



Immune lessons from allo-HSCT:
MESENCHYMAL STROMAL CELLS

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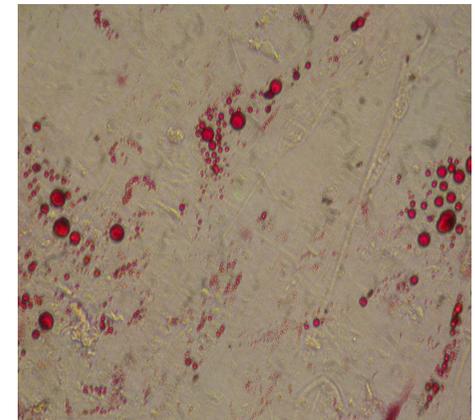
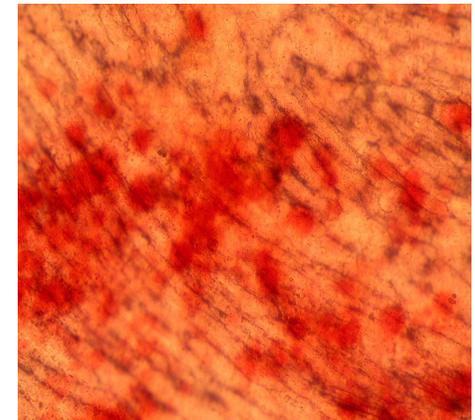
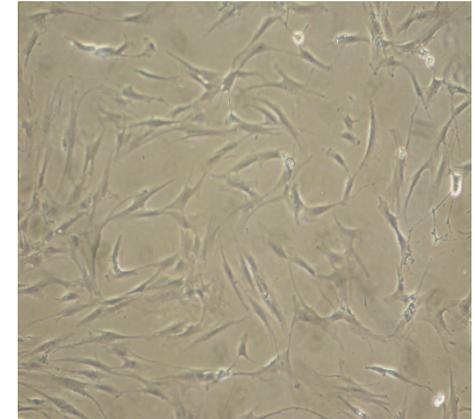
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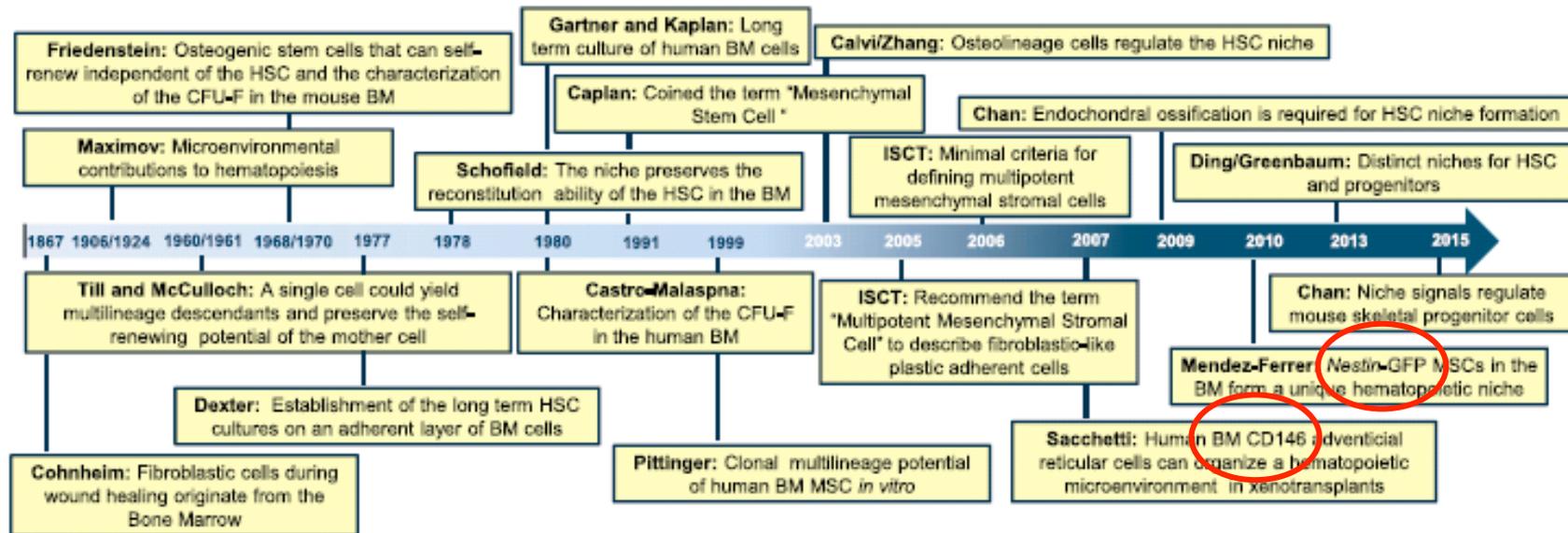
PROPERTIES of MESENCHYMAL STROMAL CELLS

- **Multipotent cells**
capable of differentiation into several mesenchymal lineages
- **Remarkable expansion after *ex vivo* culture**
- **Enhancement of hematopoietic stem cell engraftment**
- **Immunosuppressive properties**
- **Tissue repair properties**



What happened since Friedenstein (1968)?

TIMELINE REPRESENTATION OF MAJOR DISCOVERIES THAT SHAPED THE UNDERSTANDING OF MSCs



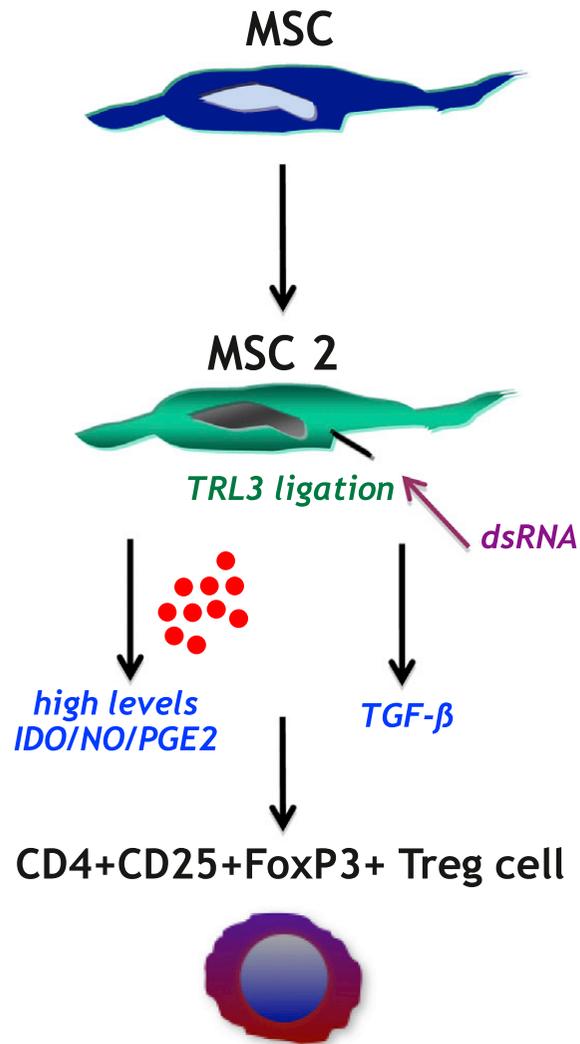
IDENTIFICATION OF MARKERS FOR THE PROSPECTIVE ISOLATION of MSCs from BM:

- CD146, CD271: human (*Sacchetti et al.; Tormin et al.*)
- Nestin: murine (*Mendez-Ferrer et al.*)

MSCs: SENSORS and SWITCHERS of INFLAMMATION

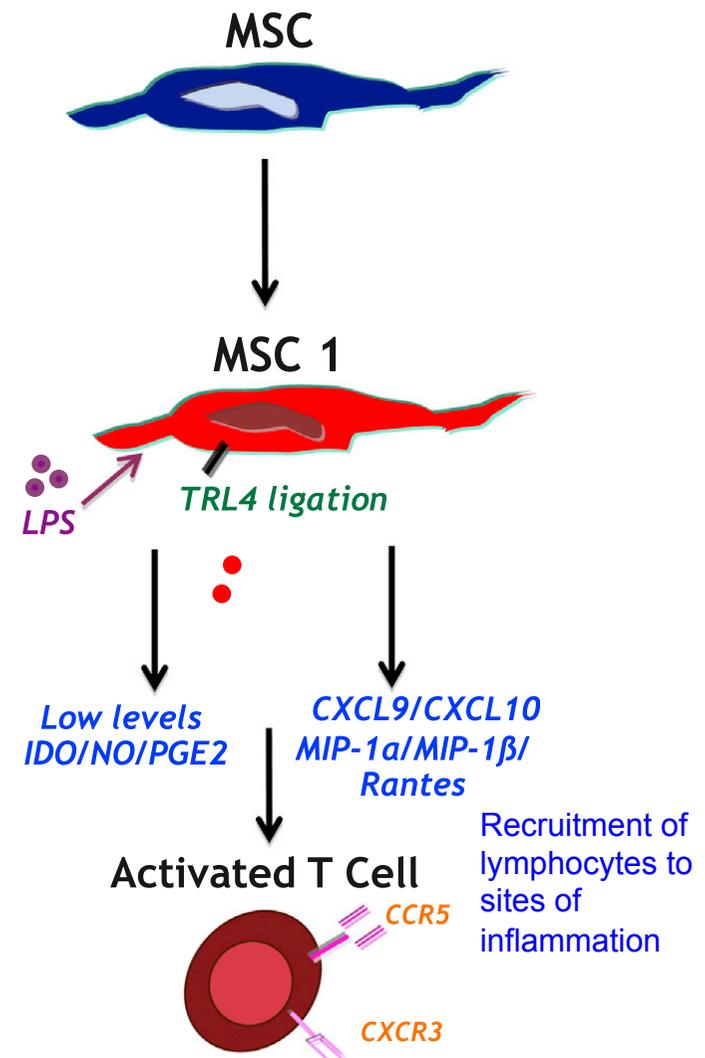
A Anti-Inflammatory

High levels IFN- γ /TNF- α



B Pro-Inflammatory

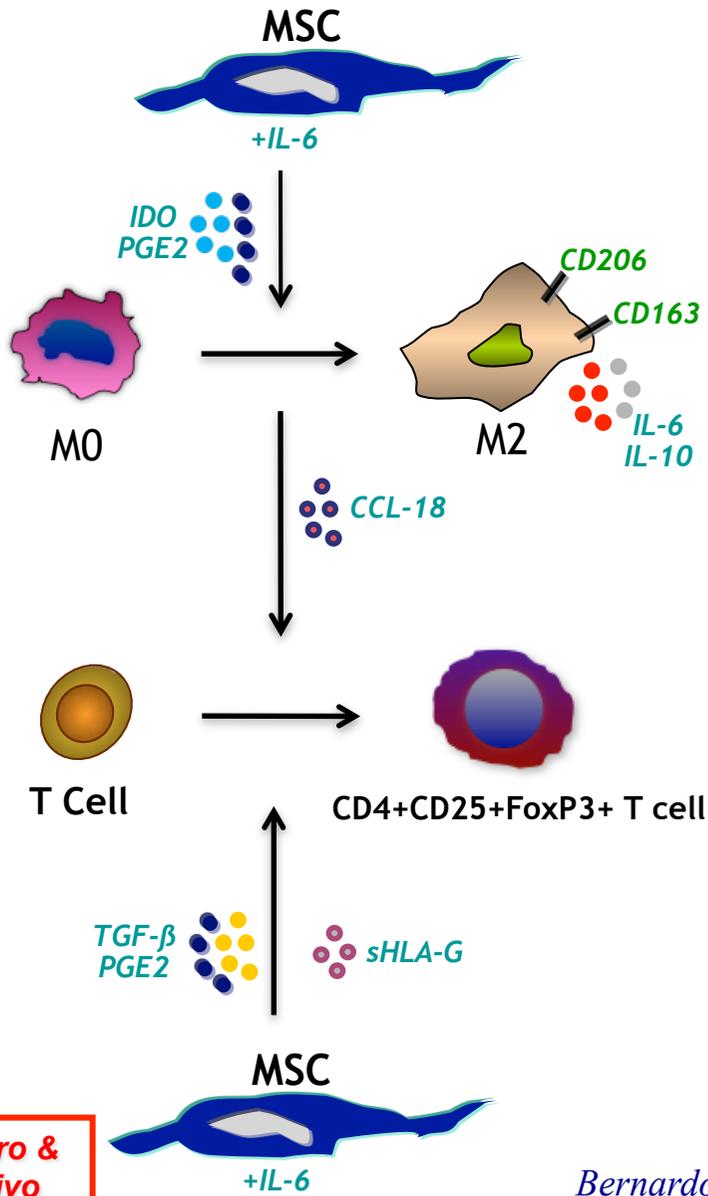
Low levels IFN- γ /TNF- α



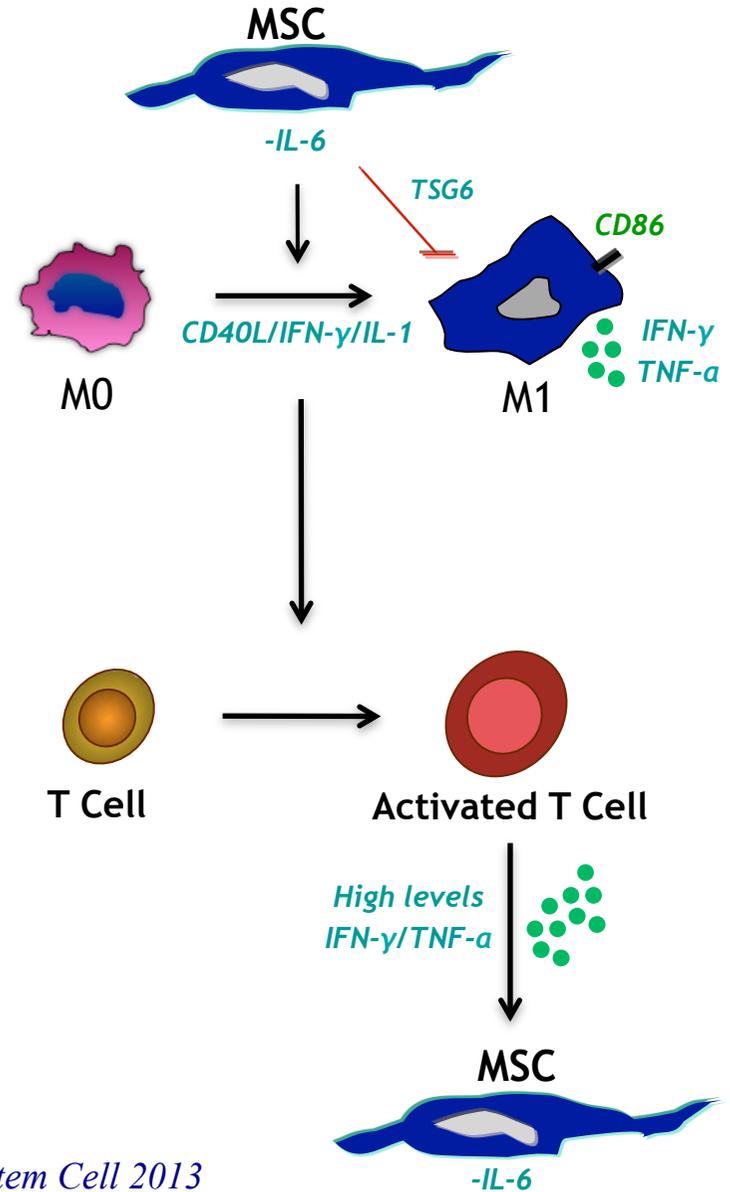
*in vitro &
in vivo*

MSCs POLARIZE MONOCYTES M0 INTO M1 & M2

Anti- Inflammatory



Pro- Inflammatory



**in vitro &
in vivo**

Bernardo and Fibbe, Cell Stem Cell 2013

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS of MSCs IN HSCT (& BEYOND)

I. Co-infusion of MSCs and HSCs to enhance hematopoietic engraftment after allo-HSCT in HAPLO- and CB-HSCT

II. Treatment of steroid-resistant acute GvHD

III. Ex-vivo expansion of CD34+ cells on MSCs for improved engraftment

IV. Treatment of acute tissue damage after allo-HSCT

(case reports in hemorrhagic cystitis, pneumothorax and pneumomediastinum, peritonitis)

& BEYOND...REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

repair of bone and cartilage degenerative disorders, Crohn's disease, kidney and liver repair

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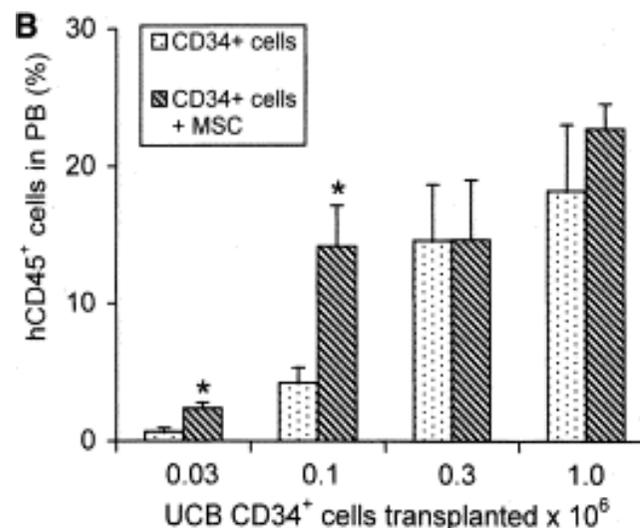
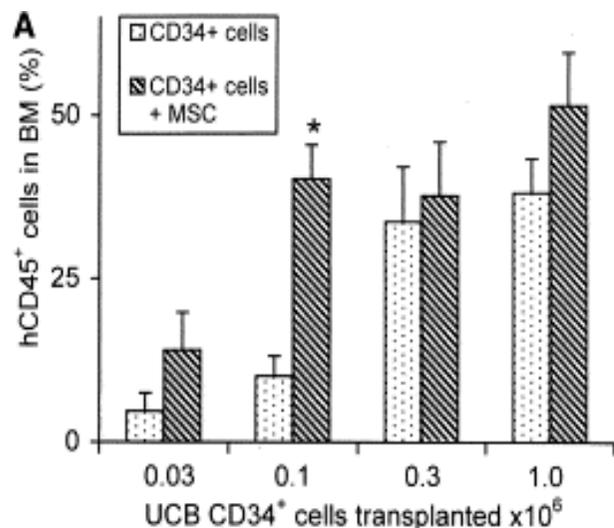
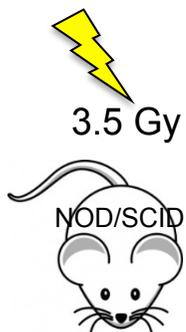
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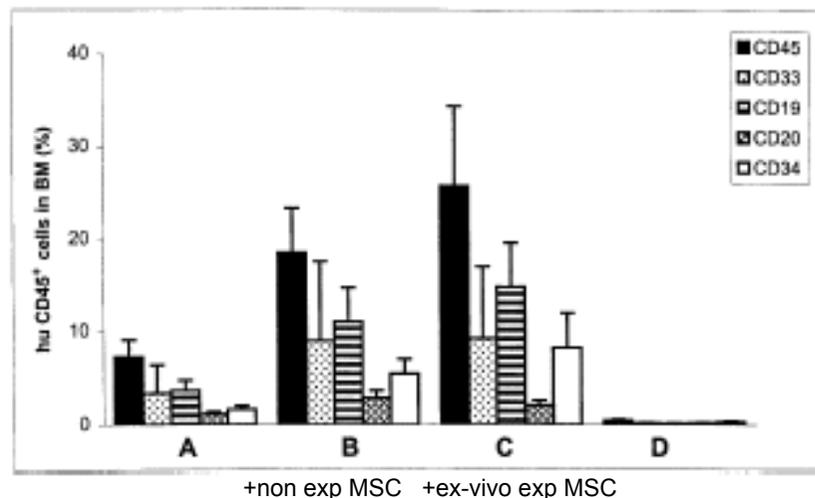
repair of bone and cartilage degenerative disorders, Crohn's disease, kidney and liver repair

MSCs and ENGRAFTMENT in MICE

Co-Tx of human fetal lung- and BM-derived MSCs enhances engraftment of human UCB CD34+ cells in NOD/SCID mice



Co-Tx:
UCB CD34+ (0.1 x 10e6)
 +
MSC (1 x 10e6)
 non expanded or ex-vivo expanded



Phase I/II trial of Co-infusion of Haploidentical HSCs and MSCs in pediatric patients

	Patients (n = 20)	Controls (n = 52)
Transplant years (range)	Dec. 2004 - July 2007	March. 1998- Nov. 2004
Mean age (range) years	8 (1-16)	8 (1-17)
Patient gender		
Male	14 (70%)	31 (60%)
Female	6 (30%)	21 (40%)
Original diseases		
Haematological malignancies	16 (80%)	40 (77%)
AML	7 (35%)	12 (30%)
MDS	2 (10%)	5 (12.5%)
ALL	7 (35%)	23 (34.5%)
Immune deficiencies	2 (10%)	2 (4%)
Other non-malignant disorders	2 (10%)	10 (19%)
Conditioning regimen		
TBI-based vs. Chemotherapy-based	12:8 (60 vs. 40%)	30:22 (58 vs. 42%)
Donor gender		
Male : Female	10 : 10	29 ; 23

MSC Co-transplantation in Haploidentical SCT

Patients (n = 20)

Controls (n = 52)

Transplant years (range)

Dec. 2004 - July 2007

March. 1998- Nov. 2004

Graft characteristics

Number of CD34+ cells infused
× 10⁶/kg (median, range)

21.3 (11.2 - 38.6)

23.0 (12.1 - 47.5)

Number of CD3+ cells infused
× 10⁵/kg

0.3 (0.3)

0.5 (0.7)

Number of MSC
× 10⁶/kg (median, range)

1.6 (1-3.3)

0

Haematopoietic recovery

Days to Leukocyte count > 1,000/mL

11.5 (9-16)

p=0.01

16.5 (14.1-17.9)

Days to PMN recovery

12 (10-17)

14 (9-28)

Days to PLT recovery

11 (9-24)

13 (9-100)

Days to reticulocyte recovery

12 (10-31)

23 (9-41)

Post-HSCT complications

Graft failure

0 (0%)

p=0.03

11 (20%)

Primary

7

Secondary

4

Acute GvHD

Grade I-II

2 (10%)

12 (23%)

Grade III-IV

0 (0%)

2 (3%)

Chronic GvHD

1 (5%)

6 (12%)

Phase I/II study of Co-Tx of UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD-derived HSCs and MSCs

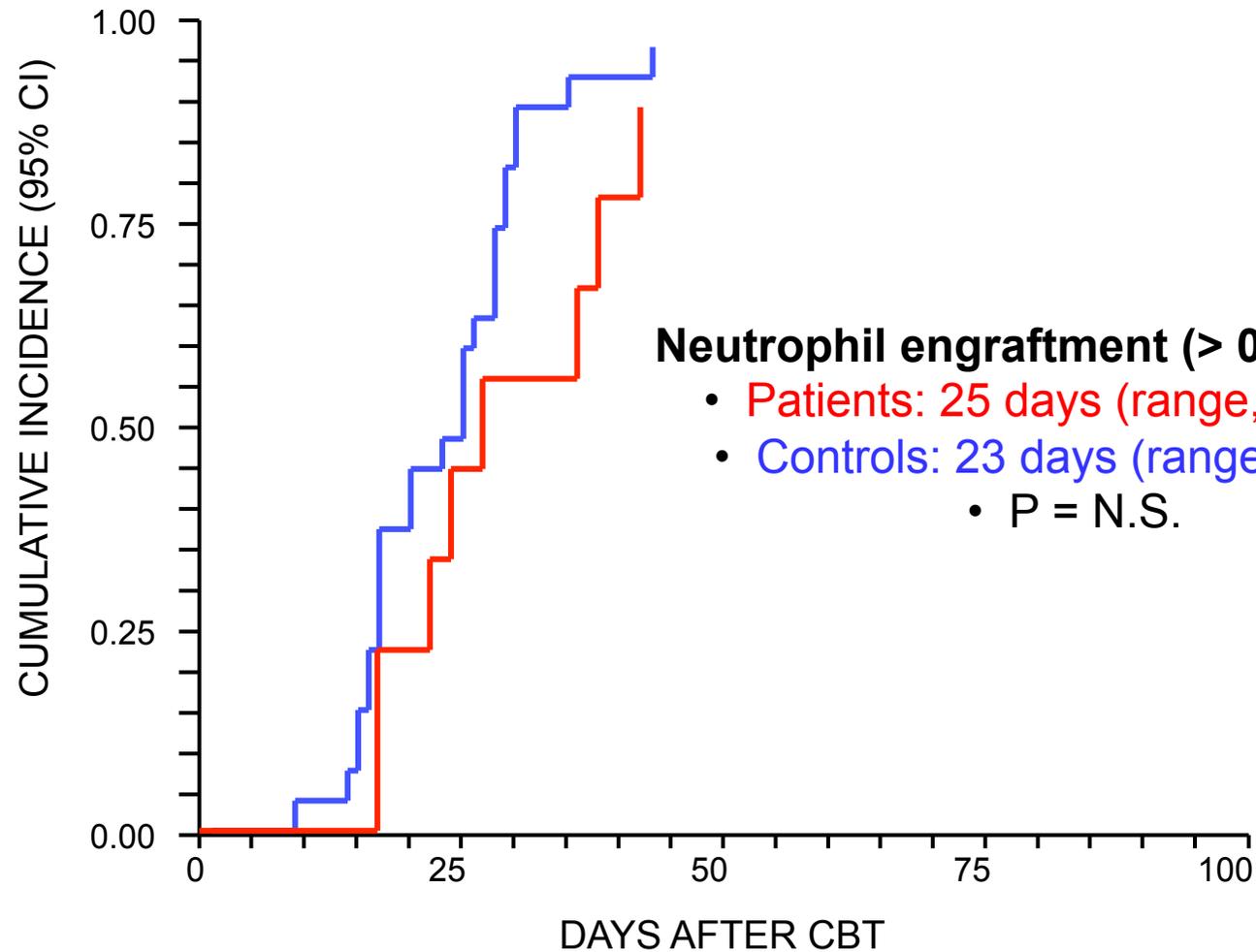
Patient characteristics

	Patients	Controls	Total
Number of patients	9	27	36
Gender: M / F	6 / 3	12 / 15	18 / 18*
Median age (years, and range)	4 (0.8 – 14)	4 (0.3 – 10)	4 (0.3 – 14)
Diagnosis:			
ALL	5 (56%)	15 (56%)	20 (56%)*
Hemoglobinopathies	2 (22%)	6 (22%)	8 (22%)
Other inborn errors	2 (22%)	6 (22%)	8 (22%)
Disease status at HSCT:			
1 st CR	3 (33%)	3 (12%)	6 (17%)*
2 nd or 3 rd CR	2 (22%)	12 (44%)	14 (39%)
Disease present	4 (45%)	12 (44%)	16 (44%)
Nucleated cells (x 10⁷/Kg):	4.4 (1.4 – 13)	3.9 (2 – 18)	4 (1.4 – 18)
CD34+ cell (x 10⁵/Kg):	2.4 (0.6 - 6.6)	2 (0.6 – 6)	2.2 (0.6 –6.6)

MSC (x 10⁶/Kg): 1.9 (1 – 3.3)

* Chi-square P = N.S.

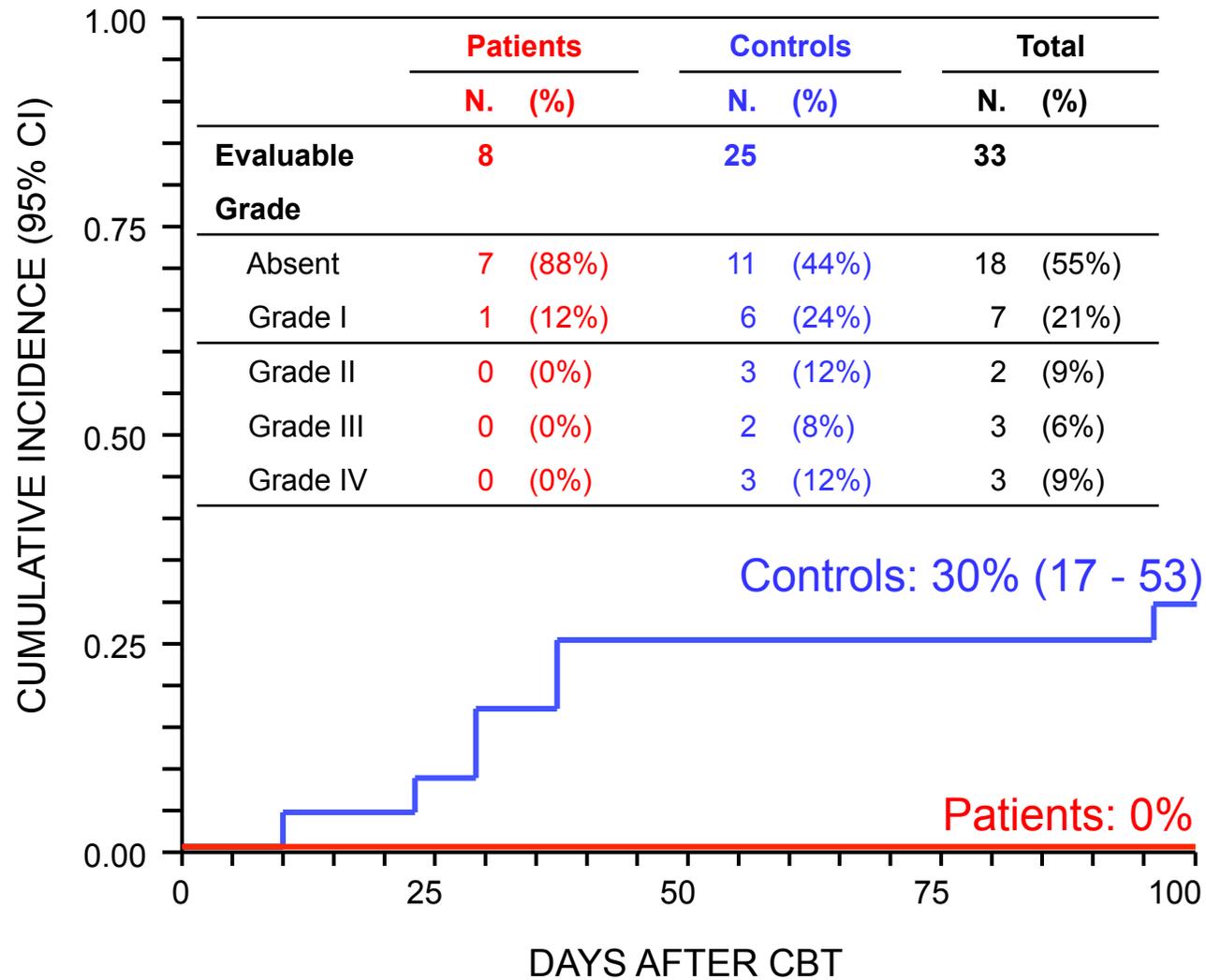
Neutrophil engraftment ($> 0.5 \times 10^9/L$)



Neutrophil engraftment ($> 0.5 \times 10^9/L$):

- Patients: 25 days (range, 17 – 42)
- Controls: 23 days (range, 8 – 42)
- P = N.S.

Grade II-IV acute graft-versus-host disease



I. MSCs TO PROMOTE ENGRAFTMENT: summary of PHASE I-II TRIALS

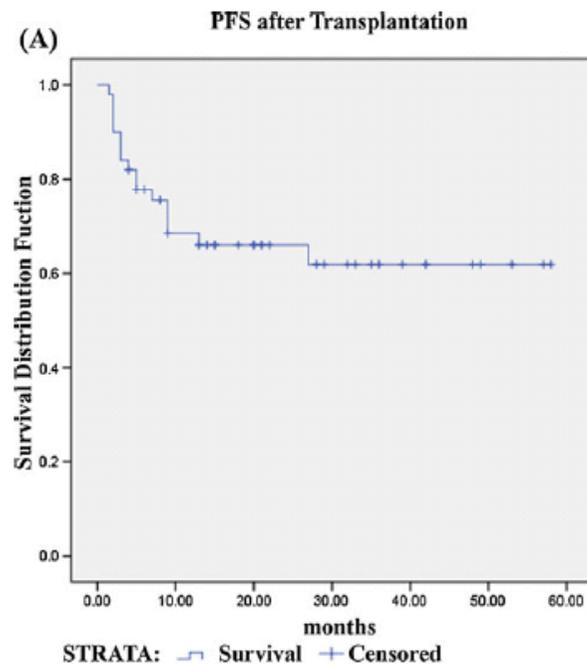
Table 1

Clinical applications of MSCs to facilitate HSC engraftment in phase I/II clinical trials.

Clinical context	MSC source	N of pts	Outcome	Refs.	
Breast cancer; autologous HSCT	BM	Auto	28	No tox. Rapid haematopoietic recovery	[68]
Hematological malignancy; allogeneic HSCT	BM	Allo	46	No tox. Prompt haematopoietic recovery	[69]
Hematological disorders; haploT-cell depleted HSCT	BM	Haplo	14 c	No tox. Graft rejection prevention. Accelerated leukocyte recovery	[9]
Hematological disorders; UCBT	BM	Haplo	8 c	No tox. Prompt haematopoietic recovery	[70]
Hematological disorders; UCBT	BM	Haplo	13 c	No tox. No effect on engraftment and haematopoietic recovery. GvHD prevention	[10]
Hematological disorders; UCBT + 3rd-party HSCs	BM	Haplo	9	No tox. No effect on kinetics of engraftment and GvHD	[71]
SAA, haplo HSCT	UCB	3° party	21	No tox. Sustained donor engraftment	[72]
Hematological malignancy; haplo HSCT	UCB	3° party	50 also c	No tox. Sustained donor engraftment	[73]

N of pts: number of patients enrolled; c: children; HSCT: haematopoietic stem cell transplantation; BM: bone marrow; UCB: umbilical cord blood; tox.: toxicity; UCBT: umbilical cord blood transplantation; aGvHD: acute graft-versus-host disease; MSC: mesenchymal stem cell.

Bernardo and Fibbe, Immunol Lett.2015



Ph. I/II. HAPLO-Tx in 50 pts. with relapsed MALIGNANCIES

- PMN engraftment: d+12 (9-20)

- PLT engraftment: d+15 (10-28)

Grade II-IV aGvHD: 24%

PFS at 2 yrs: 66% (no increased risk of relapse)

Wu Y, et al. Ann Hematol 2013

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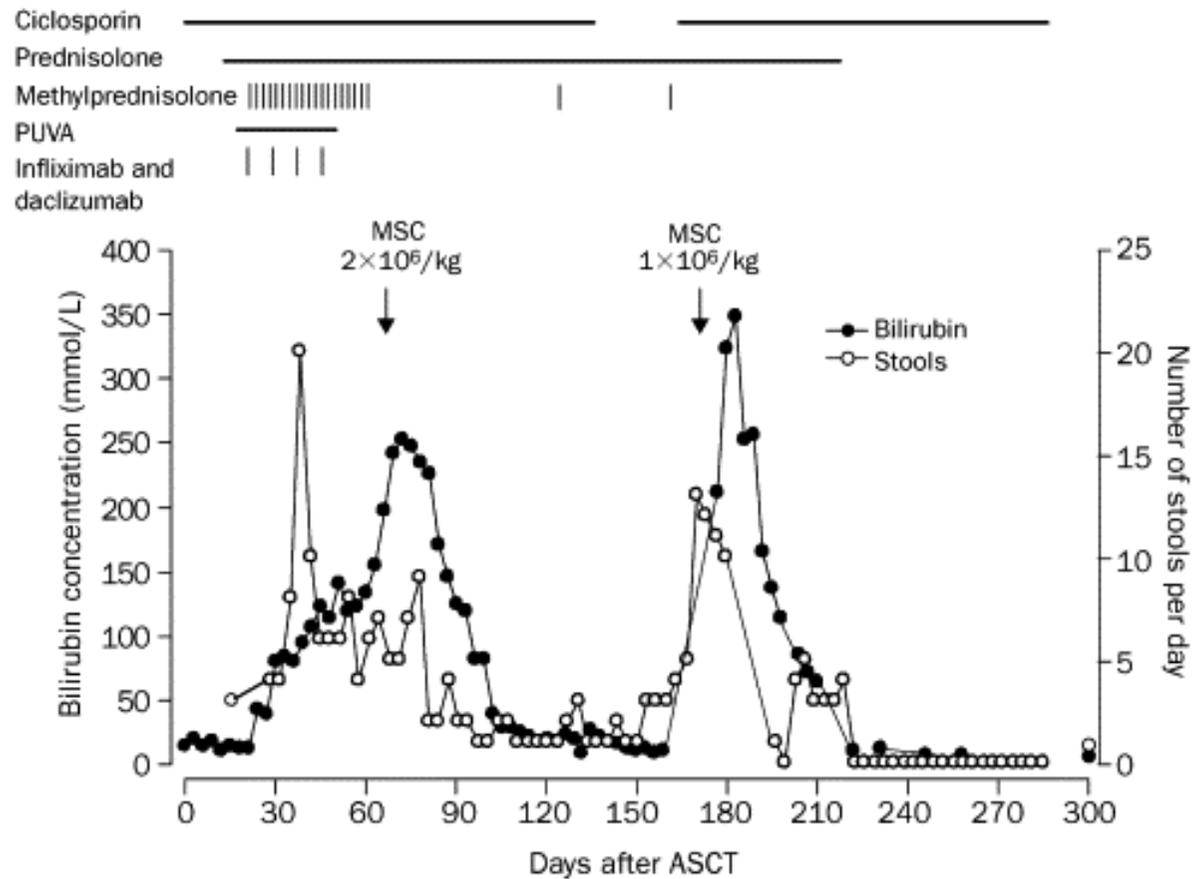
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MSCs FOR THE TREATMENT OF STEROID-RESISTANT, SEVERE, GRADE II-IV ACUTE GVHD (1)

Seminal case: treatment of severe aGvHD with third-party haploidentical MSCs



MSCs FOR STEROID-RESISTANT, SEVERE, GRADE II-IV ACUTE GVHD: *largest PHASE II STUDY (2)*

55 patients, adults+peds, gr. III/IV aGvHD

	Measure
Donors	
Number of donors	45
Donor sex (male/female)	25/20
Donor age	36 (1-67)
Number of infusions by donor type	
HLA- identical sibling	5
HLA- haploidentical donor	18
Unrelated HLA- mismatched donor	69
Volume of bone marrow harvested (mL)	60 (32-220)
Median MSC cell dose ($\times 10^6/\text{kg}$, range)	1-4 (0-4-9)
Culture passage at MSC harvest	
Passage 1	14
Passage 2, 2+3	42, 7
Passage 3, 3+4	23, 2
Passage 4	4
Number of MSC infusions	
One	27
Two	22
Three	4
Four	1
Five	1

Data are number or median (min-max range). MSC=mesenchymal stem cell.

Table 3: Mesenchymal-stem-cell donor and graft characteristics

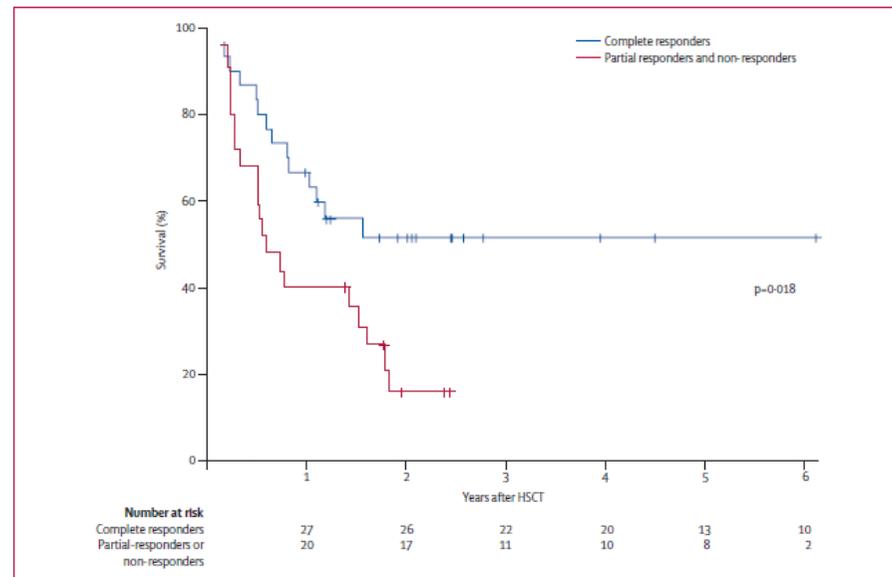
3°-party BM-MSCs

	Children (n=25)	Adults (n=30)	All patients (n=55)
Complete response	17	13	30
Partial response	4	5	9
Stable disease	2	1	3
Progressive disease	2	11	13
Overall response	21	18	39
Survival*	13	8	21
Limited chronic GVHD	2	0	2
Extensive chronic GVHD	4	2	6

*At last data collection, March, 2007.

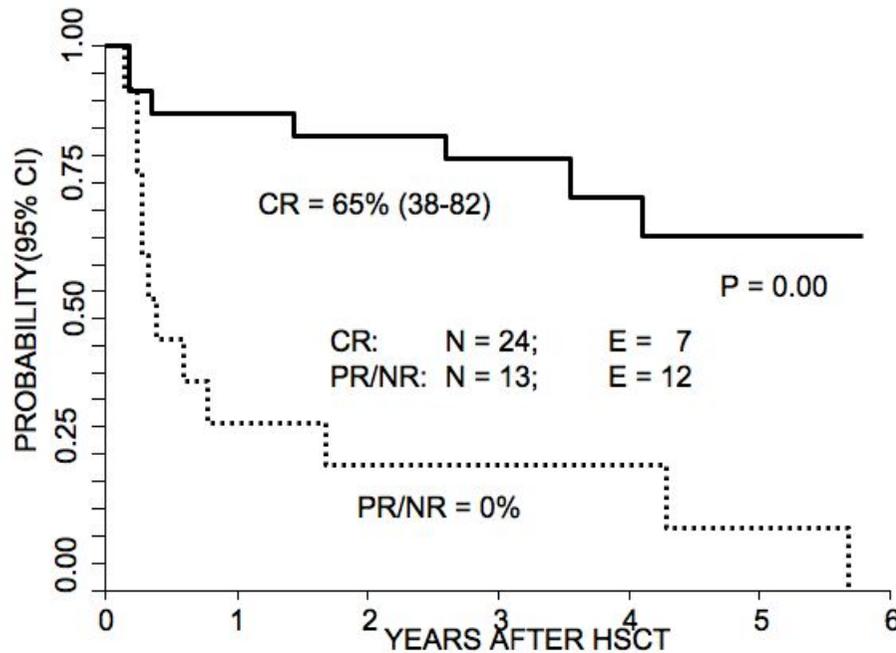
Table 4: GVHD response and outcome

Overall response: 39/55 (71%)

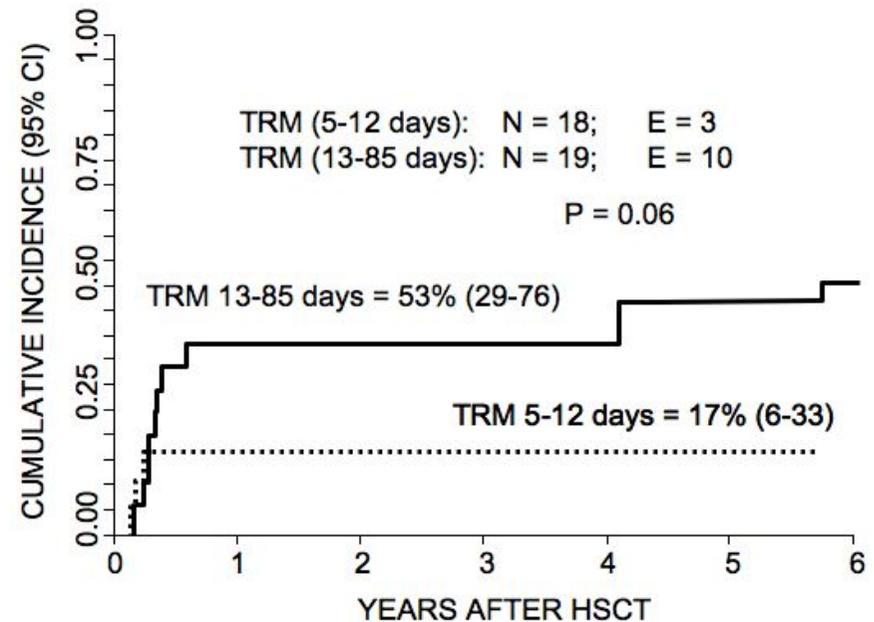


MSCs FOR THE TREATMENT OF STEROID-RESISTANT, aGVHD in PEDs (3): PHASE II STUDY

PROBABILITY of OS for CHILDREN with CR after MSC is SIGNIFICANTLY SUPERIOR to that of CHILDREN with PR/NR



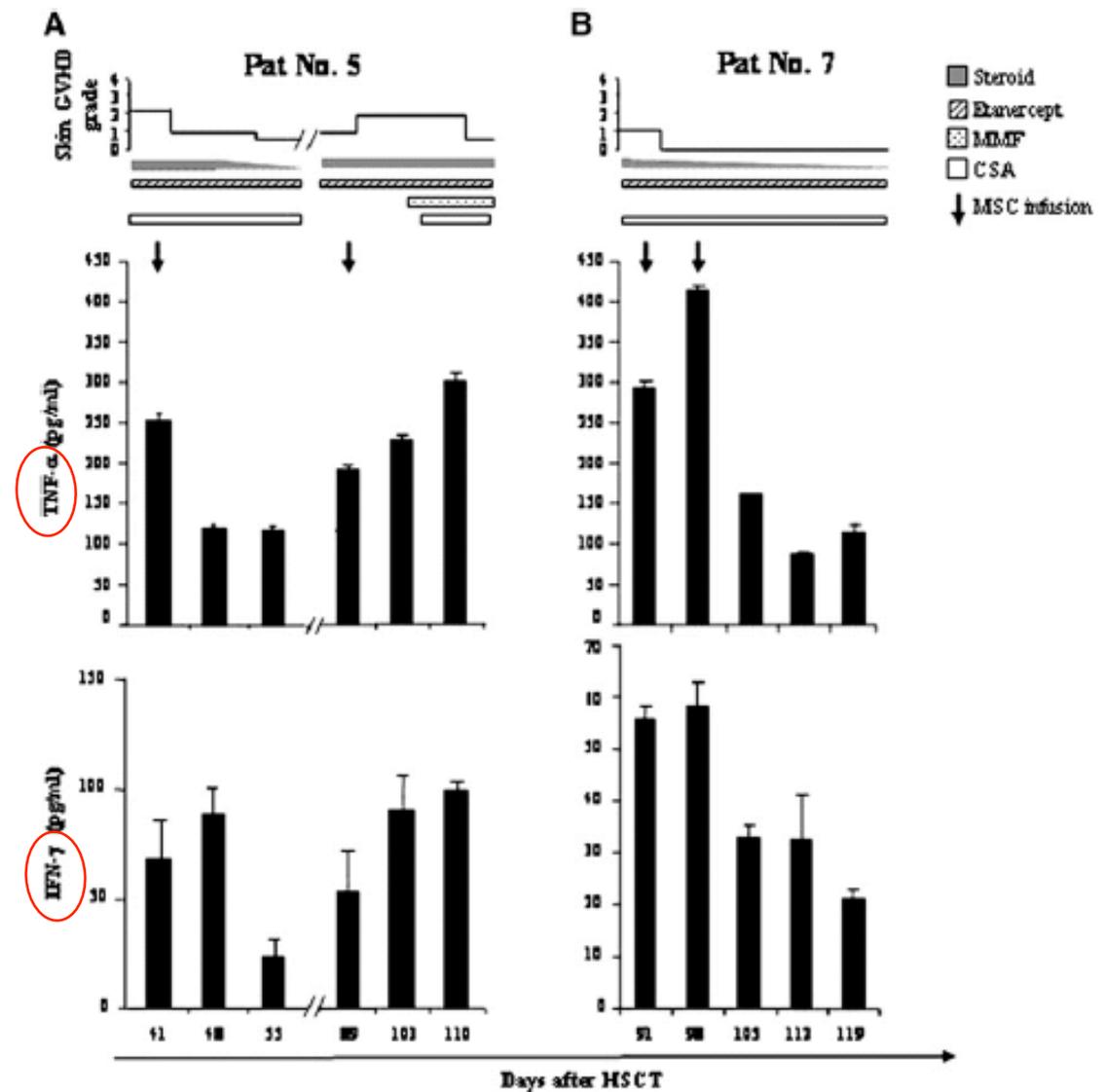
TREND for a LOWER TRM in CHILDREN with EARLY MSC as compared with CHILDREN with LATE MSC



37 patients (all peds)

3rd-PARTY BM-MSCS EXPANDED IN PLATELET LYSATE FOR CHILDREN WITH STEROID-RESISTANT aGvHD (4)

- 11 PEDs (4-15 yrs.):
 - 8 aGvHD,
 - 3 cGvHD
- MSC dose: $1.2 \times 10^6/\text{Kg}$ (0.7-3.7)
- Overall Response 71% (CR 24%)



Response correlates with levels of TNF-α and IFN-γ

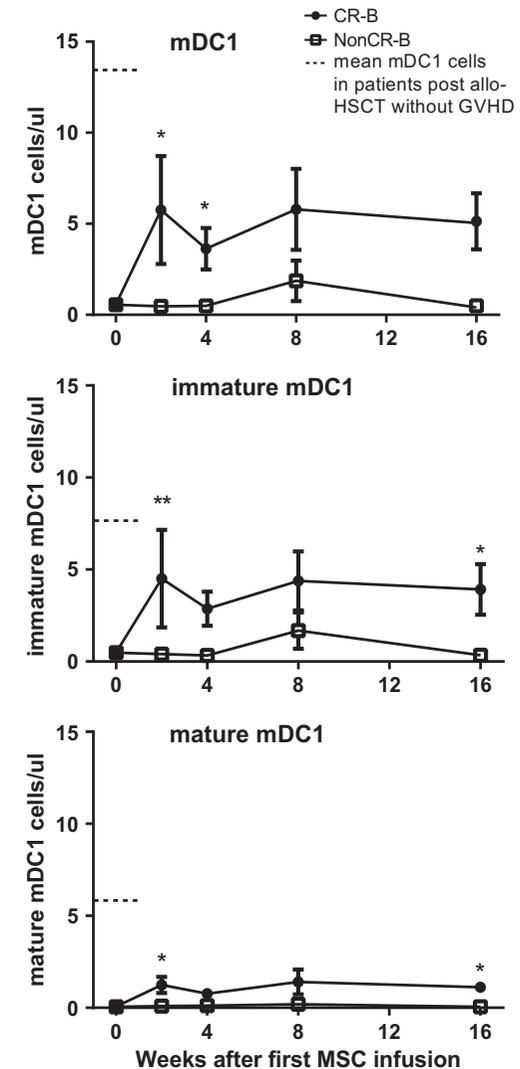
PLASMA BIOMARKERS AND LEVELS OF IDC CORRELATE WITH MORTALITY AFTER MSC INFUSION

Ph. II study: 48 patients

Table 3. Biomarkers that associate with 1-year mortality

		Outcome 1-year mortality		
Variable		HR	CI	P-value
Day 0	Age	1.032	1.005–1.059	0.02
	Levine biomarker formula	2.924	1.485–5.758	0.002
Day 14	Immature mDC1 at day 14	0.554	0.389–0.790	0.001
	ST2 at day 14	2.389	1.144–4.989	0.02

- Ferrara biomarker panel levels were predictive for mortality when measured before MSC treatment
- Increase in immature myeloid DC early after MSC treatment associated with decreased mortality



MSCs TO TREAT ACUTE GVHD: summary of CLINICAL TRIALS

Table 2. Clinical applications of MSCs to treat GvHD

Clinical context	MSC source	N of pts	Outcome	Ref. n.
Grade IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT	BM haplo	1 c	Complete resolution of grade IV acute GVHD	75
Grade II-IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT/DLI	BM 3 rd party	55 also c	OR: 69%; improved OS in responders	16
Grade II-IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT/DLI	BM 3 rd party	37 c	CR 59%; improved OS, especially if early MSC treatment	76
Grade II-IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT/DLI	BM 3 rd party (PL)	11 c	OR: 71%; CR: 24%	77
Grade II-IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT/DLI	BM 3 rd party (PL)	40 also c	OR: 67.5%; CR: 27.5%. Better in children and grade II	78
Grade II-IV aGvHD after allogeneic HSCT/DLI (Phase III)	BM 3 rd party	240 also c	No significant increase of CRs as compared with placebo; better if gastrointestinal and liver GvHD	-
Ext. Sclerodermatous cGvHD after allogeneic HSCT	BM 3 rd party	4	Improvements of the signs of cGvHD (intrabone	80
Refractory cGvHD after allogeneic HSCT	BM 3 rd party	23	injection) OR: 20/23 treated pts. Increase in Bregs	81

N of pts: number of patients enrolled; c: children; HSCT: haematopoietic stem cell transplantation; DLI: dono lymphocyte infusion; BM: bone marrow; aGvHD: acute graft-versus-host disease; cGvHD: chronic graft-versus-host disease; OR: overall response; OS, overall survival; CR, complete response; PL: platelet lysate expanded MSC; Ext: extensive.

Bernardo and Fibbe, *Immunol Lett.* 2015

OSIRIS: company-driven RANDOMIZED trial of MSCs for steroid-resistant aGvHD

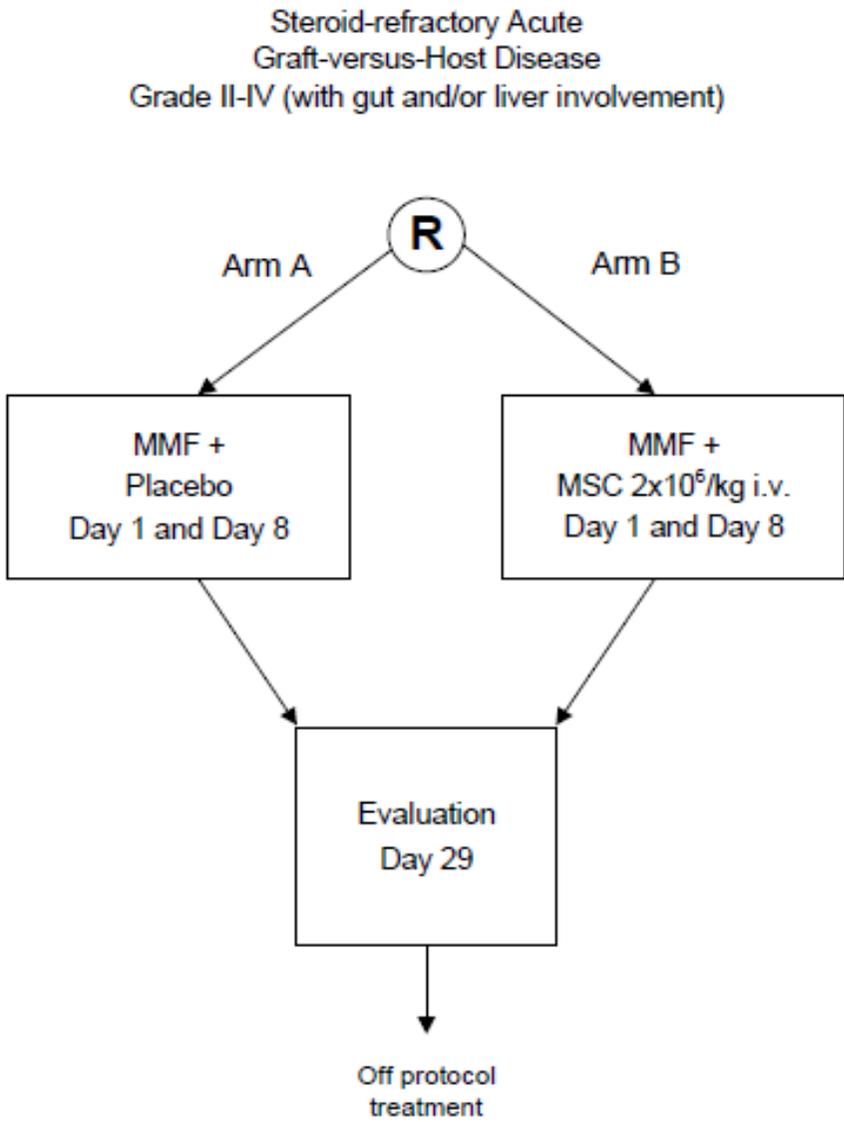
- 2:1 randomization, 163 patients received 8 infusions of 3rd-party BM-MSCs and 81 were given placebo.
- Infusional toxicity, infection rates, and incidence of recurrent malignancy were similar in the two arms.
- No difference was observed in achieving the primary end-point of a durable complete response for 28 days (35 vs. 30%), although there was a trend in favor of MSCs for patients with VISCERAL INVOLVEMENT .

Treatment of severe steroid-refractory acute GVHD with mesenchymal stromal cells.

A ph

study.

Scheme of study



Principal Investigator
Sponsor

EudraCT number



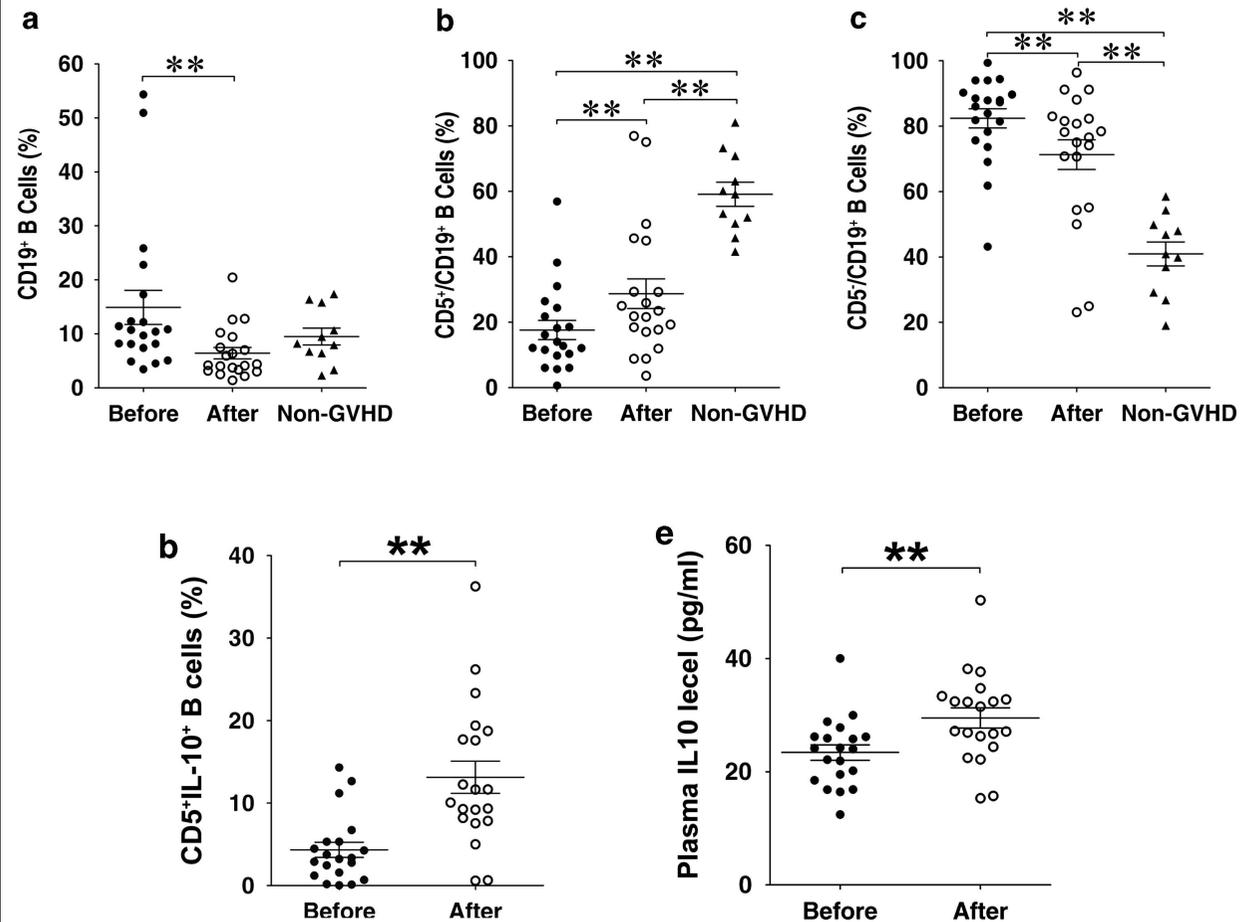
MSCs FOR THE TREATMENT OF CHRONIC GVHD

23 pts with mainly extensive cGvHD: 20/23 CR or PR
 Response to MSC is associated with an increase in
 CD5+ regulatory B cells producing IL-10

Table 1. Clinical characteristics of cGVHD patients

	cGVHD (N = 23)	Non-GVHD (N = 11)	P-value
Median age, year (range)	31 (14–51)	34 (15–49)	0.83
Sex (%)			0.72
Females	5 (21.7)	3 (27.3)	
Male	18 (78.3)	8 (72.7)	
Median time post-HSCT, month (range)	12.5 (6–56)	11 (5.5–44)	0.54
Source of graft (%)			0.70
Peripheral blood	20 (87.0)	9 (81.8)	
Bone marrow	3 (13.0)	2 (18.2)	
Transplant type (%)			> 0.99
Myeloablative	22 (95.7)	10 (90.9)	
Nonmyeloablative	1 (4.3)	1 (9.1)	
HLA matching (%)			> 0.99
Matched, unrelated	2 (8.7)	1 (9.1)	
Matched, related	19 (82.6)	9 (81.8)	
Mismatched	2 (8.7)	1 (9.1)	
Prophylaxis (%)			—
CsA	3 (13.0)	—	
CsA+prednisolon	18 (78.3)	—	
CsA+prednisolon +MM	2 (8.7)	—	
Disease (%)			0.97
AML	8 (34.8)	6 (54.4)	
ALL	4 (17.4)	2 (18.2)	
CML	6 (26.1)	3 (27.3)	
NHL	1 (4.3)	0 (0)	
Other	4 (17.4)	1 (9.1)	

Abbreviations: ALL, acute lymphoblastic leukemia; AML, acute monocytic leukemia; CML, chronic monocytic leukemia; CsA, cyclosporin A; cGVHD, chronic graft-versus-host disease; HLA, human leukocyte antigen; HSCT, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation; MM, mycophenolate mofetil; NHL, non-Hodgkin lymphoma.



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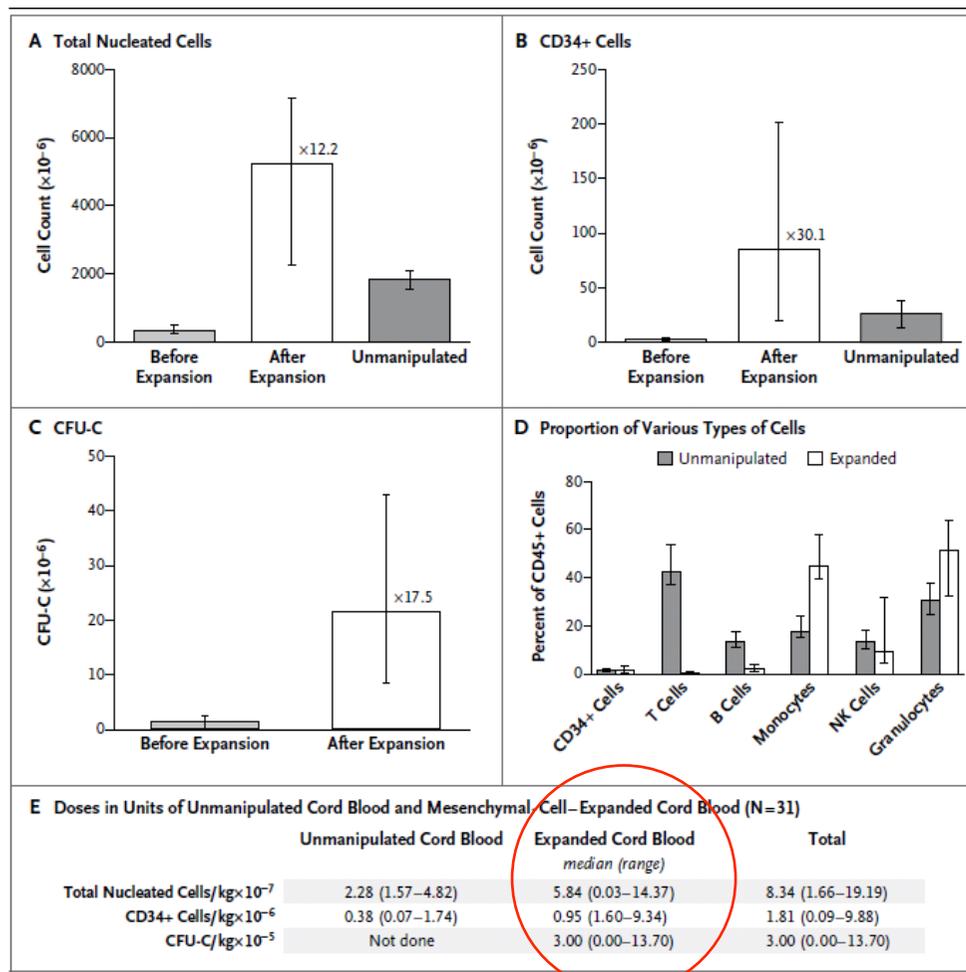
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III. EX-VIVO EXPANSION of CB-CD34+ CELLS and IMPROVED ENGRAFTMENT

3rd-party BM-MSCs



DOUBLE CBT: 1 expanded, 1 unmanipulated

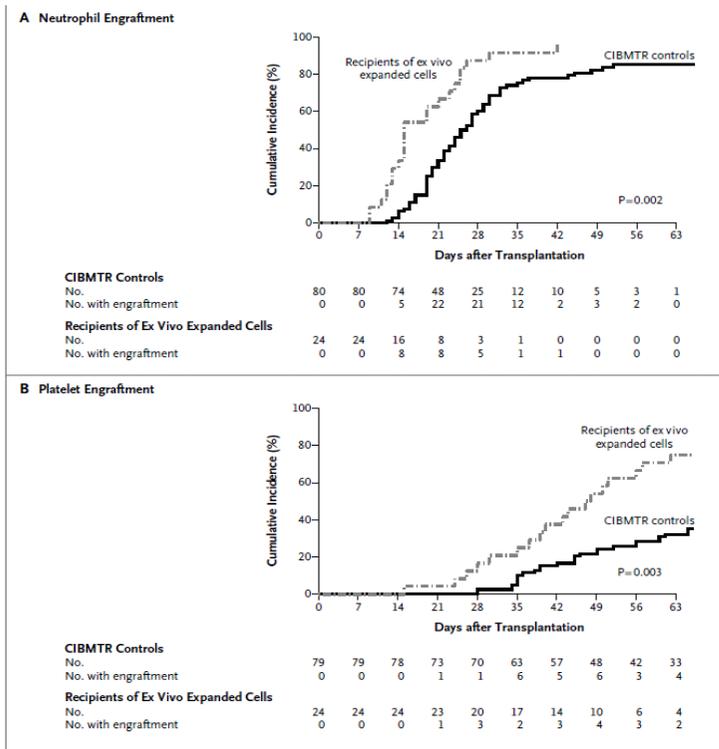
Median NC/Kg = 8.34×10^7

Median CD34+/Kg = 1.81×10^6

De Lima, et al. New England J Medicine 2012

Table 2. Engraftment in Recipients of Ex Vivo Expanded Cells and MDACC and CIBMTR Controls.

Engraftment	Recipients of Ex Vivo Expanded Cells (N=24)	MDACC Controls (N=60)	P Value ^a	CIBMTR Controls (N=80)	P Value ^b
Neutrophil engraftment					
No. of patients	23	51		67	
Time to engraftment — days					
Median	15	21	0.08	24	<0.001
Range	9–42	6–45		12–52	
Cumulative incidence — % (95% CI)					
By 26 days	88 (66–96)	62 (48–73)	0.006	53 (41–63)	<0.001
By 42 days	96 (74–99)	83 (71–91)	0.05	78 (67–86)	0.005
Platelet engraftment					
No. of patients	18	38		37	
Time to engraftment — days					
Median	42	41	0.33	49	0.03
Range	15–62	26–126		18–264	
Cumulative incidence — % (95% CI)					
By 60 days	71 (48–85)	52 (38–63)	0.10	31 (21–41)	<0.001
By 180 days	75 (53–88)	63 (50–74)	0.28	46 (35–58)	0.01



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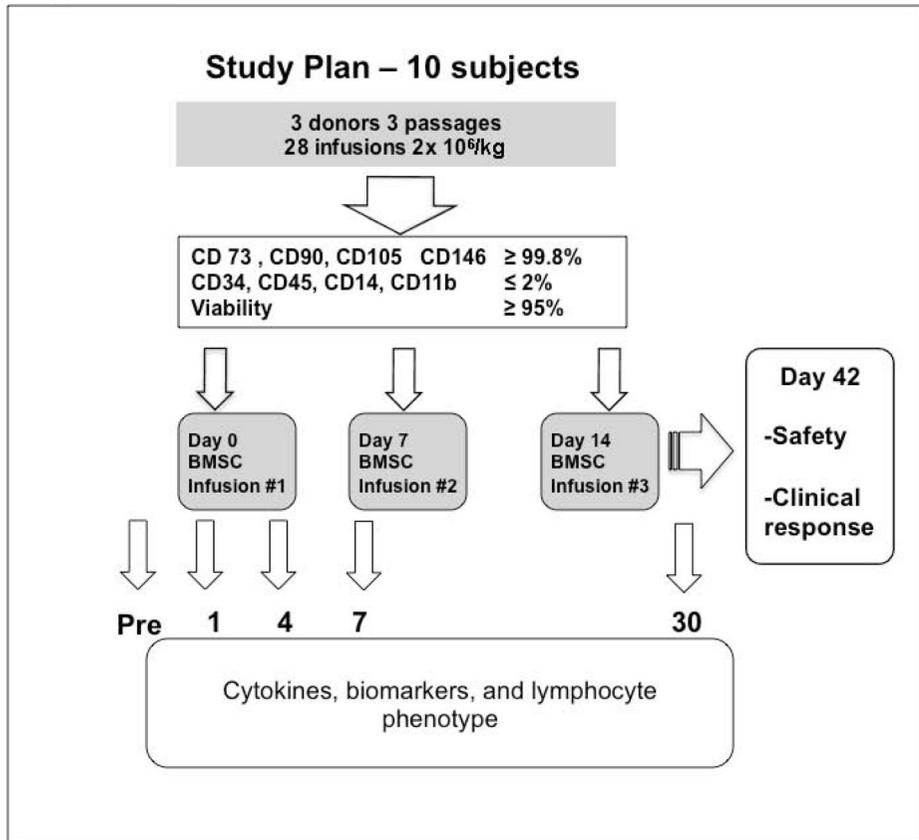
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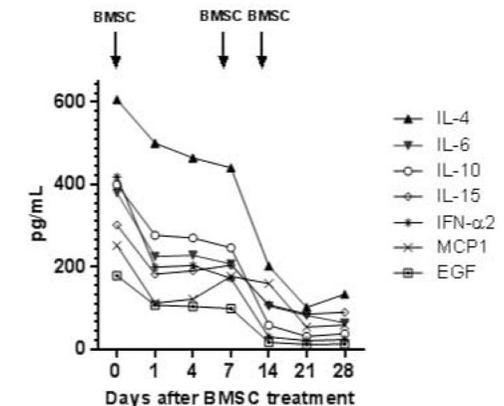
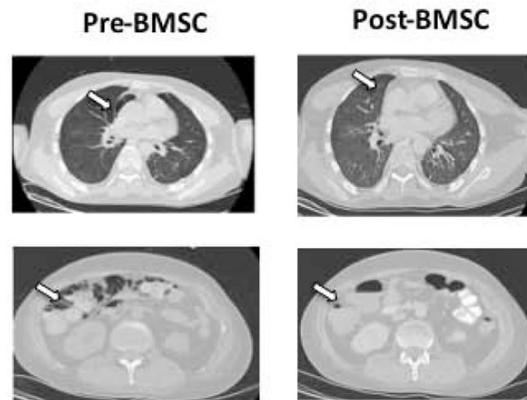
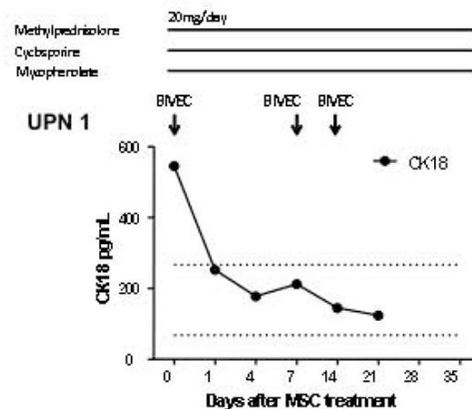
repair of bONE and CARTILAGE degenerative disorders, Crohn's disease (IBD), kidney and liver repair, ARDS

IV. MSC TO TREAT TISSUE DAMAGE IN ALLOGENEIC HSCT RECIPIENTS



MSC possess anti-inflammatory properties which can be employed to heal therapy-induced tissue toxicity after allo-HSCT:

- Hemorrhagic cystitis
- Pneumomediastinum
- Perforated colon with peritonitis



CONCLUSIONS FROM MSC TRIALS TO IMPROVE OUTCOME IN ALLO-HSCT

- ✓ Infusion of MSCs appeared to be safe and no major toxicities were observed.
- ✓ **3rd-party BM-MSCs** may provide an effective therapy for patients with severe aGvHD who do not respond to treatment with corticosteroids (Phase III ongoing). *The earlier the better*
- ✓ **Randomized clinical trials** are needed to define the role of MSCs in steroid-resistant GvHD and to identify pts. that will benefit most from the treatment
- ✓ MSC may be employed to expand HSC and to repair tissue damage after allo-HSCT
- ✓ Current MSC *in vitro* assays are not predictive of the efficacy *in vivo*. Need for identification of **potency assays** *in vitro* able to predict outcome in patients
- ✓ Need for **harmonization** in MSC manufacturing across Europe:

EMBT survey on MSC manufacturing

Working towards harmonisation

On behalf of CTIWP

Trento C, Bernardo ME, Bonini C, Dazzi F



Participants to the survey: N. 17 EBMT centers

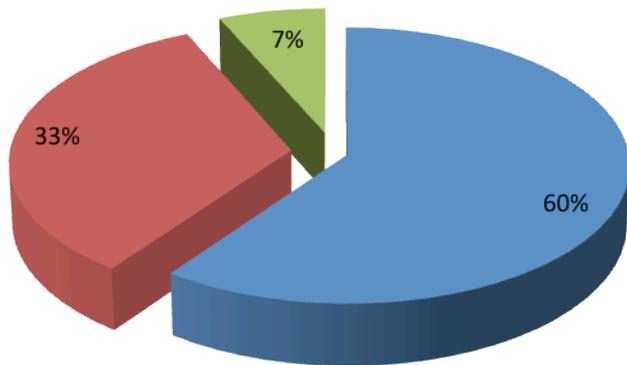
- Germany
- Israel
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Belgium
- Austria
- United Kingdom
- Lithuania
- Sweden

Considered variables:

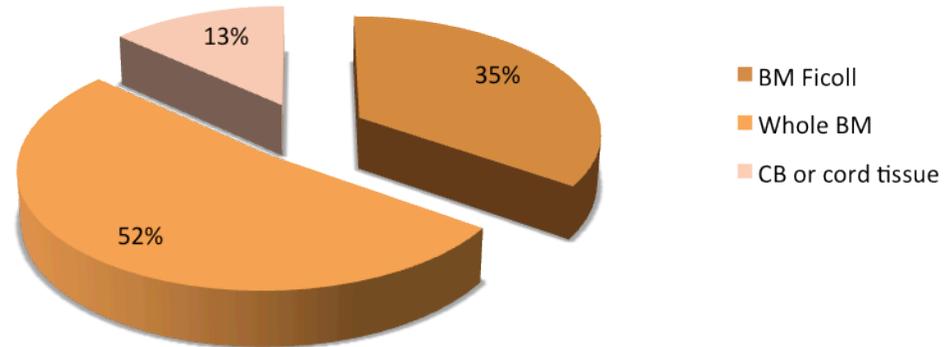
- MSC source,
- MSC donor matching,
- medium additives for ex-vivo expansion,
- data on MSC product specification for clinical release

Manufacture of MSCs

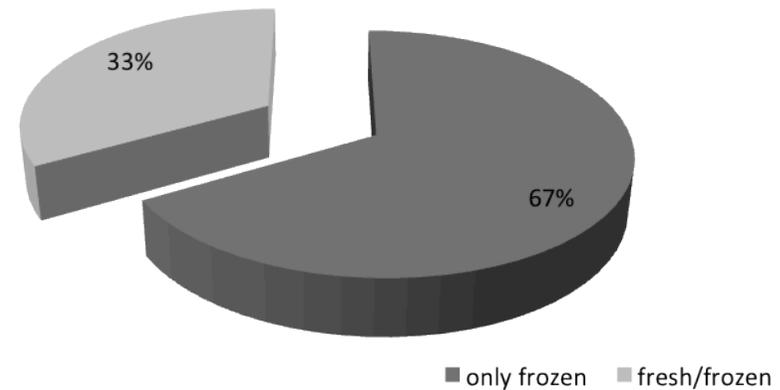
mainly BM, mainly ALLOGENEIC/THIRD PARTY, mainly FROZEN



- Allogeneic only
- Both allogeneic and autologous
- Autologous only



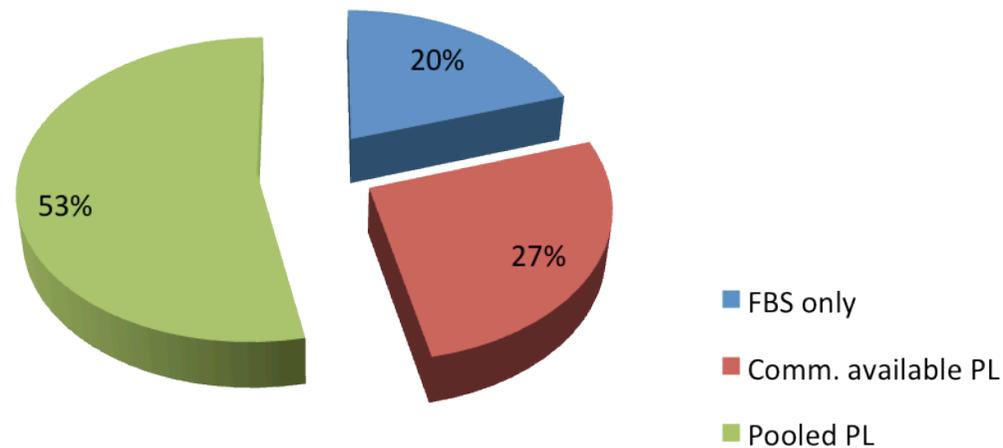
- BM Ficoll
- Whole BM
- CB or cord tissue



- only frozen
- fresh/frozen

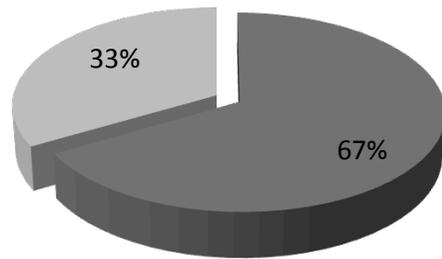
Media used for manufacture

mainly PLATELET LYSATE

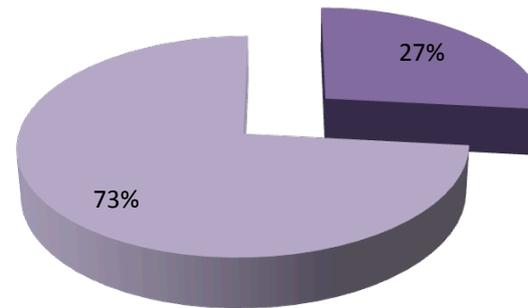


Product specification

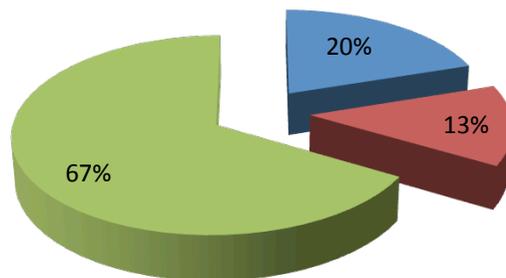
Variability in release criteria for clinical use
Only 27% performs POTENCY ASSAY



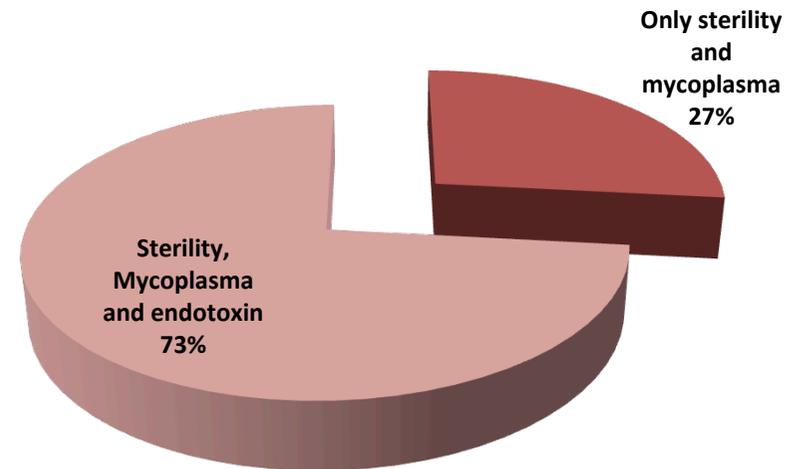
■ Karyotype
■ No karyotyping



■ Potency assay
■ No potency



■ Tri-lineage differentiation assay
■ Differentiation into Adipocytes and osteoblasts
■ No differentiation assay



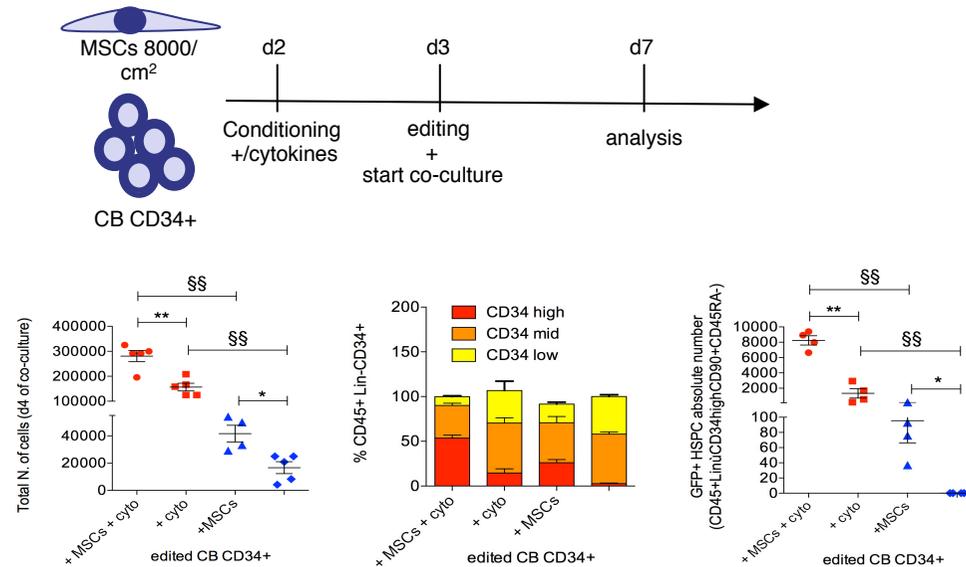
CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EBMT SURVEY ON MSC

- ✓ Very few centers have developed a potency assay that could predict patient's outcome
- ✓ Data collected highlight the high variability in MSC manufacturing as clinical product and the need for harmonization.
- ✓ Until more meaningful potency assays become available, a more homogenous approach to cell production may at least reduce variability in clinical trials and improve interpretation of results.

FUTURE: MSC to optimize the outcome of HSC-GENE THERAPY

- MSC support of gene-edited (GE) HSPC in 2D co-culture**

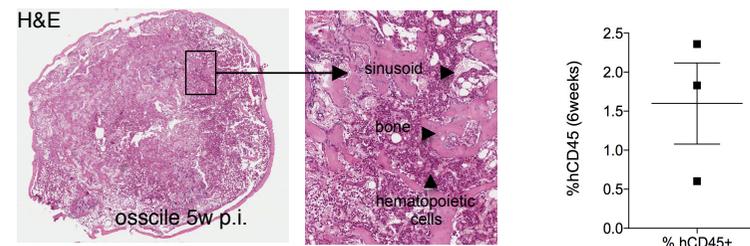
MSC significantly increase the number of primitive GE-HSPC, identified as Lin- CD34^{high}, CD90⁺ and CD45RA-



- In vivo ossicle 3D model with humanized niche to support engraftment of GE-HSPC**

- humanized BM niche present at 5 weeks after the implantation of scaffolds pre-seeded with huMSC and EC into non-irradiated NSG mice

- huCD45⁺ cells were detected in PB already at 6 weeks after HSCT



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N. Starc

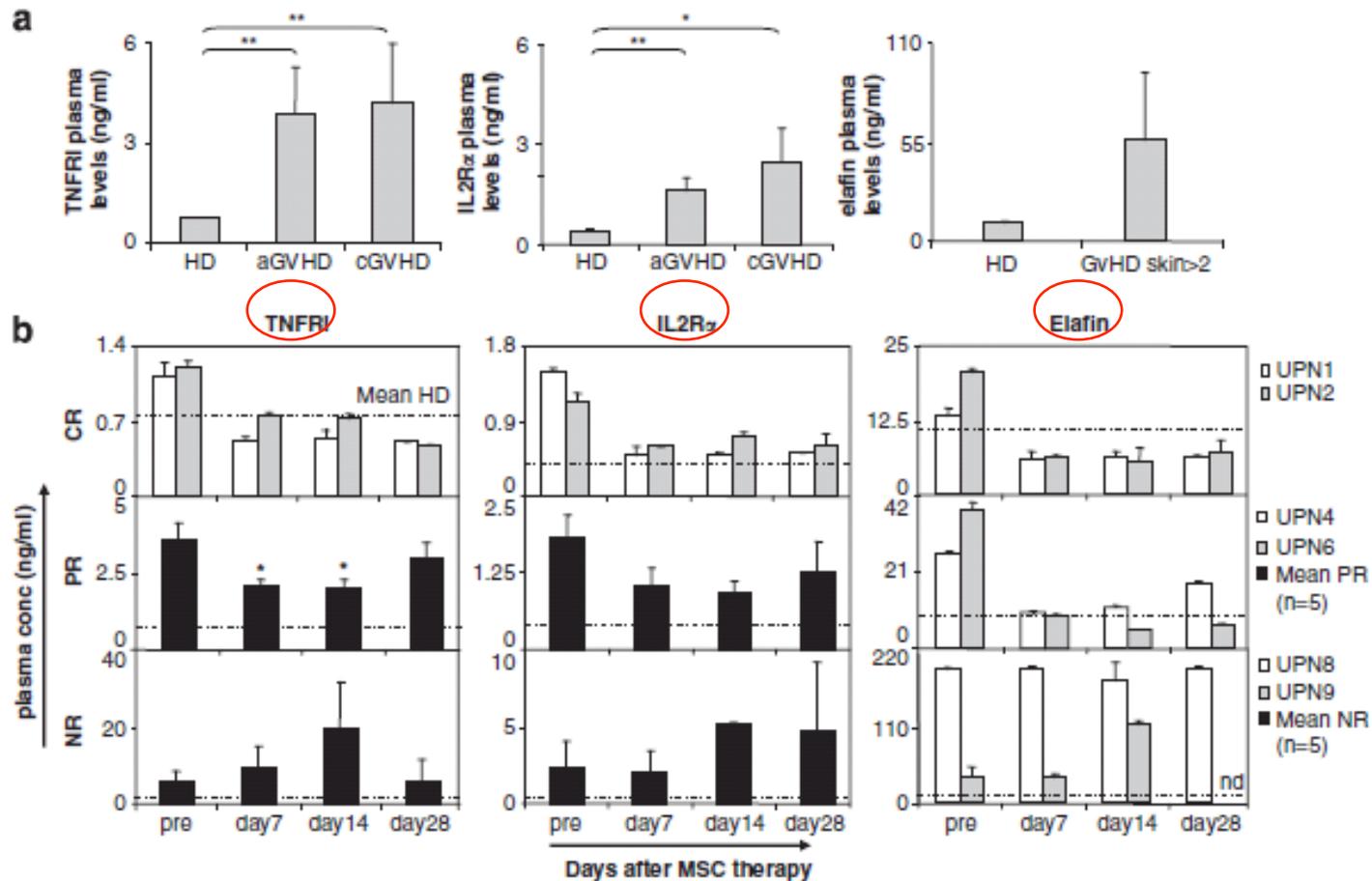
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KING's COLLEGE, London

C. Trento
F. DAZZI

PLASMA BIOMARKERS FOR aGVHD RESPONSE AFTER MSC THERAPY

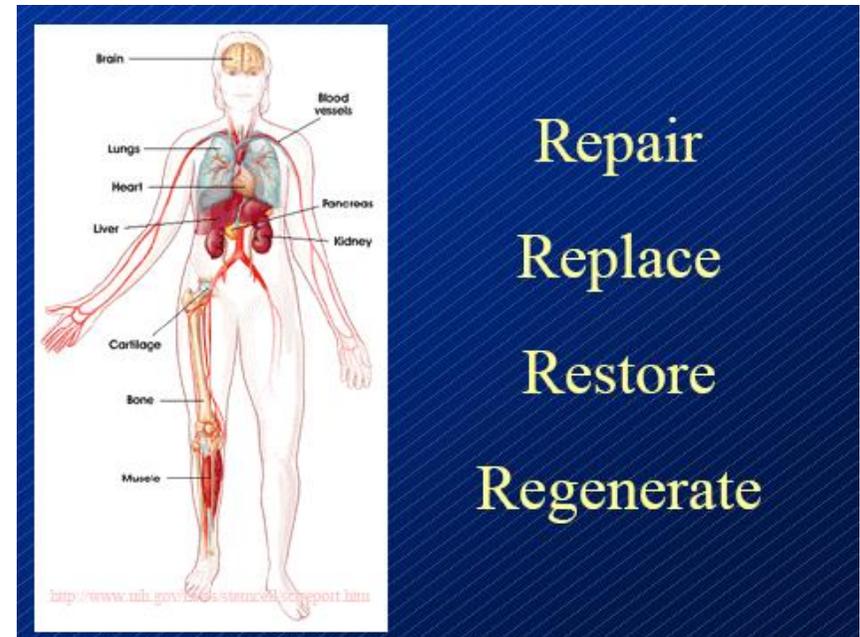


TNFRI, **IL2R α** and **ELAFIN** can be employed as biomarkers for monitoring patients' response to MSC therapy

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS of MSCs as ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AGENTS in REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

In REGENERATIVE MEDICINE:

- repair of BONE and CARTILAGE degenerative disorders
- IBD (Crohn's disease)
- Kidney and liver repair
- Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis
- Acute Respiratory Distress



IN PHASE II STUDIES GvHD RESPONSE CORRELATES WITH OS

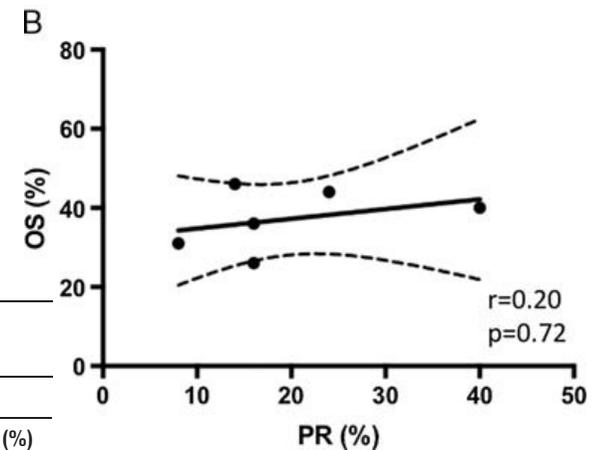
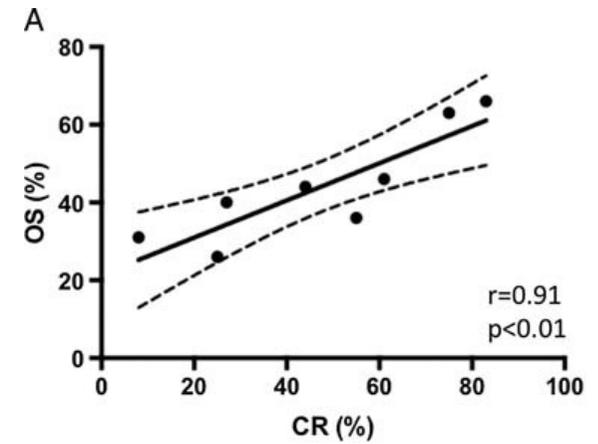
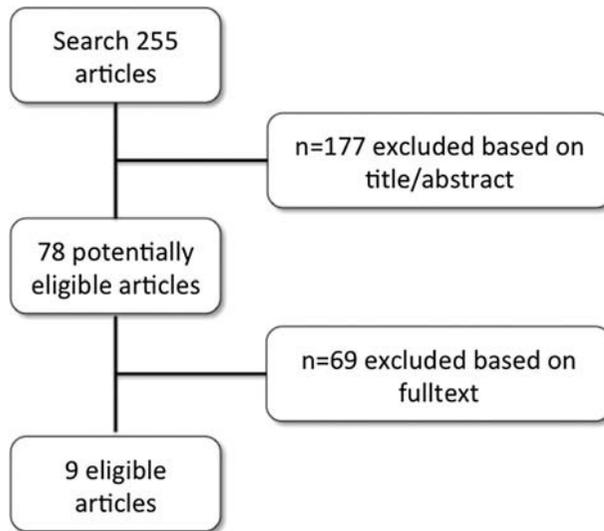


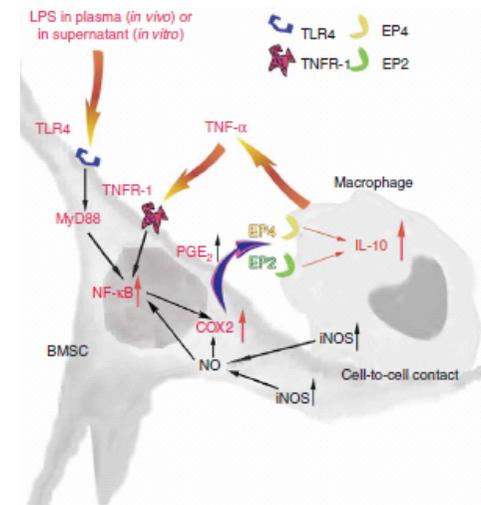
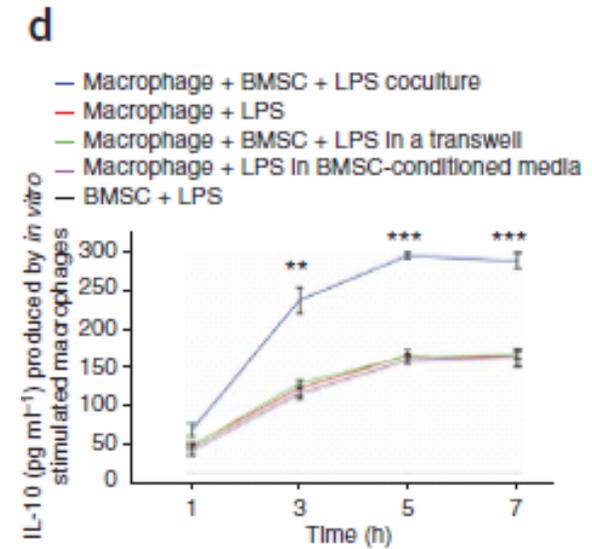
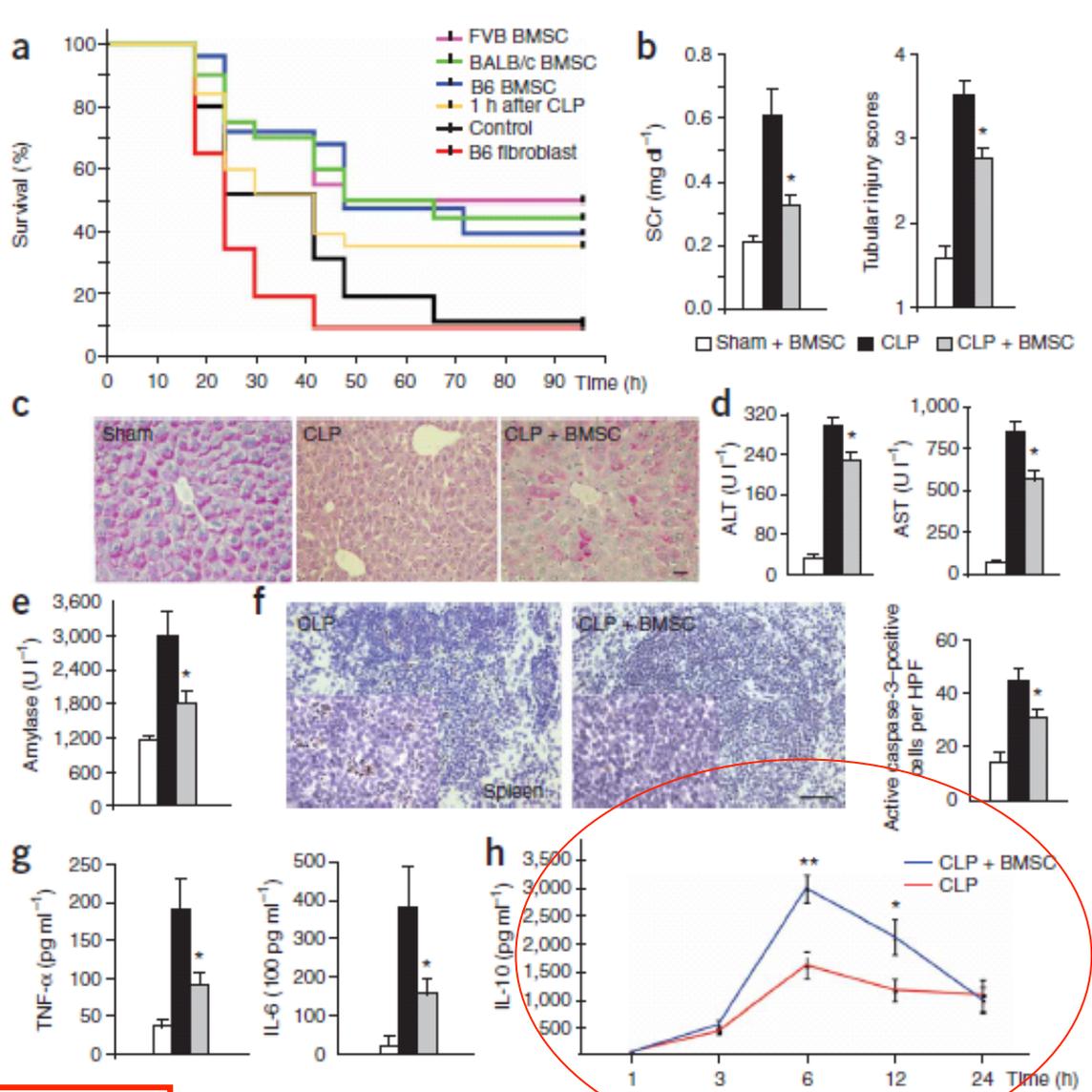
TABLE 2.
Response rates and survival

First Author		Outcome			Survival		
		CR (%)	PR (%)	MR (%)	Relapse (%)	TRM ^a (%)	OS (%)
Ringden (2006)	pts	6/8 (75)			0/8 (0)	3/8 (38)	5/8 (63)
	co	NM			NM	NM	0/16 (0)
Fang (2007)		5/6 (83)			1/6 (17)	1/6 (17)	4/6 (66)
Le Blanc (2008)		30/55 (55)	9/55 (16)		3/55 (5)	CR 11/30 (37) PR/NR 18/25 (72) ^b	16/30 (53) 4/25 (16) ^b
Von Bonin (2009)		1/13 (8)	1/13 (8)	5/13 (38)	0/13 (0)	9/13 (21)	4/13 (31)
Resnick (2013)		17/50 (34)	16/50 (32)		1/50 (2)	CR/PR 6/33 (18)	NM
Sanchez (2014)		11/25 (44)	6/25 (24)		2/25 (8)	CR/PR 7/17 (41) NR 5/8 (71)	8/11 (67) 3/14 (21)
Introna (2014)		11/40 (27)	16/40 (40)		6/40 (15)	18/40 (45)	16/40 (40)
Zhao (2015)	pts	17/28 (61)	4/28 (14)		2/28 (7) ^c	12/28 (43)	.../28 (46) ^d
	co	5/19 (26)	3/19 (16)		1/19 (3) ^c	13/19 (68)	.../19 (26)
Te Boome (2015)		12/48 (25)					.../48 (44)

Munneke et al. Transplantation 2016

Hashmi et al. Lancet Hematol 2016

MSCs ATTENUATE SEPSIS VIA PGE2-DEPENDENT REPROGRAMMING OF HOST MACROPHAGES



in animal models