

Συμπεράσματα από τη θεραπευτική στρατηγική
των τελευταίων ετών στον ΣΕΛ.
Νέες τάσεις, τι ακολουθεί.

Γεώργιος Μπερτσιάς

Κλινική Ρευματολογίας και Κλινικής
Ανοσολογίας, ΠαΓΝΗ και Ιατρική Σχολή
Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης



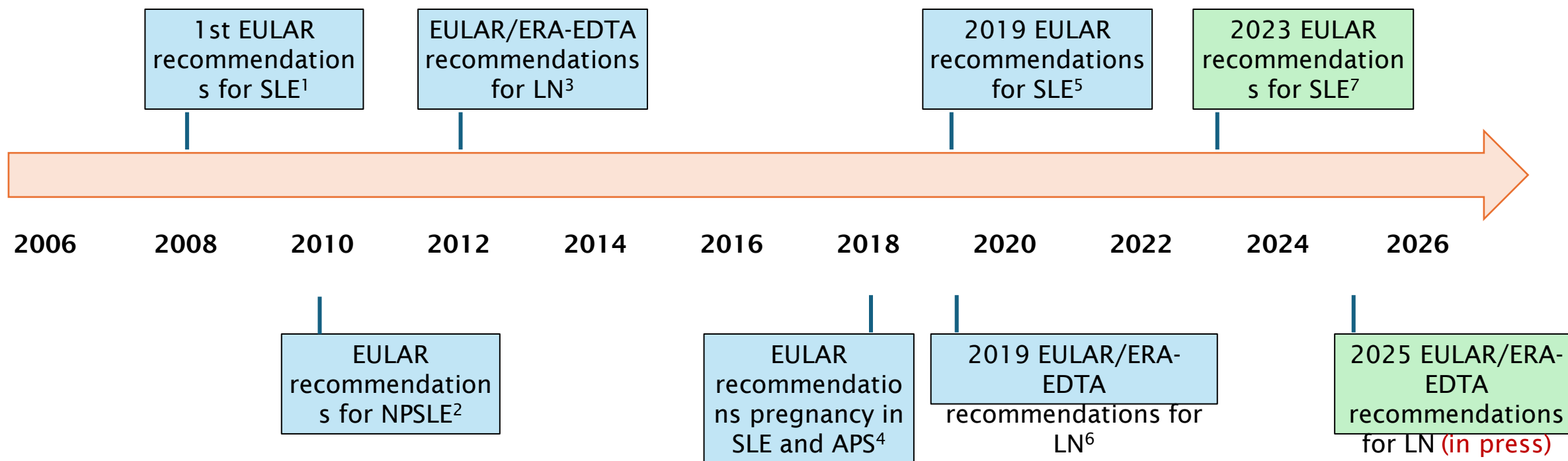
03-10-2025



Σύγκρουση συμφερόντων

- **Speaker/consultancy fees:** Otsuka, Lilly, Pfizer, GSK, AstraZeneca, Novartis, AbbVie, Argenx

EULAR recommendations on SLE: counting >15 years



APS, antiphospholipid syndrome; ERA-EDTA, European Renal Association; EULAR, European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology; LN, lupus nephritis; NPSLE, neuropsychiatric systemic lupus erythematosus; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus.
1. Bertsias G et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2008;67:195-205; 2. Bertsias GK et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2010;69:2074-82; 3. Bertsias GK et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2012;71:1771-82;
4. Andreoli L et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2017;76:476-85; 5. Fanouriakis A et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2019;78:736-45; 6. Fanouriakis A et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2020;79:713-723.
7. Fanouriakis A et al. Ann Rheum Dis. 2024;83(1):15-29.

What prompted the 2023 update?

- Need for early/prompt diagnosis and treatment and the role of new classification systems
- Disease activity instruments and their implementation in clinical care
- **New agents approved (belimumab, anifrolumab, voclosporin)¹**
- **Therapeutic strategy of SLE:**
 - Treat-to-target concept
 - Patient subgrouping/stratification based on sociodemographic, clinical and biological data,
 - Combination therapies¹
 - Glucocorticoid tapering, withdrawal of immunosuppressive treatment
- **Improved strategies for the prevention of flares**
- **Assessment of the risk for infections (e.g., SARS-Cov2) and mitigation strategies (e.g. immunisations)**

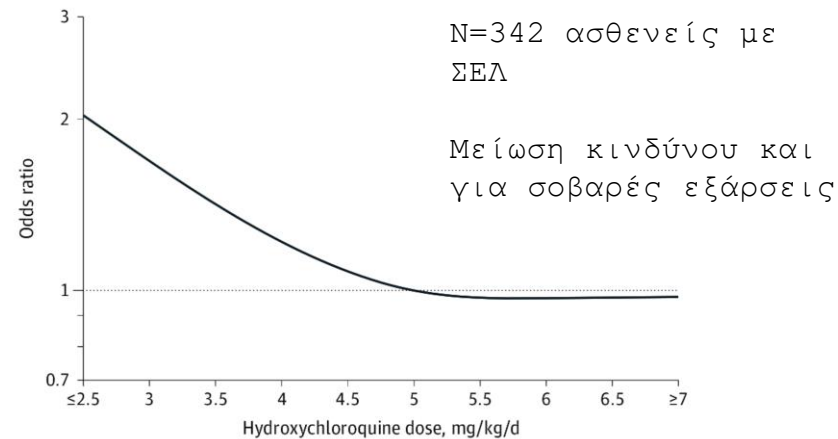
SARS-Cov2, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus.

Fanouriakis A et al. Ann Rheum Dis. 2024;83(1):15-29 and speakers own opinion (Dr Bertias is part of the EULAR Task Force for the SLE and Lupus Nephritis recommendations [2008-2023])

General SLE recommendations

Recommendation ¹	LoA mean (SD)
HCQ is recommended for all patients (1b/A), unless contraindicated, at a target dose of 5 mg/kg real body weight/day (2b/B) but individualised based on risk for flare (2b/B) and retinal toxicity	9.21 (1.35)

Figure. Estimated Odds Ratio for Lupus Flares According to the Average Weight-Based Hydroxychloroquine Dose



JAMA. 2022; 328 (14) : 1458–60

Χρήση του HCQ

- 200 → 400 mg/ημέρα (αρχική δόση): διατήρηση τουλάχιστον 3–6 μήνες, έως σταθεροποίησης νόσου
- Νόσος υπό έλεγχο: τιτλοποίηση προς τα 5 mg/kg/ημέρα

GFR, glomerular filtration rate; HQC, hydroxychloroquine; LoA, level of agreement; LN, lupus nephritis; SD, standard deviation; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus.

Fanouriakis A et al. Ann Rheum Dis. 2024;83(1):15-29; 2. Speaker's own opinion.

LoA: Level of agreement

General SLE recommendations

Recommendation ¹	LoA mean (SD)
GCs, if needed, are dosed based upon the type and severity of organ involvement (2b/C) and should be reduced to maintenance dose of ≤ 5 mg/day (prednisone equivalent) (2a/B) and, when possible, withdrawn; in patients with moderate to severe disease, pulses of IV MP (125–1000 mg per day, for 1–3 days) (3b/C) can be considered	9.57 (0.77)

Points to consider

- ‘Acceptable’ threshold of daily GC dose for maintenance treatment reduced to maximum 5 mg/day prednisone equivalent (vs. 7.5 mg/day in the 2019 recommendations)
- Extrapolation from observational data linking GC dose > 5 mg/day to exaggerated risk for organ damage²

GC, glucocorticoids; IV, intravenous; LoA, level of agreement; LN, lupus nephritis; MP, mycophenolate; SD, standard deviation; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus.

1. Fanouriakis A et al. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2024;83(1):15–29.; 2. Speaker’s own opinion.

Χρήση κορτικοστεροειδών: «...more art than science...»

Patients with mild SLE

Timing	GC dosage
Week	Oral prednisone equivalent (mg/day)
1	10–15
2	5–10
3	2.5–5
4	0 if lupus is controlled

Patients with moderate SLE

Timing	GC dosage
Optional day 1–3	With or without* IV MP pulses 0.125–0.5 g/day (for up to 3 days as initial treatment)
Week	Oral prednisone equivalent (mg/day)
1	20–30
2	20–25
3	15–20
4	15–20
5	10–15
6	10–15
7	5–10
8	5–10
9	2.5–7.5
10	2.5–7.5
11	0–5
12	0–5
13	0–2.5
14	0–2.5
>15	0 if lupus is controlled

Patients with severe non-renal SLE or active lupus nephritis^{†‡}

Timing	GC dosage
Day 1–3	IV MP pulses 0.25–0.5 g/day (for up to 3 days as initial treatment)
Week	Oral prednisone equivalent (mg/day)
0–2	0.5–0.6 mg/kg (up to 40)
3–4	0.3–0.4 mg/kg
5–6	15
7–8	10
9–10	7.5
11–12	5
13–14	2.5
15–16	2.5
17–18	2.5
19–20	2.5
21–24	2.5
>25	<2.5

APLAR 2025
(abstract)

- Όσες μεθυλπρεδνιζολόνης:

- Σε «απειλητική» νόσο (π.χ. μεγάλη περικαρδιακή συλλογή με αρχόμενο cardiac tamponate, θρομβοπενία <30.000/μL, κυψελιδίτιδα)
- Όταν σκεφτείς τη χορήγηση ≥30–40 mg/ημέρα ισοδύναμο πρεδνιζόνης
- Για την «επιτάχυνση» του tapering στεροειδών
- Δοσολογία: 125 – 1000 mg, x1–3 ώσες

General SLE recommendations

Recommendation	LoA mean (SD)
In patients not responding to HCQ (+/- GC) or patients unable to reduce GC below doses acceptable for chronic use, addition of immunomodulating/immunosuppressive agents (methotrexate [1b/B], azathioprine [2b/C] or mycophenolate [2a/B]) and/or biologic agents (belimumab [1a/A] or anifrolumab [1a/A]) should be considered	9.32 (0.91)

Points to consider

- RCTs and LTE support the superiority of biologics (over SoC) in reducing SLE activity, flares and GC dose
- Not a prerequisite to try ≥ 1 csDMARDs/ISTs prior to biologics
- No preference between the two currently approved biologics (for general SLE)
- **Emphasis on the prompt initiation of csDMARDs/ISTs or biologics** to expedite disease control and GC reduction

csDMARD, conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drug; GC, glucocorticoids; HCQ, hydroxychloroquine; IST, immunosuppressive therapy; LoA, level of agreement; LN, lupus nephritis; LTE, long-term extension; RCT, randomised controlled trials; SD, standard deviation; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus; SoC, standard-of-care.

Fanouriakis A et al. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2024;83(1):15-29

Μυκοφαινολικό: αποτελεσματικότητα στο ΣΕΛ

Table 2. Improvement of clinical and laboratory manifestations in 6 and 12 months. Values are n (%) unless otherwise specified.

Variables	Time	Nonrenal, n = 72	Renal, n = 108
CNS	Baseline	11	7
	6 mos	8 (72.7)	3 (42.9)
	12 mos	8 (72.7)	6 (85.7)
Vasculitis	Baseline	2	6
	6 mos	2 (100)	6 (100)
	12 mos	1 (50)	6 (100)
MSK manifestations	Baseline	19	11
	6 mos	11 (57.9)	10 (90.9)
	12 mos	14 (73.7)	11 (100)
Renal	Baseline	0	105
	6 mos	0 (0)	20 (19)
	12 mos	0 (0)	29 (27.6)
Skin disease	Baseline	27	30
	6 mos	7 (25.9)	10 (33.3)
	12 mos	11 (40.7)	16 (53.3)
Serositis	Baseline	8	7
	6 mos	6 (75)	4 (57.1)
	12 mos	5 (62.5)	7 (100)
Immunological abnormalities	Baseline	45	85
	6 mos	11 (24.4)	15 (17.6)
	12 mos	12 (26.7)	15 (17.6)
Hematological abnormalities	Baseline	10	3
	6 mos	8 (80)	2 (66.7)
	12 mos	6 (60)	2 (66.7)

CNS: central nervous system; MSK: musculoskeletal.

- Δεδομένα από σειρές ασθενών (σε συνδυασμό με **μέτριες/υψηλές δόσεις στεροειδών**) & μία ελεγχόμενη μελέτη (MMF vs. AZA)
- Αποτελεσματικότητα σε:
 - ✓ **Υποξύ δερματικό λύκο**
 - ✓ **Αιμολυτική αναιμία**
 - ✓ **Θρομβοπενία**
 - ✓ **Αγγειίτιδα**
 - ✓ **Νευρολογικές εκδηλώσεις**
- Κλινικά **σημαντικό αποτέλεσμα στους 3–4 μήνες** → ύφεση $\approx 40-50\%$ στο 1 έτος
- **Υποτροπές $\approx 15-20\%$**
- **Κύρια ένδειξη:** μετρίως σοβαρές ή σοβαρές εκδηλώσεις ΣΕΛ, αστοχία ή τοξικότητα σε AZA, αποφυγή χρήσης CYC

Βιολογικοί παράγοντες & τροποποίηση της φυσικής πορείας της νόσου

Table 1 Application of the proposed matrix for non-renal disease activity and organ damage disease modification criteria

Product	Disease modification potential		Disease modification confirmed (beyond 5 years)
	Outcomes: year 1	Outcomes: years 2–5	Outcomes: year 5 or later
	❶ Significant reduction in disease activity measured using a validated tool (ie, SELENA-SLEDAI, BILAG, SRI-4) ❷ Significant reduction in severe flare measured using a validated tool (ie, SFI or BILAG) ❸ Reduction in use of steroids* and/or immunosuppressants	❶ Sustained improvement in multiple organ domains/no worsening in multiple organ domains ❷ Prevention of severe flares ❸ Continued reduction in use of steroids* and/or immunosuppressants	No change in SDI or delayed progression
Anifrolumab	❶❷❸	❶❷❸	●
Belimumab	❶❷❸	❶❷❸	●



Διευκόλυνση επίτευξης των
θεραπευτικών στόχων (treat-to-
target)

(εξωνεφρικός ΣΕΛ)

Organ-specific recommendations

Skin involvement in SLE	LoA mean (SD)
Treatment of active skin disease should include topical agents (GC, calcineurin inhibitors) (2b/B), antimalarials (HCQ, CQ) (1a/A), and/or systemic glucocorticoids (4/C) as needed, with methotrexate (1b/B), mycophenolate (4/C), anifrolumab (1a/A), or belimumab (1a/B), considered as second-line therapy	9.35 (1.06)

Points to consider

- Anifrolumab rated with LoE: A due to the CLASI data included in phase II/III trials
- Real-world evidence supports its superior efficacy especially in refractory mucocutaneous involvement

Organ-specific recommendations

Hematological involvement in SLE	LoA mean (SD)
For acute treatment of severe autoimmune thrombocytopenia , high-dose GC (including pulses of intravenous methylprednisolone) (4/C), with or without intravenous immunoglobulin G (4/C), and/or <u>rituximab</u> (2b/B), and/or high-dose intravenous cyclophosphamide (4/C), followed by <u>maintenance therapy</u> with rituximab (2b/B), azathioprine (2b/C), mycophenolate (2b/C), or cyclosporine (4/C), should be considered.	9.35 (1.06)

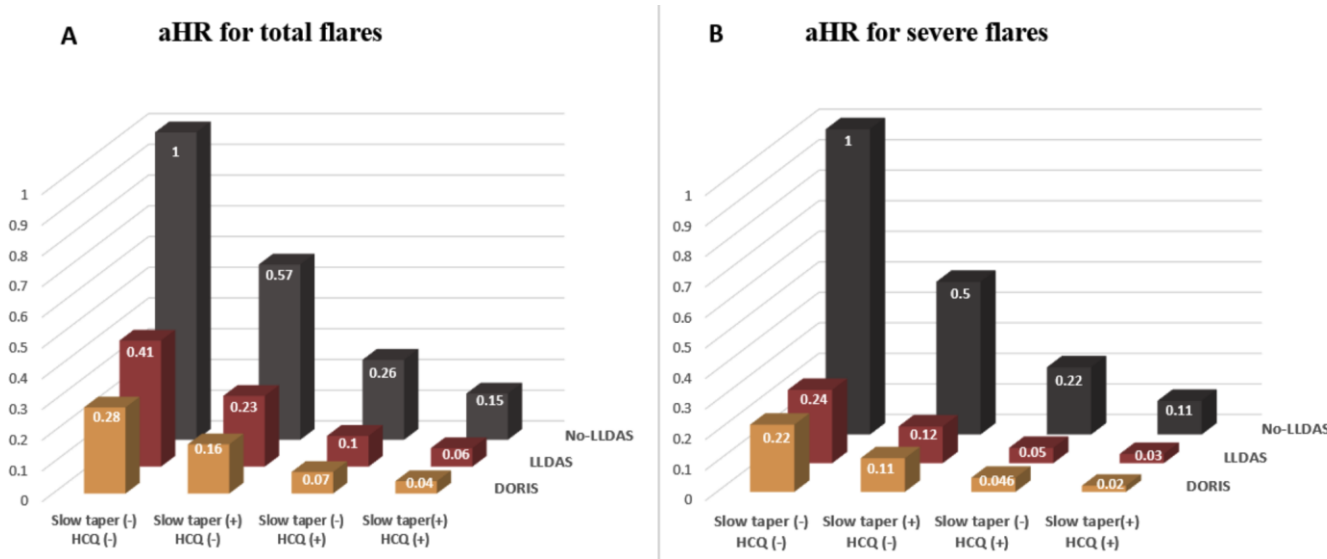
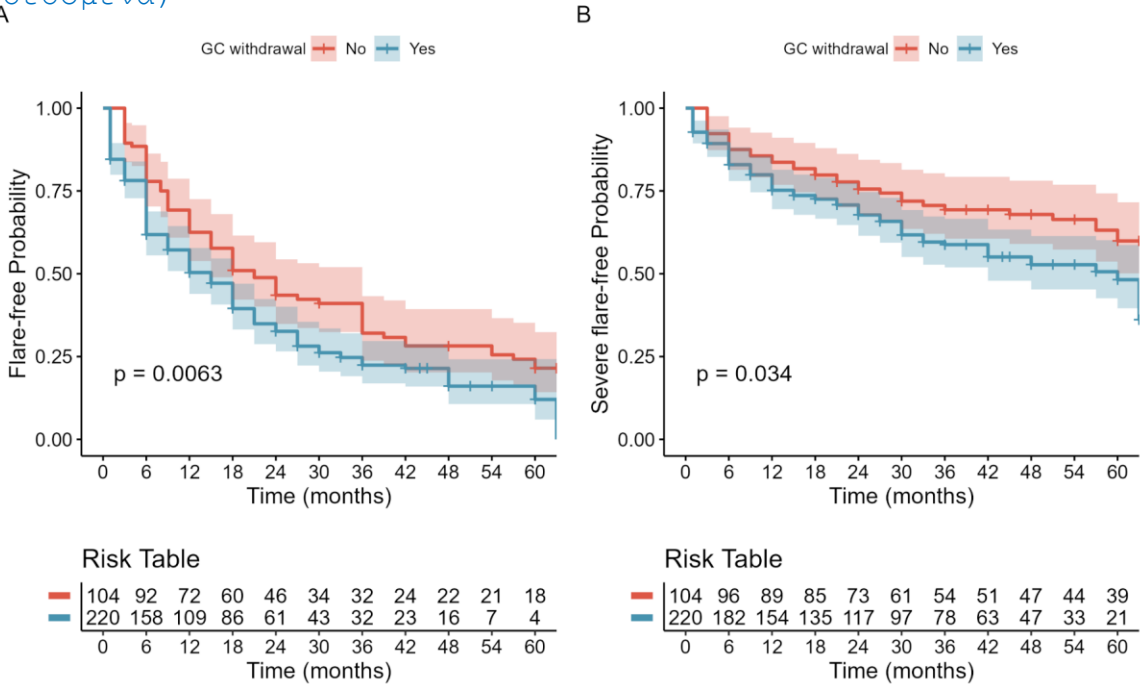
General SLE recommendations

Recommendation ¹	LoA, mean (SD) ¹
In SLE patients achieving sustained remission, gradual tapering of treatment should be considered, with withdrawal of GC first (2a/B)	9.89 (0.38)

GC, glucocorticoids; IST, immunosuppressive therapy; LN, lupus nephritis; LoA, level of agreement; M0, month zero; M24, 24 months; SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus.
1. Fanouriakis A et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2024;83(1):15-29. 2. Jourde-Chiche N et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2022;81(10):1420-1427; 3. Jourde-Chiche N et al. *Nephrol Dial Transplant*. 2022; 37 (Suppl. 3): i818-i822 (Abstract FC053); 4. Speaker's own opinion.

Διακοπή των κορτικοστεροειδών στο ΣΕΛ

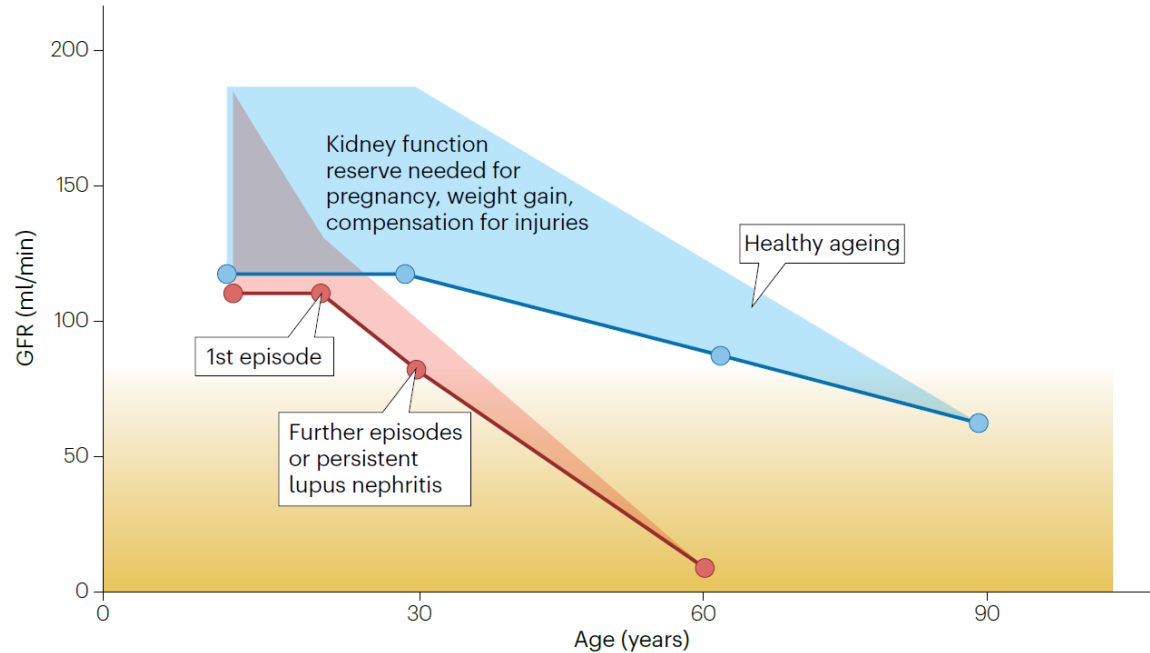
Ασθενείς με μέτριο/σοβαρό ΣΕΛ (προοπτικά δεδομένα)



1. Slow GC tapering (6 months) until complete withdrawal
2. Use of HCQ >50% of time
3. DORIS or LLDAS (at the time of complete withdrawal)

ΣΕΛ με νεφρική προσβολή

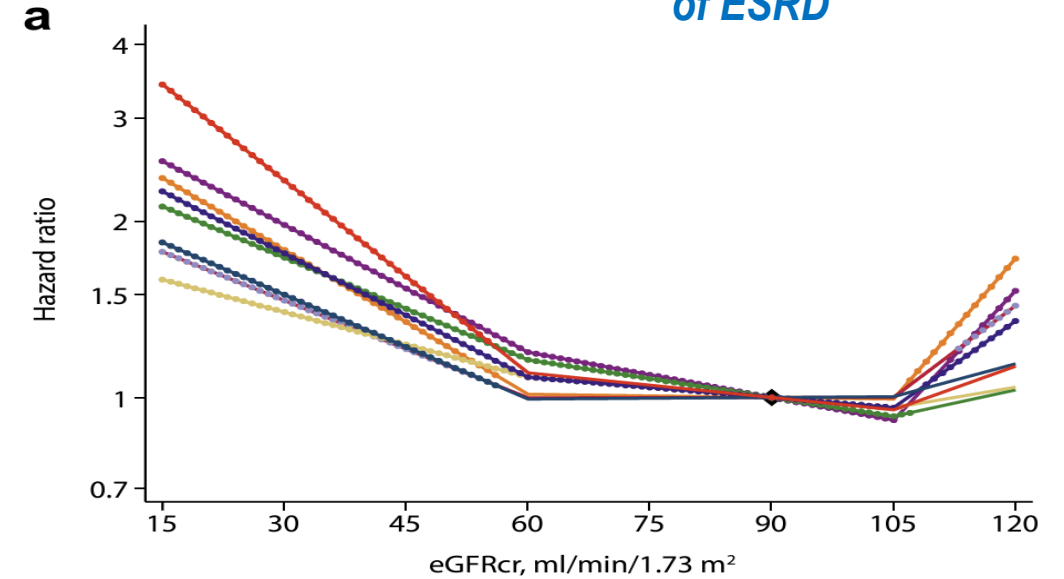
Functional reserve and its compromise by each flare of lupus nephritis



Nat Rev Rheumatol. 2024 Nov;20(11):699-711

The 60
ml/min
GFR
threshold

The multiple morbidities and significant mortality of ESRD



- All-cause mortality, 721 394 participants; 102 910 events
- Cardiovascular mortality, 719 987 participants; 27 051 events
- All-cause hospitalization, 676 519 participants; 7862 events
- Myocardial infarction, 711 478 participants; 18 659 events
- Stroke, 711 293 participants; 17 609 events



EULAR Recommendations for SLE with Kidney Involvement (2025)

 Diagnosis/Targets	 Immune treatment	 Non-immune treatment	 Severe or Refractory
• Kidney biopsy Indispensable; repeat if clinical uncertainty • Target - Prevention of - Chronic kidney disease - Flares • Milestones - Kidney function: preservation or improvement by 3 months - Proteinuria: * Reduction by 25% at 3 mo * Reduction by 50% by 6 mo * UPCR < 700 mg/g by 12 mo	• Early combination therapy Hydroxychloroquine and Glucocorticoids with immunosuppressive and CNI or biologic • Glucocorticoids - Start with pulses - Continue with 0.3-0.7 mg/kg/day prednisone - Taper to ≤ 5 mg/day by 4-6 months and withdraw, when possible • Immunosuppressives - MMF, low-dose CY • CNI - Voclosporin or TAC (CsA) • Biologics Belimumab, Obinutuzumab	• Nephroprotection - Low salt (less than 5 g/day) - Control blood pressure (RAAS blockade 1st choice) - SGLT2-inhibitors (in stable disease, if residual proteinuria after 12 mo) • Dyslipidaemia • Vaccinations Influenza, COVID-19, HZV, S. pneumoniae • Bone health	• Severe Consider high-dose IV-CY plus pulse IV-MP • Refractory - Combination of IV-CY with B cell depletion - Addition of a CNI if heavy proteinuria - Experimental therapies in the context of a protocol • Thrombotic microangiopathy - Plasma exchange - Complement inhibitors - Anti-vWf (caplacizumab)

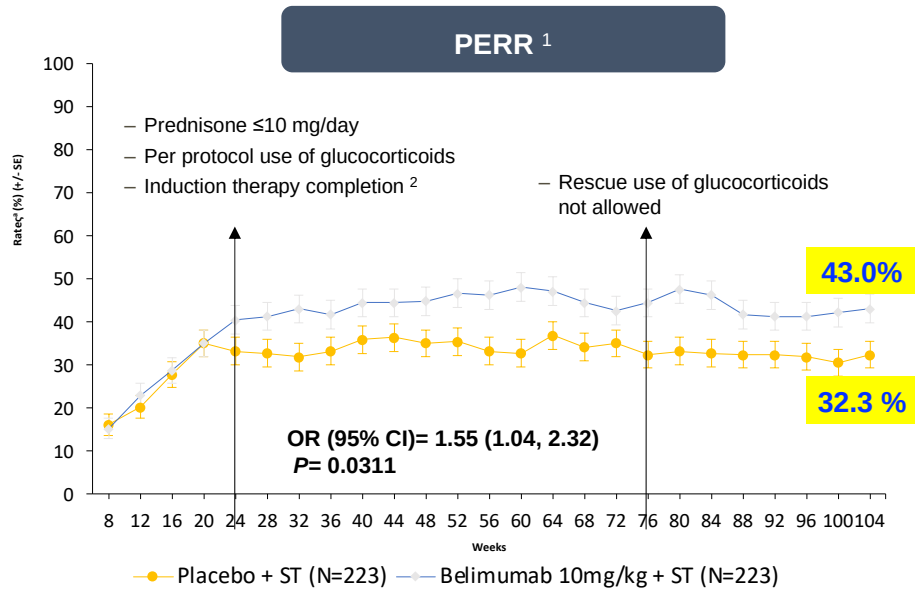
Recommendation 4: Immunosuppressive treatment (1)

Recommendation	LoA, mean (SD)
For patients with active lupus nephritis, <i>especially those with poor prognostic factors</i>, we recommend combination therapy of: a) mycophenolate or low-dose intravenous cyclophosphamide with belimumab (1b/A), or b) mycophenolate with a calcineurin inhibitor (voclosporin or tacrolimus) (1b/A), or c) mycophenolate with obinutuzumab (1b/A). Alternative regimens include single-agent therapy with either mycophenolate (1a/A) or low-dose intravenous cyclophosphamide (1a/A).	9.59 (0.78)

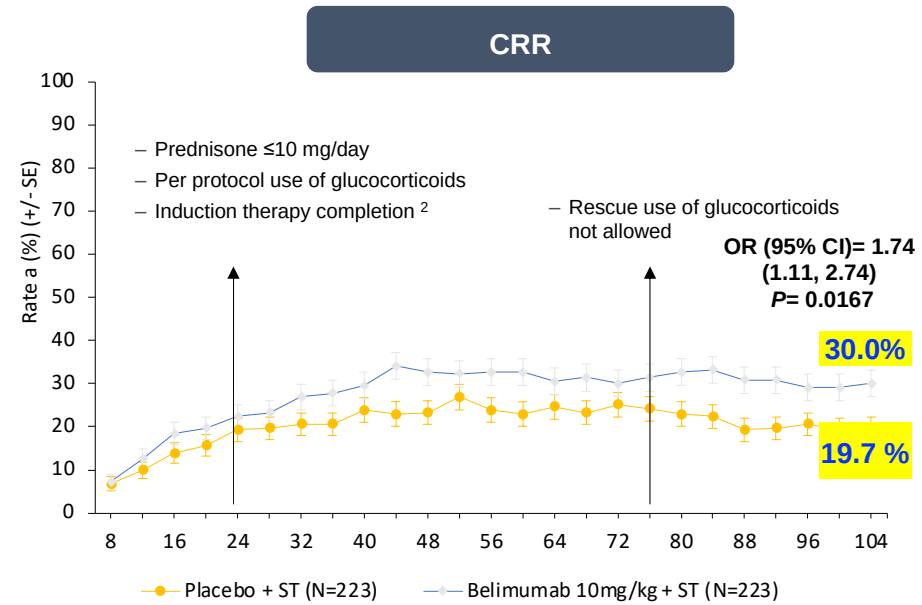
LoA: Level of agreement

Targeting B-cells: belimumab (add-on) versus standard therapy in active lupus nephritis (BLISS-LN)

55% greater odds to meet the primary endpoint of renal response

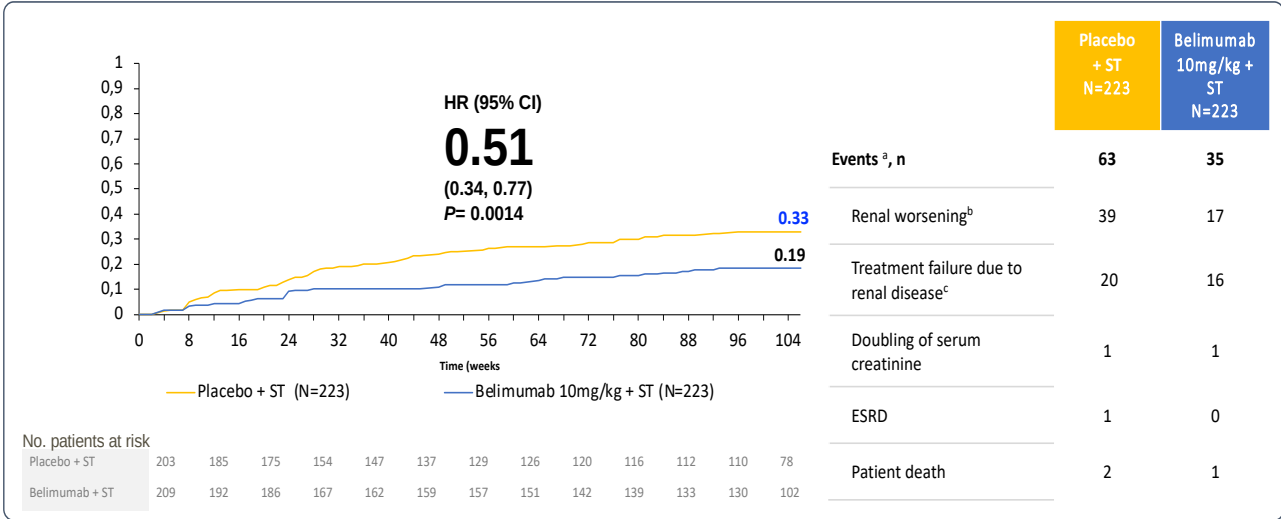


74% greater odds to achieve complete renal response

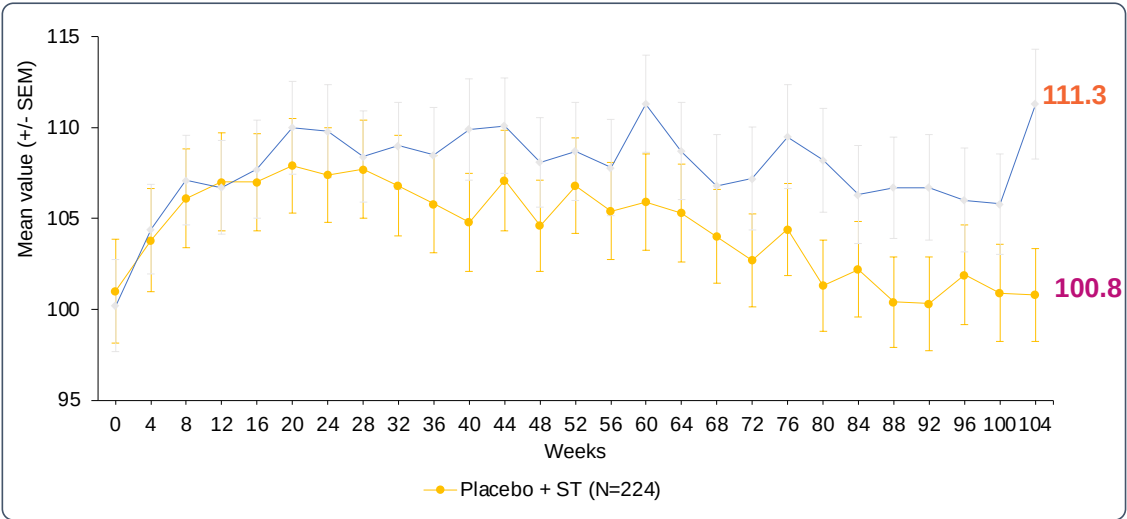


Furie R, et al, N Engl J Med. 2020;383: 1117-28

49% lower odds for renal adverse event or death in LN patients treated with belimumab

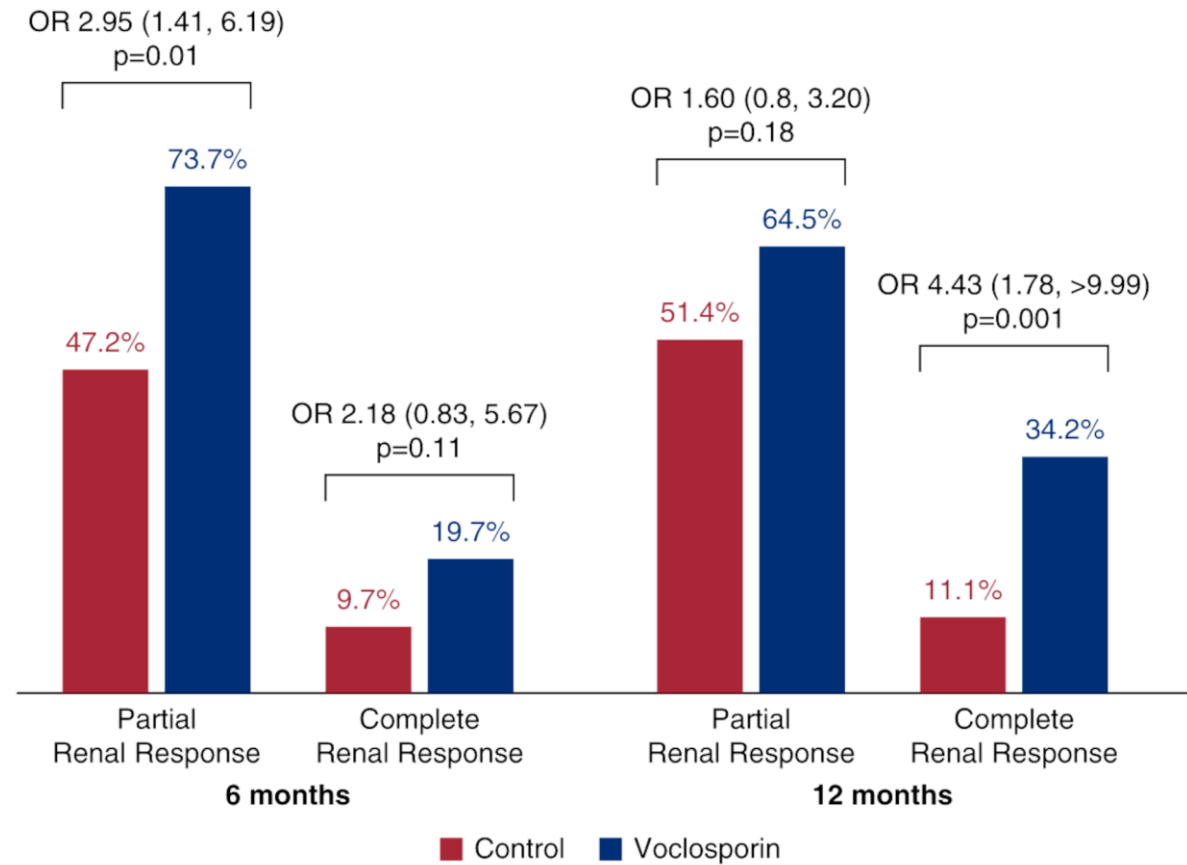


Average GFR was higher in belimumab-treated LN patients

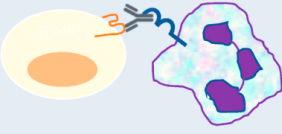
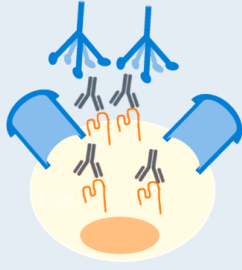
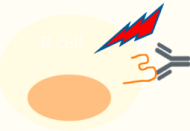


Efficacy of Voclosporin in Proliferative Lupus Nephritis with High Levels of Proteinuria

Hanni Menn-Josephy¹, Lucy S. Hodge², Vanessa Birardi², and Henry Leher²



Obinutuzimab (type II anti-CD20 mAb) depletes >93% of peripheral B-cells in SLE

Effector mechanism of B cell depletion by anti CD20 mAb		Type I anti-CD20 mAb	Type II anti-CD20 mAb Obinutuzumab
ADCC and ADCP FcGR dependent <i>Via Neutrophil</i>		++	+++++
<i>Via NK cell</i>		++	+++++
Internalisation and complement dependent cytotoxicity		+++	+
Direct Cell Death FcGR independent		+	++
		Apoptosis	Nonapoptotic lysosome-mediated cell death

- Less dependent on complement-mediated cytotoxicity
- Less internalized from the cell membrane
- Presumably induces higher depletion of tissue infiltrating B-cells (kidneys)
- *In vitro* studies suggest less dependency of BAFF concentration

Reddy VR, et al. Rheumatology. 2022; 61: 2894–2904
 Reddy VR, et al. Rheumatology. 2017; 56:1227–1237
 Marinov AD, et al. Arthritis Rheumatol. 2021; 73: 826–836
 Clin J Am Soc Nephrol. 2018;13(10):1502-9;
 J Autoimmun. 2022; 102873; Biologicals. 2021; 69: 1–14
 Ann Rheum Dis. 2022; 81: 100–7

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Efficacy and Safety of Obinutuzumab in Active Lupus Nephritis

R.A. Furie,¹ B.H. Rovin,² J.P. Garg,³ M.B. Santiago,^{4,5,6} G. Aroca-Martínez,^{7,8}
 A.E. Zuta Santillán,⁹ D. Alvarez,¹¹ C. Navarro Sandoval,¹⁰ A.M. Lila,¹³ J.A. Tumlin,¹⁴
 A. Saxena,¹⁵ F. Irazoque Palazuelos,¹⁶ H. Raghu,³ B. Yoo,³ I. Hassan,¹⁷ E. Martins,¹⁸
 H. Sehgal,¹⁸ P. Kirchner,¹⁸ J. Ross Terres,³ T.A. Omachi,³ T. Schindler,¹⁸
 W.F. Pendergraft III,³ and A. Malvar,¹² for the REGENCY Trial Investigators*

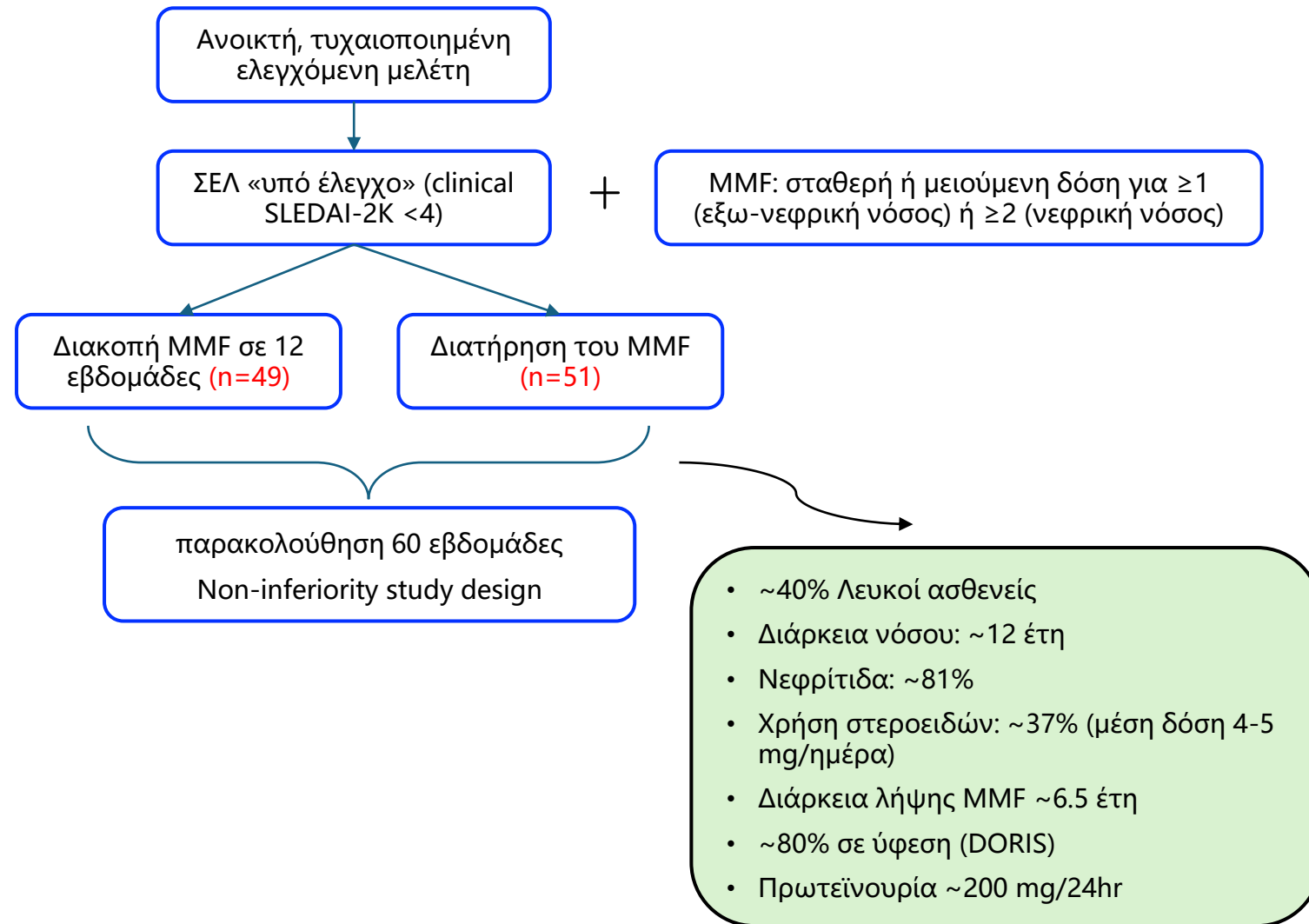
Table 2. Primary and Secondary End Point Results in the Intention-to-Treat Population.*

End Point	Obinutuzumab (N=135)	Placebo (N=136)	Adjusted Difference (95% CI)†	P Value‡
Primary end point				
Complete renal response at wk 76 — % (95% CI)§¶	46.4 (38.0 to 54.9)	33.1 (25.2 to 41.0)	13.4 (2.0 to 24.8)	0.02
Key secondary end points				
Complete renal response at wk 76 with prednisone taper to ≤7.5 mg/day between wks 64 and 76 — % (95% CI)§¶**	42.7 (34.3 to 51.1)	30.9 (23.1 to 38.7)	11.9 (0.6 to 23.2)	0.04
UPCR <0.8 at week 76 with no intercurrent event — % (95% CI)¶††	55.5 (47.1 to 64.0)	41.9 (33.6 to 50.2)	13.7 (2.0 to 25.4)	0.02
Change in the eGFR from baseline to wk 76 — ml/min/1.73 m ² ‡‡	2.31±2.71	−1.54±2.71	3.84 (−1.83 to 9.51)	
Death or renal-related event through wk 76 — % (95% CI)¶¶¶	18.9 (12.1 to 25.6)	35.6 (27.5 to 43.8)	−16.8 (−27.4 to −6.2)	
Overall renal response at wk 50 — % (95% CI)¶¶¶¶	59.1 (50.8 to 67.4)	50.7 (42.2 to 59.2)	8.4 (−3.4 to 20.1)	
Change in FACIT-F score from baseline to wk 76 — points‡‡	1.8±1.2	3.1±1.2	−1.4 (−3.9 to 1.2)	

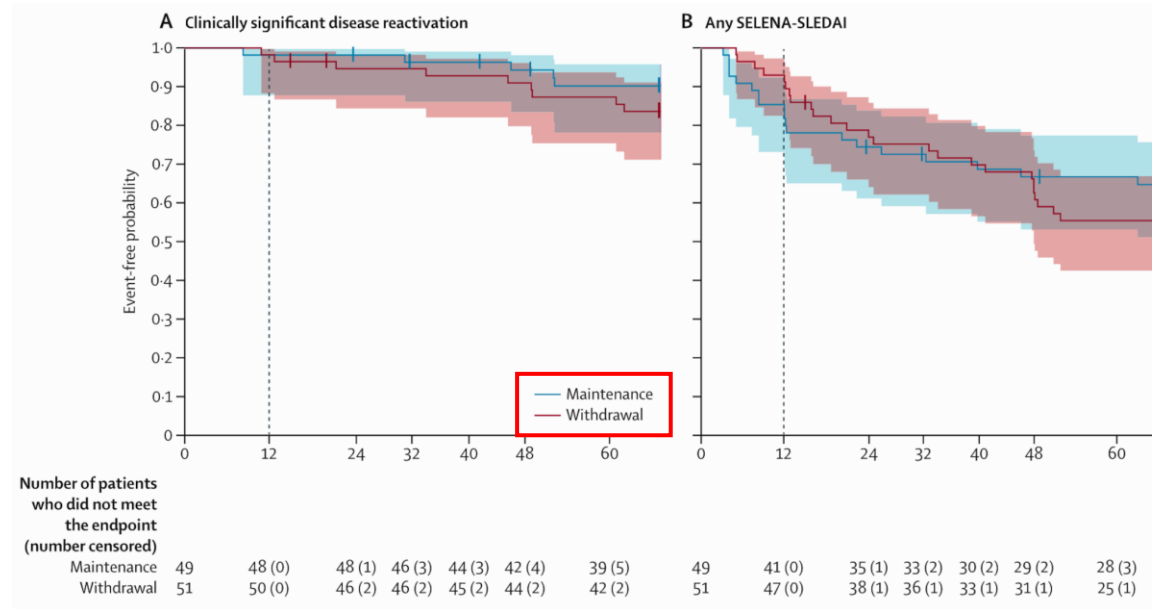
Recommendation 7: Gradual withdrawal of treatment

Recommendation	LoA, mean (SD)
In patients in sustained remission , gradual withdrawal of immunosuppressive and/or biologic therapy should be considered after three years of therapy following response , taking into consideration the risk for flare (2a/B)	9.31 (0.97)

Διακοπή του μυκοφαινολικού σε σταθερό, ανενεργό ΣΕΛ



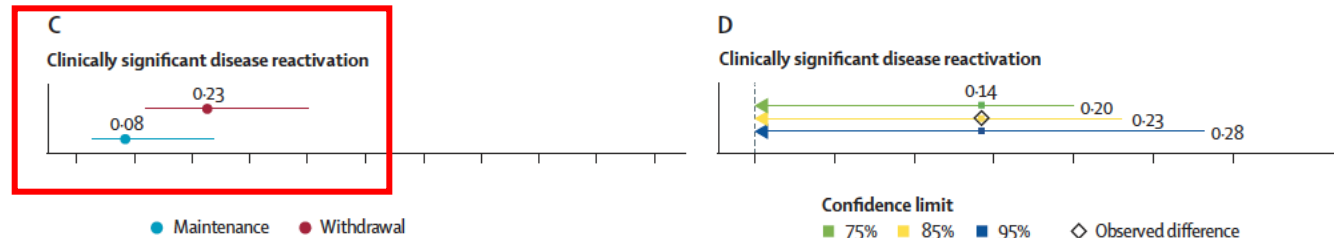
Διακοπή του μυκοφαινολικού σε σταθερό, ανενεργό ΣΕΛ: προσοχή στη νεφρίτιδα!



Σύνολο ασθενών



Ασθενείς με νεφρίτιδα





EULAR Recommendations for SLE with Kidney Involvement (2025)

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• Kidney biopsy Indispensable; repeat if clinical uncertainty • Target - Prevention of - Chronic kidney disease - Flares • Milestones - Kidney function: preservation or improvement by 3 months - Proteinuria: * Reduction by 25% at 3 mo * Reduction by 50% by 6 mo * UPCR < 700 mg/g by 12 mo	• Early combination therapy Hydroxychloroquine and Glucocorticoids with immunosuppressive and CNI or biologic • Glucocorticoids - Start with pulses - Continue with 0.3-0.7 mg/kg/day prednisone - Taper to ≤ 5 mg/day by 4-6 months and withdraw, when possible • Immunosuppressives - MMF, low-dose CY • CNI - Voclosporin or TAC (CsA) • Biologics Belimumab, Obinutuzumab	• Nephroprotection - Low salt (less than 5 g/day) - Control blood pressure (RAAS blockade 1st choice) - SGLT2-inhibitors (in stable disease, if residual proteinuria after 12 mo) • Dyslipidaemia • Vaccinations Influenza, COVID-19, HZV, S. pneumoniae • Bone health	• Severe Consider high-dose IV-CY plus pulse IV-MP • Refractory - Combination of IV-CY with B cell depletion - Addition of a CNI if heavy proteinuria - Experimental therapies in the context of a protocol • Thrombotic microangiopathy - Plasma exchange - Complement inhibitors - Anti-vWf (caplacizumab)

Τι να αναμένουμε;

- Από την ύφεση (DORIS), στην «βαθιά» ύφεση (DORIS+)
- Στρατηγικές ενίσχυσης της αποτελεσματικότητας υφιστάμενων θεραπειών (π.χ., πρόωγη έναρξης, βιοδείκτες)
- Νεφρίτιδα: (επαναληπτική) βιοψία για την εξατομίκευση της θεραπείας
- Βελτίωση αντιμετώπισης συννοσηροτήτων
- Νέοι θεραπευτικοί παράγοντες

Καινοτόμες στοχευμένες θεραπείες στο ΣΕΛ

Promising new agents

Anti-BAFF-receptor

Upadacitinib (JAK1 inhibitor)

Deucravacitinib (TYK2 inhibitor)

“Engagers” (e.g. bispecific CD20/CD3 T-cell engaging antibody)

...allogeneic CD19+ CAR T-cells
BCMA CAR T-cells
CAR NK cells
...CAR T & mAbs

