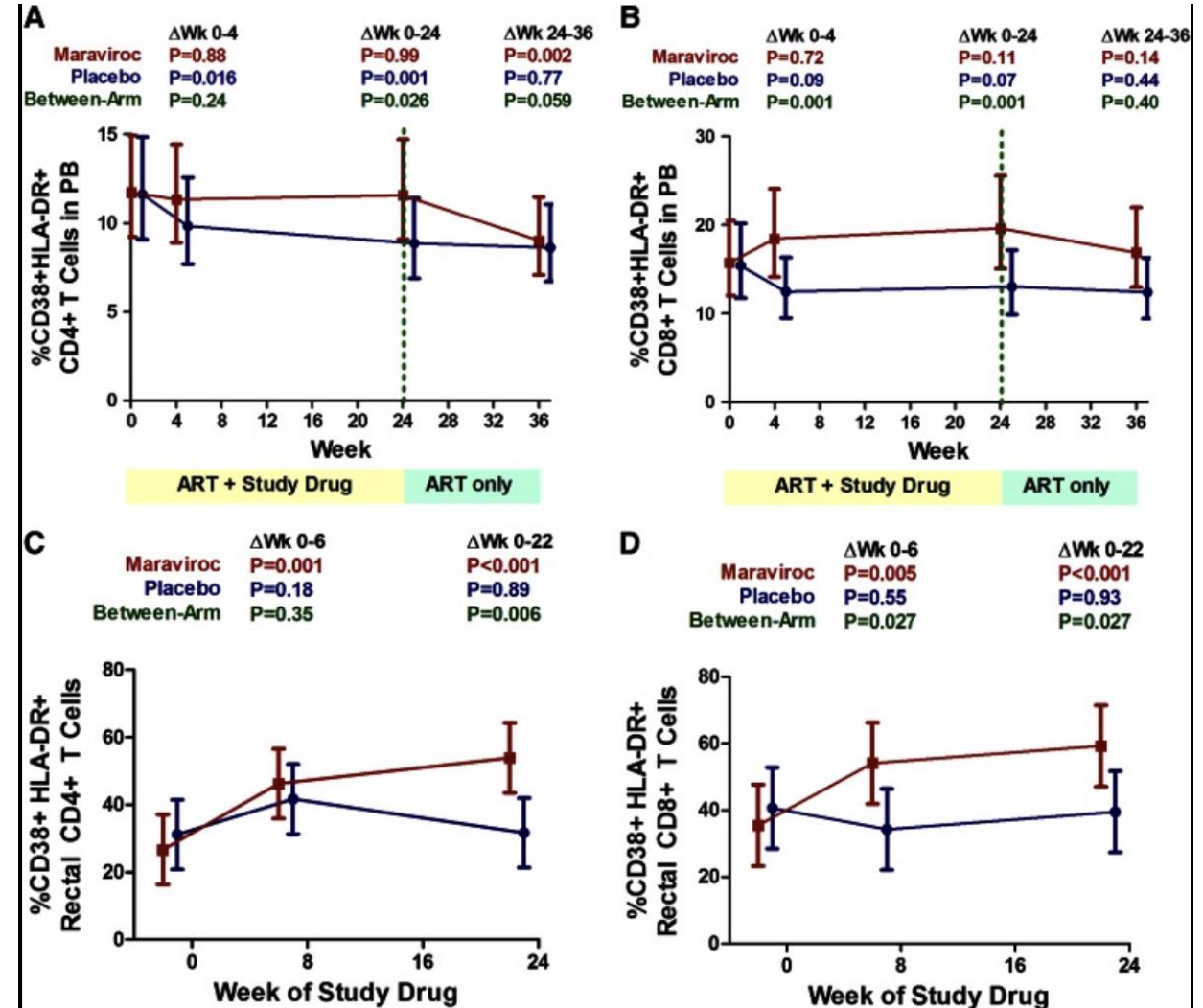
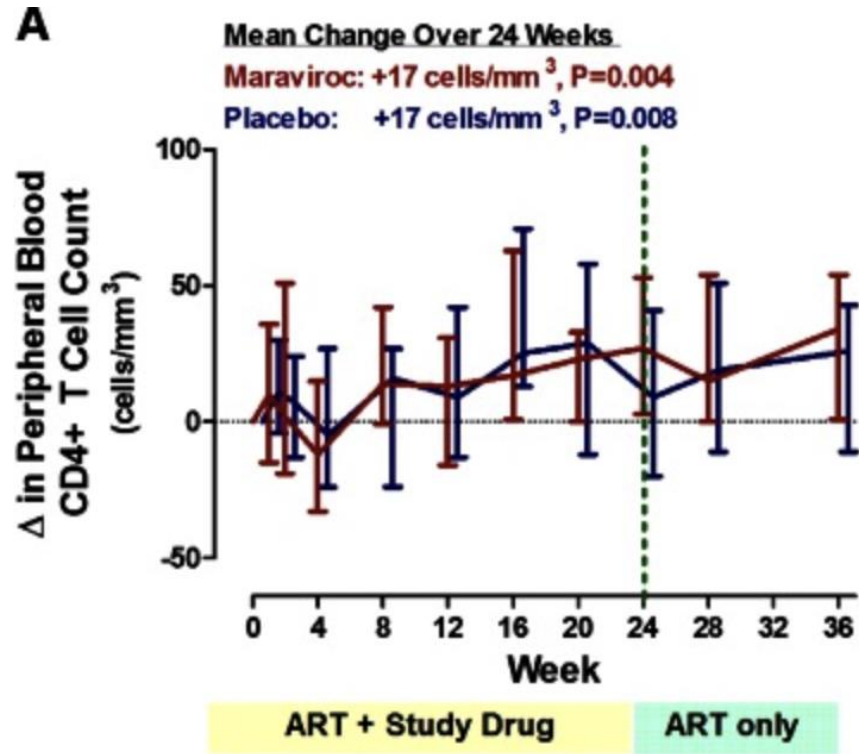


MVC intensification in INR: no effect on HIV RNA

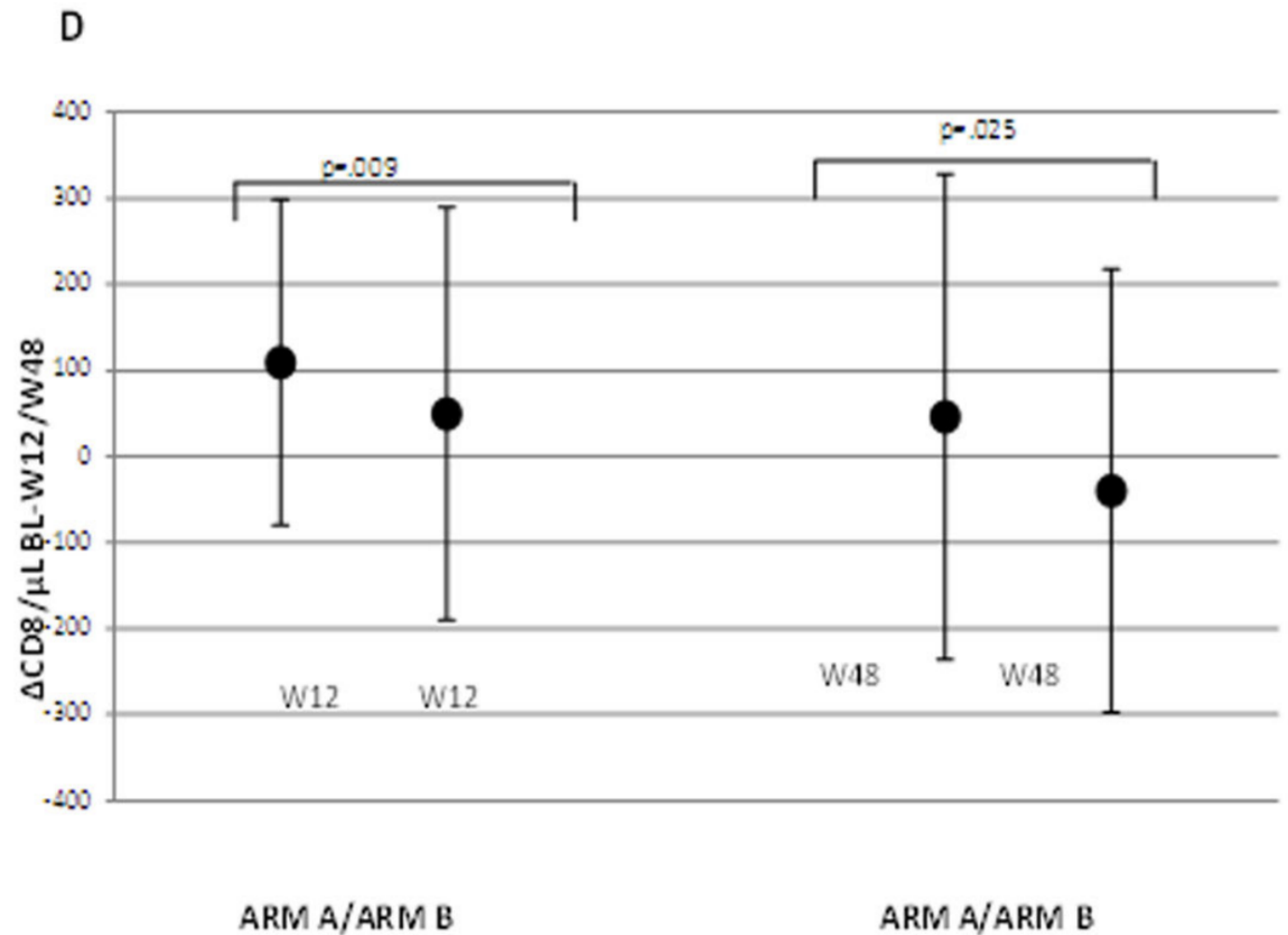
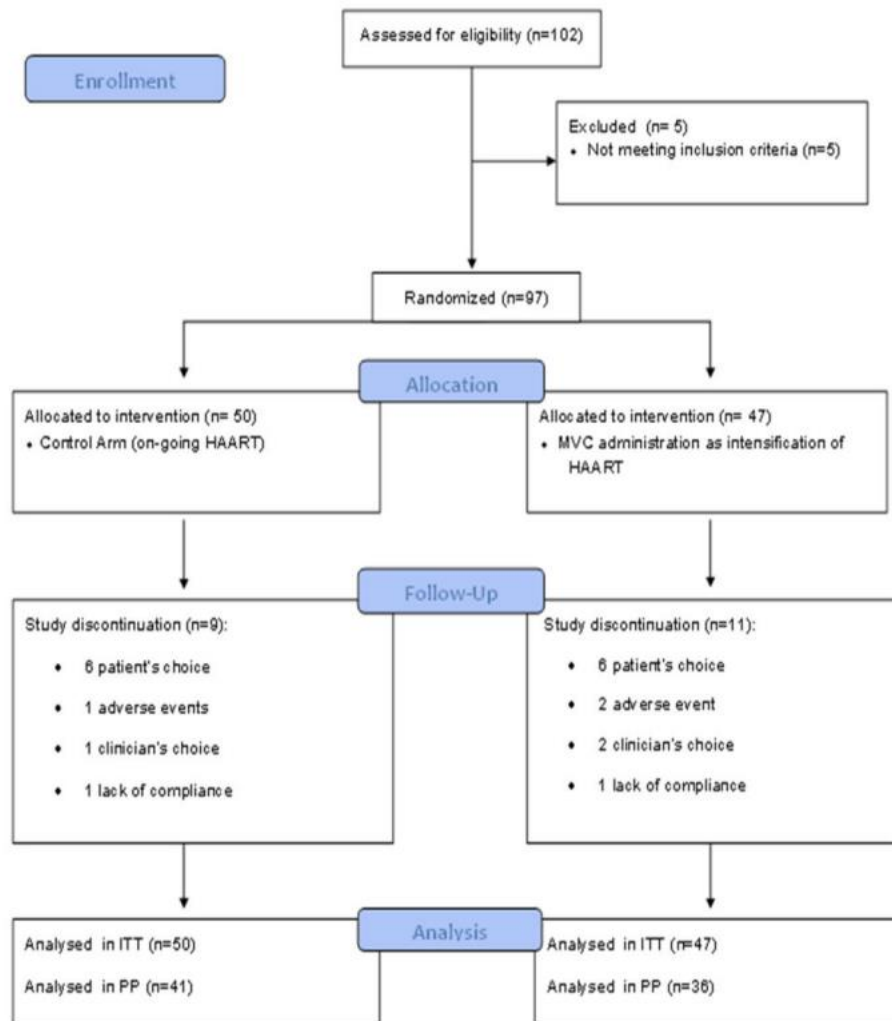
We randomized 45 HIV-infected subjects with CD4 counts <350/uL and plasma HIV RNA levels <48 copies/mL on cART to add maraviroc vs placebo to their regimen for 24 weeks followed by 12 weeks on ART alone



MVC intensification in INR: increased T cell activation in blood and gut

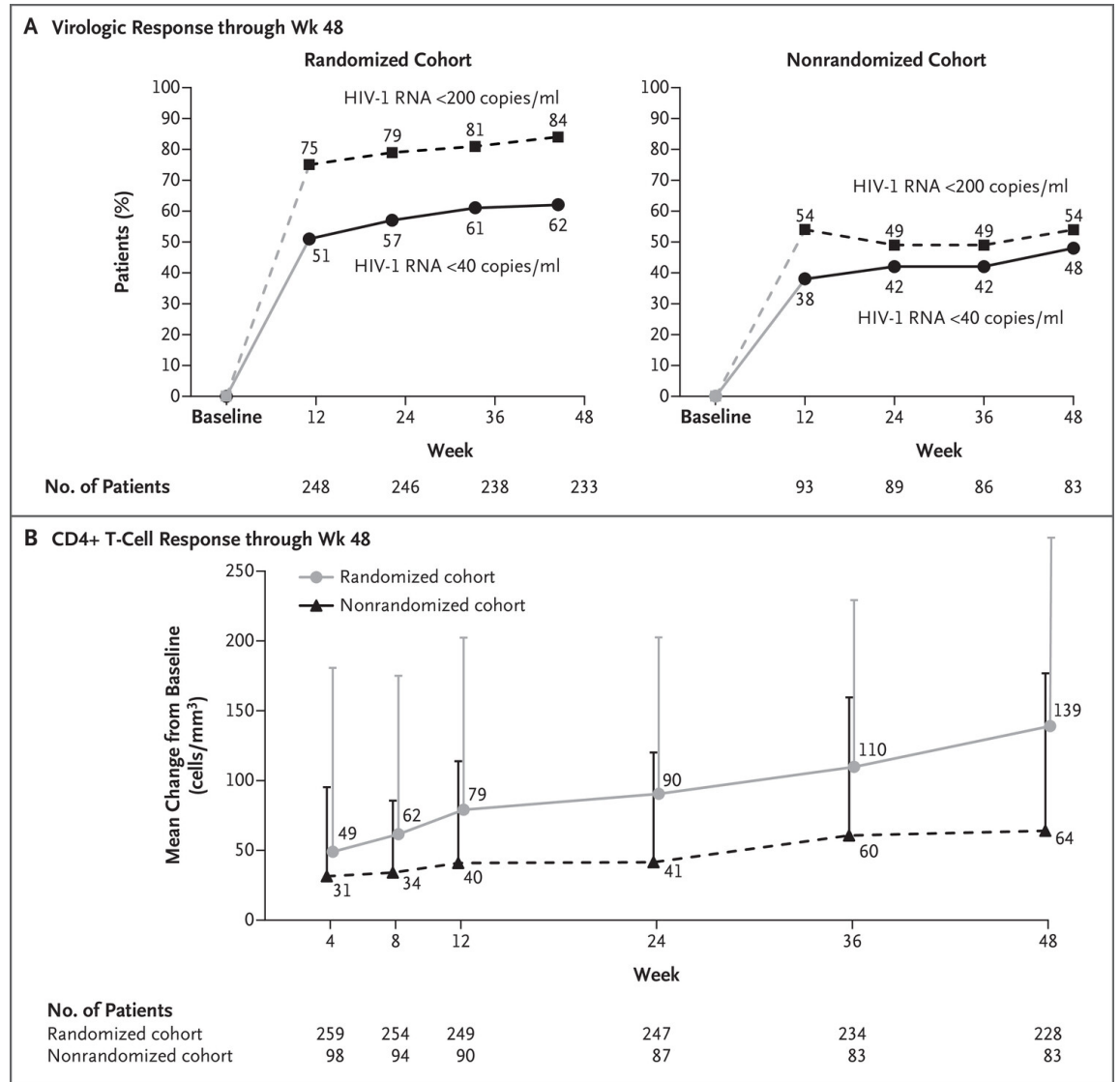


MVC intensification in INR: increased CD8+ T cells



Fostemsavir

- Fostemsavir is the prodrug of temsavir, a first-in-class investigational HIV-1 **attachment inhibitor**.
- Temsavir binds the viral envelope protein gp120 on HIV-1, adjacent to the gp120-CD4+ binding site. In doing so, it prevents the conformational change required for attachment of HIV-1 to the host cell.



[◀ Previous Study](#) | [Return to List](#) | [Next Study ▶](#)

Changes in Immunologic Parameters Following the Addition of Fostemsavir in Virologically Suppressed Immunologic Non-responders Living With HIV-the RECOVER Study

Brief Summary:

The RECOVER study is a self-controlled case series to evaluate whether the addition of **Fostemsavir** (Rukobia) to a stable HIV regimen in virologically suppressed patients living with HIV who never experience optimal CD4 T-cell count recovery can result in meaningful increases in different immunologic parameters such as CD4 T-cell count, CD4 T-cell percentage and CD4/CD8 ratio

Condition or disease ⓘ	Intervention/treatment ⓘ	Phase ⓘ
HIV-1-infection	Drug: Fostemsavir 600 MG [Rukobia]	Phase 4

- Documented plasma HIV-1 RNA < 50 c/mL x 2 within the last year prior to screening
- Must be on a stable ARV regimen for ≥6 months prior to screening
- CD4+T-cell count<350 cells/mm³ while on ARVs for at least 2 years
- Must be willing to add FTR 600 mg twice daily to their current antiretroviral regimen

Impact of Anti-CD4 Autoantibodies on Immune Reconstitution in People with Advanced HIV

Epiling et al, 2024 | *Clinical Infectious Diseases*



Retrospective Cohort Study



1. Characterize the relative frequency of anti-CD4 autoantibodies in a wide variety of cohorts of people with and without HIV.
2. Assess the impact of these autoantibodies on the rate and extent of CD4 recovery in people with advanced HIV starting ART.

**ART-naïve people with advanced HIV
(pre-ART CD4 ≤ 100 cells/ μ L, N=210):**

Anti-CD4 autoantibody
positive at ART initiation



N = 61 (29%)

Anti-CD4 autoantibody
negative at ART initiation



N = 149 (71%)

These AAb were not detected in any people without HIV (N=104)

Rate of CD4 Recovery



5.8 cells/ μ L per month 6.6 cells/ μ L per month

P = .007

CD4 Count after 192 weeks of ART

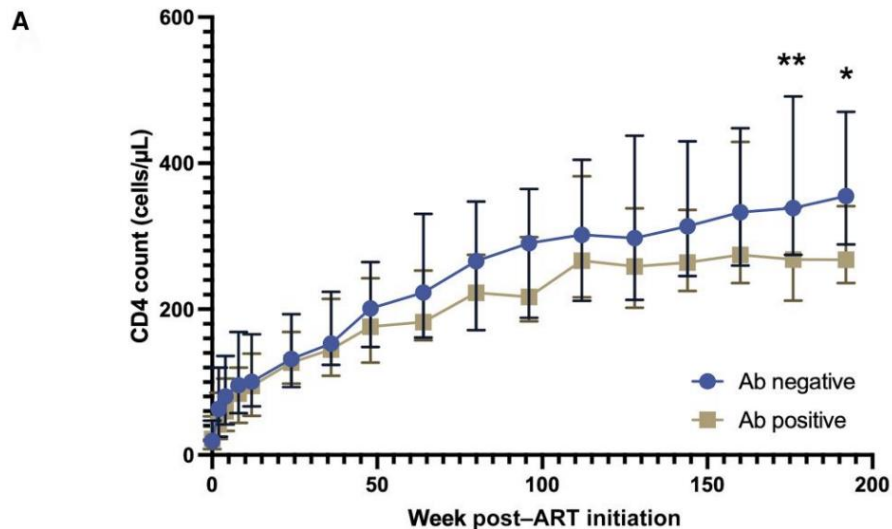


268 cells/ μ L 355 cells/ μ L

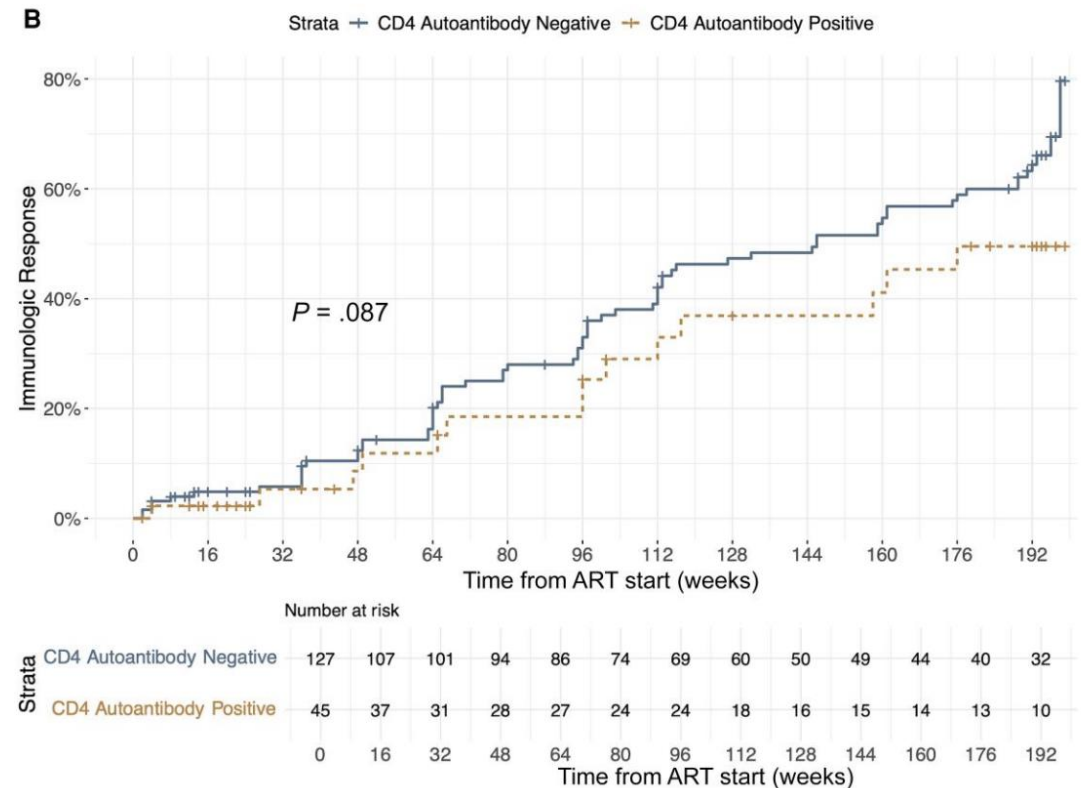
P = .019

1. 29% of people with advanced HIV starting ART had autoantibodies against the CD4 receptor. These autoantibodies were not isolated from any cohort of people without HIV.
2. The presence of anti-CD4 autoantibodies at ART initiation was associated with an impaired rate and extent of CD4 recovery. Conversely, incidental immunosuppressive therapy was associated with increased CD4 counts in these participants.

Anti CD4 Autoantibodies and Immune Reconstitution



Week	0	2	4	8	12	24	36	48	64	80	96	112	128	144	160	176	192
N (AAb neg)	149	133	125	112	114	112	104	98	98	100	94	95	90	88	85	82	84
N (AAb pos)	61	51	45	37	42	37	33	29	28	24	26	26	22	21	20	20	16
P value	.673	.136	.106	.107	.185	.981	.369	.399	.307	.06	.084	.748	.217	.076	.114	.008	.018



Incidental, clinically indicated immunosuppressive therapy in these participants was associated with an improved rate of CD4 reconstitution ($P = .0019$) and higher week 192 CD4 count (551 vs 268 cells/ μ L, $P = .019$).

Role of ibalizumab in INR?

D3-D4 domains contain the epitope(s) for the generation and binding of anti-CD4 autoantibody

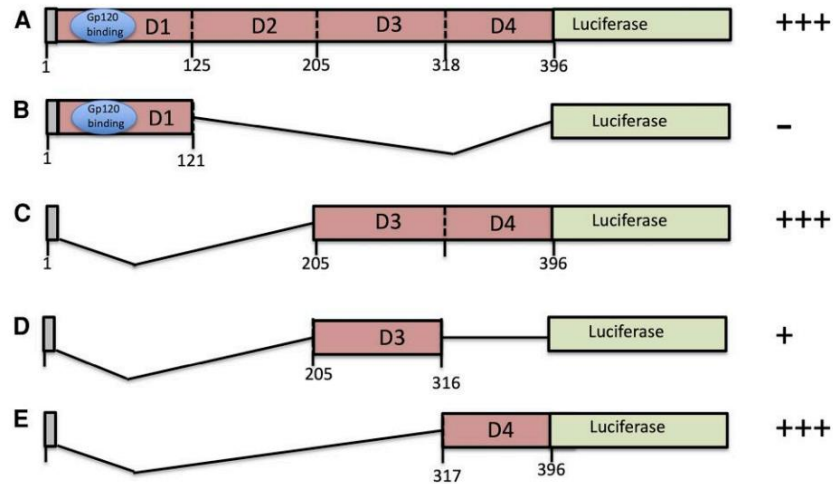
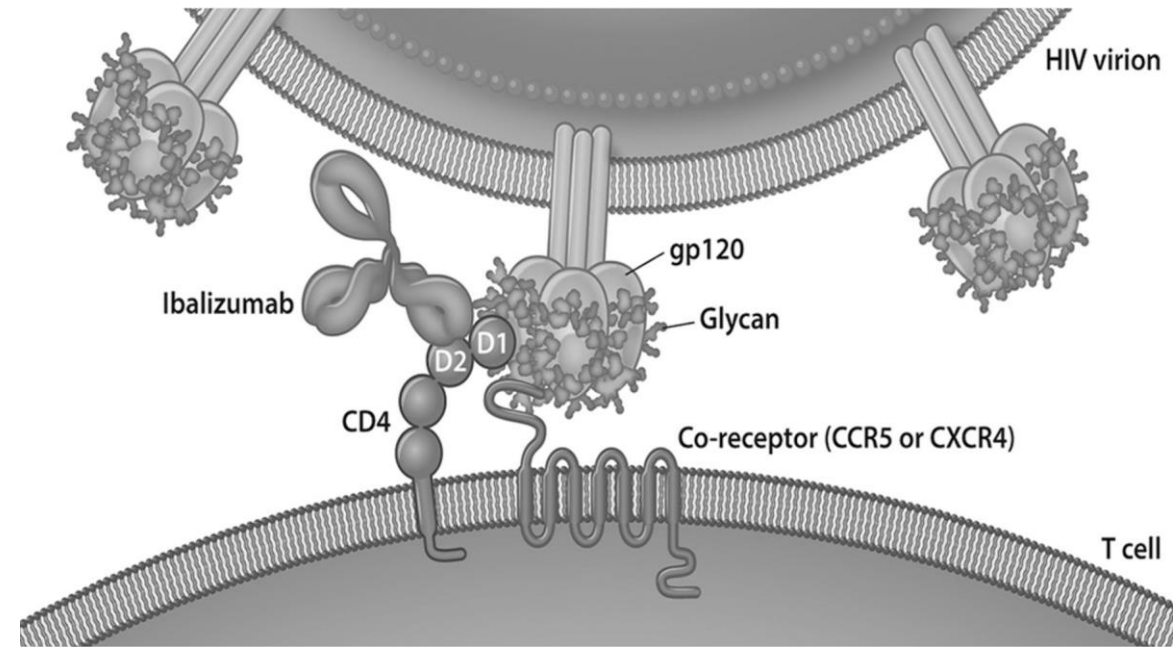


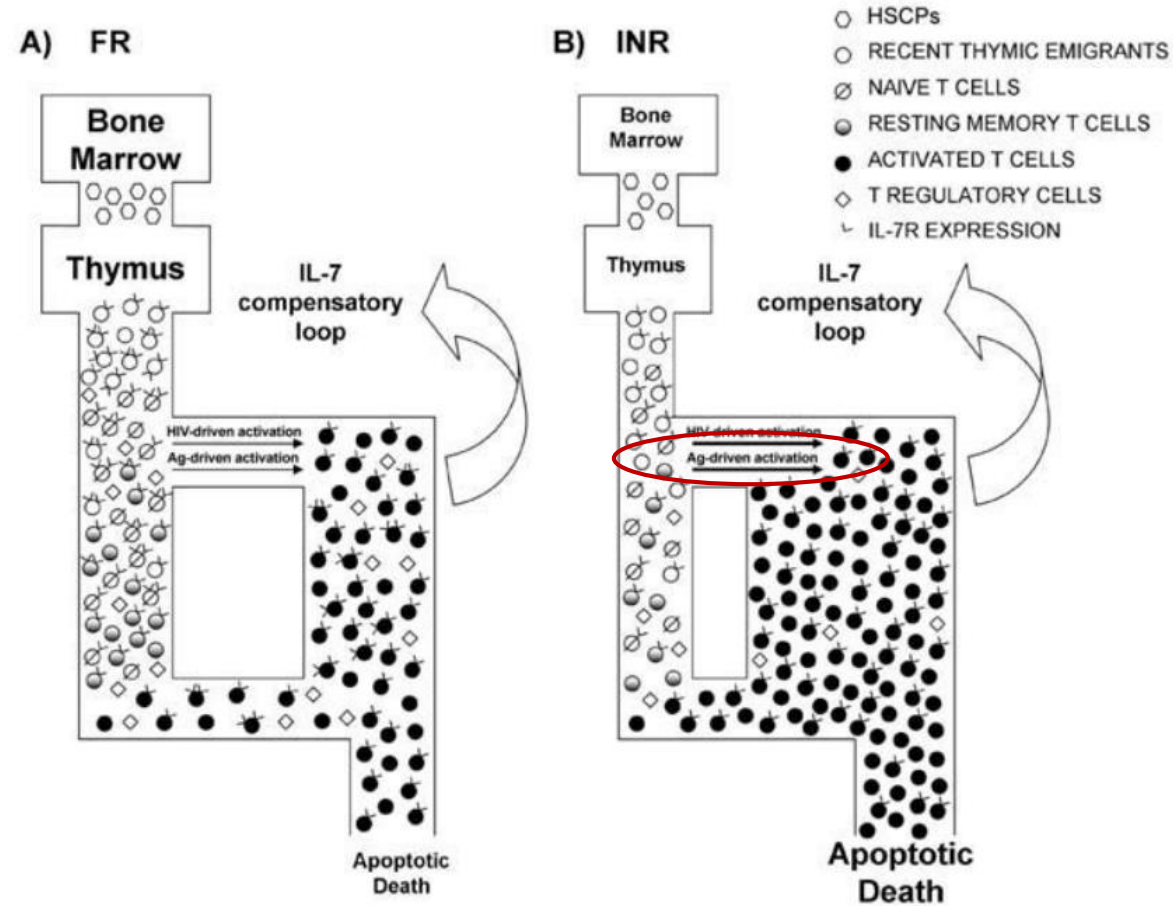
Figure 2. Mapping of autoantibody binding to different regions of the CD4 receptor. Relative autoantibody binding to different regions of the CD4 receptor determined by serological testing are summarized (–, negative; +, weak and +++; strong). The extracellular region of the CD4 receptor consisting of the D1–D4 protein domains showed strong immunoreactivity (A). A deletion mutant of CD4 containing only the D1 domain (B) was seronegative for CD4 autoantibody binding. Antibody binding was strongly retained with deletion mutants of CD4 maintaining the integrity of the D3–D4 domains (C), weakly with the D3 domain (D), and strongly with the D4 domain (E).



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Adjuvant therapeutic strategy #4:

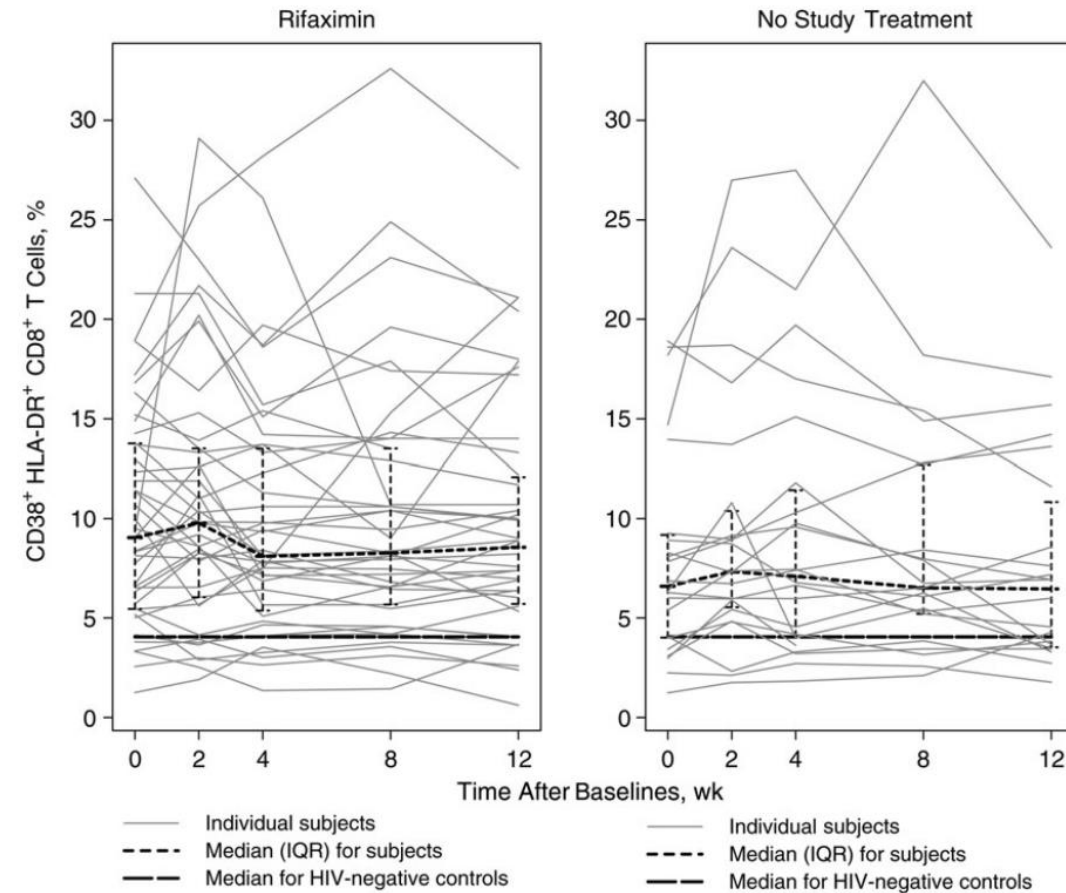
reduce immune activation by
counteracting microbial
translocation/correcting
dysbiosis

No effect of rifaximin in INR

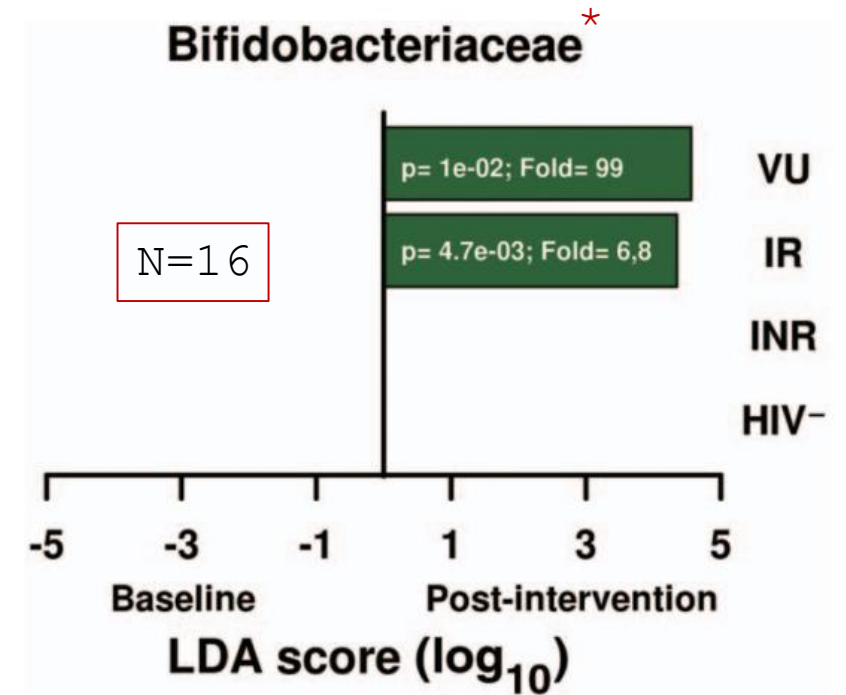
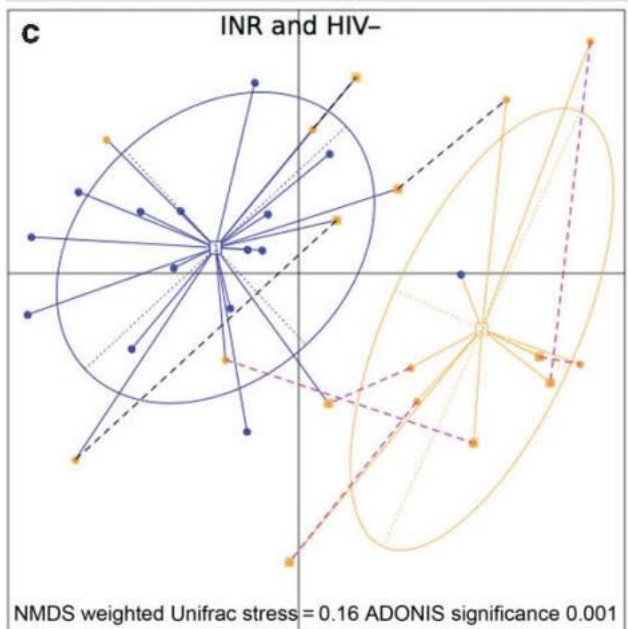
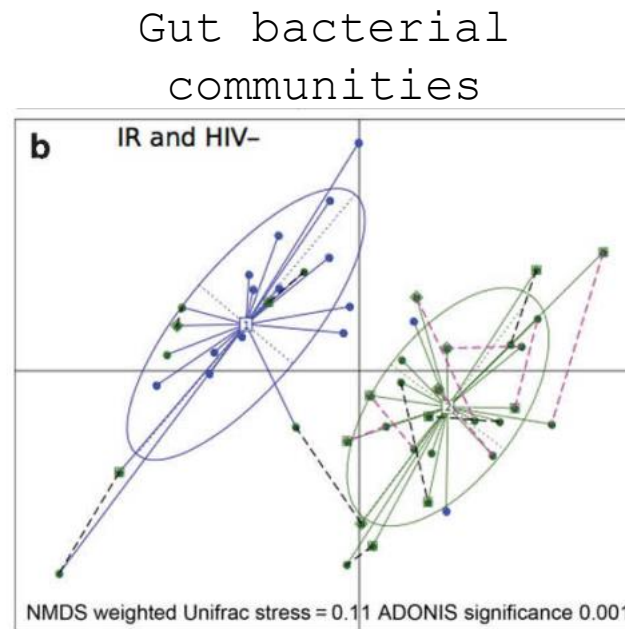
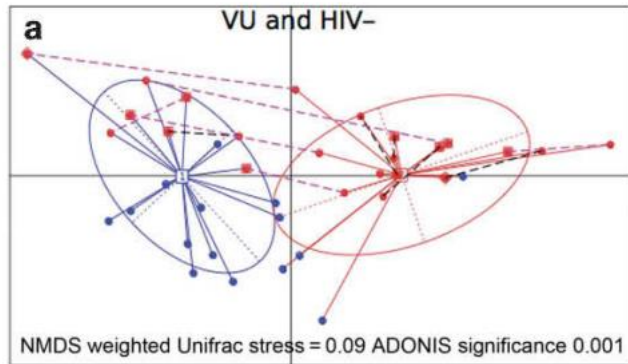
- Non-absorbable antibiotic that decreases lipopolysaccharide (LPS) in cirrhotics
- HIV-positive adults receiving ART for ≥ 96 weeks with undetectable viremia for ≥ 48 weeks and CD4(+) T-cell counts < 350 cells/mm³ were randomized 2:1 to rifaximin versus no study treatment for 4 weeks

Table 1. Baseline Demographic, Immunologic, and Virologic Characteristics of the 65 Subjects Included in the As-Treated Analyses

Baseline Characteristic	All Subjects (N = 65)	Rifaximin Arm (n = 43)	No-Treatment Arm (n = 22)
Age, median (IQR), y	50 (44–55)	48 (43–56)	51 (45–55)
Age ≥ 60 y, No. (%)	7 (11)	4 (9)	3 (14)
Race/ethnicity, No. (%)			
White non-Hispanic	31 (48)	19 (44)	12 (55)
Black non-Hispanic	20 (31)	17 (40)	3 (14)
Hispanic	13 (20)	7 (16)	6 (27)
Other	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (5)
Sex, No. (%)			
Male	59 (91)	39 (91)	20 (91)
Female	6 (9)	4 (9)	2 (9)
Cotrimoxazole use, No. (%)	29 (45)	21 (49)	8 (36)
Baseline CD4 ⁺ T-cell count ^a			
Median (IQR), cells/mm ³	236 (179–284)	251 (179–286)	223 (167–280)
≥ 350 cells/mm ³ , No. (%)	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (5)
Nadir CD4 ⁺ T-cell count, median (IQR), cells/mm ³	41 (15–88)	50 (22–71)	40 (10–88)
Entry HIV-1 RNA level below lower limit of assay, No. (%)	65 (100)	43 (100)	22 (100)
Interval since 1st undetectable HIV-1 RNA level, median (IQR), y	3.8 (2.4–7.3)	3.3 (2.2–7.3)	3.9 (2.8–8.8)

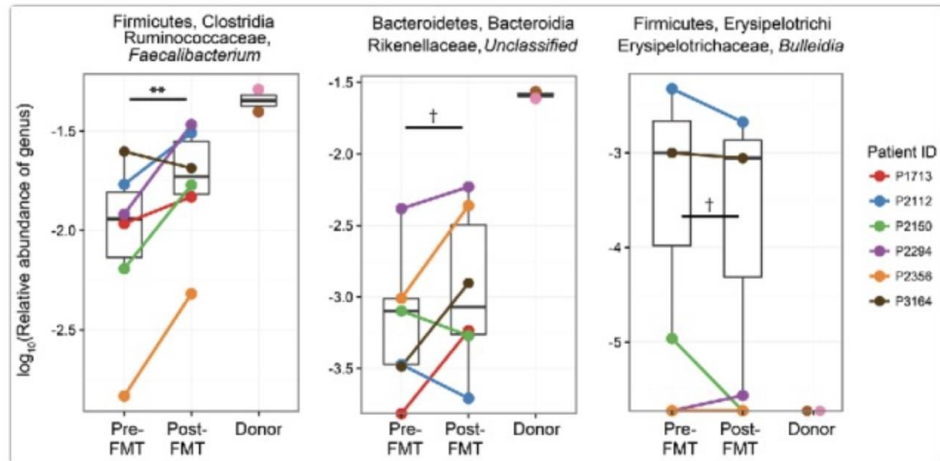


Scant effect of prebiotics (scGOS/lcFOS/glutamine) in INR

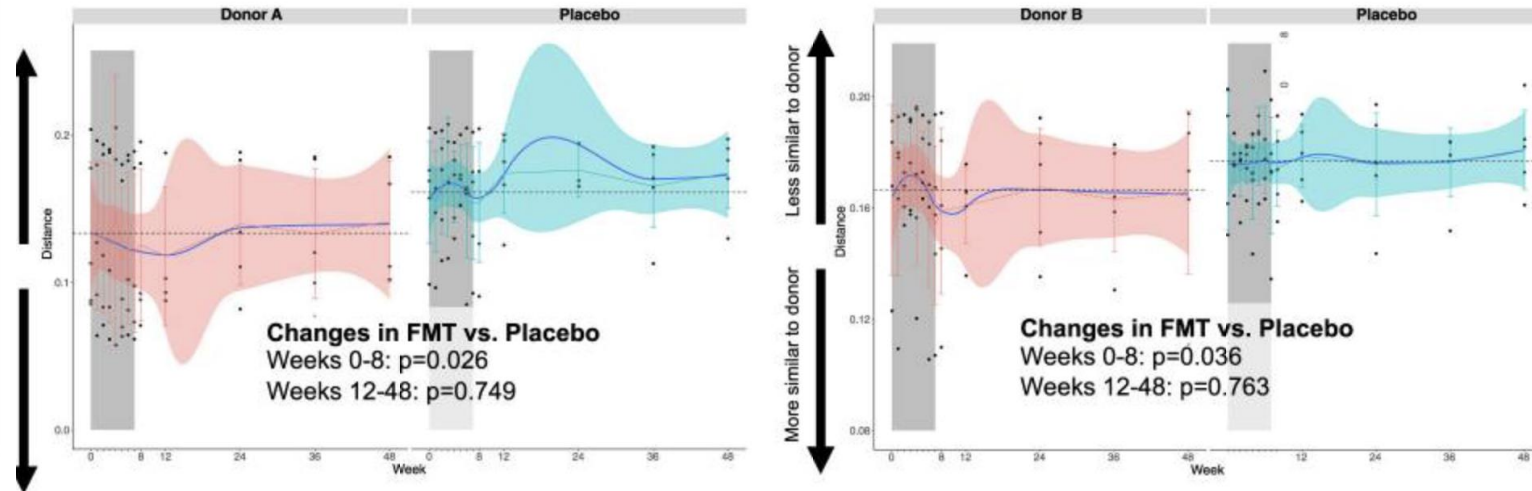


*immunomodulatory properties and
amino acids metabolism

Limited engraftment of donor FMT in HIV



FMT via colonoscopy (one-time)



Capsulized FMT (8 weeks)

Adjuvant therapeutic strategy #5:
reduce immune activation by
treating co-infections

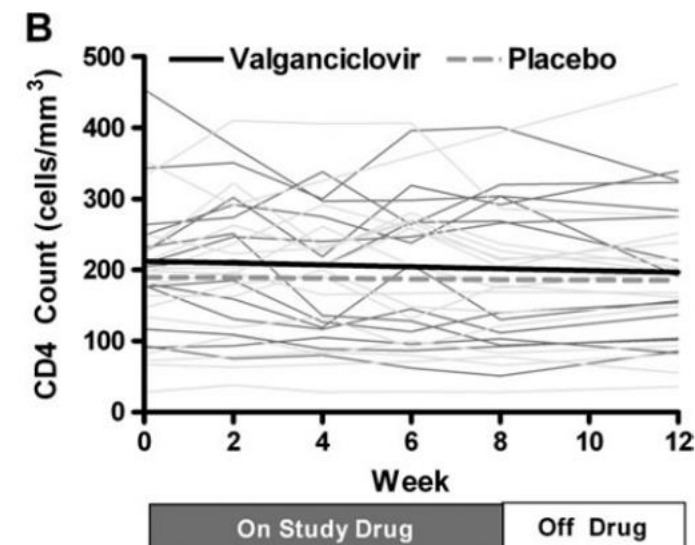
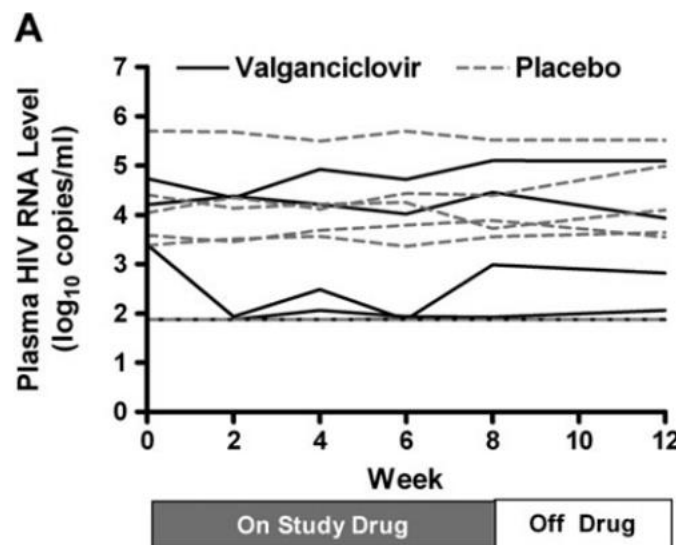
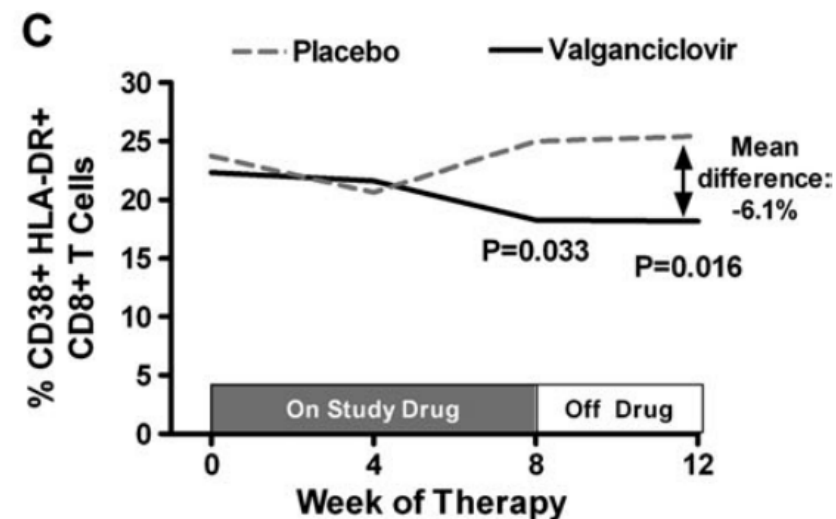
Valganciclovir Reduces T Cell Activation in HIV-infected Individuals With Incomplete CD4⁺ T Cell Recovery on Antiretroviral Therapy

Peter W. Hunt,¹ Jeffrey N. Martin,¹ Elizabeth Sinclair,¹ Lorrie Epling,¹ Juli Teague,¹ Mark A. Jacobson,¹ Russell P. Tracy,² Lawrence Corey,³ and Steven G. Deeks¹

¹Departments of Medicine, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics, University of California, San Francisco; ²Departments of Pathology and Biochemistry, University of Vermont College of Medicine, Burlington; ³Departments of Laboratory Medicine, Medicine and Microbiology, University of Washington, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle

- 30 cART-treated, CMV-seropositive participants
- CD4 counts <350 cells/mm³
- randomized to receive valganciclovir 900 mg daily or placebo for 8 weeks, followed by an additional 4-week observation period
- The primary outcome was the week 8 change in percentage of activated (CD38+ HLA-DR+) CD8+ T

Hunt, CIP, percentage of activated



Letermovir reduces immunologic and cardiometabolic biomarkers in PLWH

Figure 1. Futility Analysis: Letermovir unexpectedly increased sTNFR2 and had little effect on sCD163

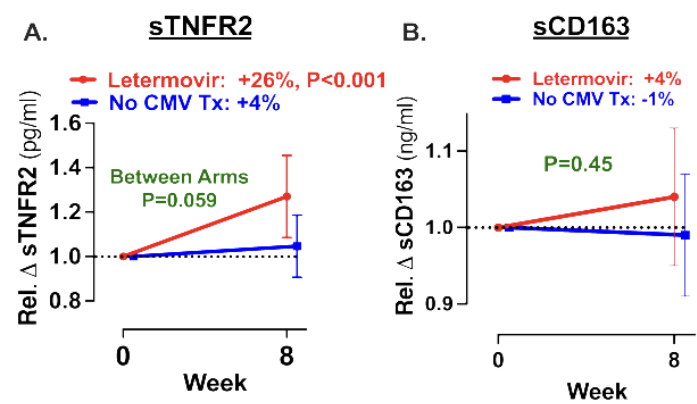


Figure 2. Suppression of CMV viral IL-10 may have contributed to the increase in plasma sTNFR2.

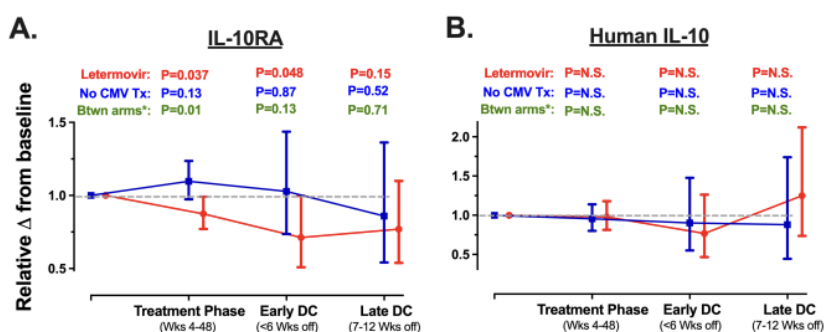
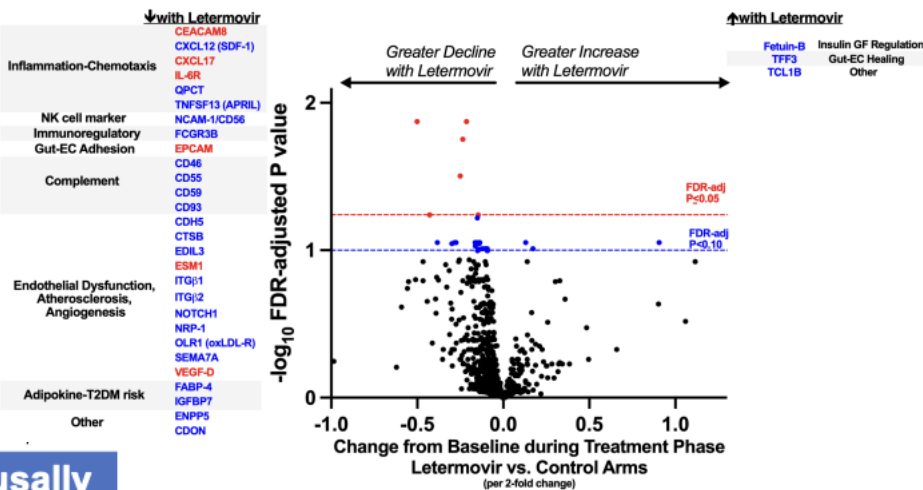
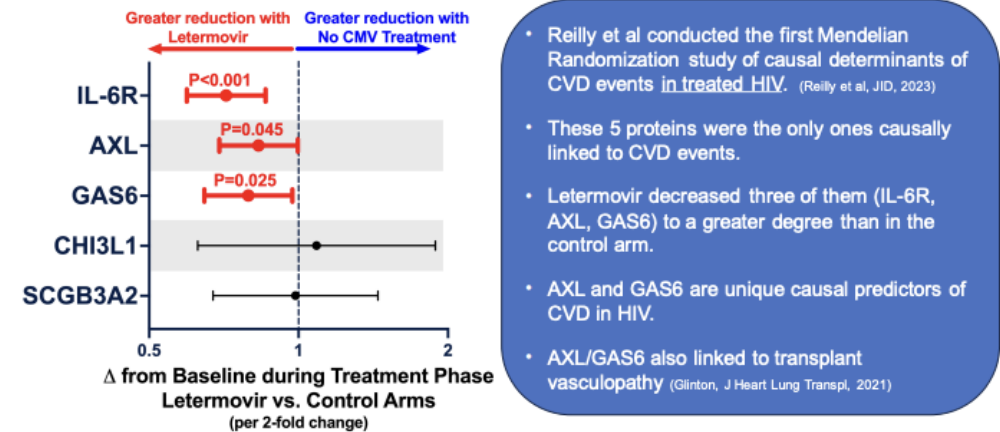


Figure 3. Letermovir broadly impacts immunologic and cardiometabolic biomarkers in people with HIV.



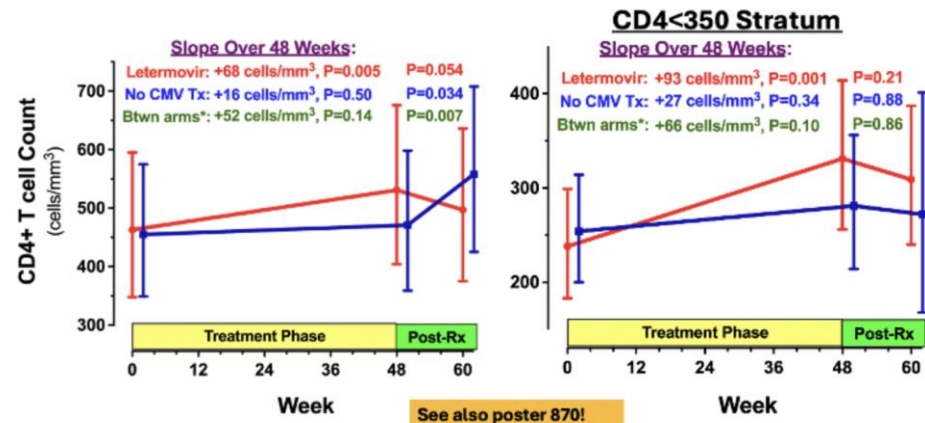
Evaluate the antiinflammatory efficacy of letermovir 480 mg once daily for 48 weeks in PWH and asymptomatic CMV with ART-mediated suppression, n=18
No treatment, n=21

Figure 4. Letermovir suppresses 3/5 proteins causally linked to CVD Events by Mendelian Randomization

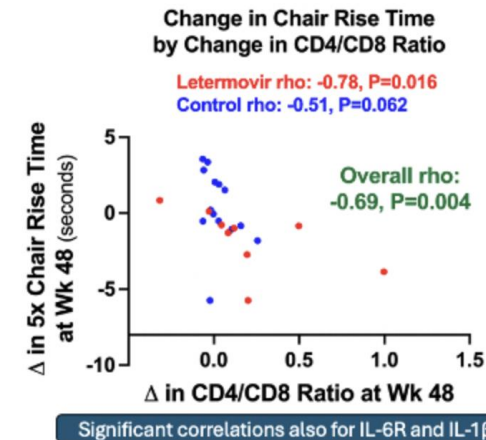
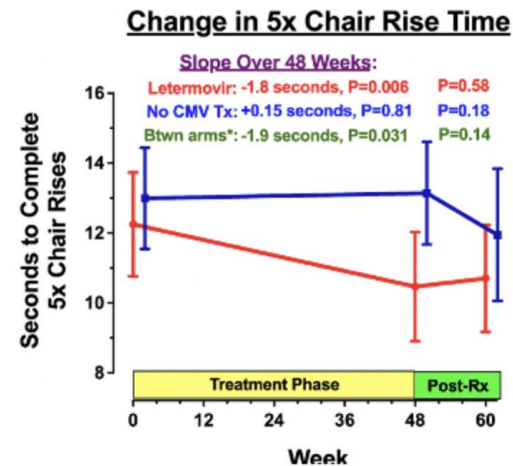
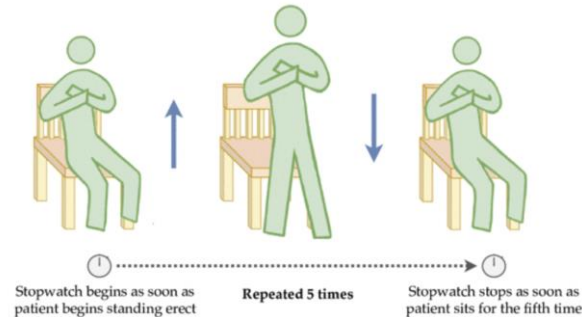


Immune and aging benefits following letermovir?

CD4 Count Increased in the Letermovir Arm Particularly Among Those with CD4<350



5x Chair Rise Test – Measure of Physical Function and Leg Strength



CASE REPORT

Open Access

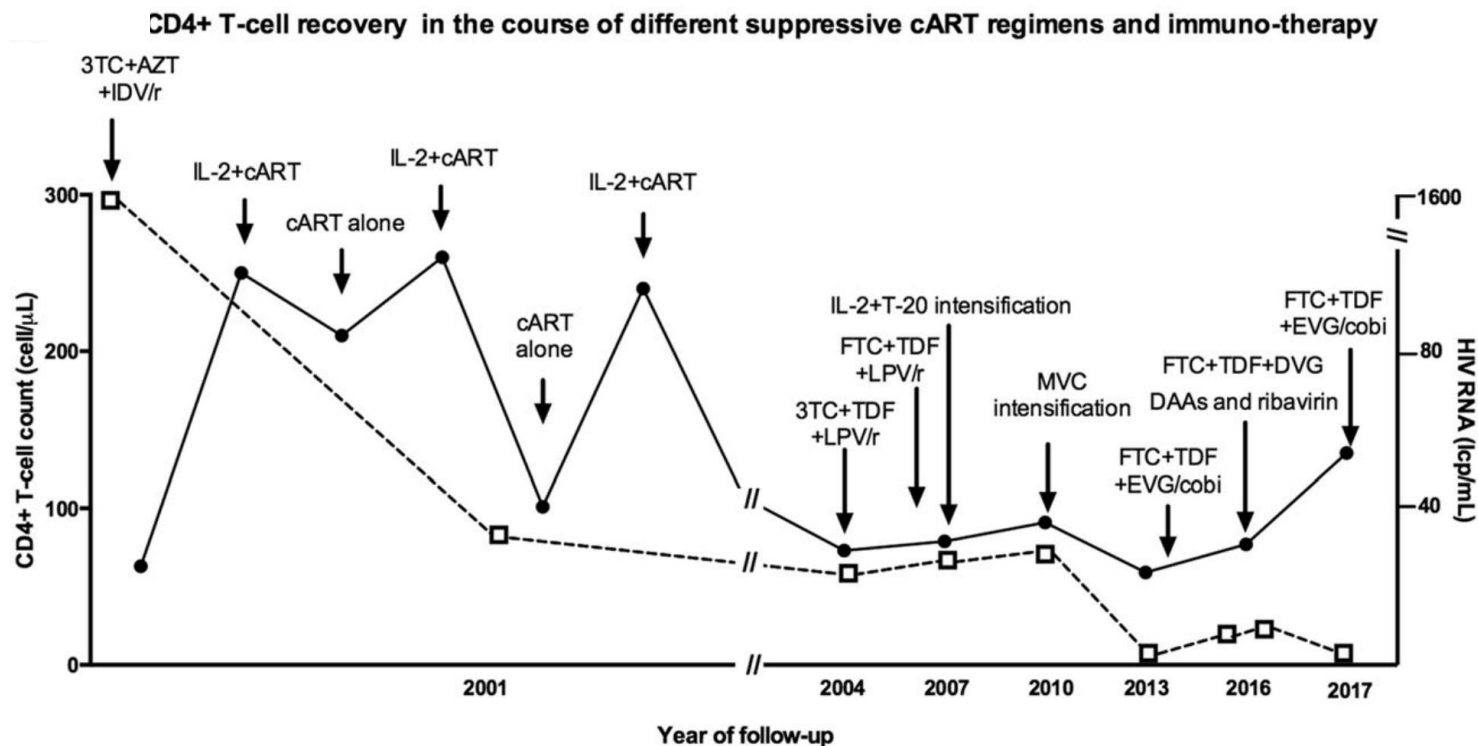


Is weak CD4+ gain in the course of suppressive combination antiretroviral therapy for HIV infection a current clinical challenge? A case report and brief review of the literature

Camilla Tincati^{*} , Esther Merlini, Antonella d'Arminio Monforte and Giulia Marchetti

April 2025 (BIC/FTC/TAF):

- CD4+ T cell count: 89/uL (7%)
- HIV RNA: undetectable



Poor CD4 Cell Recovery and Persistent Inflammation Despite Viral Suppression

Updated: May 26, 2021

Reviewed: May 26, 2021

Key Considerations and Recommendations

- Persistently low CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts and immune activation are each associated with increased AIDS- and non-AIDS-related morbidity and mortality among individuals with antiretroviral therapy (ART)-mediated viral suppression.
- Adding antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to a suppressive ARV regimen (ART intensification) does not improve CD4 cell recovery or reduce immune activation and, therefore, **is not recommended (AI)**.
- In individuals with viral suppression, switching ARV drug classes does not consistently improve CD4 cell recovery or reduce all relevant markers of immune activation and **is not recommended (BIII)**.
- Interleukin-2 **is not recommended (AI)** to increase CD4 cell counts and/or decrease immune activation, because clinical trial data demonstrated no clinical benefit.
- Other interventions designed to increase CD4 cell counts and/or decrease immune activation **are not recommended** outside of a clinical trial, because no current interventions have been proven to decrease morbidity or mortality during ART-mediated viral suppression **(AII)**.
- Efforts to decrease morbidity and mortality during ART-mediated viral suppression should focus on addressing modifiable risk factors for chronic disease (e.g., encouraging smoking cessation, a healthy diet, and regular exercise; treating hypertension and hyperlipidemia).
- Monitoring markers of immune activation and inflammation is not recommended, because no intervention targeting immune pathways has proven to improve the health of individuals with HIV, and many blood markers that predict morbidity and mortality fluctuate within individuals **(AII)**.

Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = **Weak**

Rating of Evidence: I = Data from randomized controlled trials; II = Data from well-designed nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; III = Expert opinion

Conclusions

- Poor immune recovery is multifactorial
 - cART class/strategy did not appear to impact immune recovery
 - adjuvant strategies are ineffective
- Poor immune recovery is linked to disease progression
 - need for clinical endpoints, not (only) CD4+ T-cell restoration (IL-2)
- **Prevention of poor immune recovery through early cART introduction (avoiding Late Presentation)**

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