

Managing CAR T Cell Toxicity: Strategies and Insights

Sai Ravi Pingali MD

Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine

Houston Methodist Hospital

09/23/2023

Conflict of Interests

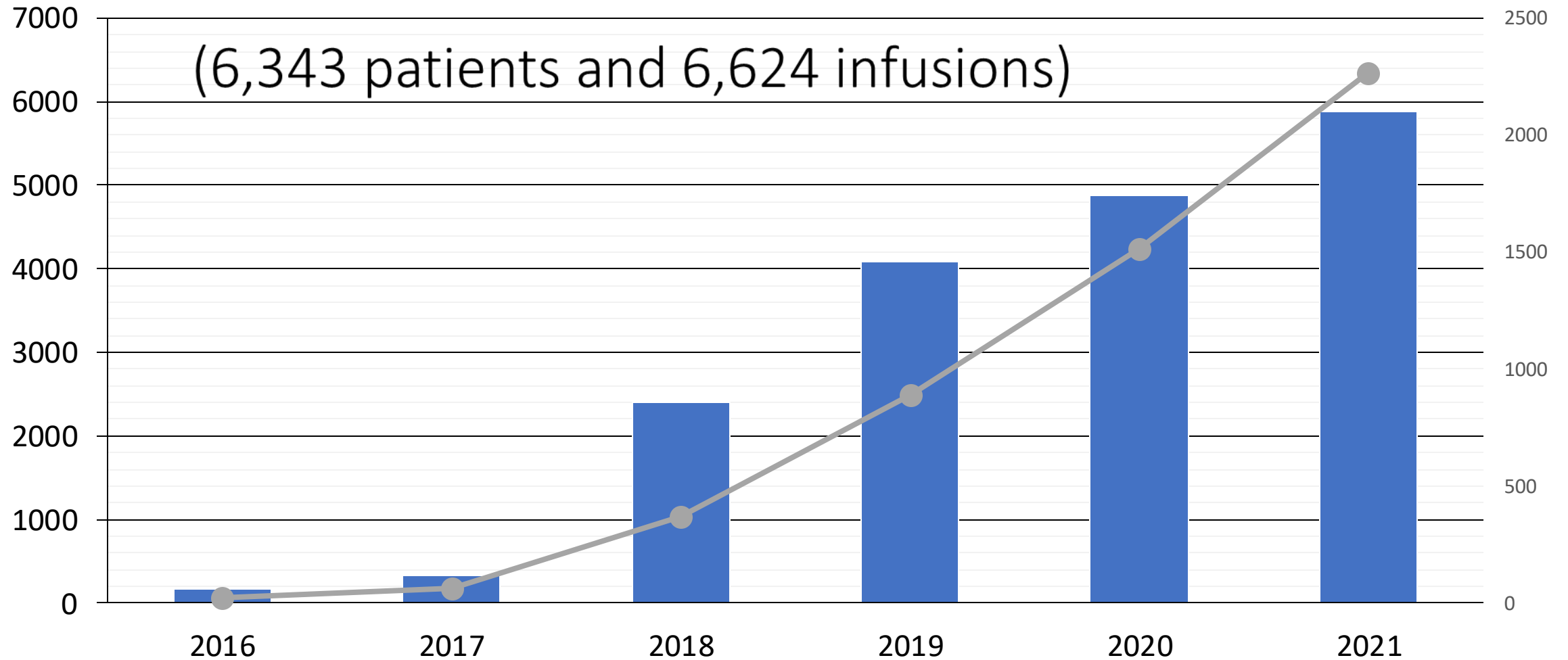
Attended Ad Board of Cardinal Health

Approved CAR T Cells

Summary of FDA-approved CAR T cell therapies for B cell malignancies and multiple myeloma.

Company name Brand name Generic name	Date of approval	Target antigen/ Antibody	Hinge/ transmembrane	Costimulatory domains	Vector promoter	Targeted cancers	Pivotal trial	No. of Patients	Outcomes	References
Novartis Kymriah Tisagenlecleucel	Aug 30, 2017	CD19 Mouse FMC63	CD8 α /CD8 α	4-1BB + CD3 ζ	Lentiviral EF1 α	R/R B-ALL	ELIANA (NCT02228096)	75	81% overall remission	(Maude et al., 2018)
Kite Yescarta Axicabtagene ciloleucel	Oct 18, 2017	CD19 Mouse FMC63	CD8 α /CD8 α	CD28 + CD3 ζ	Gammaretroviral LTR	R/R LBCL	ZUMA-1 (NCT02348216)	108	58% complete response	(Locke et al., 2019)
Kite Tecartus Brexucabtagene autoleucel	Jul 24, 2020	CD19 Mouse FMC63	CD28/CD28	CD28 + CD3 ζ	Gammaretroviral LTR	R/R MCL	ZUMA-2 (NCT02601313)	68	67% complete response	(Wang et al., 2020)
Juno Breyanzi Lisocabtagene maraleucel	Feb 5, 2021	CD19 Mouse FMC63	IgG4/CD28	4-1BB+ CD3 ζ	Lentiviral EF1 α	R/R LBCL	Transcend NHL001 (NCT02631044)	269	53% complete response	(Abramson et al., 2020)
Bluebird Abecma Idecabtagene vicleucel	Mar 26, 2021	BCMA Mouse BB2121	CD8 α /CD8 α	4-1BB+ CD3 ζ	Lentiviral MND	R/R MM	KarMMa (NCT03361748)	128	33% complete response	(Munshi et al., 2021)
J&J and Legend Carvykti	Feb 28, 2022	BCMA dual camel single-domain antibodies	CD8 α /CD8 α	4-1BB + CD3 ζ	Lentiviral EF1 α	R/R MM	CARTITUDE-1 (NCT03548207)	68	82.5% complete response	(Martin et al., 2023)

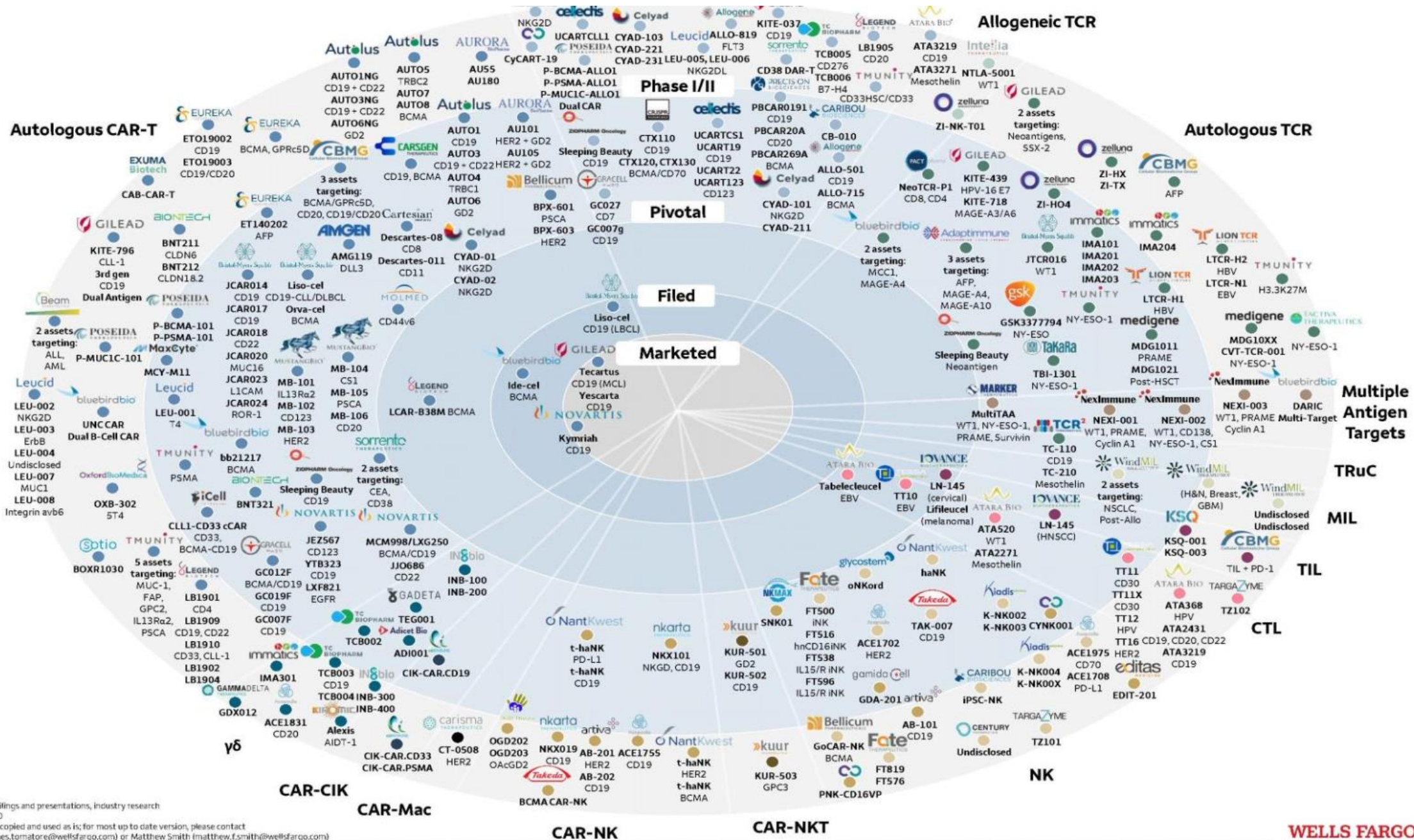
Number of CAR T cell infusions: 2016-2021



Data Incomplete for 2020 & 2021

Cumulative

Moskop, A, Jacobs B, Pasquini MC. **Current uses of CAR T cell Therapies in the US: CIDR summary slides, 2021.** <http://www.cibmtr.org> accessed 9/19/2023



Source: Company filings and presentations, industry research
 © Wells Fargo 2020
 Document may be copied and used as is; for most up to date version, please contact
 Jim Tomatore (james.tomatore@wellsfargo.com) or Matthew Smith (matthew.f.smith@wellsfargo.com)

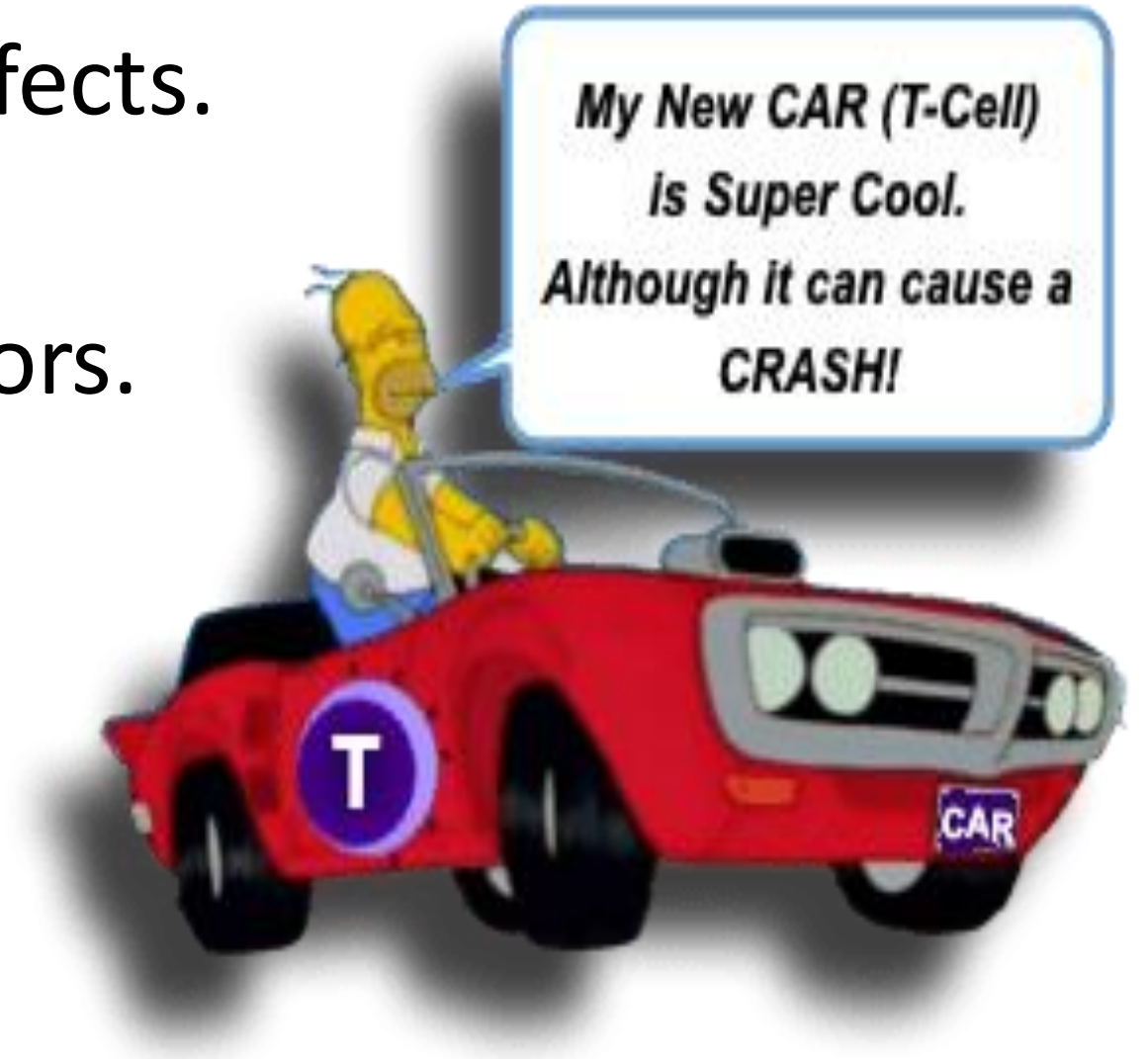
Adopted

CAR T Landscape

- More commercial CAR-T cell /Cellular Therapies likely to be approved in next few years (including solid tumors).
- Various CAR-T cell/Cellular Therapy trials ongoing for Colo-rectal Cancer, Melanoma, Prostate Cancer and Hepatomas.
- 1228 CAR- T trials ([Clinicaltrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov). Accessed on 9/17/2023)

Challenges

- Short /Long term side effects.
- Several rate limiting factors.
- Financial Toxicity.
- Resistance.



Toxicities

- Cytokine Release Syndrome- CRS
- ICANS
- Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis.
- Persistent cytopenias
- Infections
- Hypogammaglobulinemia
- Second cancers?

Early CAR toxicities

- The result of activation or engagement of endogenous or transferred T cells and/or other immune cells

Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS)

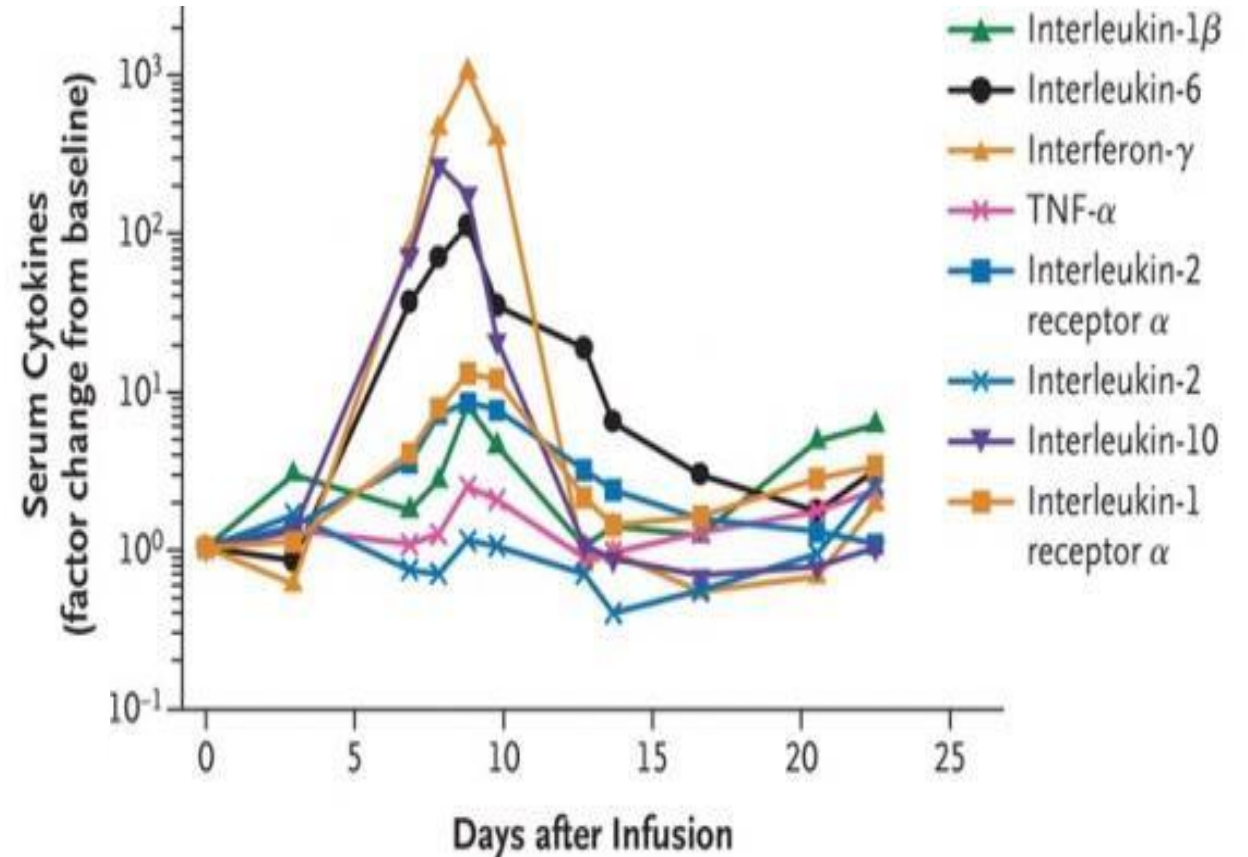
- Supraphysiologic systemic inflammatory response following immune therapy
- Manifestations likely mediated by high levels of circulating cytokines, e.g. IL-6 and IL-1
- Fever is a cardinal symptom

Immune effector Cell-Associated Neurotoxicity Syndrome (ICANS)

- Pathologic process involving the central nervous system
- Symptoms or signs include aphasia, altered level of consciousness, impairment of cognitive skills, motor weakness, seizures, and cerebral edema.

Cytokine Release Syndrome

- Manifestations include:
 - Fever
 - Hypotension
 - Hypoxia (capillary leak)
 - End organ dysfunction
 - Liver, kidney, heart, coagulopathy, ...
- Laboratory findings include:
 - Elevated inflammatory markers
 - C-reactive protein, ferritin
 - Often lags behind clinical changes
 - Coagulopathy



CRS

- 74-100%
- Fever at onset
- 1-7 days
- Can last 1-2 weeks
- Earlier Onset CD28– (axi-cel and brexu-cel) compared with 4-1BB-costimulated(Tisa-cel)
- Severity- On disease burden, Cardiac disease, Higher doses of CAR-T cells

CRS incidence in larger trials

	Tisagenlecleucel ¹	Axicabtagene ciloleucel ²	Tisagenlecleucel ³	Lisocabtagene maraleucel ⁴
Disease	Ped/AYA ALL	Adult DLBCL	Adult DLBCL	Adult DLBCL
Patients treated	75	101	111	114
CRS	DIFFERENT GRADING SCALES WERE USED!!!			
Time to onset	3 d (1-22)	2 d (1-12)	3 d (1-9)	5 d (2-12)
Duration	8 d (1-36)	8 d (NR)	7 d (2-30)	5 d (NR)
All grades	77%	93%	58%	42%
Grade 3 or 4	47%	13%	23%	2%
Tocilizumab use	51%	43%	16%	21%
Vasopressor use	33%*	17%	6%*	NR
Steroid use	NR	27%	11%	17%

*High dose

¹Maude *et al.* (ELIANA), N Engl J Med 2018; ²Locke *et al.* (ZUMA-1), Lancet Oncol 2019;

³Schuster *et al.* (JULIET), N Engl J Med 2019; ⁴Abramson *et al.* (TRANSCEND), LANCET 2020

CRS grading – ASBMT/ASTCT

Parameter	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Fever	T ≥ 38°C	T ≥ 38°C	T ≥ 38°C	T ≥ 38°C
		with		
Hypotension	None	Not requiring vasopressors	Requiring one pressor (± vasopressin)	Requiring multiple vasopressors (excluding vasopressin)
		and/or		
Hypoxia	None	Low-flow nasal cannula (NC) or blow-by	High-flow NC, face mask, non-rebreather or Venturi mask	Positive pressure (e.g., CPAP, BiPAP, intubation, ventilation)

(organ toxicities should be graded using CTCAE but do not inform CRS grade)

Management

- Supportive Care
- Tocilizumab-IL-6 Blocking antibody- approved in 2017
- Adults - ASTCT grade 2 CRS or higher.
- Earlier for Elderly or Extensive co-morbidities.
- For pediatric patients at ASTCT grade 3 CRS .
- Persistent Grade 1 CRS > 3 days

J Immunother Cancer. 2020;8(2):e001511

Oncologist 2018;23:943–7

N Engl J Med Overseas Ed 2013;368:1509–18

Nat Rev Clin Oncol 2018;15:47–62.

Management

- Refractory CRS after 1 dose of tocilizumab, administer steroids with second dose of tocilizumab
- Refractory CRS third-line agents, including anakinra and high-dose methylprednisolone.
- Rule out/re-evaluate for infections.
- Rapid taper steroids once symptoms begin to improve.

Blood 2016;127:3321–30.

Biol Blood Marrow Transplant 2019; ;25:e123–7

N Engl J Med 2014;371:1507–17.

IEC-Associated Neurotoxicity Syndrome (ICANS)

- 42-87%
- 4-6 days onset
- Can last 2 weeks
- Concurrent or after CRS
- Rarely before CRS

ICANS pathophysiology

- Thought to be secondary to high levels of cytokines and endothelial activation in the CNS
- Human and animal data suggest:
 - Increased permeability of blood-brain barrier (BBB) allows access of cytokines to pericytes
 - Risk factors include:
Tumor burden, high CAR-T cell dose, CRS, pre-existing neurologic comorbidities

Gust et al. Cancer Discov 2017;
Kenderian et al. Blood, 2019

ICANS

- A spectrum of neurologic abnormalities associated with CNS dysfunction
 - Confusion, delirium, aphasia, obtundation, seizure, cerebral edema
 - Possibly fatal
 - Other neurotoxicities (such as headache and myoclonus) are excluded from ICANS
- Occurs during or after CRS, rarely before

ICANS incidence in larger trials

	Tisagenlecleucel ¹	Axicabtagene ciloleucel ²	Tisagenlecleucel ³	Lisocabtagene maraleucel ⁴
Disease	Ped/AYA ALL	Adult DLBCL	Adult DLBCL	Adult DLBCL
Patients treated	75	101	111	114
Neurotoxicity	DIFFERENT GRADING SCALES WERE USED!!!			
Time to onset	Within 8 wks	5 d (1-17)	6 d (1-17)	10 d (3-23)
Median duration	NR	17 d	14 d	11 d
All grades	40%	64%	21%	30%
Grade \geq 3	13%	28%	12%	10%

NR: not reported

¹Maude *et al.* (ELIANA), N Engl J Med 2018; ²Locke *et al.* (ZUMA-1), Lancet Oncol 2019;

³Schuster *et al.* (JULIET), N Engl J Med 2019; ⁴Abramson *et al.* (TRANSCEND), Lancet 2020

ICANS grading – ASBMT/ASTCT

Parameter	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
ICE score*	7-9	3-6	0-2	0 (unable to do)
Level of consciousness	Awakens spontaneously	Awakens to voice	Awakens to tactile stimulus	Unarousable, stupor or coma
Seizure	—	—	Focal or generalized, resolving quickly	Life threatening, prolonged, status
Motor findings	—	—	—	Deep focal weakness
Cerebral edema	—	—	Focal edema on imaging	Diffuse edema on imaging or signs of increased ICP

*Immune effector Cell-associated Encephalopathy score: ❶ Oriented to year, month, city and hospital (4 points). ❷ Names 3 objects (3 points). ❸ Follows simple commands (1 point).

❹ Writes standard sentence (1 point). ❺ Able to count backwards from 100 by 10 (1 point).

ICANS management

- All stress comprehensive supportive care:
 - Frequent neurologic assessment
 - Imaging(Brain CT/MRI) and EEG as appropriate
 - Adequate management of increased intracranial pressure
- All recommend for grade ≥ 2 :
 - Steroids (dexamethasone)- dosing product specific
 - Methylprednisone 1 g X 3 days Grade 4
 - Rapid taper
 - Prophylactic Levetiracetam
 - Tocilizumab does not cross BBB and is not effective

ICANS management

- Other potential drugs:
 - Anakinra
 - Therapeutic
 - Prophylactic
 - Situximab
- Case reports- IT chemotherapy

J Immunother Cancer. 2022;10(1)
Blood Adv. 2020;4(13):3123-3127
Blood. 2021;138(suppl 1). Abstract 96
Blood Adv . 2020;4(10):2119-2122

Dexamethasone Prophylaxis

- ZUMA- 1, Cohort -6
- 3 days (day 0 -2)
- Levetiracetam starting day 0
- CRS in 80% of patients (all grade ≤ 2).
- Any grade and grade 3 or higher Neurologic events in 58% and 13%

ASTCT App

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `tgapp.asbmt.org`. The page title is "Calculators and Algorithms". The content is organized into three main sections:

- TRANSPLANT CALCULATORS**
 - HCT Comorbidity Index
 - Cumulative Illness Rating Scale-Geriatric (CIRS-G) Score
 - Acute GVHD Grading
 - CIBMTR VOD Risk
- IMMUNE EFFECTOR CELLS CALCULATORS**
 - CRS Grading
 - Immune Effector Cell-Associated Encephalopathy (ICE) Score
 - Immune Effector Cell-Associated Neurotoxicity Syndrome (ICANS) Grading for Adults
- DISEASE CALCULATORS**
 - MDS/MPN**
 - CIBMTR MDS Score
 - IPSS-R Score - MDS

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 8:13 AM on 1/19/2019. The search bar contains the text "Type here to search".

IEC-Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis-like Syndrome

- Rare
- More common with CD 22 CAR T cells
- Rising Ferritin, CRS resolves
- Recurrence of fever
- Coagulation abnormalities
- Transaminitis
- Hemophagocytosis on BM biopsy
- Anakinra/Steroids

Br J Haematol. 2021;194(4):701-707
Blood. 2021;138(24):2469-2484

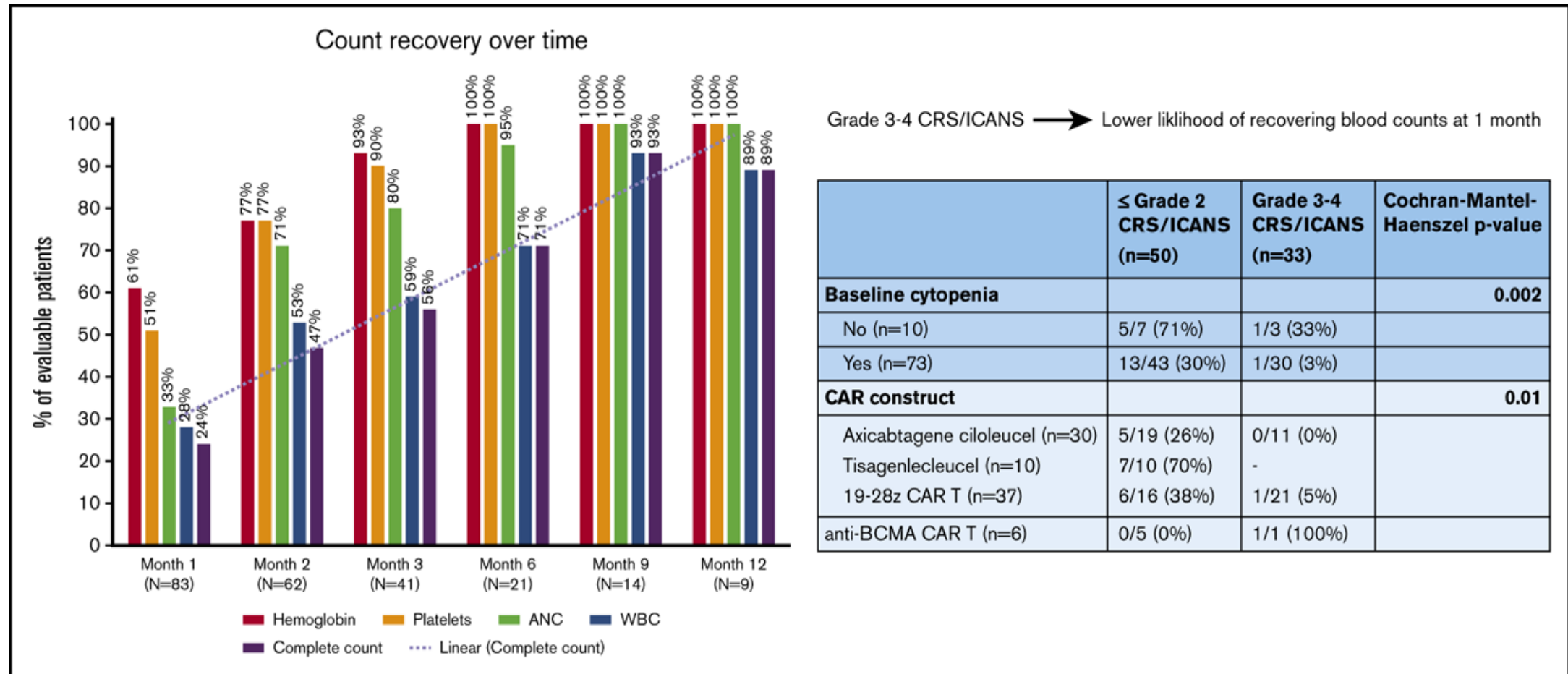
Other early CAR toxicities

- Coagulopathy
 - Potentially leading to cerebral hemorrhage
 - Part of CRS
 - Part of IEC-HS
- These can be life threatening acute toxicities but are excluded from definitions of CRS and ICANS

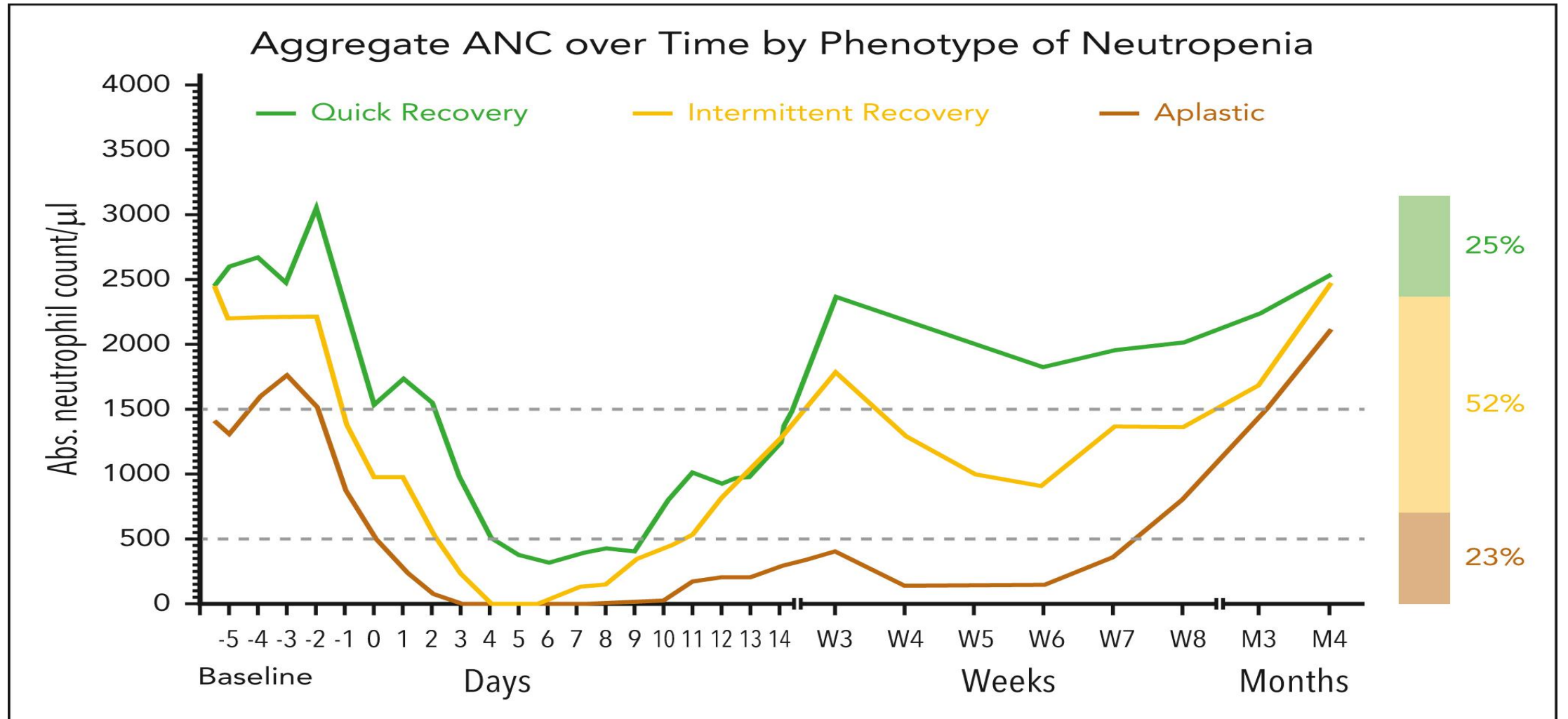
Late CAR toxicities

- Some are due to lymphodepleting chemotherapy (and possibly inflammatory sequelae of CRS)
 - Persistent cytopenias (can be prolonged)
 - Infections
- Others can result from on-target off-tumor effects of CAR
 - Toxicities from cells may persist and worsen
 - CD19 CARTs: B cell aplasia and hypogammaglobulinemia

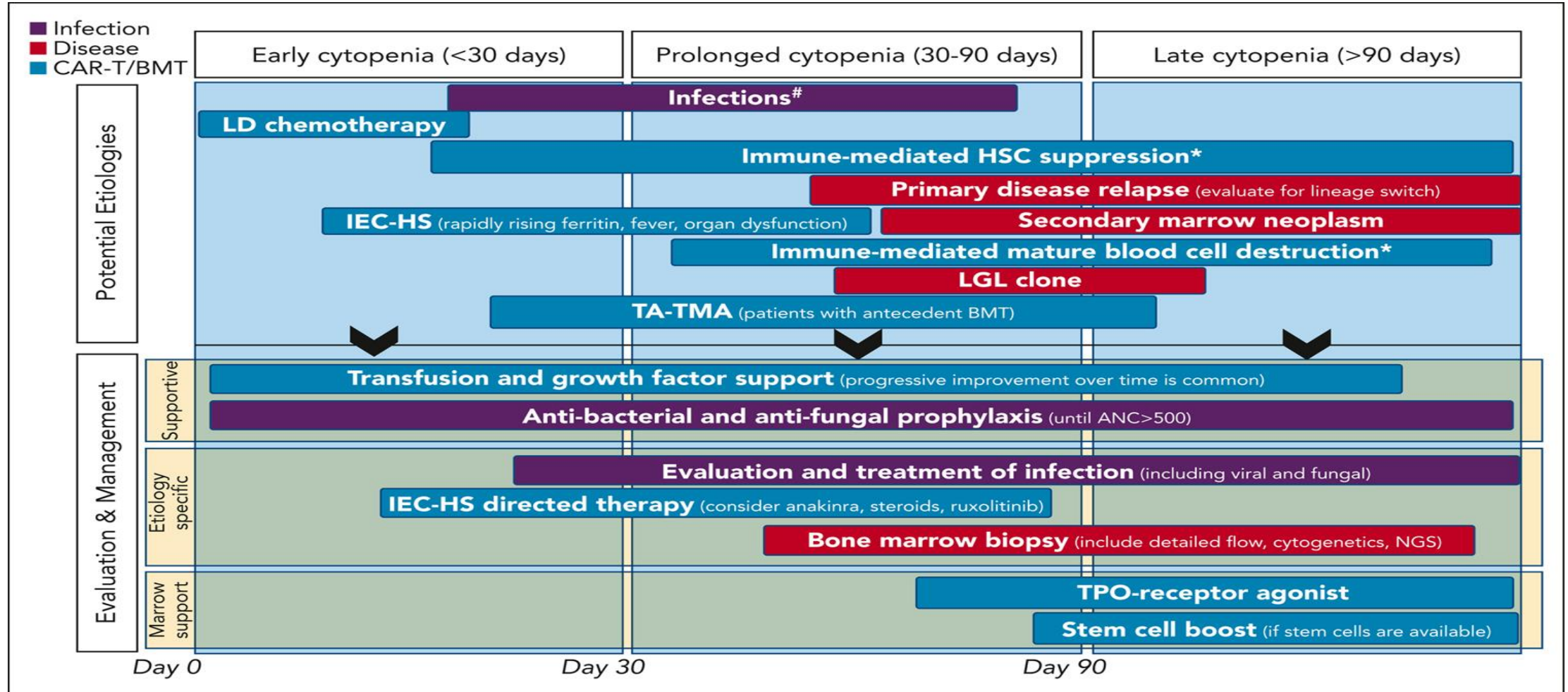
CAR T Associated Cytopenias



CAR T Associated Cytopenias



CAR T Associated Cytopenias



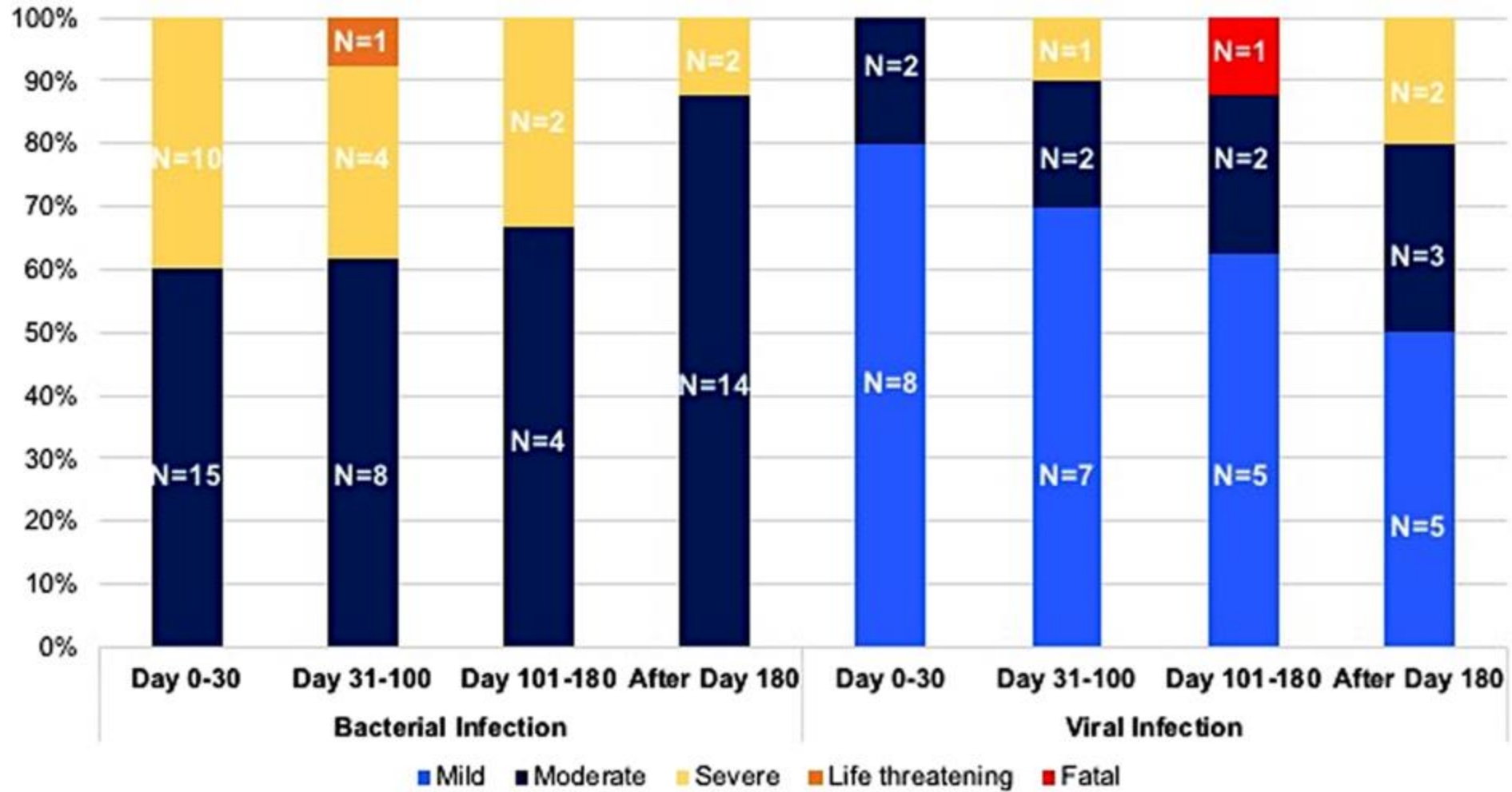
Hypogammaglobulinemia/B Cell Aplasia

- Persistence of CAR T cells
- Recovery median ~ 6.7 months
- Previous therapies increase risk
- IV Ig for IgG <400
- Subcutaneous may be an option

Infections

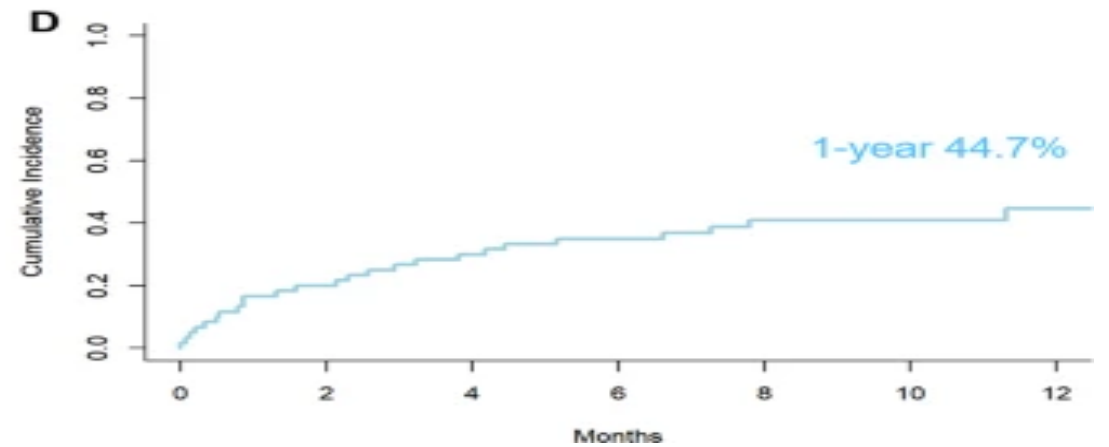
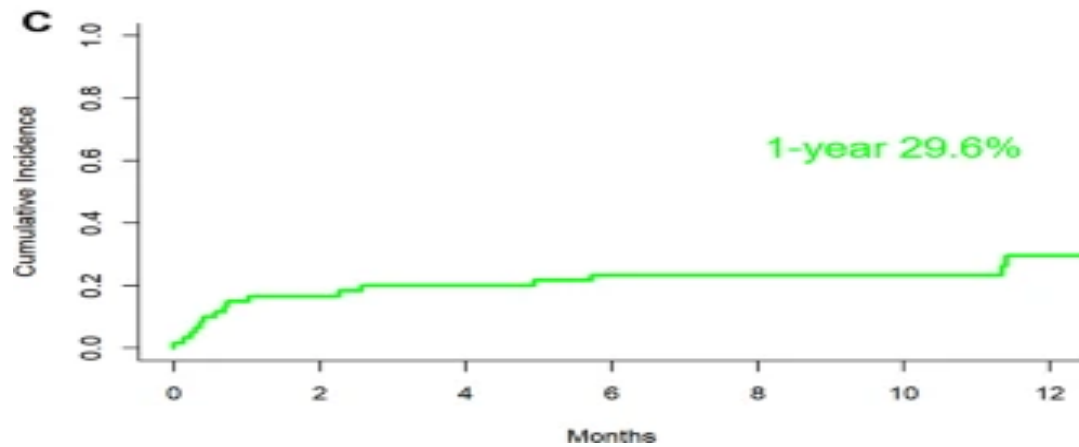
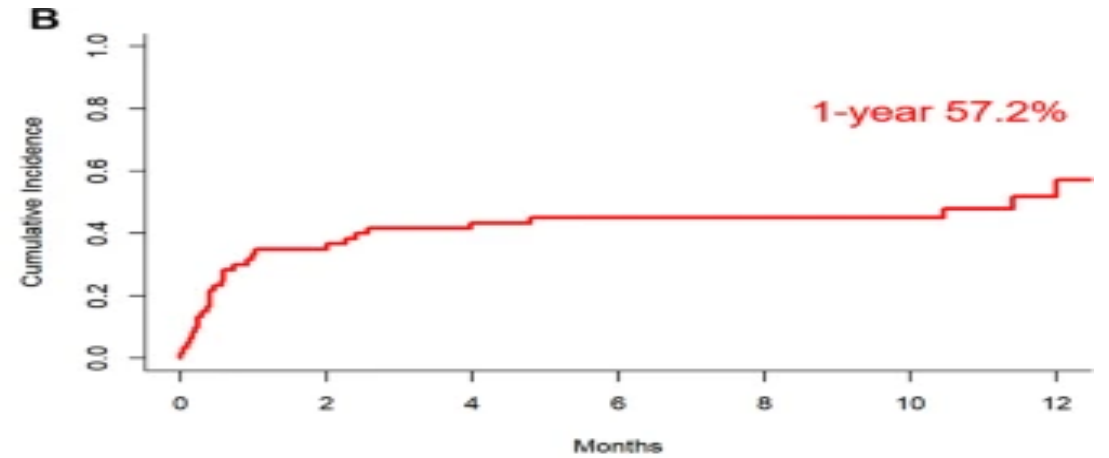
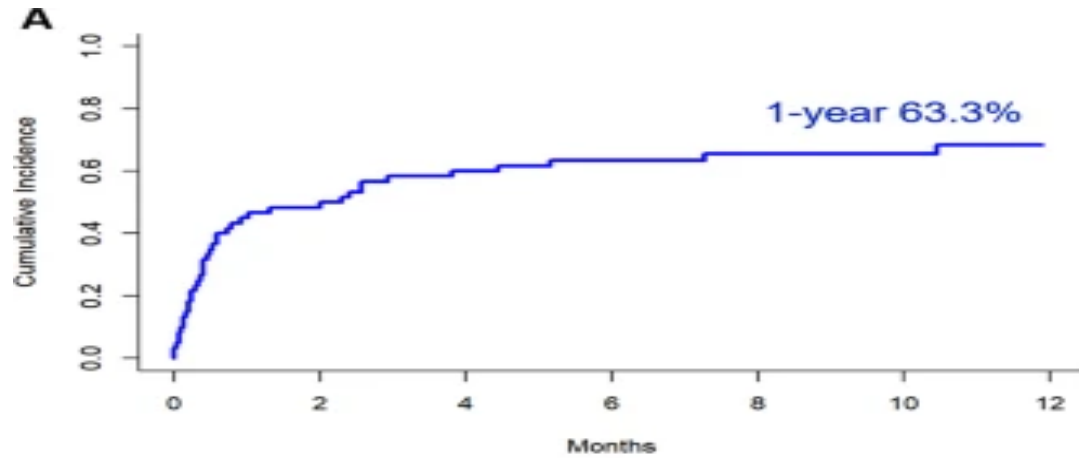
- Previous therapies
- Lymphodepeletion Chemotherapy
- Bacterial /Fungal/Viral- prophylaxis
- PJP- Prophylaxis
- CRS/ICANS Therapies
- Hypogammaglobulinemia

Infections- CD 19 CAR T cells



Adopted from Wudhikarn. *Blood Cancer J.* **10**, 79 (2020)

Cumulative Infections



Financial Toxicity/Access

- Social Worker evaluation
- Patient education
- Family support
- Call Parameters
- Infection prophylaxis.

Novel Strategies- ? Better

- Bispecific / Trispecific CAR T cells
- Allogeneic CAR T cells
- NK-CAR cell Therapies
- Safety switch

Regulations

ASTCT 80/20 Taskforce

1. Mission

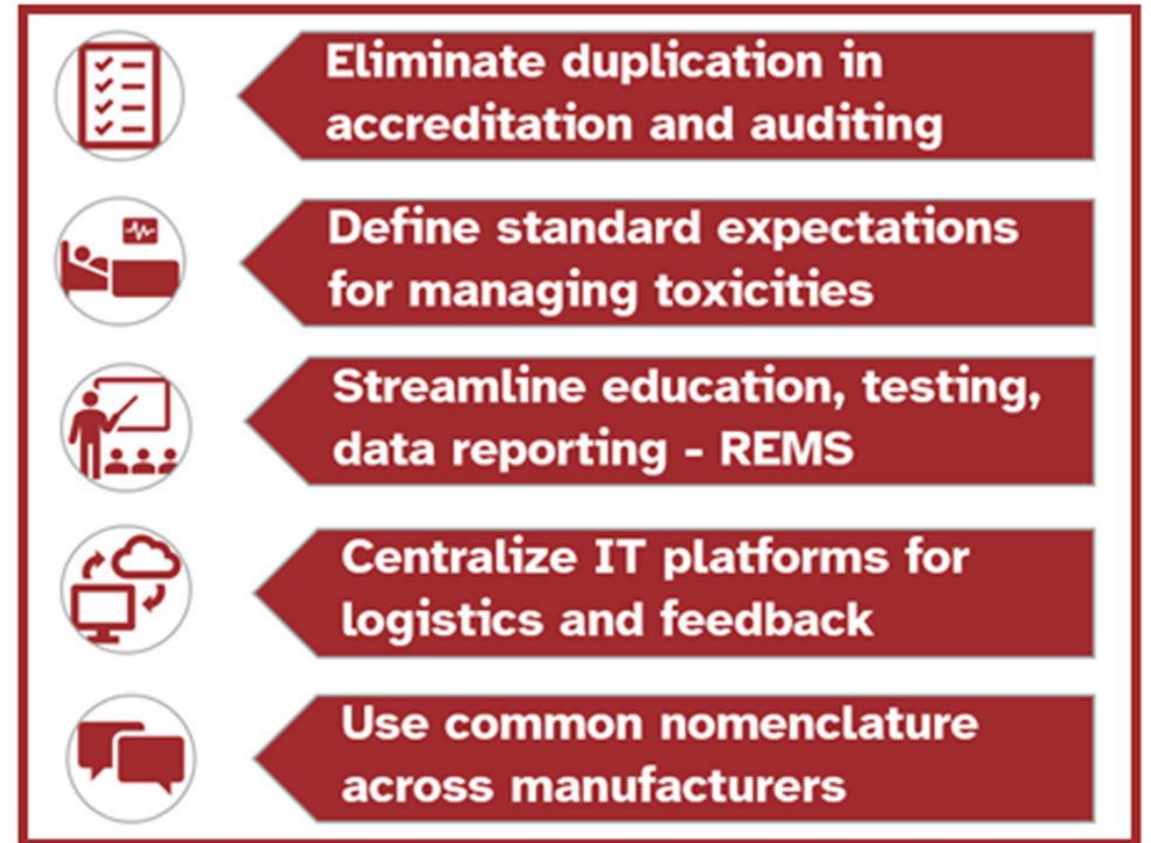
- **Advocate** for standardization
- **Identify 80% common workflows** (contrasting **20% product-specific**)
- **Streamline** auditing and education
- **Leverage** existing entities



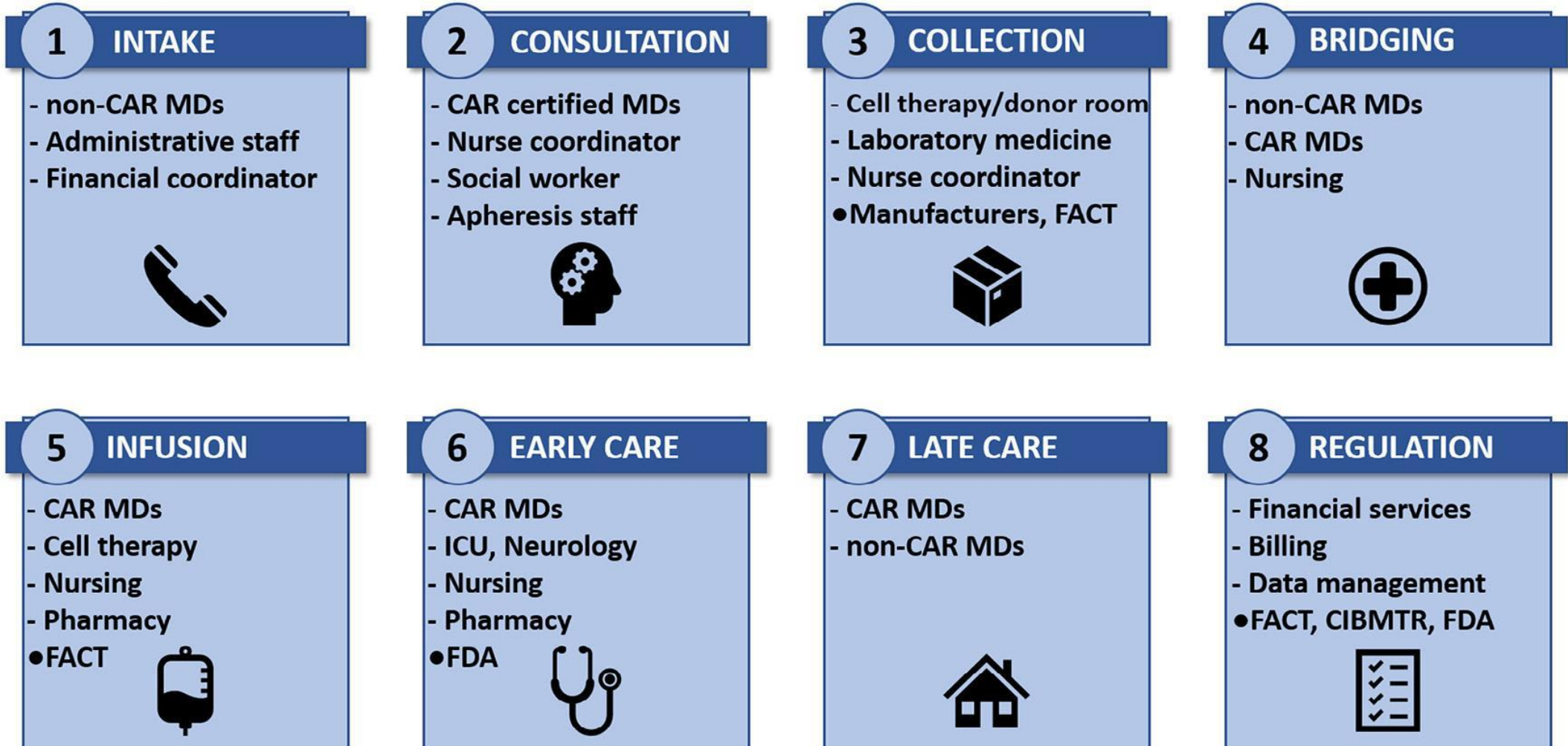
2. Taskforce Activities



3. Potential Solutions to Challenges



Essentials of CAR T Program



Thank you