

Disease Modification in Individuals with  
**MODERATE-TO-SEVERE**  
**RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS:**  
Optimizing Treatment Through the Finely Tuned Selectivity for JAKs



### MEETING INFO

TeleECHO Presentation

Thursday, March 10, 2022

7:00 – 8:00 PM ET

6:00 – 7:00 PM CT

5:00 – 6:00 PM MT

4:00 – 5:00 PM PT

### FACULTY

**Jon T Giles, MD MPH**

Associate Professor of Medicine

Division of Rheumatology

Columbia University, College of Physicians & Surgeons  
New York, NY



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*This activity is co-provided by Ultimate Medical Academy/Complete Conference Management (CCM).*

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## Disease Modification in Individuals with **MODERATE-TO-SEVERE RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS:** Optimizing Treatment Through the Finely Tuned Selectivity for JAKs

### Agenda

#### **I. Managing Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)**

- a. Features of rheumatoid arthritis
- b. RA pathophysiology
- c. Treatment options for RA
- d. Guideline recommended care of RA
  - i. Initial DMARD choice
  - ii. Options after inadequate response to initial therapy
- e. Treating to target

#### **II. JAK Inhibitors for the Management of Moderate-to-Severe RA**

- a. JAK inhibitor mechanism of action and selectivity
- b. Review of clinical trial data of the efficacy and safety of JAK inhibitors:
  - i. Monotherapy
  - ii. Combination therapy
  - iii. Patients with inadequate response to methotrexate (MTX IR)
  - iv. MTX naive populations
  - v. Long-term safety data

#### **III. Application of Societal Guidelines for Moderate-to-Severe Disease – ACR & EULAR**

- a. Focus on JAK inhibition and its place in management of patients
- b. Comorbid conditions and RA treatment considerations

#### **IV. Conclusions**

#### **V. Interactive Case Studies**

#### **VI. Q & A**

# **Disease Modification in Individuals with Moderate-to-Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis: Optimizing Treatment Through the Finely Tuned Selectivity for JAKs**

## **FACULTY**

**Jon T. Giles, MD, MPH (Program Chair)**

Associate Professor of Medicine

Division of Rheumatology

Columbia University, College of Physicians & Surgeons

New York, NY

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This TeleECHO series will explore the use of JAK inhibitors for the management of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) through interactive case studies. Faculty will review emerging efficacy and safety data, discuss guideline recommended care of RA, and help clinicians identify candidates for treatment with JAK inhibitors.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

This CME initiative is designed to meet the educational needs of rheumatologists, nurses and allied healthcare professionals involved in the care of patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon the completion of this program, attendees should be able to:

- Review the members of the JAK family, involvement in RA pathology, and selectivity of JAK targets and associated effects
- Discuss the clinical trials findings for Janus Kinase inhibitors in patients with moderate-to-severe RA
- Describe the application of ACR/EULAR management recommendations to clinical practice for patients with moderate-to-severe rheumatoid arthritis

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The reviewer of this activity has nothing to disclose.

### CNE Content Review

The content of this activity was peer reviewed by a nurse reviewer.

Douglas Cox, MSN, MHA, RN

Ultimate Medical Academy/CCM – Lead Nurse Planner

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Finely Tuned Selectivity for JAKs***

**Jon T. Giles, MD, MPH**

Associate Professor of Medicine  
Division of Rheumatology  
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New York, NY

**Accreditation**

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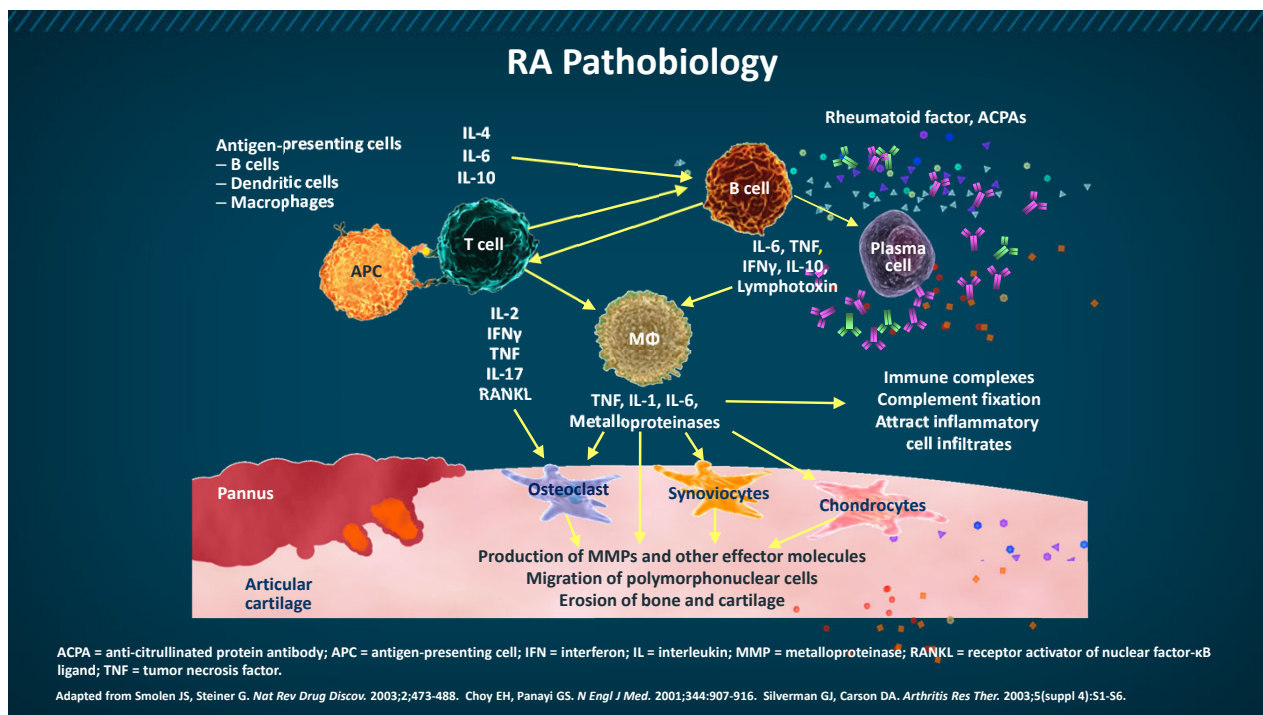
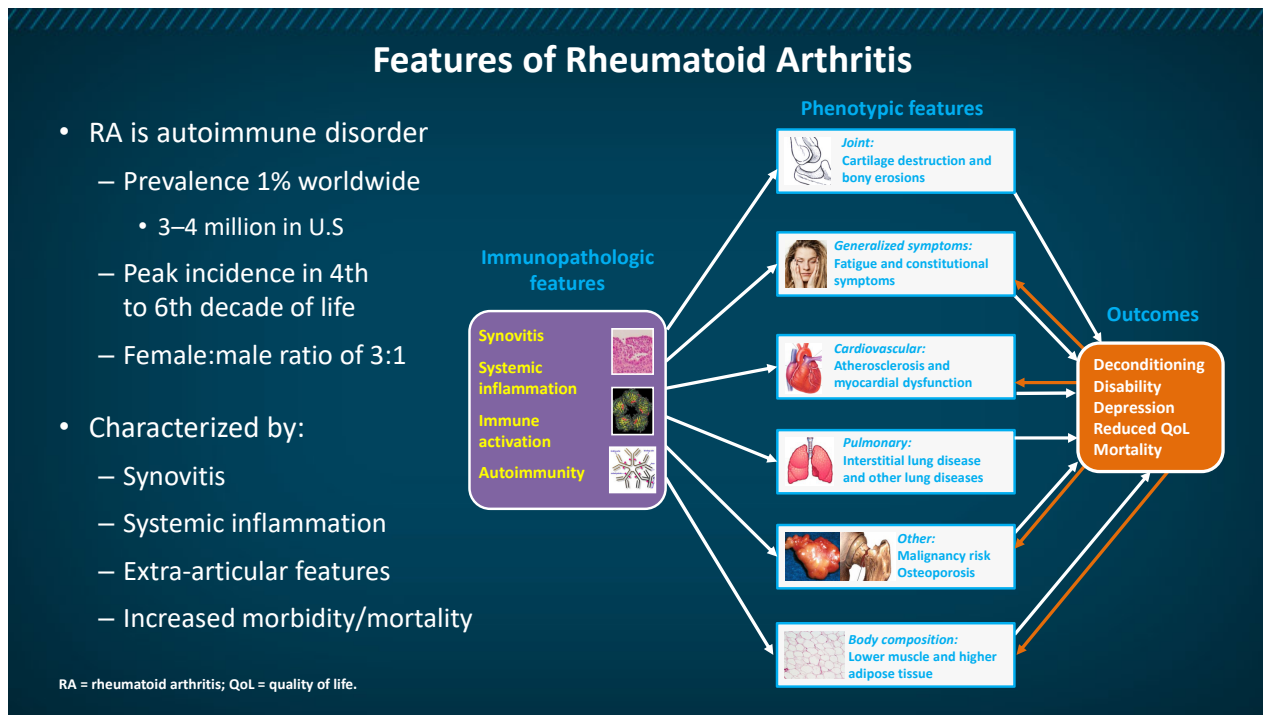
- Jon T. Giles, MD, MPH has received consulting fees from AbbVie, Bristol Myers Squibb, Lilly, Gilead, and UCB. He also states a financial relationship with Pfizer.
- During the course of this lecture, Dr. Giles may mention the use of medications for both FDA-approved and non-approved indications.

**This activity is supported by an educational grant from AbbVie Inc.**

## Learning Objectives

- Review the members of the JAK family, their involvement in RA pathology, and selectivity of JAK targets and associated effects
- Discuss the clinical trials findings for JAK inhibitors in patients with moderate-to-severe RA
- Describe the application of ACR/EULAR management recommendations to clinical practice for patients with moderate-to-severe rheumatoid arthritis

JAK = Janus kinase; RA = rheumatoid arthritis; ACR = American College of Rheumatology; EULAR = European League Against Rheumatism.





## Disease-Modifying Pharmacotherapies for RA Available in US

### Oral non-biologics

Methotrexate  
Sulfasalazine  
Hydroxychloroquine  
Leflunomide  
Azathioprine  
Cyclosporine  
Tacrolimus  
Cyclophosphamide

Prednisone

### Selective cytokine inhibitors

#### TNF inhibitors

Etanercept  
Infliximab  
Adalimumab  
Certolizumab  
Golimumab

#### IL-1 inhibitors

Anakinra

#### IL-6 inhibitors

Tocilizumab  
Sarilumab

### B-cell depletion

Rituximab

### T cell co-stimulation blockade

Abatacept

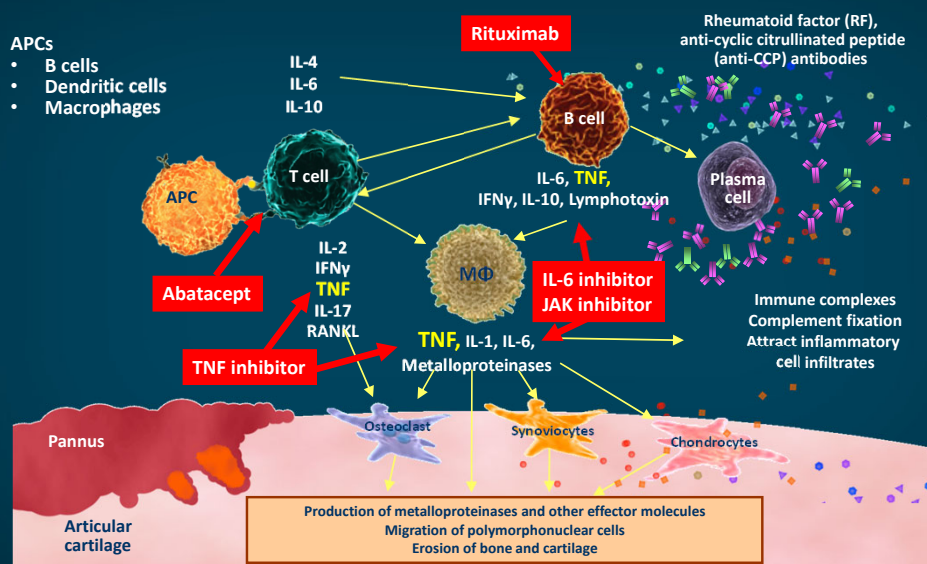
### JAK inhibition

Tofacitinib  
Baricitinib  
Upadacitinib

US = United States; JAK = Janus kinase.

Köhler BM, et al. *J Clin Med.* 2019;8:938.

## Targets of Therapy in RA



Adapted from Smolen JS, Steiner G. *Nat Rev Drug Discov.* 2003;2:473-488. Choy EH, Panayi GS. *N Engl J Med.* 2001;344:907-916. Silverman GJ, Carson DA. *Arthritis Res Ther.* 2003;5(suppl 4):S1-S6.

## Initial DMARD Choice

### American College of Rheumatology (ACR) 2021 RA Treatment Guideline

Initiation of DMARD treatment of patients with RA	
ACR recommendations	Certainty of evidence
Initiation of treatment in DMARD-naïve patients with <b>MODERATE-TO-HIGH</b> disease activity Methotrexate (MTX) monotherapy is <b>strongly</b> recommended over: Hydroxychloroquine or sulfasalazine bDMARD or tsDMARD monotherapy Combination of MTX + non-TNFi bDMARD or tsDMARD MTX monotherapy is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over: Leflunomide Dual or triple csDMARD therapy Combination of MTX + TNFi Initiation of csDMARD without short-term (<3 months) glucocorticoids is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over initiation of csDMARD with short-term glucocorticoids Initiation of csDMARD without longer-term (≥3 months) glucocorticoids is <b>strongly</b> recommended over initiation of csDMARD with longer-term glucocorticoids	Very low/low Very low/moderate Low/very low Low Moderate Low Very low Moderate
Initiation of treatment in DMARD-naïve patients with <b>LOW</b> disease activity Hydroxychloroquine is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over other csDMARDs Sulfasalazine is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over MTX MTX is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over leflunomide	Very low Very low Very low
Initiation of treatment in csDMARD-treated, but MTX-naïve, patients with <b>MODERATE-TO-HIGH</b> disease activity MTX monotherapy is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over combination of MTX + bDMARD or tsDMARD	Moderate/very low

DMARD = disease-modifying antirheumatic drug; bDMARD = biologic DMARD; tsDMARD = targeted-synthetic DMARD; csDMARD = conventional synthetic DMARD; TNFi = TNF inhibitor.

Fraenkel L, et al. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2021;73:924-939.

## Failure of Initial Treatment Choice

### ACR 2021 RA Treatment Guideline

Treatment modification following inadequate response to initial treatment	
Recommendations	Certainty of evidence
T2T approach is <b>strongly</b> recommended over usual care for patients who have not been previously treated with bDMARDs or tsDMARDs	Low
T2T approach is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over usual care for patients who have had an inadequate response to bDMARDs or tsDMARDs	Very low
Minimal initial treatment goal of low disease activity is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over goal of remission	Low
Addition of a bDMARD or tsDMARD is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over triple therapy for patients taking maximally tolerated doses of MTX who are not at target	Very low
Switching to bDMARD or tsDMARD of different class is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over switching to bDMARD or tsDMARD belonging to same class for patients taking bDMARD or tsDMARD who are not at target	Very low
Addition of/switching to DMARDs is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over continuation of glucocorticoids for patients taking glucocorticoids to remain at target	Very low
Addition of/switching to DMARDs (± IA glucocorticoids) is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over use of IA glucocorticoids alone for patients taking DMARDs who are not at target	Very low

T2T = treat-to-target; IA = intraarticular.

Fraenkel L, et al. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2021;73:924-939.

## The Principles of Treating to Target

- T2T by measuring disease activity and adjusting therapy accordingly will result in better patient outcomes
- The primary target for treatment should be clinical remission, defined as the absence of signs and symptoms of significant inflammatory disease activity
- In some cases, low disease activity (LDA) may be an acceptable treatment goal, particularly in patients with long-standing, established disease

Smolen JS, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2010;69:631-637.

## So, Can T2T Be Implemented in the Real World? A First Look...

- RA BIODAM (**B**IOmarkers of joint **DAM**age): RA registry in 10 countries<sup>1,2</sup>
  - At 41% of visits, T2T protocol was not implemented<sup>1</sup>
  - Main reason: physician felt current treatment was adequate (69%)<sup>2</sup>
- CORRONA (**C**onsortium of **R**heumatology **R**esearchers of **N**orth **A**merica)<sup>3,4</sup>
  - Failure to escalate occurred at ~50% of visits
  - 2 main reasons: doctor said treatment needed more time to work (eg, 3 more months) or patient refused
- Implications for patients with persistently active disease
  - Patients and doctors feel that current treatment is “good enough”
  - Patients are risk averse to add/change therapy

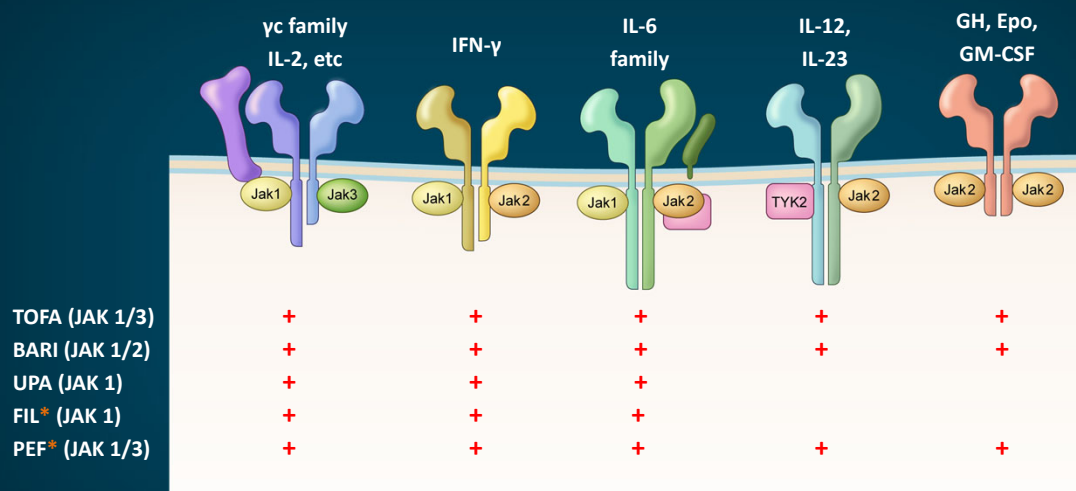
1. Ramiro S, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020;79:453-459. 2. Maksymowych WP, et al. *Arthritis Rheumatol*. 2014;66(suppl 10):abstract 2912. 3. Harrold L, et al. *Arthritis Rheumatol*. 2015;67(suppl 10): abstract 3185. 4. Harrold LR, et al. *Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken)*. 2018;70:379-387.

## Unmet Need for RA Treatments

- Rates of “low disease activity” and “remission” have improved over time
  - 5 years after symptom onset in 2009, 45% reached sustained remission (SR) compared with only 16% in 1999
  - Largely due to the availability of new treatments and adoption of T2T
- However, SR is only observed in ~25%
  - Fluctuating disease activity/flares
  - Secondary loss of response
  - Treatment resistance in a subset
  - Intolerance/side effects
- Complete treatment refractoriness is rare

Einarsson JT, et al. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2020;59:205-212. Mierau M, et al. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2007;46:975-979. Prince FHM, et al. *Arthritis Res Ther*. 2012;14:R68.

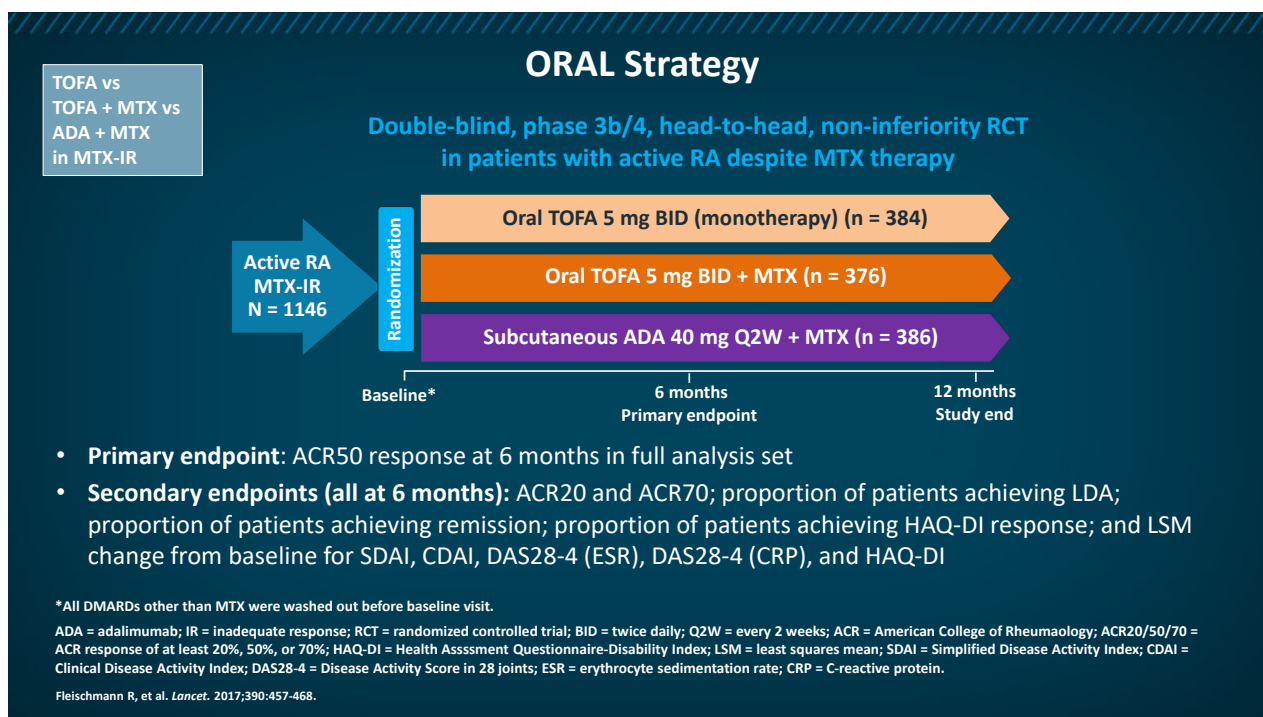
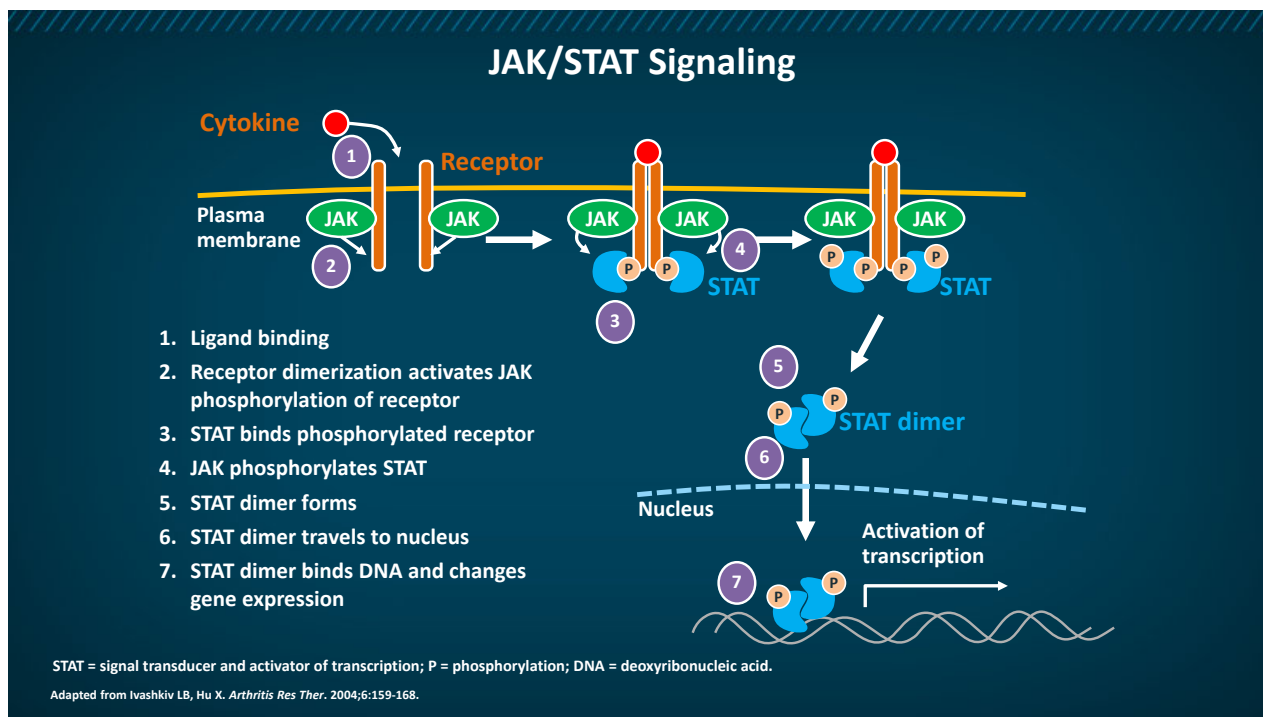
## Signaling by Type I/II Cytokine Receptors and JAK Inhibitors



\*Not FDA approved.

GH = growth hormone; Epo = erythropoietin; GM-CSF = granulocyte macrophage colony-stimulating factor; TYK = tyrosine kinase; TOFA = tofacitinib; BARI = baricitinib; UPA = upadacitinib; FIL = filgotinib; PEF = peficitinib.

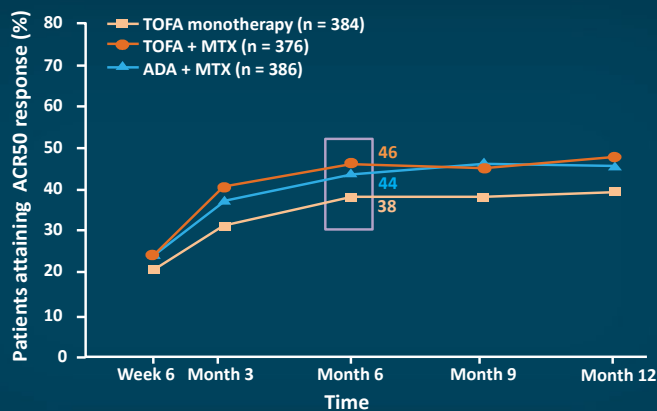
Fragoulis GE, et al. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2021;148:941-952.



TOFA vs  
TOFA + MTX vs  
ADA + MTX  
in MTX-IR

## ORAL Strategy: Efficacy

### Primary Endpoint: ACR50 at 6 Months



- Tofacitinib + MTX non-inferior to adalimumab + MTX
- Tofacitinib monotherapy did not meet non-inferiority criteria compared with tofacitinib + MTX
- Tofacitinib monotherapy did not meet non-inferiority criteria compared with adalimumab + MTX

Fleischmann R, et al. *Lancet*. 2017;390:457-468.

## ORAL Strategy

### AEs, Serious AEs, and Discontinuations

	TOFA monotherapy (n = 384)	TOFA + MTX (n = 376)	ADA + MTX (n = 386)
Total number of AEs, n	598	652	620
Patients with AEs, n (%)	226 (59%)	231 (61%)	253 (66%)
Patients with treatment-related AEs, n (%)	101 (26%)	111 (30%)	133 (35%)
Patients with serious AEs, n (%)	35 (9%)	27 (7%)	24 (6%)
Patients discontinuing due to AEs, n (%)	23 (6%)	26 (7%)	37 (10%)
Patients with severe AEs, n (%) (defined by investigator)	24 (6%)	17 (5%)	23 (6%)
Deaths, n (%)	2 (1%)	0	0
<b>AEs of special interest, n (%)</b>			
Serious infections	6 (2%)	10 (3%)	6 (2%)
HZ (serious and non-serious)	4 (1%)	8 (2%)	6 (2%)
HZ (serious and non-serious) in vaccinated patients	1/69 (1%)	2/75 (3%)	0/72 (0%)
Opportunistic infections (not TB)	2 (1%)	1 (< 1%)	2 (1%)
TB	0	2 (1%)	0
MACE (non-fatal)	0	0	2 (1%)
Malignancy (not non-melanoma skin cancer)	1 (< 1%)	0	0
Non-melanoma skin cancer	2 (1%)	0	1 (< 1%)

AE = adverse event; HZ = herpes zoster; TB = tuberculosis; MACE = major adverse cardiovascular event.

Fleischmann R, et al. *Lancet*. 2017;390:457-468.



## Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) With JAK Inhibitors

Primary analysis: VTE events identified from inpatient claims with as-treated follow-up approach

Data source and exposure group	VTE events, n	Total PYs of follow-up	Incidence rate per 100 PYs (95% CI)	Unadjusted HR (95% CI)	Propensity score-adjusted HR (95% CI)
<b>Truven MarketScan</b>					
TNFi initiators (n = 32,164)	98	28,951	0.34 (0.27–0.41)	Reference	Reference
TOFA initiators (n = 1910)	8	1326	0.60 (0.26–1.19)	1.70 (0.82–3.49)	1.55 (0.75–3.18)
<b>Medicare claims</b>					
TNFi initiators (n = 16,091)	117	12,660	0.92 (0.76–1.11)	Reference	Reference
TOFA initiators (n = 995)	<11*	625	1.12 (0.45–2.31)	1.16 (0.54–2.49)	1.12 (0.52–2.40)
<b>Pooled</b>					
TNFi initiators (n = 48,255)	215	41,611	0.52 (0.45–0.59)	Reference	Reference
TOFA initiators (n = 2905)	15	1951	0.77 (0.43–1.27)	1.42 (0.84–2.40)	1.33 (0.78–2.24)

- Higher rates of VTE noted in interim analysis of large safety study for tofacitinib 10 mg BID
- EMA recommended caution for use of JAK inhibitors for people at risk for VTE
- Rates of VTE across phase 3 trials of all studied JAK inhibitors ≈ 0.5/1000 PYs

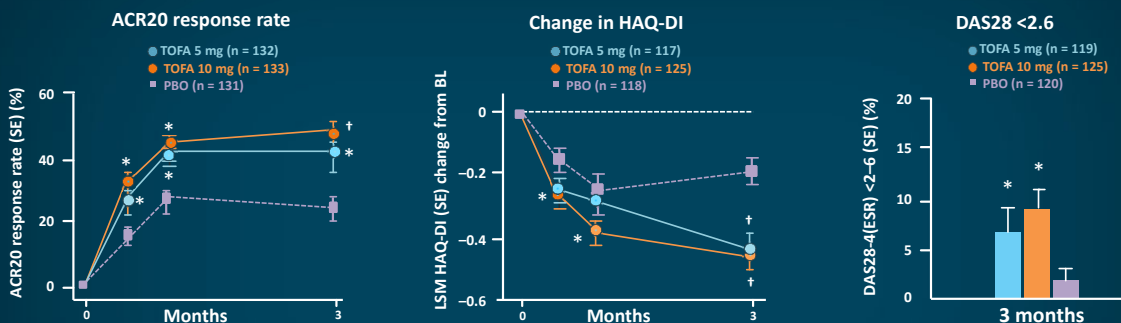
\*Actual number suppressed; required by data use agreement with Medicare and Medicaid Services for counts <11.

HR = hazard ratio; CI = confidence interval; PY = person-year; EMA = European Medicines Agency.

Desai RJ, et al. *Arthritis Rheumatol.* 2019;71:892-900. Sandborn WJ, et al. *Aliment Pharmacol Ther.* 2019;50:1068-1076. EMA ([www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/human/referrals/xeljanz](http://www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/human/referrals/xeljanz)). Accessed 12/21/2021.

## Efficacy and Safety of Tofacitinib (JAK 1/3) + MTX in TNFi-IR Patients

Phase 3 trial outcomes for treatments at 3 months<sup>1</sup>



- Tofacitinib has consistent, manageable safety profile across studies; no new safety signals<sup>1</sup>
- Consistent safety through 114 months; sustained clinical efficacy through 96 months<sup>2</sup>
- 5-year analysis of AEs with tofacitinib vs bDMARDs reported in CORRONA RA registry shows higher incidence of HZ but not MACE or other serious infections<sup>3</sup>

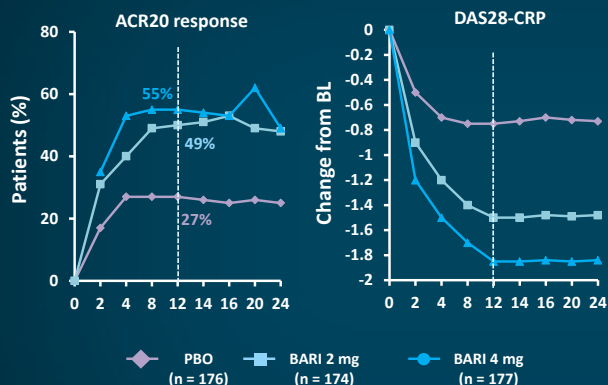
\*P ≤ .05, †P < .0001 vs PBO.

PBO = placebo; SE = standard error; BL = baseline.

1. Burmester GR, et al. *Lancet.* 2013;381:451-460. 2. Wollenhaupt J, et al. *ACR/ARHP* 2017: abstract 522. 3. Kremer J, et al. *EULAR* 2019: abstract OP0028.

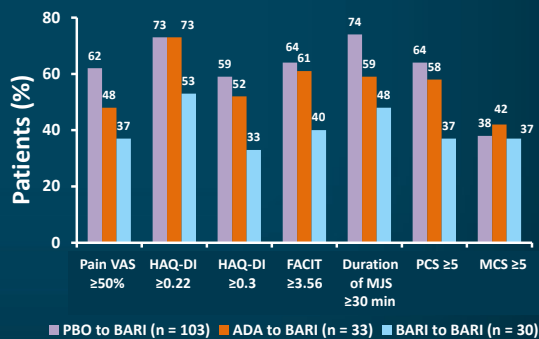
## Efficacy and Safety of Baricitinib (JAK 1/2) in bDMARD-IR Patients

### RA-BEACON phase 3 trial<sup>1,2</sup>



### RA-BEAM phase 3 trial<sup>3</sup>

Patients meeting/exceeding clinically relevant improvement thresholds at week 12 after rescue



VAS = visual analog scale; FACIT-F = Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Fatigue; MJS = morning joint stiffness; PCS = physical component score; MCS = mental component score; min = minute(s).

1. Genovese MC, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2016;374:1243-1252 and supplement. 2. Genovese MC, et al. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2018;57:900-908. 3. Fautrel B, et al. ACR/ARHP 2017: abstract 508.

## Baricitinib

- Baricitinib led to more AEs (including infections) than placebo<sup>1</sup>
- Most common infections were respiratory tract, urinary tract, bronchitis<sup>1</sup>
- Rates of serious AEs through week 24 were similar among patient groups<sup>1</sup>
- Post-hoc analysis of RA-BEACON: ORs favored use of baricitinib over placebo regardless of bDMARD history (number or type)<sup>2</sup>
- 7-year integrated safety analysis from phase 3 trials show increased risk for HZ and deep vein thrombosis/pulmonary embolism but not for malignancy<sup>3</sup>

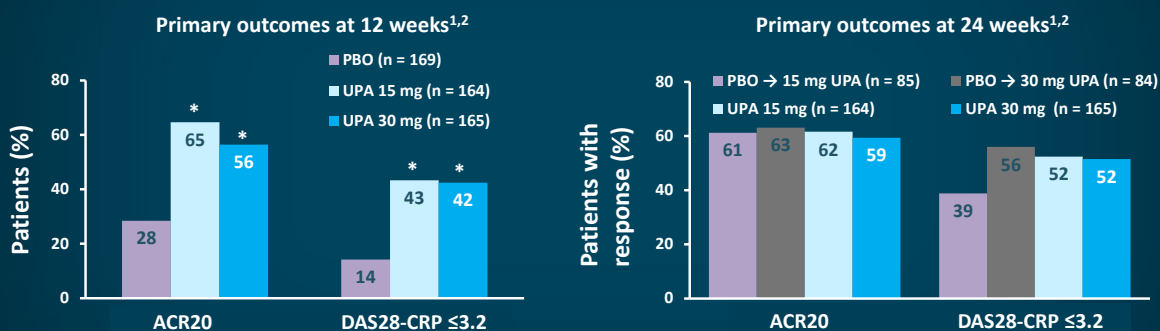
OR = odds ratio.

1. Genovese MC, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2016;374:1243-1252. 2. Genovese MC, et al. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2018;57:900-908. 3. Genovese MC, et al. EULAR 2019: abstract THU0078.



## Efficacy and Safety of Upadacitinib (JAK 1) in bDMARD-IR Patients

### Phase 3 trial SELECT-BEYOND



\*P < .0001 relative to PBO.

1. Genovese MC, et al. *Lancet*. 2018;391:2513-2524. 2. Genovese MC, et al. *ACR/ARHP* 2017: abstract 10L.

## Upadacitinib

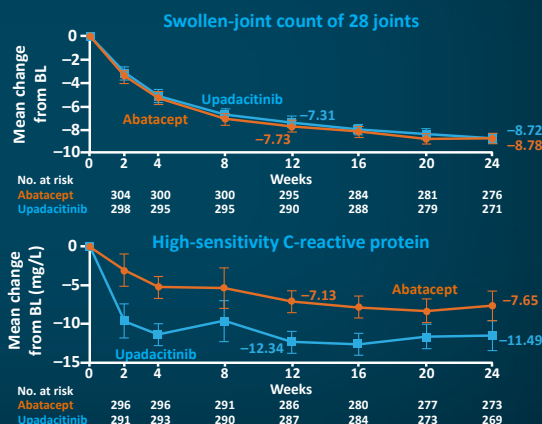
- In a post-hoc analysis, upadacitinib showed comparable efficacy whether administered with methotrexate or with other non-methotrexate csDMARDs<sup>1</sup>
- UPA treatment also resulted in significant, clinically meaningful improvements in PROs among patients<sup>2</sup>
- Pooled safety analysis across phase 3 trials showed higher risk for serious infections and HZ but not for VTE, MACE, or malignancy (vs comparators)<sup>3</sup>
- Safety and efficacy remained consistent after 60 weeks of treatment<sup>4</sup>

PRO = patient-reported outcome.

1. Kremer J, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2019;78(suppl 2):A749 (abstract FRI0155). 2. Strand V, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2018;77(suppl 2):990 (abstract SAT0255). 3. Cohen SB, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2019;78(suppl 2):357 (abstract THU0167). 4. Genovese MC, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2019;78(suppl 2):360 (abstract THU0172).

## Efficacy and Safety of Upadacitinib vs Abatacept in bDMARD-IR Patients

- Phase 3 trial SELECT-CHOICE
- Assessed non-inferiority (primary outcome) and superiority (secondary outcome) of oral upadacitinib 15 mg daily vs IV abatacept monthly for change in DAS28-CRP
  - Stable background non-biologic DMARDs continued
  - Primary endpoint measured at week 12
- Upadacitinib was non-inferior and superior to abatacept at week 12
  - Primary driver was change in CRP
- Remission at week 12 higher for upadacitinib vs abatacept
  - 30.0% vs 13.3% ( $P < .001$ )
- Adverse events higher for upadacitinib
  - Serious infection, MACE, VTE
  - HZ not higher, but low frequency at week 12

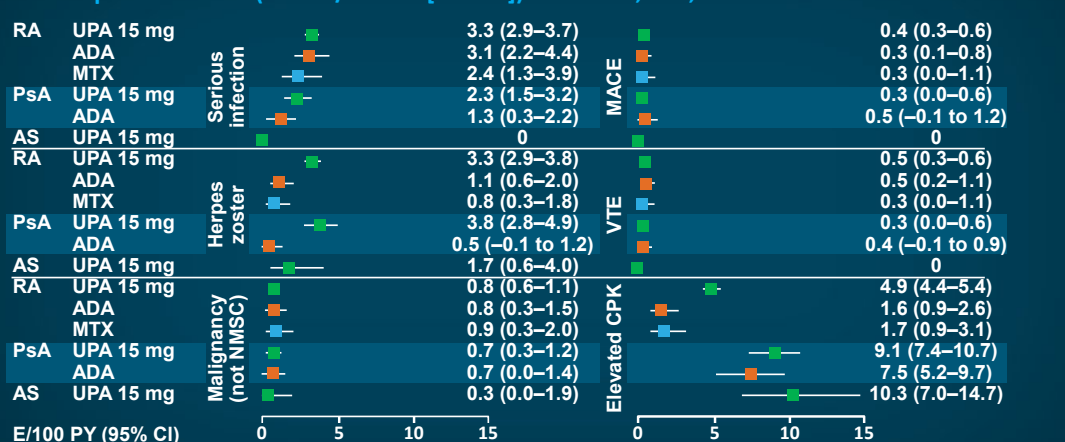


IV = intravenous.

Rubbert-Roth A, et al. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;383:1511-1521.

## Longer Term Safety of Upadacitinib from Open-Label Trial Extensions Across Indications and Compared with Adalimumab and MTX

AEs of special interest (events/100 PY [95% CI]) across RA, PsA, and AS



4298 patients received  $\geq 1$  dose UPA 15 mg (n = 3209 RA; n = 907 PsA; n = 182 AS)

PsA = psoriatic arthritis; AS = ankylosing spondylitis; NMSC = non-melanoma skin cancer; CPK = creatine phosphokinase.

Burmester G, et al. *ACR* 2021, abstract 1691.

## ORAL Surveillance Safety Trial: Tofacitinib vs TNF Inhibitors

### Randomized, Open-Label Phase 4 Non-inferiority Trial

**Inclusion/exclusion criteria**

- Moderate/severe RA MTX-IR
- Age ≥50 years
- ≥1 CVD risk factor
- No current/prior malignancy

**R**  
1:1:1  
N = 4362

**Study start**      **Protocol amendment**      **Study completed**

MAR 2014      FEB 2019      JUL 2020

TOFA 5 mg BID + MTX (n = 1455)  
TOFA 10 mg BID + MTX (n = 1456) → TOFA 10 mg → 5 mg BID  
TNFi + MTX (n = 1451)

ADA 40 mg Q2W (North America) or ETN 50 mg QW (RoW)

- Co-primary outcomes: MACE and malignancy (combined TOFA doses vs TNFi)
  - Non-inferiority margin set at 1.8
- After a signal for VTE was detected for TOFA 10 mg BID in Feb 2019, patients on this dose were changed to 5 mg BID
- The study was completed once ≥1500 patients were followed for ≥3 years, ≥103 MACE were reported, and ≥138 malignancies excluding NMSC were reported

CVD = cardiovascular disease; ETN = etanercept; QW = each week; RoW = rest of world.  
Ytterberg SR, et al. ACR 2021, abstract 831

## ORAL Surveillance Safety Trial: Tofacitinib vs TNF Inhibitors

### HRs (95% CI) and IRs (95% CI) for adjudicated MACE and malignancies

◆ TOFA 5 mg BID   ◆ TOFA 10 mg BID   ◆ Combined TOFA doses   ◆ TNFi

**MACE**

HR = 1.24 (0.81–1.91)

HR = 1.43 (0.94–2.18)

HR = 1.15 (0.77–1.71)

HR = 1.33 (0.91–1.94)

HR = 0.98

HR = 0.73

**Malignancies (excluding NMSC)**

HR = 1.47 (1.00–2.18)

HR = 1.48 (1.00–2.19)

HR = 1.00 (0.70–1.43)

HR = 1.48 (1.04–2.09)

HR = 1.13

HR = 1.13

HR = 1.13

HR = 0.77

Noninferiority margin: upper CI <1.8

	TOFA 5 mg BID	TOFA 10 mg BID	Combined TOFA doses	TNFi
n	47	51	98	37
N	1455	1456	2911	1451
PY	5166	4872	10,038	5045
IR (95% CI)	0.91	1.05	0.98	0.73
HR (95% CI)	1.15 (0.77–1.71)	1.33 (0.91–1.94)	0.98	0.73
NNH vs TNFi	567	319	412	ref

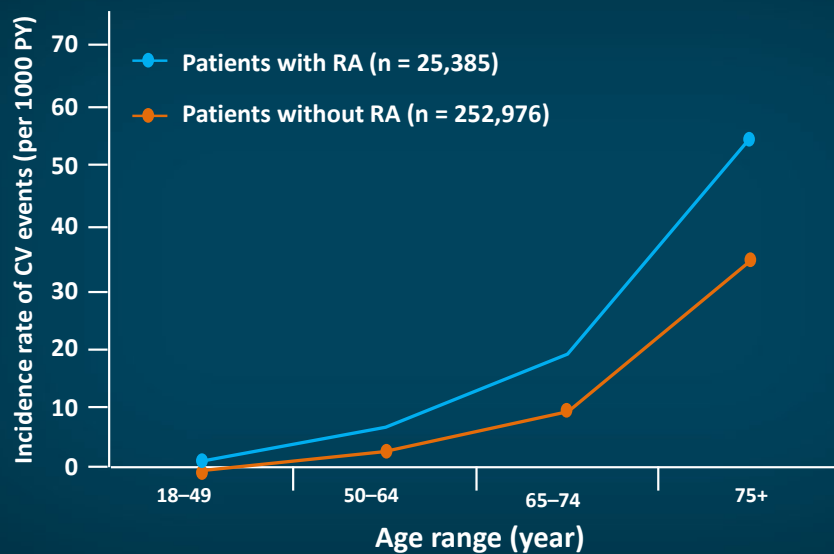
  

	TOFA 5 mg BID	TOFA 10 mg BID	Combined TOFA doses	TNFi
n	62	60	122	42
N	1455	1456	2911	1451
PY	5491	5312	10,803	5482
IR (95% CI)	1.13	1.13	1.13	0.77
HR (95% CI)	1.00 (0.70–1.43)	1.48 (1.04–2.09)	1.13	0.77
NNH vs TNFi	276	275	275	ref

- Combined tofacitinib doses were not non-inferior to TNFi for either MACE or malignancy
- No difference between BID tofacitinib doses
- Most MACE and malignancies occurred in patients >65 years and/or ever smokers
- MACE difference for tofacitinib vs TNFi primarily for MI
- Malignancy difference for tofacitinib vs TNFi primarily for lung cancer, lymphoma, and NMSC

IR = incidence rate; NNH = number needed to harm; MI = myocardial infarction.  
Ytterberg SR, et al. ACR 2021, abstract 831. Charles-Schoeman C, et al. ACR 2021, abstract 958. Curtis J, et al. ACR 2021, abstract 1940.

## RA Is an Independent Risk Factor for Cardiovascular Events\*



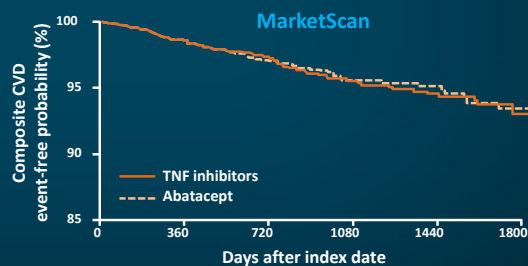
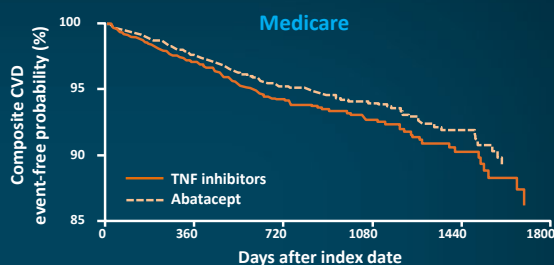
\*MI and stroke.

CV = cardiovascular.

Solomon DH, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2006;65:1608-1612.

## DMARDs and CVD Events in RA

- Methotrexate and TNF inhibitors are most studied
- Observational data only
- Comparison group problematic
- MTX use associated with 28% reduction in all CVD events across 8 cohort studies (HR = 0.72 [95% CI, 0.57–0.91],  $P = .007$ )<sup>1</sup>
- TNFi use associated with 30% reduction in CVD events across 16 cohort studies (HR = 0.70 [95% CI, 0.54–0.90],  $P = .005$ )<sup>1</sup>
- Abatacept similar to etanercept from claims data<sup>2</sup>
- Tocilizumab similar to etanercept in head-to-head randomized clinical trial<sup>3</sup>



1. Roubille C, et al. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2015;74:480-489. 2. Kang EH, et al. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2018;7:e007393. 3. Giles JT, et al. *Arthritis Rheumatol.* 2020;72:31-40.

## RA Treatments and Comorbid Disease Considerations from the ACR Treatment Guideline

RA treatments and comorbid disease considerations	
Recommendations	Certainty of evidence
<b>Previous serious infection</b> Addition of csDMARDs is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over addition of a bDMARD or tsDMARD for patients with a serious infection within previous 12 months who have moderate-to-high disease activity despite csDMARD monotherapy Addition of/switching to DMARDs is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over initiation/dose escalation of glucocorticoids for patients with a serious infection within previous 12 months who have moderate-to-high disease activity	Very low Very low
<b>Pulmonary disease</b> Methotrexate is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over alternative DMARDs for treatment of inflammatory arthritis for patients with clinically diagnosed mild and stable airway or parenchymal lung disease who have moderate-to-high disease activity	Very low
<b>Heart failure</b> Addition of a non-TNFi DMARD or tsDMARD is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over addition of a TNFi for patients with New York Heart Association (NYHA) class III or IV heart failure and an inadequate response to csDMARDs Switching to a non-TNFi bDMARD or tsDMARD is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over continuation of a TNFi for patients taking a TNFi who develop heart failure	Very low Very low

Fraenkel L, et al. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2021;73:924-939.

## RA Treatments and Comorbid Disease Considerations from the ACR Treatment Guideline (continued)

RA treatments and comorbid disease considerations	
Recommendations	Certainty of evidence
<b>Hepatitis B infection</b> Prophylactic antiviral therapy is <b>strongly</b> recommended over frequent monitoring alone for patients initiating rituximab who are hepatitis B core antibody positive (regardless of hepatitis B surface-antigen status) Prophylactic antiviral therapy is <b>strongly</b> recommended over frequent monitoring alone for patients initiating any bDMARD or tsDMARD who are hepatitis B core antibody positive and hepatitis B surface antigen positive Frequent monitoring alone is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over prophylactic antiviral therapy for patients initiating a bDMARD other than rituximab or a tsDMARD who are hepatitis B core antibody positive and hepatitis B surface antigen negative	Very low Very low Very low
<b>Lymphoproliferative disorder</b> Rituximab is <b>conditionally</b> recommended over other DMARDs for patients who have a previous lymphoproliferative disorder for which rituximab is an approved treatment and who have moderate-to-high disease activity	Very low

Fraenkel L, et al. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2021;73:924-939.

## Conclusions

- RA is a chronic inflammatory disease with significant morbidity and disability if left untreated
- Advances in our understanding of RA pathogenesis have led to the development of new and more effective therapies; most recently, these have included newly developed agents that block JAK signaling
- Optimal approach to therapy needs to consider comorbidities, quality of life, T2T, tailoring regimens when needed, and promoting strategies that improve adherence

## Case Study: Tracey

### Case Study: Birth of Third Child

- Tracey is a 35-year-old woman who started taking a TNF inhibitor after the birth of her second child to control her newly diagnosed RA. She has had a very favorable response.
- After 10 months of treatment, she became pregnant with her third child and stopped the TNF inhibitor. Her RA was in remission during pregnancy, and she gave birth to a healthy baby girl after an uneventful pregnancy.
- Soon after the birth, Tracey's RA returned with more joints involved than originally. In addition to the fingers, wrists, and toes, she now has swollen ankles and knees, and her left elbow is so stiff and swollen that she cannot extend it.
- When her rheumatologist restarted the TNF inhibitor that she was taking before her pregnancy, it did not seem to work at all this time.
- She does not plan to have any more children.

### Case Study: Question #1

**What are Tracey's  
treatment options?**



## Case Study: Considerations

- As before, the post-partum period has revved up her RA disease activity. Now the symptoms are more severe than previously, and they interfere with her ability to function and care for her family.
- Methotrexate is an appropriate option since she has no immediate pregnancy plans and has no contraindications.
- Tracey starts with a low dose of prednisone. She feels better initially, but once the prednisone is tapered, she still has significant joint swelling and stiffness, even after prednisone has been increased to 25 mg per week.
- In addition, Tracey reports that the day or two after she takes methotrexate, she feels exhausted and has headaches. She tells you that she cannot continue taking a medication that causes her to be out of commission for 2 days out of the week.

## Case Study: Question #2

What change would you make to Tracey's treatment regimen?

- A. Change her current oral methotrexate to subcutaneous injected methotrexate at the same dose
- B. Restart prednisone and continue it indefinitely
- C. Start a different TNF inhibitor than the one she was taking before her second pregnancy
- D. Start a non-TNF inhibitor biologic
- E. Start a JAK inhibitor



## Case Study: Treatment Considerations

- Changing oral MTX to subcutaneous form can help with some symptoms, such as gastrointestinal intolerance, but it usually does not help with fatigue and headache. In fact, it can make those symptoms worse.
- Long-term corticosteroid therapy carries significant risk of toxicity and is not likely to help with the MTX side effects very much.
- Tracey responded to a TNF inhibitor before but failed to respond when it was restarted after her second pregnancy. She might respond to a second TNF inhibitor, but there is no guarantee.
- A non-TNF inhibitor biologic is an option, but each of them requires 3 months or more to reach full effectiveness, and most work better in combination with MTX or an additional non-biologic DMARD.
- The JAK inhibitor class is effective with or without concomitant non-biologic DMARDs, and responses are typically observed in weeks rather than months.

## Case Study: Pat

## Case Study: Pat

- Pat is a 66-year-old woman who has had RA for 7 years. She was initially treated with MTX and did well on it for several years. When she began having more stiffness and swelling 2 years ago, a TNF inhibitor was added. It was moderately helpful, but she never achieved LDA or remission despite trying 2 different TNF inhibitors.
- She is currently taking MTX 25 mg per week and is using daily NSAIDs to help with symptoms. She stopped her TNF inhibitor 3 months ago because she did not think it was helping; her joint swelling and stiffness have gotten worse.
- She has 8 swollen and 10 tender joints; her CRP is elevated at 10 mg/dL.
- She has osteopenia based on her last DXA scan, with a FRAX score appropriate for a bisphosphonate, but she did not start it.
- Her BMI is 32 (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Half of your time during appointments is spent discussing weight-loss strategies, but she never seems to lose any weight between visits.

DXA = dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (scan); FRAX = Fracture Risk Assessment Tool; BMI = body mass index.

## Case Study: Question #1

Which treatment option or options are best for Pat?

- A. Try another TNF inhibitor
- B. Add sulfasalazine and hydroxychloroquine to MTX
- C. Add abatacept
- D. Add rituximab
- E. Add an IL-6 blocker
- F. Add a JAK inhibitor
- G. Start 20 mg of prednisone and taper it over the next 3 months, then reevaluate

### Case Study: Follow-Up

- When you review Pat's medical record, you see that she had a deep venous thrombosis 15 years ago.
- She was anticoagulated for 6 months and has not had a recurrence since then.

### Case Study: Question #2

**Does this information change  
your management plan for Pat?**

## Case Study: VTE Risk

- Age, elevated BMI, and prior history of thromboembolic disease have been identified as risk factors for VTE in clinical trials of JAK inhibitors.
- Although overall risk of VTE is low among patients treated with JAK inhibitors (about 1 in every 200 or less), the risk may be higher in those with risk factors, especially those with prior VTE.
- The European Medicines Agency recommends not using JAK inhibitors in patients with VTE risk factors.

**Thank You!**

**Q&A**

**Disease Modification in Individuals with Moderate-to-Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis:  
Optimizing Treatment Through the Finely Tuned Selectivity for JAKs**

Resource	Address
Burmester G, Cohen S, Winthrop K, et al. <b>Long-term safety profile of upadacitinib in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, or ankylosing spondylitis.</b> Presented at: ACR Convergence; November 9, 2021; Abstract 1691.	<a href="https://acrabstracts.org/abstract/long-term-safety-profile-of-upadacitinib-in-patients-with-rheumatoid-arthritis-psoriatic-arthritis-or-ankylosing-spondylitis/">https://acrabstracts.org/abstract/long-term-safety-profile-of-upadacitinib-in-patients-with-rheumatoid-arthritis-psoriatic-arthritis-or-ankylosing-spondylitis/</a>
Burmester GR, Blanco R, Charles-Schoeman C, et al. <b>Tofacitinib (CP-690,550) in combination with methotrexate in patients with active rheumatoid arthritis with an inadequate response to tumour necrosis factor inhibitors: A randomised phase 3 trial.</b> <i>Lancet.</i> 2013;381:451-460.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23294500/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23294500/</a>
Desai RJ, Pawar A, Weinblatt ME, Kim SC. <b>Comparative risk of venous thromboembolism in rheumatoid arthritis patients receiving tofacitinib versus those receiving tumor necrosis factor inhibitors: An observational cohort study.</b> <i>Arthritis Rheumatol.</i> 2019;71:892-900.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30552833/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30552833/</a>
Fleischmann R, Mysler E, Hall S, et al. <b>Efficacy and safety of tofacitinib monotherapy, tofacitinib with methotrexate, and adalimumab with methotrexate in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (ORAL Strategy): A phase 3b/4, double-blind, head-to-head, randomised controlled trial.</b> <i>Lancet.</i> 2017;390:457-468.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28629665/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28629665/</a>
Fraenkel L, Bathon JM, England BR, et al. <b>2021 American College of Rheumatology Guideline for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis.</b> <i>Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken).</i> 2021;73:924-939.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34101387/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34101387/</a>
Fragoulis GE, Brock J, Basu N, McInnes IB, Siebert. <b>The role for JAK inhibitors in the treatment of immune-mediated rheumatic and related conditions.</b> <i>J Allergy Clin Immunol.</i> 2021;148:941-952.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34450118/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34450118/</a>
Genovese MC, Fleischmann R, Combe B, et al. <b>Safety and efficacy of upadacitinib in patients with active rheumatoid arthritis refractory to biologic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (SELECT-BEYOND): A double-blind, randomised controlled phase 3 trial.</b> <i>Lancet.</i> 2018;391:2513-2524.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29908670/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29908670/</a>
Genovese MC, Kremer J, Zamani O, et al. <b>Baricitinib in patients with refractory rheumatoid arthritis.</b> <i>N Engl J Med.</i> 2016;374:1243-1252.	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27028914/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27028914/</a>

<p>Köhler BM, Günther J, Kaudewitz D, Lorenz HM. <b>Current Therapeutic Options in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis.</b> <i>J Clin Med.</i> 2019;8:938.</p>	<p><a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31261785/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31261785/</a></p>
<p>Rubbert-Roth A, Enejosa J, Pangan AL, et al. <b>Trial of upadacitinib or abatacept in rheumatoid arthritis.</b> <i>N Engl J Med.</i> 2020;383:1511-1521.</p>	<p><a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33053283/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33053283/</a></p>
<p>Smolen JS, Aletaha D, Bijlsma JW, et al. <b>Treating rheumatoid arthritis to target: Recommendations of an international task force.</b> <i>Ann Rheum Dis.</i> 2010;69:631-637.</p>	<p><a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20215140/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20215140/</a></p>
<p>Ytterberg SR, Bhatt DL, Mikuls T, et al. <b>Safety and efficacy of tofacitinib vs TNF inhibitors in RA patients aged 50 years or older with one or more cardiovascular risks: Results from a phase 3b/4 randomized safety trial.</b> Presented at: ACR Convergence; November 7, 2021; Abstract 831.</p>	<p><a href="https://acrabstracts.org/abstract/safety-and-efficacy-of-tofacitinib-vs-tnf-inhibitors-in-ra-patients-aged-50-years-or-older-with-one-or-more-cardiovascular-risks-results-from-a-phase-3b-4-randomized-safety-trial/">https://acrabstracts.org/abstract/safety-and-efficacy-of-tofacitinib-vs-tnf-inhibitors-in-ra-patients-aged-50-years-or-older-with-one-or-more-cardiovascular-risks-results-from-a-phase-3b-4-randomized-safety-trial/</a></p>