

# John Strasswimmer MD, PhD

MIAMI CANCER 2018: NOVEL THERAPIES FOR BCC AND SCC OF SKIN AND MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA.

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# John Strasswimmer, MD, PhD

Novel Therapies for BCC and SCC of Skin and Merkel Cancer

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“why I am a mohs surgeon”

—JOHN STRASSWIMMER MD, PHD



SCC, RECURRENCE AFTER EXCISION,  
HAS CLL

“why I am a mohs surgeon”

–JOHN STRASSWIMMER MD, PHD



13 MONTHS LATER, HE TOOK ME  
SCUBA DIVING

# MOHS IN 2018: CURATIVE SURGERY NOT “FROZEN SECTIONS”

- fresh technique: <1% -5% recurrence vs 3-25% for excision (BCC, SCC)
- “staged” permanent technique:
  - <3% recurrence vs 15% (melanoma in situ)
  - <5% recurrence vs 20% DFSP (dermato-fibro-sarcoma-protuberans)



FRESH FOR SCC



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# John Strasswimmer MD, PhD

MIAMI CANCER 2018: NOVEL THERAPIES FOR BCC AND SCC OF SKIN AND MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA.

## Goals: understand three tumors

- MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA -  
THE DERMATOLOGIST'S ROLE IN AN ONCOLOGY CHALLENGE
- SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA:  
A DERMATOLOGIST'S AND ONCOLOGISTS' SHARED CHALLENGE
- BASAL CELL CARCINOMA -  
AN ONCOLOGIST'S ROLE IN A DERMATOLOGY CHALLENGE



# Goals: understand three cutaneous tumors

	MERKEL (MCC)	SQUAMOUS (SCC)	BASAL (BCC)
INCIDENCE	RARE (2488)	COMMON (1,000,000)	COMMON (5,000,000)
METASTATIC POTENTIAL	20-30% (1000)	LOW (10,000)	RARE (1,000 EST)
SYSTEMIC THERAPY	PD-1/PD-L1	NO	HEDGEHOG PATHWAY



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years

- -

- -



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years

- -

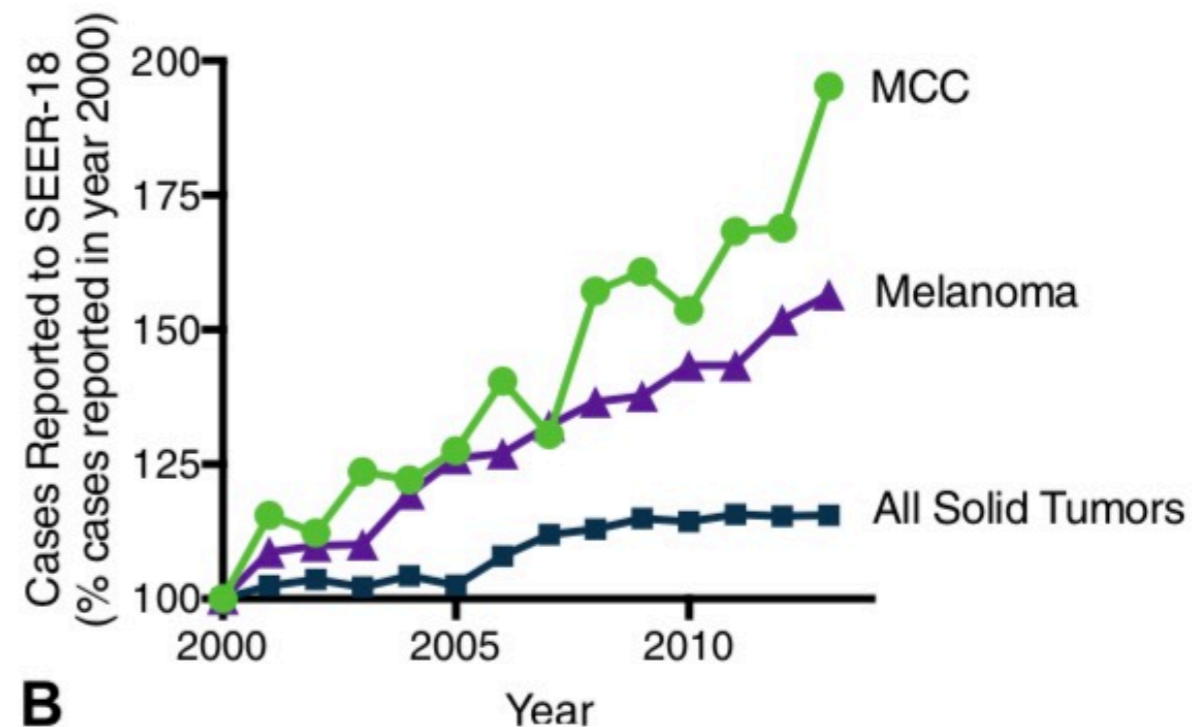
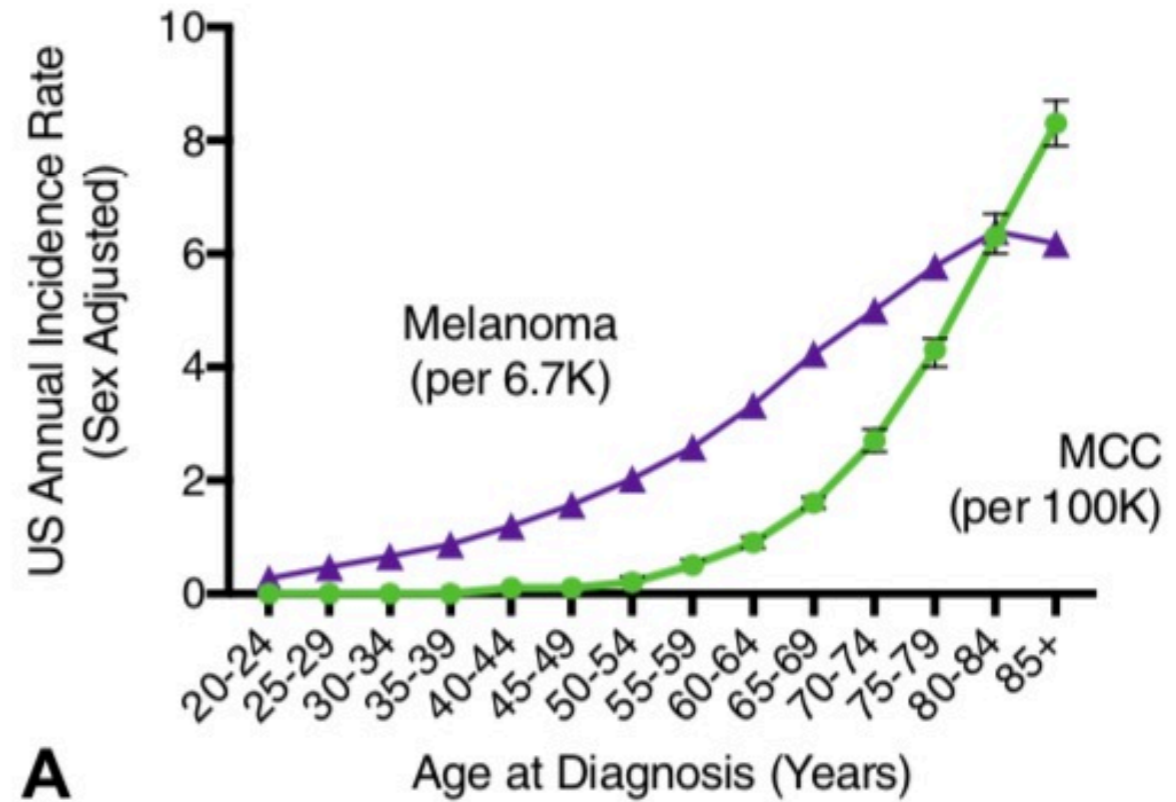
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# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
- -Very age dependent
- predict >3000 by 2025

REF: PAULSON ET AL: J. AMER ACAD. DERM 78 (3)  
NOVEMBER 2017



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

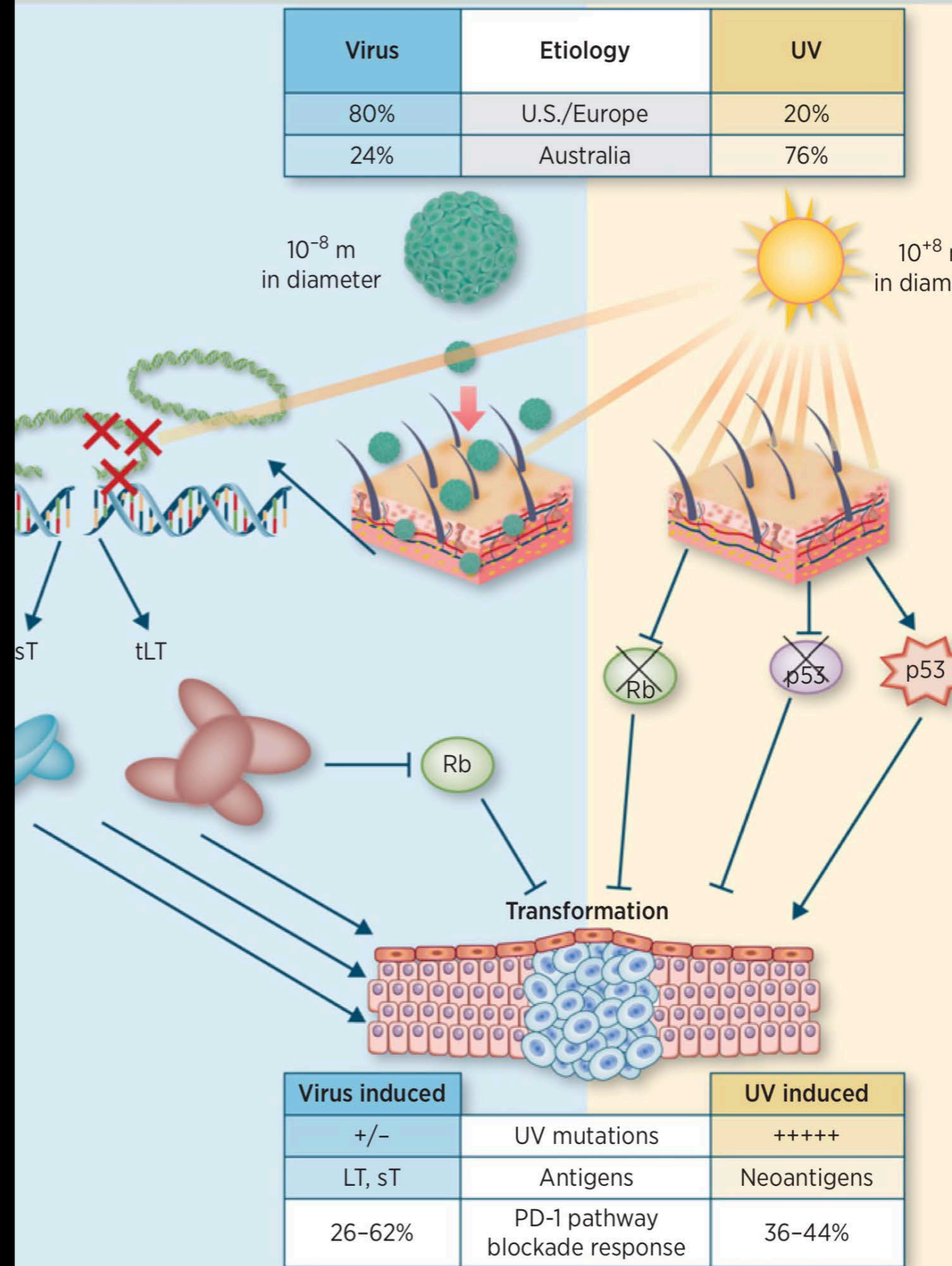
- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
- Etiology: UV and virus
- -



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
- Etiology: UV and virus
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REF: NGHEIM ET AL: CLINICAL CANCER RES. DECEMBER 2017



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
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- Immune role is significant





# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
- Etiology: UV and virus
- Immune role is significant



SPONTANEOUS RESOLUTION TWO  
MONTHS AFTER BIOPSY



# MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

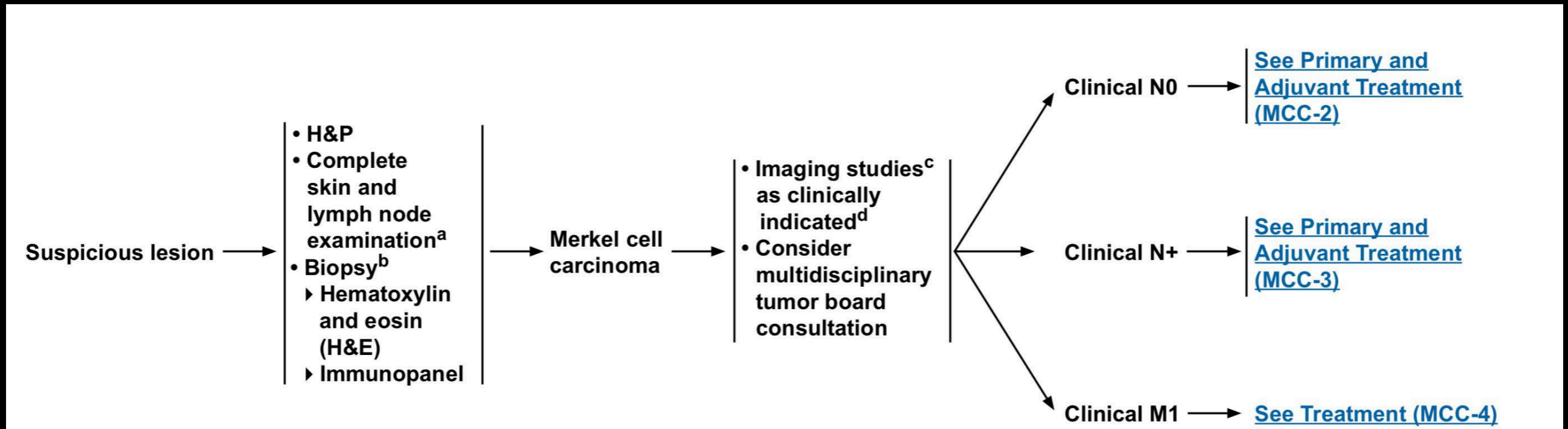
- Rare: 0.7 per 100,000 15.5 per 100,000 for  $\geq 85$  years
- Etiology: UV and virus
- Immune role is significant



NO PRIMARY TUMOR



# Staging Merkel Cell New 2018



NCCN GUIDELINES VERSION 1.2018 MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA

- ROLE OF VIRUS (MVPV)
  - QUANTITATION OF MCPV ANTIBODIES: PATIENT STATUS”
    - SERONEGATIVE: MAY PREDICT HIGHER RECURRENCE
    - SEROPOSITIVE: RISING TITRE MAY EARLY INDICATE RECURRENCE
- 2018 AJCC STAGING CHANGES INCLUDE
  - PATIENTS WITH UNKNOWN PRIMARY = NEARLY 2X INCREASED SURVIVAL
  - STAGING OF NODE DISEASE BY PATHOLOGY VS CLINICAL EACH STAGE



# How to treat Merkel Cell ?

**Table 1.** Selected data for chemotherapy and anti-PD1/PD-L1 in MCC

Line	Chemotherapy		Nivolumab ≥1st line	Avelumab ≥2nd line	Pembrolizumab 1st line
	1st line	2nd line			
Cohort size	62-67	20-30	22	88	25
Agent	Etoposide and platinum-based agent <sup>b</sup>	Topotecan <sup>b</sup>	Anti-PD-1	Anti-PD-L1	Anti-PD-1
ORR	31%-55%	9%-23%	68%	32%	56%
9-month PFS <sup>a</sup>	15%-26%	0%-3%	N/A <sup>c</sup>	33%	56%
Publications	Becker, 2017 <sup>d</sup> (46); Cowey, 2017 (45); Iyer, 2016 (44)		Topalian, 2017 (52)	Kaufman, 2016 (54)	Nghiem, 2016 (50)

<sup>a</sup>Values estimated from charts.

<sup>b</sup>Most commonly used agents.

<sup>c</sup>9-Month PFS is not yet available; however, 3-month median PFS is 82%.

<sup>d</sup>Data for second-line chemotherapy only.

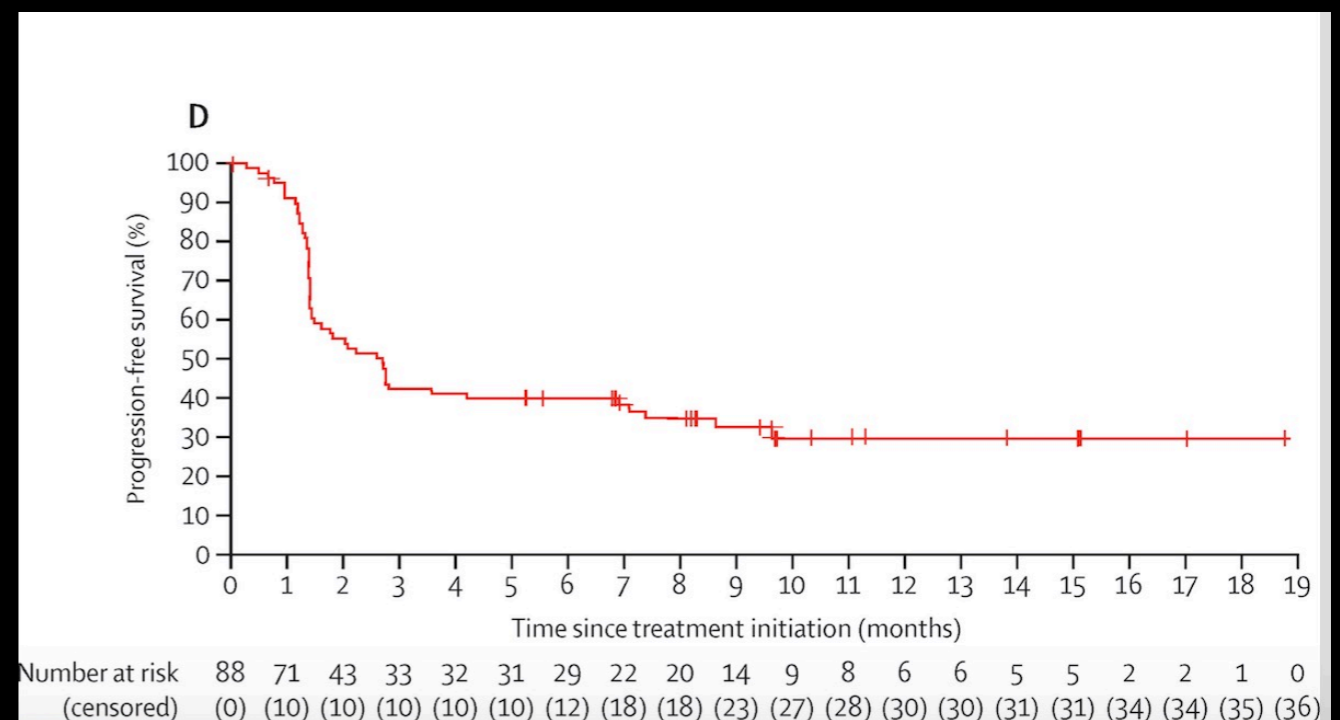
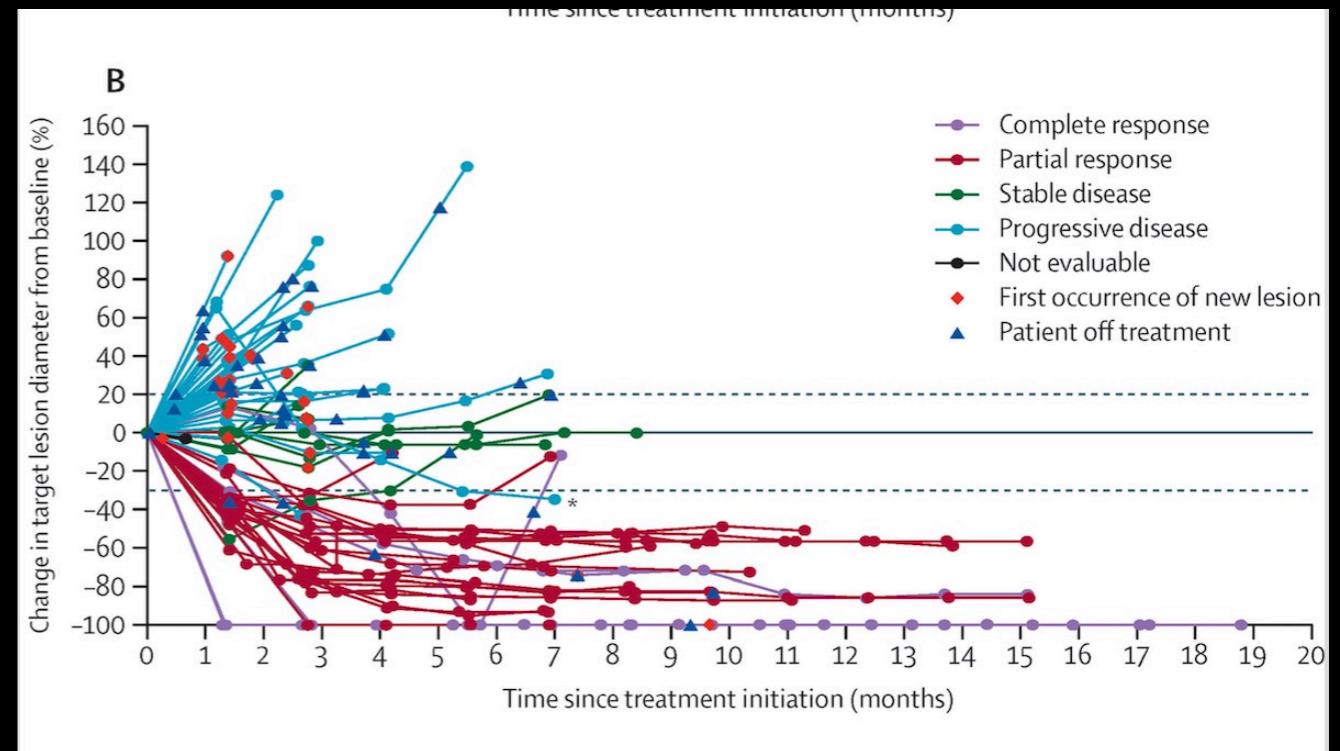
REF: NGHEIM ET AL: CLINICAL CANCER RES. DECEMBER 2017

- PD-(L)-1 BLOCKADE AVELUMAB FDA-APPROVED MARCH 2017
  - 40% DONT GET INITIAL RESPONSE
  - SECONDARY RESISTANCE CAN APPEAR
  - PATIENT LIMITATION: IMMUNOSUPPRESSED, AUTOIMMUNE
- TRIALS
  - NIVOLUMAB+IPILIMUMAB+/- SBRT
  - PEMBROLIZUMAB WITH OR WITHOUT STEREOTACTIC BODY RADIATION
  - T-VEC (TALIMOGENE LAHERPAREPVEC) WITH OR WITHOUT RADIOTHERAPY



# JAVELIN Merkel 200 trial

- Avelumab ( PD-L1 blockade ) approved March 2017 for >12 year old for metastatic MCC
- Administration:
  - 10mg.kg q2 weeks
  - AE: pneumonitis, hepatitis, coitis, endocrinopathies, nephritis
  - embryo and fetotoxic
- Study: Phase 2, open label, single arm
  - RECIST v1.1
  - : 88 patients ORR= 33% ( 11% CR; 21% PR)
  - estimate: 74% of responders wil have duration ?12 months



REF: KAUFMAN ET AL: LANCET ONCOLOGY OCTOBER 2016 AND KAUFMAN ET AL J. IMMUNOTHERAPY CANCER 2018

# SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

- common >1,000,000 per year
- moderate metastatic risk
- Hi Risk:
  - immunosuppression (CLL, solid organ transplant)
  - tumor: poorly differentiated, fat invasion

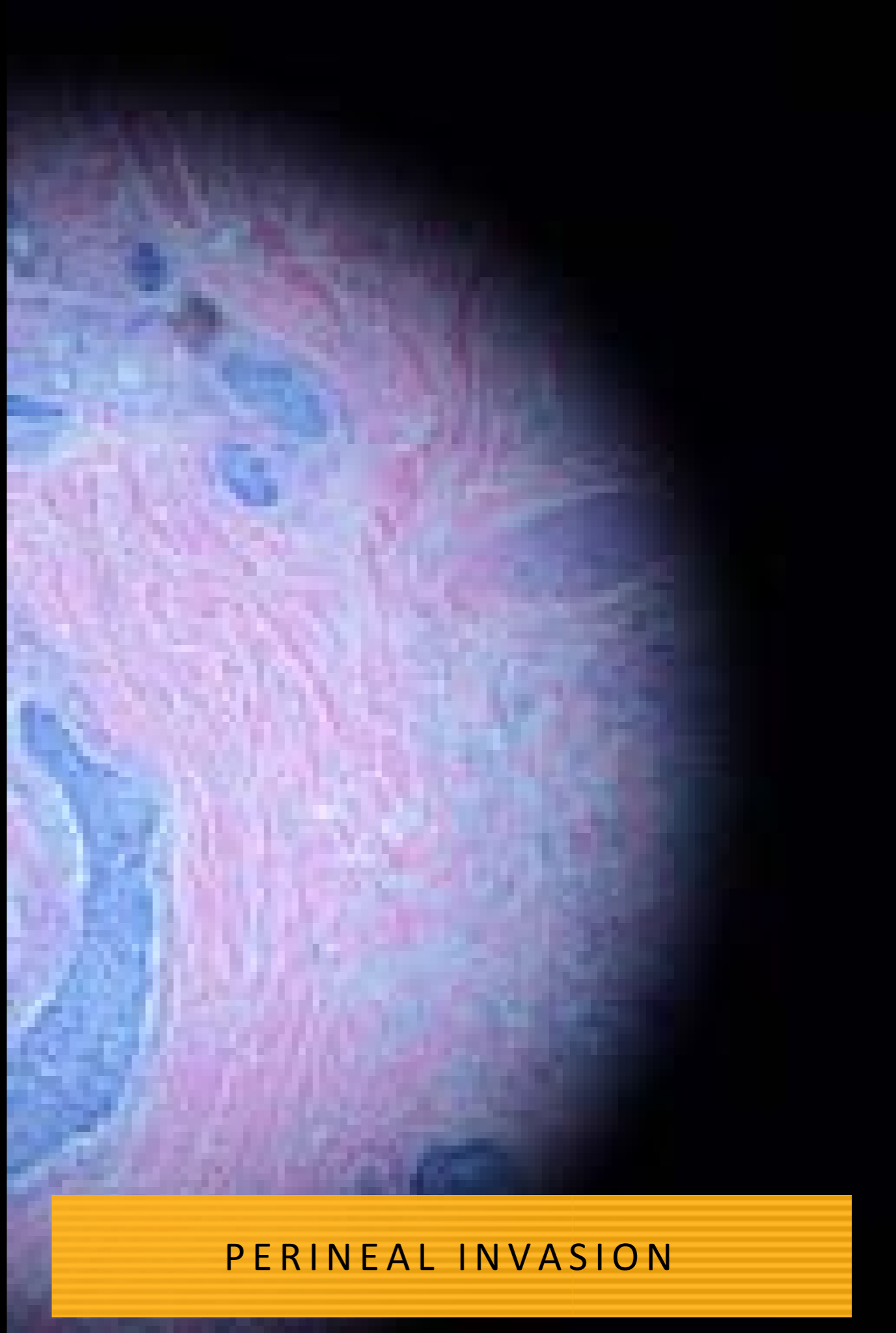


SCC, RECURRENCE AFTER EXCISION,  
HAS CLL



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PERINEAL INVASION



# How to treat cSCC?

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**NCCN** National Comprehensive Cancer Network®

**NCCN Guidelines Version 2.2018**  
**Squamous Cell Skin Cancer**

[NCCN Guidelines Index](#)  
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[Discussion](#)

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FOLLOW-UP	RECURRENCE
<p><b>Local disease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H&amp;P<sup>u,v</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Every 3–12 mo for 2 y, then every 6–12 mo for 3 y, then annually for life</li></ul></li><li>• Patient education<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Sun protection</li><li>▶ Self examination of skin</li></ul></li></ul>	
<p><b>Regional disease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H&amp;P<sup>u,v,w</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Every 1–3 mo for 1 y, then every 2–4 mo for 1 y, then every 4–6 mo for 3 y, then every 6–12 mo for life</li></ul></li><li>• Patient education<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Sun protection</li><li>▶ Self examination of skin and lymph nodes</li></ul></li></ul>	
	<p>Local → <a href="#">See Primary Treatment for local disease (SCC-1)</a></p> <p>New regional disease → <a href="#">See Primary Treatment for regional disease (SCC-4)</a></p> <p>Regional recurrence or distant metastases → Multidisciplinary tumor board consultation<sup>x</sup></p>

“THERE ARE NO DRUGS APPROVED BY THE US FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) SPECIFICALLY FOR THE TREATMENT OF CSCC.”  
2018 J. AMER ACAD DERMATOL.





# How to treat cSCC?

## • EGFR MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES

- cetuximab 2011 Phase 2: nonresectable DCR 69% PR 35% CR 6% CR
- cetuximab + /- platinum, 5-FU 2015 nonresectable neoadjuvant helps 92% become resectable
- panitumumab 2014 Phase 2: nonresectable 31% ORR PR18% CR 12%

## • EGFR SMALL MOLECULE INHIBITOR

- Gefitinib 2017 Phase 2: nonresectable DCR 51% % ORR 16%

## • PD-1 INHIBITOR

### • Cemiplimab

- 2017 Phase 2: nonresectable ORR 16% PR 16%
- Expanded axes study 2018: Regenron/Sanofi : “An Open-Label, Expanded Access Protocol of Cemiplimab in Patients With Metastatic or Locally Advanced Cutaneous Squamous Cell Carcinoma Who Are Not Candidates for Surgery”



# BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

- common >5,000,000 per year
- extremely low metastatic risk
- high risk for local morbidity
  - tumor type( size, location, histology)
  - perineurial invasion

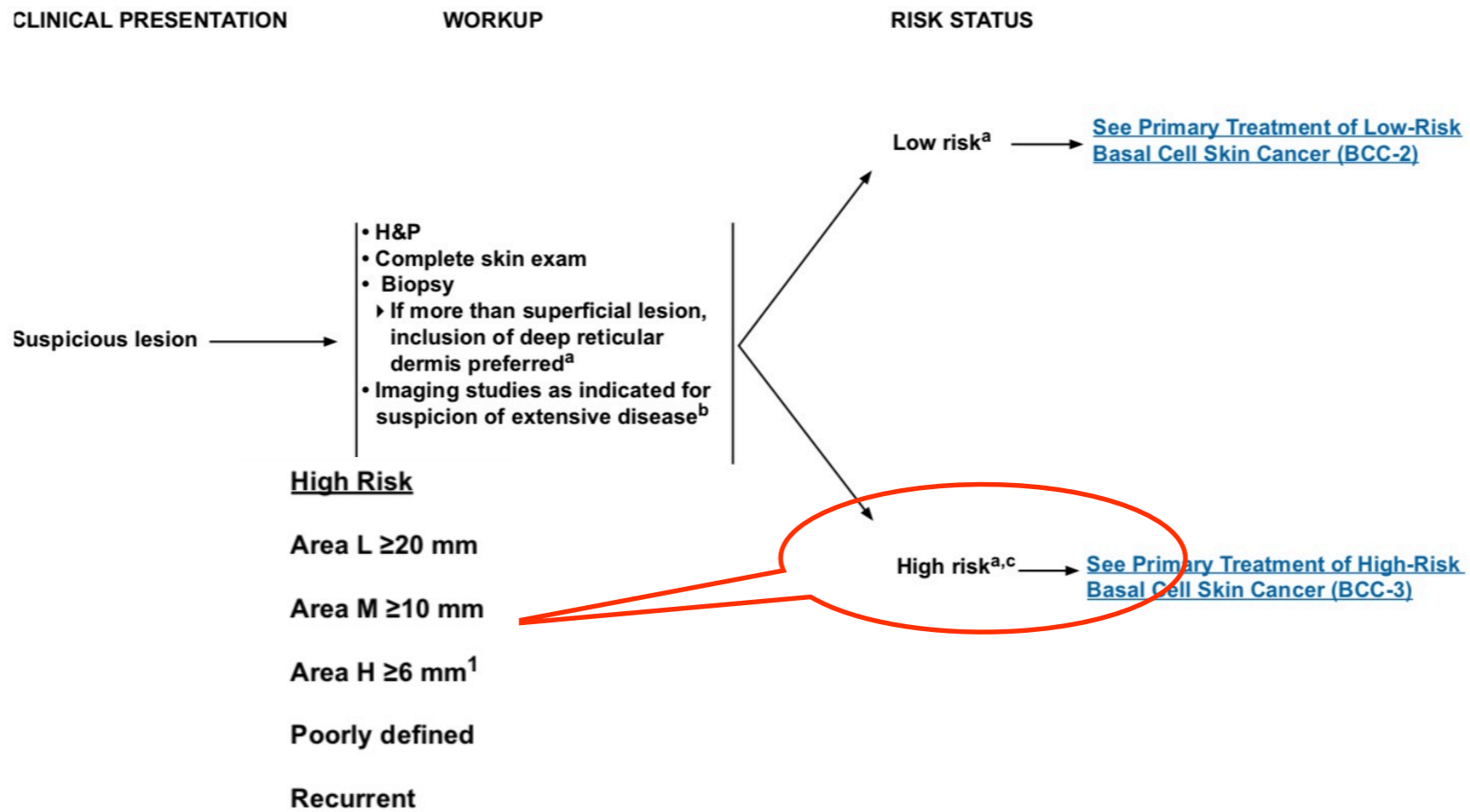


# ADVANCED BCC

- Locally Advanced (laBCC)
- Metastatic (mBCC)



# LOCALLY ADVANCED BCC



[See Risk Factors for Recurrence \(BCC-A\).](#)

Extensive disease includes deep structural involvement such as bone, perineural disease, and deep soft tissue. If perineural disease is suspected, MRI is preferred. Any high-risk factor places the patient in the high-risk category.

**Note:** All recommendations are category 2A unless otherwise indicated.

Clinical Trials: NCCN believes that the best management of any cancer patient is in a clinical trial. Participation in clinical trials is especially encouraged.





# How to treat IaBCC?

HEDGEHOG PATHWAY (SMOOTHENED) INHIBITORS (HPI)



# HEDGEHOG PATHWAY

- controls contact growth inhibition
- embryogenesis, others

MAKE A "HEDGEHOG MUTATION"

OR

FEED THEM AN HPI

cylopamine (natural)



# HEDGEHOG PATHWAY

- controls contact growth inhibition
- embryogenesis, others
- BCC are hedgehog mutants



cylopamine (natural) or  
vismodegib / sonidegib





# HEDGEHOG PATHWAY

- controls contact growth inhibition
- embryogenesis, others
- BCC are “hedgehog mutants”

TREAT

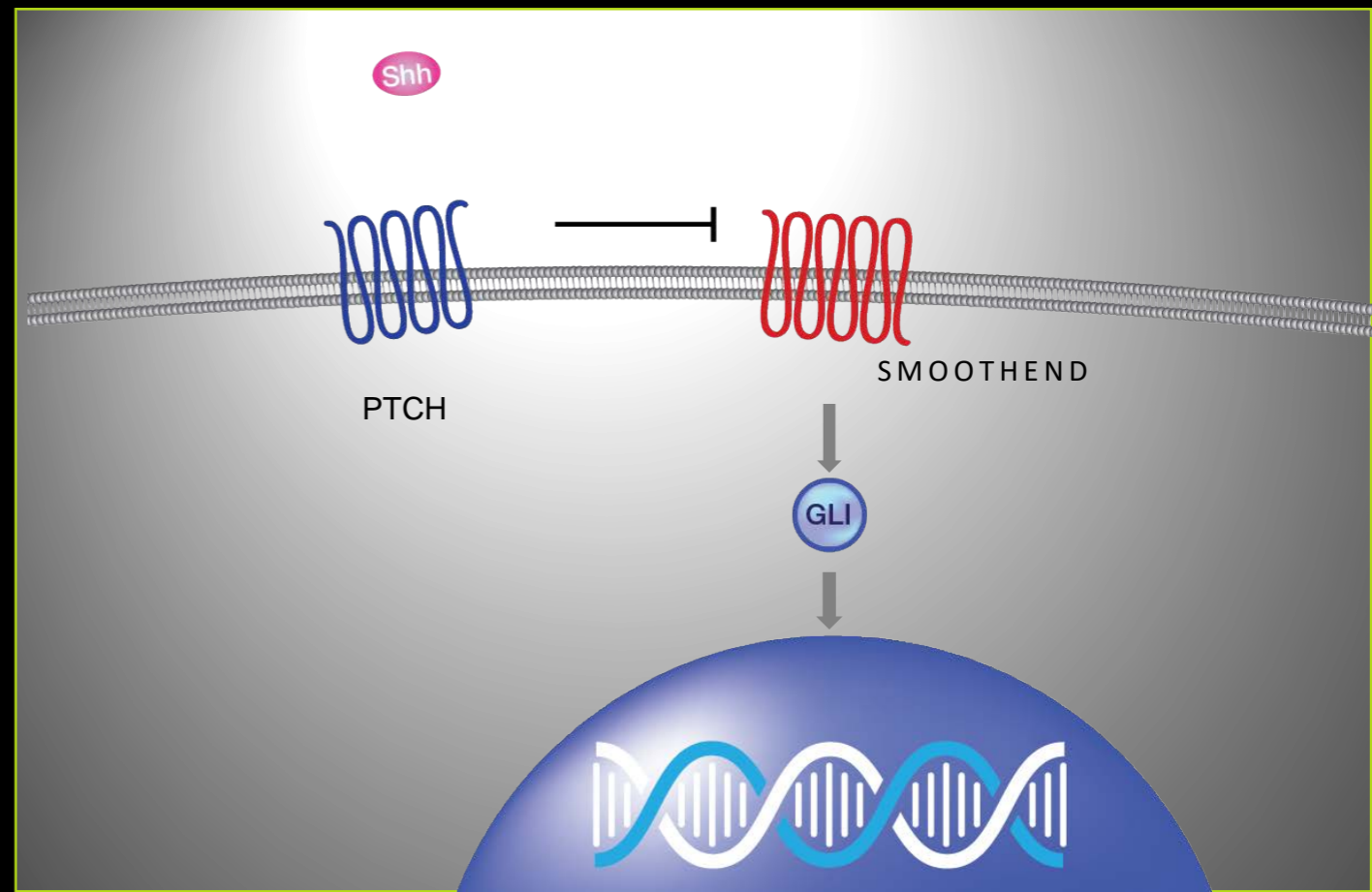
BCC

FEED THEM AN HPI



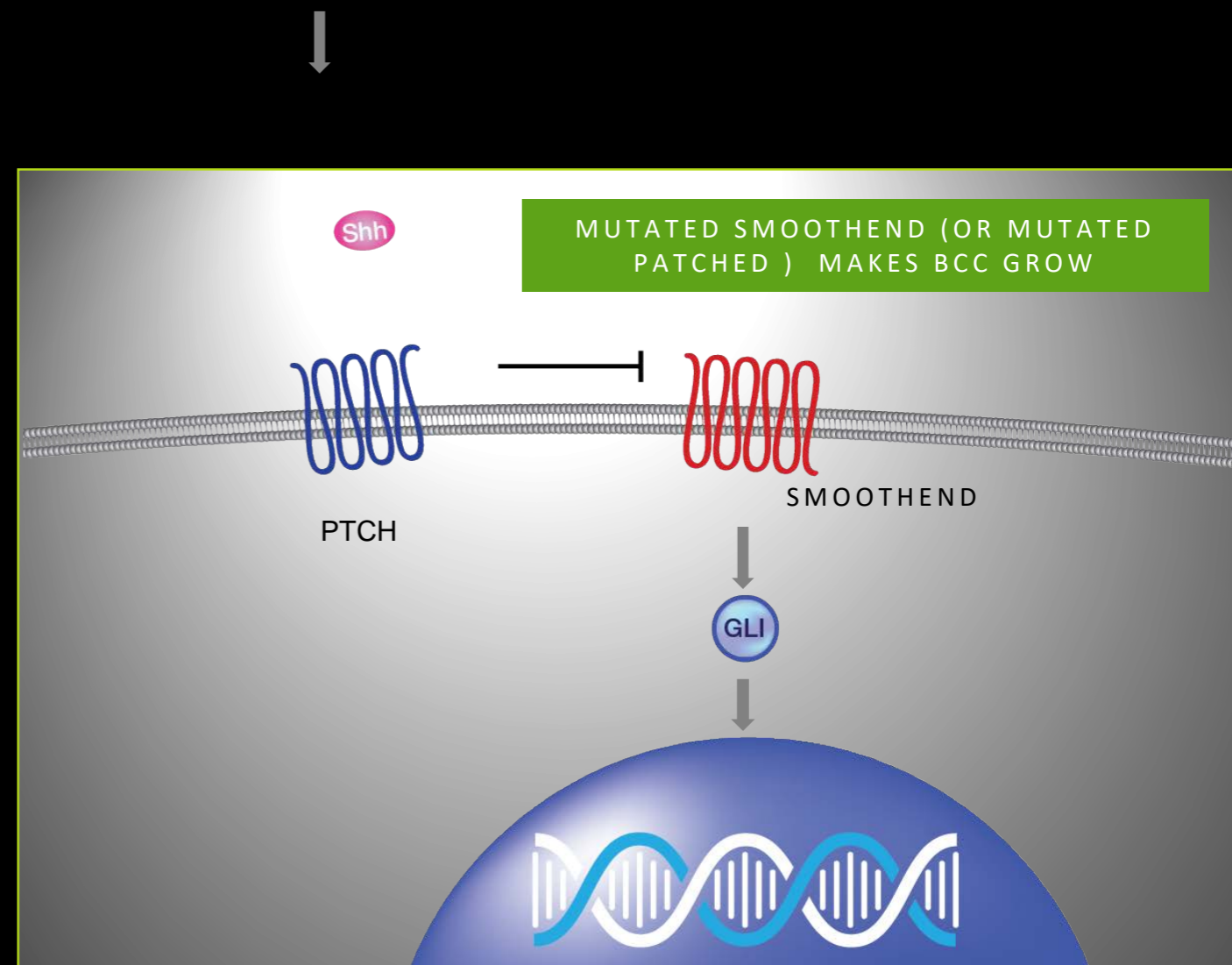
# What are HPIs?

SMALL MOLECULE INHIBITOR OF SMOOTHENED OF THE HEDGEHOG MULTISTEP PATHWAY



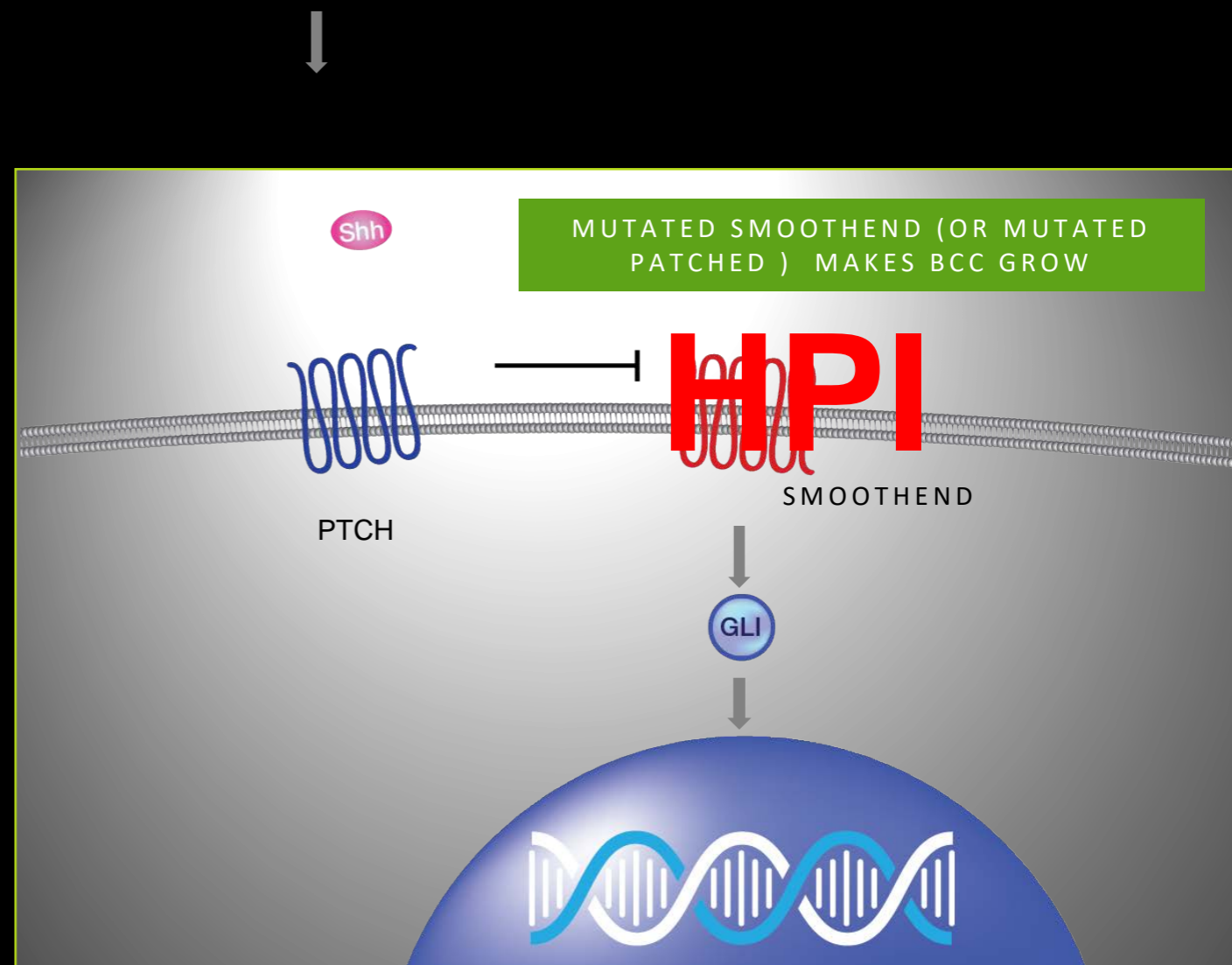
# What are HPis?

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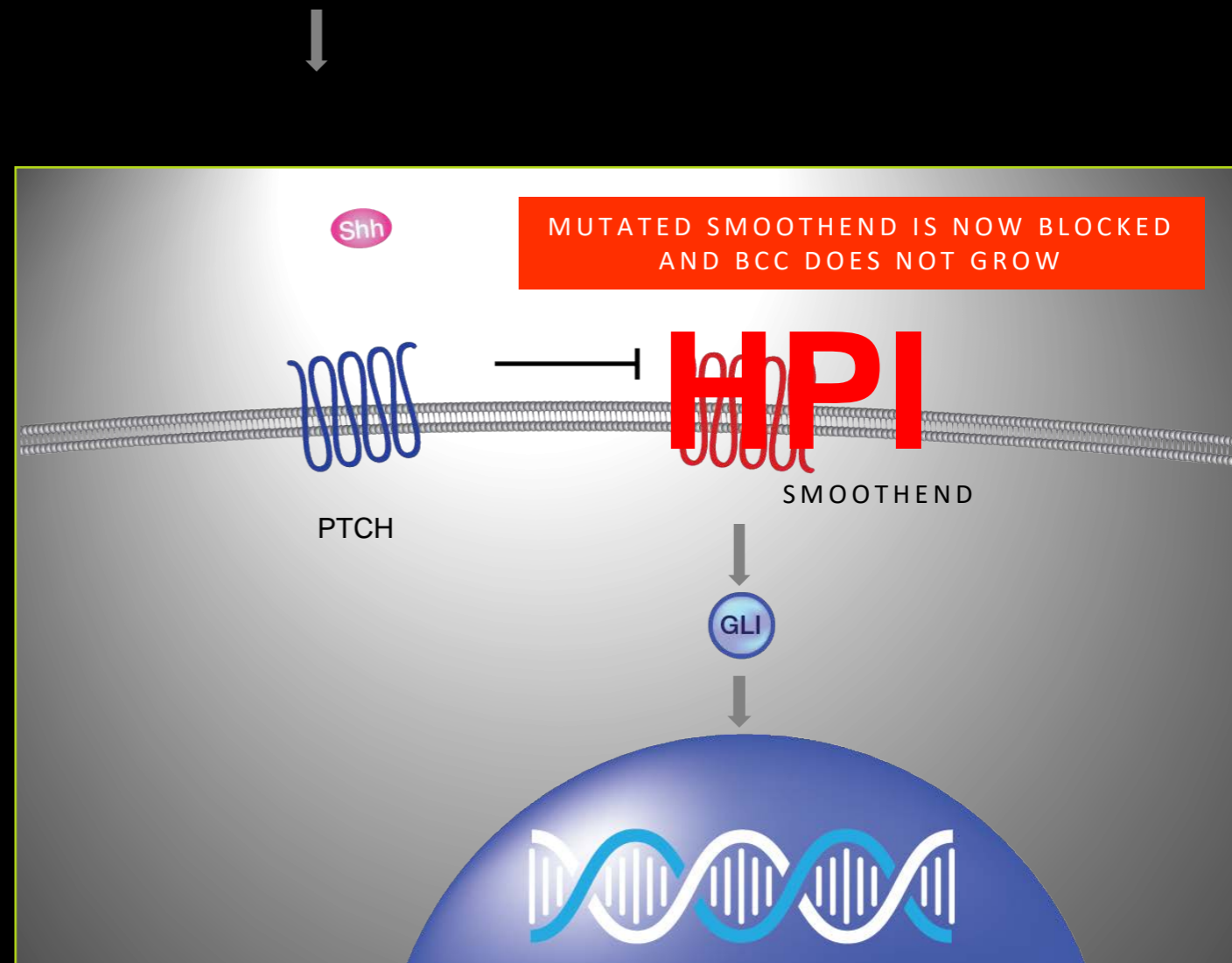
# What are HPIs?

SMALL MOLECULE INHIBITOR



# What are HPis?

SMALL MOLECULE INHIBITOR



# HPI for laBCC

- Reversible inhibitors of smoothed molecule in the hedgehog pathway
- Both require pregnancy control “black box” as teratogen
- Both indicated to treat as long as tolerated or until progression
  - vismodegib: FDA approved for both laBCC and metastatic (mBCC) 2012 daily dose 150mg
  - sonidegib FDA approved for laBCC 2015 daily dose 200 mg



# Goals

- WHAT ARE HEDGEHOG PATHWAY INHIBITORS (HPI)?  
DO THEY WORK?  
HOW LONG DO YOU NEED TO TREAT?  
DO THEY HELP WITH SURGERY OR RADIATION TREATMENT?  
HOW TO MANAGE “SIDE EFFECTS”  
HOW TO MANAGE RESISTANCE?



# HPI for laBCC

- work quickly

PRE TREATMENT



6 MONTHS HPI





## HPI for laBCC

- work quickly
- potential for cure
- How long to treat?

2 WEEK PULSE

PRE TREATMENT



**Fig 1.** A Hispanic man presented with a large BCC, which was previously treated with radiation. He was started on vismodegib, but treatment abruptly ended after only

2 YEARS LATER



[Spontaneous resolution of advanced basal cell carcinoma after short-pulse treatment with hedgehog pathway inhibitor.](#)

Jacobsen AA, Strasswimmer J.

JAAD Case Rep. 2016 Aug 30;2(4):360-1. doi: 10.1016/j.jdc.2016.06.010. eCollection 2016 Jul. No abstract available.

# HPI for laBCC

- work quickly

6 YEARS  
CONTINUOUS  
THERAPY

## Four-year experience with vismodegib hedgehog inhibitor therapy



*To the Editor:* Vismodegib for basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is indicated until treatment failure. Long-term administration remains a concern. Two prospective studies report follow-up of only 10<sup>1</sup> and 5.5 months.<sup>2</sup> In another series, more than 33% could not tolerate vismodegib beyond 3 months,<sup>3</sup> and the longest patient series did not report tolerability.<sup>4</sup> We describe our 4-year experience.

Twelve patients (median age, 63 years; range, 34-94 years) with BCC commenced vismodegib therapy (Table 1). Three (25%) terminated therapy within 6 months due to adverse events (AE). All others had sustained improvement (mean, 25 months; range, 13-42 months). Two required "medication holidays," and 2 others discontinued after 13 and 17 months due to worsening AEs despite clinical improvement. One

PRE TREATMENT



6 MONTHS HPI



# Evidence

- **VISMODEGIB**

- ERIVANCE 2012- Phase 2, FDA approval for laBCC (43% ORR) and mBCC (30% ORR)
- STEVIE 2017 open label 1215 patients 8.9 month duration 68% ORR laBCC 37% mBCC

- **SONIDEGIB**

- BOLT 2015 2012- Phase 2, FDA approval for laBCC (43% ORR)

- **POOLED ANALYSIS JAMA DERMATOLOGY 2016**

- Audrey A. Jacobsen BS, ; Adam S. Aldahan, BS; Olivia B. Hughes,; Vidhi V. Shah, BA1; John Strasswimmer, MD, PhD
- ORR 64% (vismodegib) 3 most common adverse effects were muscle spasms (66.4%), alopecia (61.1%) and dysgeusia (57.3%) Recommend CPK monitoring for class of medications

Research

Original Investigation

Hedgehog Pathway Inhibitor Therapy for Locally Advanced and Metastatic Basal Cell Carcinoma  
A Systematic Review and Pooled Analysis of Interventional Studies

Audrey A. Jacobsen, BA; Adam S. Aldahan, BS; Olivia B. Hughes, BS; Vidhi V. Shah, BA; John Strasswimmer, MD, PhD



# USERS MANUAL FOR HPI

JACOBSEN ET AL PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT OF ADVERSE EVENTS OF HPI THERAPY JAAD 76 (4) 2016

- Molecules active in :
  - hair follicles, GI tract, ovaries
  - probably elsewhere
- Adverse events are in groups:
  - The anticipated, treatment limiting discomforts (alopecia, dysgeusia, leg cramps, fatigue, amenorrhea)
  - medical adverse events ( high CPK, electrolyte disturbance, CHF, pregnancy)
  - ? SCC risk

**Table 1. Mechanism of Action and Proposed Management for Adverse Effects Due to Hedgehog Pathway Inhibitors**

Adverse Effect	Mechanism	Proposed Management
Alopecia	<u>Shh</u> inhibition leads to <u>telogen</u> arrest in the hair follicle cycle <sup>14</sup>	Concealment measures and <u>minoxidil</u> 2-5% continued 6 months post-therapy <sup>12</sup>
Amenorrhea	Reversible FSH inhibition <sup>23</sup>	Counsel on reversibility  Early family planning in <u>Gorlin</u> Syndrome cases  Monitor for other menopause-like state conditions
<u>Dysgeusia</u> and weight loss	HPIs may inhibit taste cell turnover <sup>18</sup>	Early nutritional evaluation and counseling <sup>17</sup>  Eliminate extraneous factors of taste alteration <sup>12</sup>
Elevated CPK and muscle spasms	<u>Shh</u> may cause altered calcium transport leading to impaired muscle function <sup>21</sup>	Supportive care  Calcium channel blockers (amlodipine) may help <sup>22</sup>
New onset SCC	Possible dedifferentiation of <u>basilosquamous</u> tumors, chronic inflammation (similar to a <u>Marjolin</u> ulcer), and/or SCC collision tumor with the original BCC site <sup>32</sup>	Biopsy for new or persistent ulceration, nodule, or erythema <sup>32</sup>  Skin exams during and after therapy for distant SCC

# USERS MANUAL FOR HPI

JACOBSEN ET AL PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT OF ADVERSE EVENTS OF HPI  
THERAPY JAAD 76 (4) 2016

- New recognized adverse events are appearing

**Table 2. New and/or rare adverse effects due to vismodegib treatment reported in the literature**

---

Amenorrhea due to reversible FSH inhibition<sup>23</sup>

Cholestatic hepatic injury<sup>34</sup> and hepatotoxicity<sup>33</sup>

Drug hypersensitivity syndrome<sup>37</sup>

Elevated International Normalized Ratio (INR)<sup>38</sup>

Epidermal cyst formation and hyperkeratosis<sup>39</sup>

New onset congestive heart failure<sup>40</sup>

New onset keratoacanthomas<sup>41</sup>

Persistent alopecia<sup>13</sup>

Squamous cell carcinoma<sup>32,42-46</sup>

Trichodysplasia spinulosum in a Gorlin syndrome patient<sup>47</sup>

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PART 3: RESISTANCE

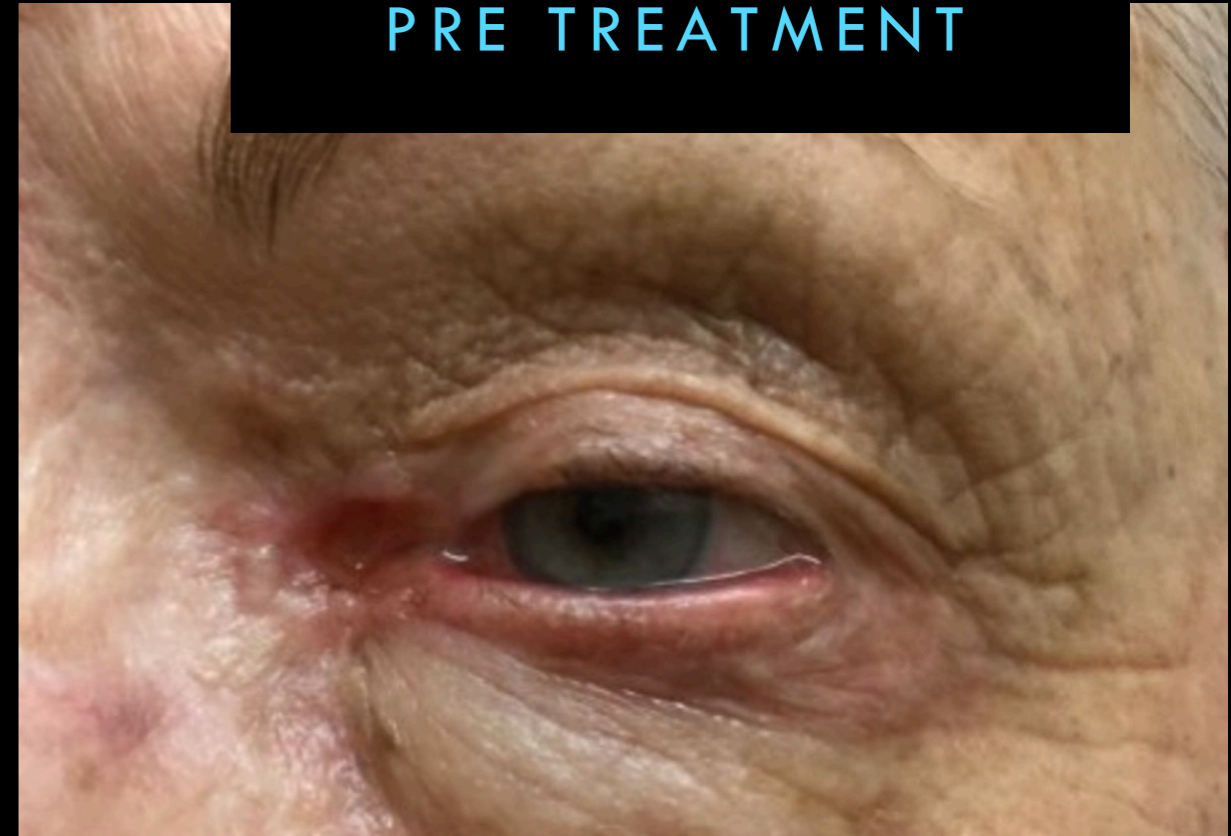
# USERS MANUAL FOR HPI

CLINICAL RESISTANCE VS OCCULT RESISTANCE

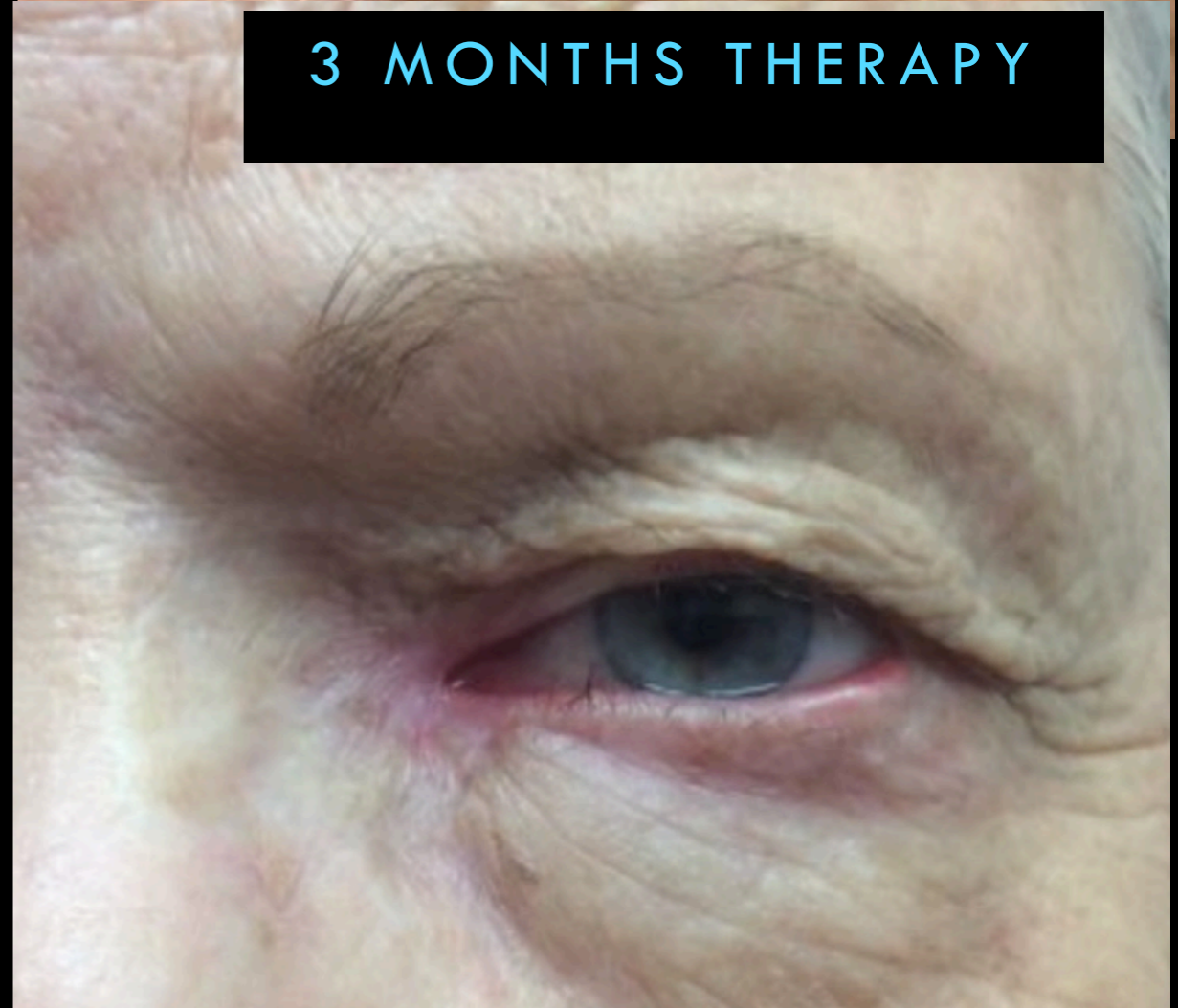
# Occult Resistance

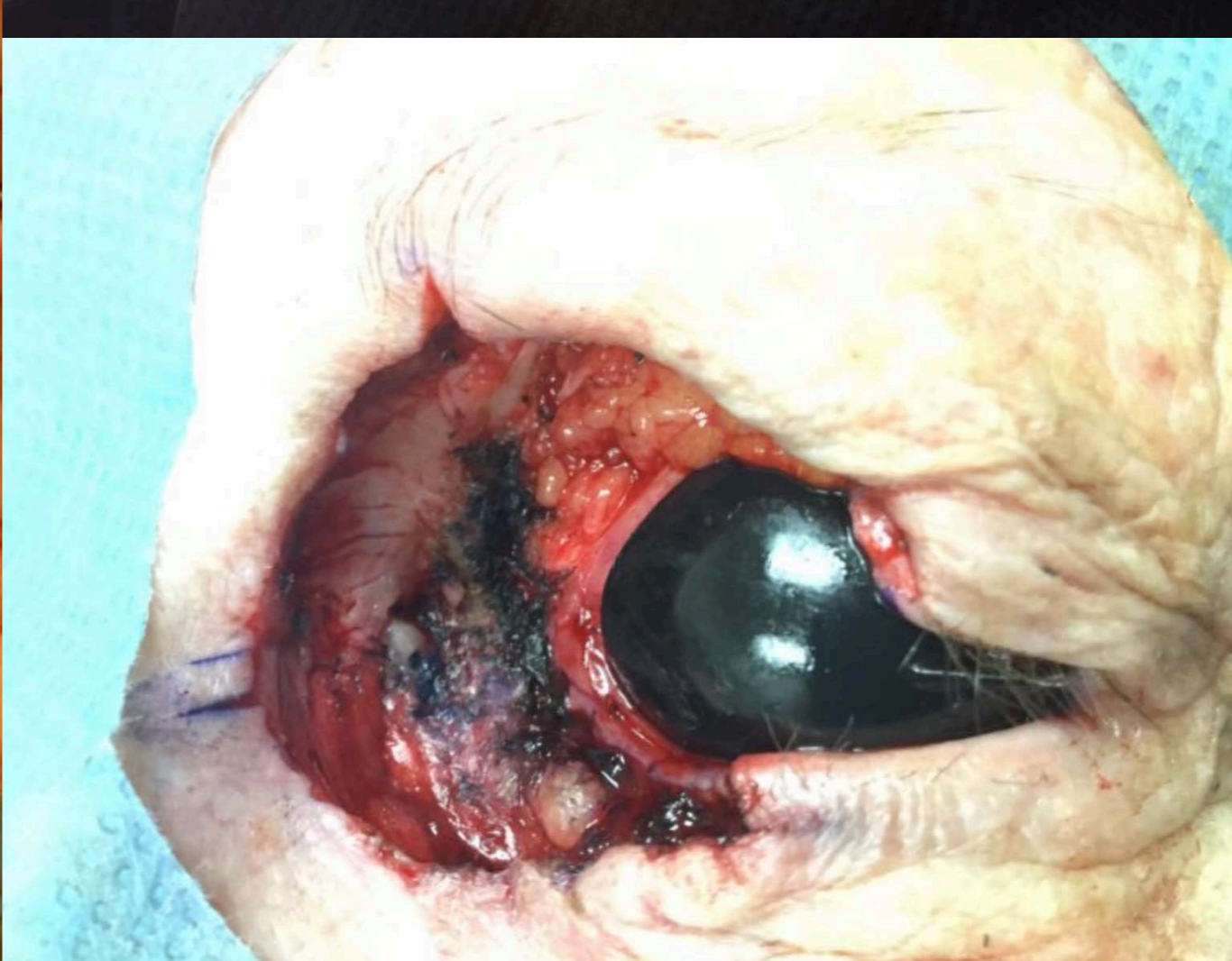
- Failed Mohs twice over 5 years
- MRI of orbit = limited
- Repeat MRI = no change

PRE TREATMENT



3 MONTHS THERAPY







“Time to finish”

MELANOMA 5K APRIL 2018 BOCA RATON



Thank you

[WWW.DERMATOLGYMISSIONS.ORG](http://WWW.DERMATOLGYMISSIONS.ORG)

