

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual  
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2023**

**RhAPP**  
RHEUMATOLOGY ADVANCED  
PRACTICE PROVIDERS



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# *Crystallizing* the Latest Developments in Gout

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# Faculty Disclosures

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- Kris Giani, PA-C:
  - Consultant: Abbvie
- Jessica Michaud, PharmD:
  - There are no financial relationships to disclose.

# Objectives

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- Differentiate gout from other types of crystal arthropathies
- Explain the role of pegloticase in gout
- Implement a plan for pegloticase that includes methotrexate
- Interpret literature on the cardiovascular risk related to gout and of allopurinol and febuxostat

# Poll for the Attendees

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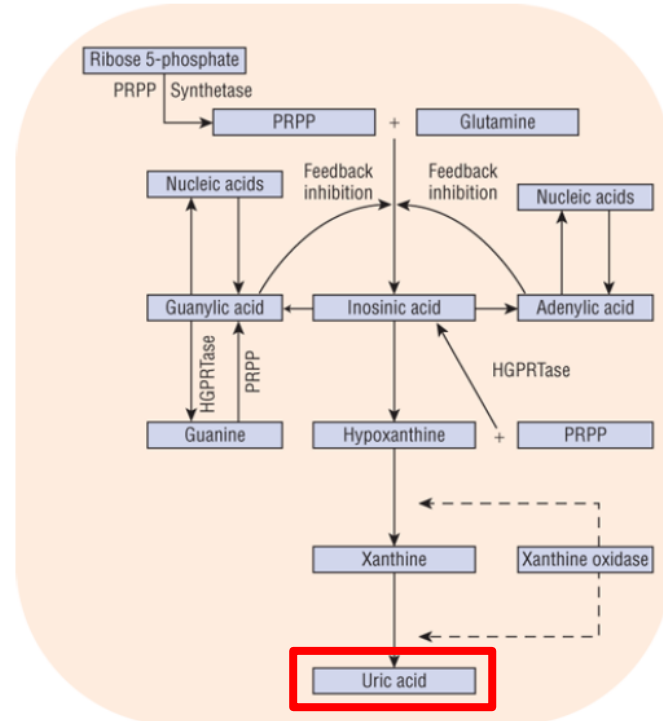
- How much experience do you have with gout?
  - 1: little to none → 4: a lot
- How much pegloticase have you used?
  - 1: none, 2: a few times, 3: many times, 4: a LOT
- Have you used a csDMARD with pegloticase?
  - Raise hand: yes

# Epidemiology

- Prevalence in the United States ~4% and increasing
- Risk factors
  - Non-modifiable
    - Age and gender (men overall but also at younger ages in men) (lower risk in premenopausal women due to ↓ active renal reabsorptive urate transporters due to estrogen)
    - Race (racial and ethnic minorities, esp Black)
    - Genetics
  - Modifiable
    - Obesity
    - HTN
    - Dyslipidemia
    - Cardiovascular disease
    - Diabetes mellitus
    - CKD
    - Dietary factors
    - Alcohol
    - Medications altering urate balance

# Pathophysiology

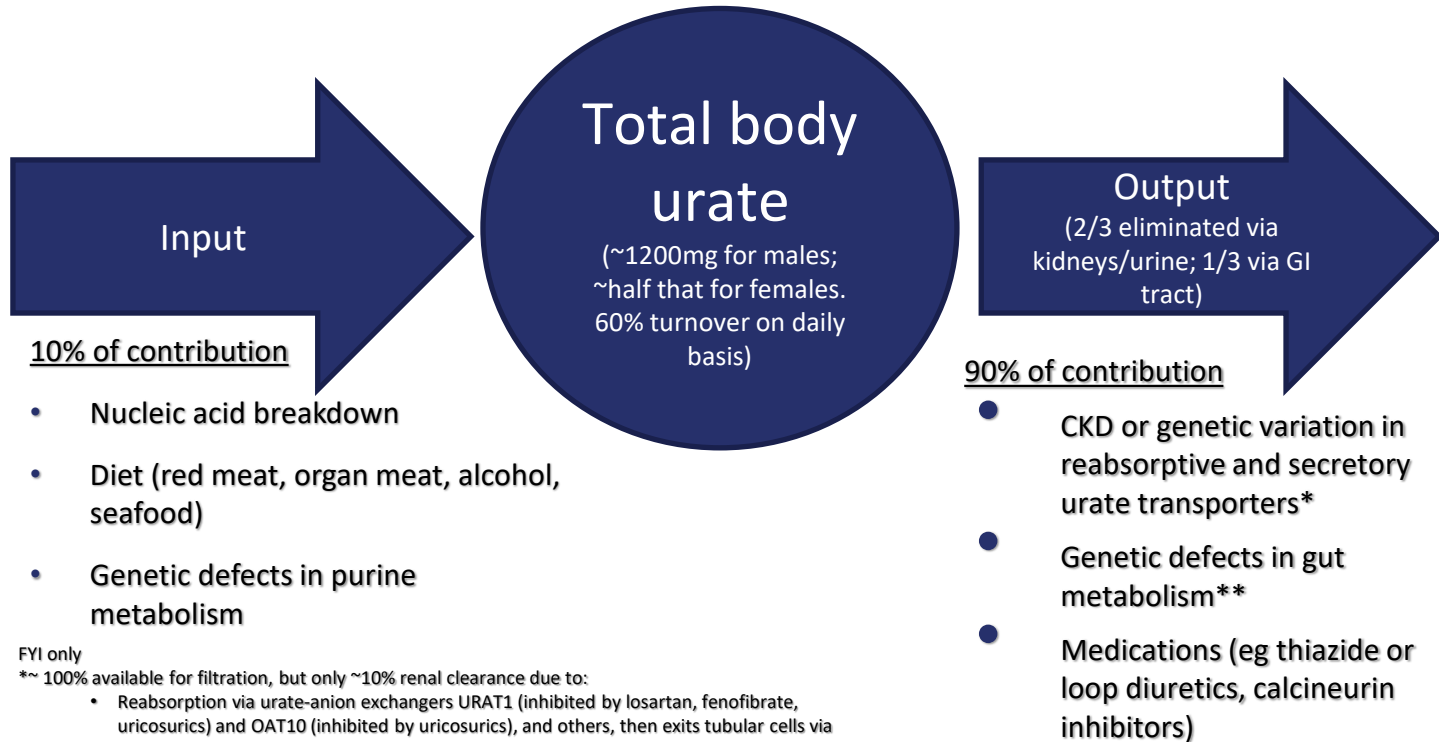
- Uric acid is the final waste product of nucleic acid (purine) breakdown
- Other mammals have uricase to further break down uric acid into allantoin
- Solubility threshold is <6.8 mg/dL



Source: J.T. DiPiro, R.L. Talbert, G.C. Yee, G.R. Matzke, B.G. Wells, L.M. Posey: Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 10th Edition, [www.accesspharmacy.com](http://www.accesspharmacy.com)  
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# Pathophysiology



FYI only

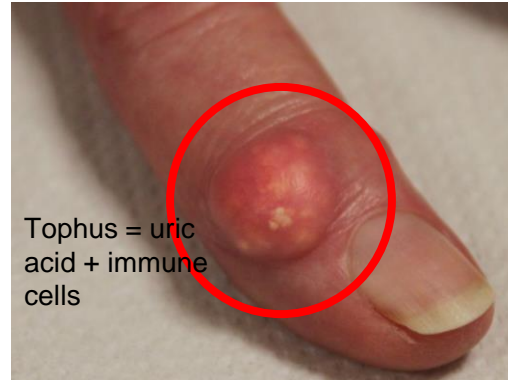
\*~ 100% available for filtration, but only ~10% renal clearance due to:

- Reabsorption via urate-anion exchangers URAT1 (inhibited by losartan, fenofibrate, uricosurics) and OAT10 (inhibited by uricosurics), and others, then exits tubular cells via GLUT9
- Secretion via anion exchangers OAT1 and OAT3, and others

\*\*Transportation into gut at least partly mediated by high-capacity urate efflux transporter ABCG2 (also expressed in proximal renal tubular epithelium), then degradation by colonic bacteria

# Symptoms - Acute Gout Flare

- Severe joint pain – described as being on fire or being dislocated
- Rapid onset (6-12 hours), localized (85-90% single joint), inflammatory
- Self-limiting and may last from days to weeks (3-14 days)
- Most common joint is first metatarsophalangeal – “podagra”



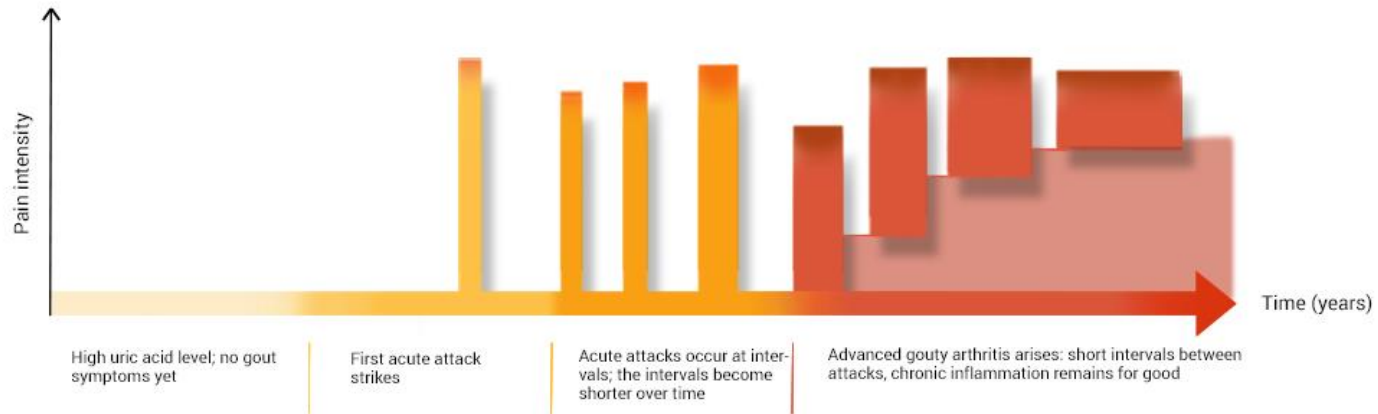
- Then in order: insteps, ankles, heels, knees, wrists, fingers, elbows

# Disease Course

Asymptomatic hyperuricemia

Intercritical gout and recurrent gouty arthritis

Chronic tophaceous gout



# Diagnosis

- **Joint fluid aspiration** – gold standard (“crystal-prove”)
  - Look for MSU crystals – confirms gout
  - Other crystals may be present, eg calcium pyrophosphate (CPP) → calcium pyrophosphate deposition disease (CPPD) or “pseudogout”
- Serum uric acid (SUA) should be measured and followed, however, it is **NOT** diagnostic
  - Uric acid can be higher or lower (usually lower) than usual during a flare

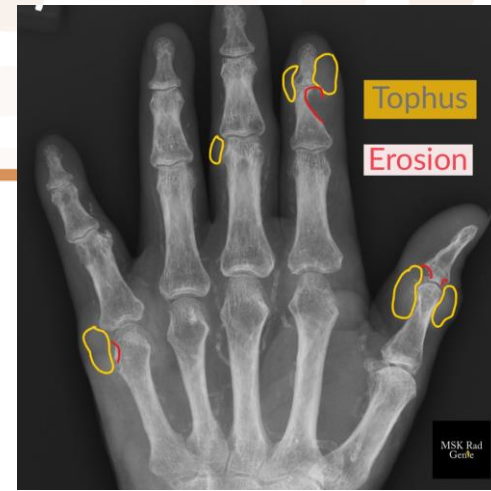
# Why is This Important?

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- Gout is NOT a disease of acute flares followed by full recovery of the involved joint!
- Gout is NOT a “self-inflicted” disease caused by food or alcohol  
→ cannot be fully solved by diet changes
- Gout may be an independent risk factor for premature death
- Focus is often on treating flares, under-estimating gout’s impact on mobility, function, and quality of life

# Why is This Important?

- Without treatment:
  - Flares
  - Joint damage
  - Tophi
  - Kidney stones (10-25%)
  - ?Urate nephropathy
- It can take months-years for crystals or tophi to dissolve



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**TREATMENT**

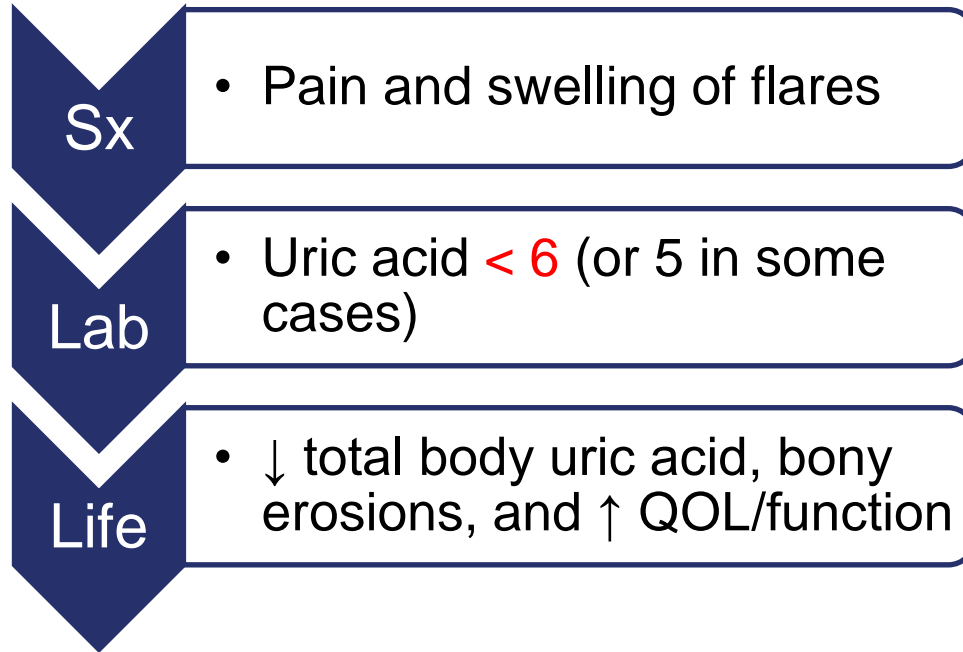
# Guidelines

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- American College of Rheumatology (ACR) 2020
- European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR) 2019

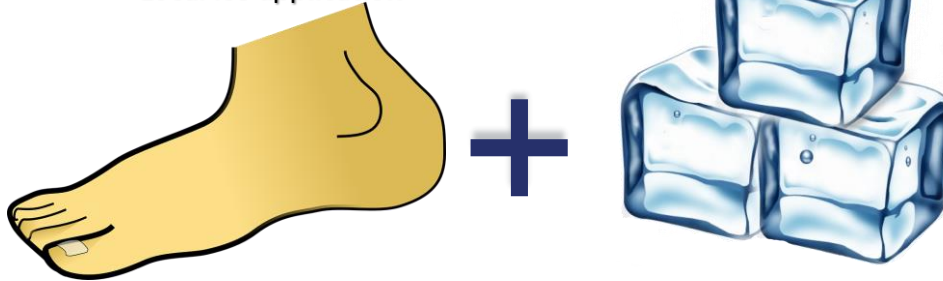


# Goals of Treatment



# Non-Pharmacologic Therapy

- For acute flares
  - Rest
  - Local ice application



- Diet and lifestyle changes (but estimated to result in only ~10-18% reduction in uric acid)
  - Avoid: organ meats, high-fructose corn syrup, excessive alcohol
  - Limit: meat, seafood, sugars (eg, naturally sweet fruit juices, desserts), salt
  - Weight loss

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**TREATMENT**

**ACUTE TREATMENT  
OF gout FLARES**

# Treatment of acute gout attack

## Colchicine

- (+) soon after onset (esp 12hr)
- (-) GFR < 30, liver insufficiency, CYP3A4/PGi

## NSAID (any)

- (+) cost concerns
- (-) HF, GI bleed, ↑ age, CKD, antithrombotic

## Prednisone

- (+) CKD, cost concerns
- (-) uncontrolled DM/HTN, GI bleed, infection, osteoporosis

Choose based on comorbidities and patient's experience re: efficacy/AEs

# Colchicine

- MOA: Somewhat unknown. Thought to interfere with the system in WBCs that activates IL-1 $\beta$ . Also inhibits microtubules that are involved in activation and migration of neutrophils
- Dose for acute flares:
  - 1.2 mg, then 0.6 mg 1 hour later
    - May then start additional dosing of 0.6mg 1-2 times per day short-term (eg 2-5 days) if needed
  - Dose reductions required for CKD and drug interactions in certain cases

# Colchicine

- Adverse effects:
  - Common: Nausea, diarrhea
  - Severe: myelosuppression, myotoxicity including rhabdomyolysis
- Drug interactions:
  - Colchicine is a substrate of both P-glycoprotein and CYP3A4 and may inhibit CYP3A4 to some degree
  - Fatal DDIs reported, esp if multiple interacting drugs, high colchicine dose, or CKD
  - Caution with statins (esp if competitive CYP3A4 substrates eg atorvastatin or simvastatin) due to additive risk of rhabdomyolysis

# Corticosteroids

- Various oral dosing regimens are reasonable
  - Choose based on severity of flare, usual duration of flares, comorbidities, and patient's experience with efficacy/adverse effects
  - Examples
    - 40mg daily x 5 days
    - 30mg daily x 3 days, then 20mg daily x 3 days, then 10mg daily x 3 days
- Intra-articular steroid injections can also be done, but:
  - $\leq 2$  joints involved
  - Patient must agree to have needle placed in painful joint (easier if already doing arthrocentesis)

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# TREATMENT

Urate-lowering  
Therapy (ult)



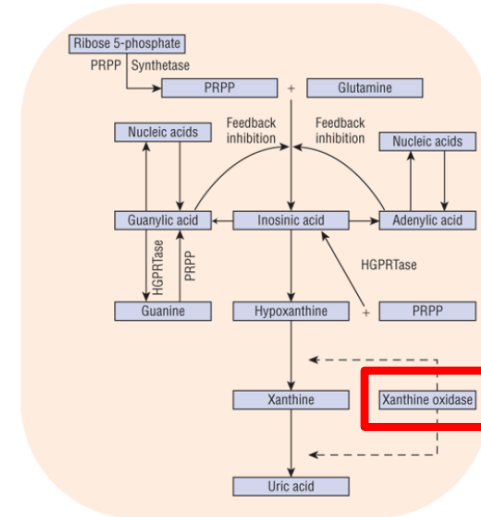
# ULT Indications

Would you choose to take allopurinol long-term to prevent 2 severe gouty flares/year?

- Definitely
  - $\geq 1$  subcutaneous tophi
  - Radiographic damage attributable to gout
  - Frequent ( $\geq 2$  per year) or disabling flares
- Maybe
  - Infrequent ( $< 2$  per year) flares
  - First flare with:
    - CKD stage  $\geq 3$  (reasoning:  $\uparrow$  risk of gout progression and clinical tophi, acute flare tx options more limited, and may be added benefit to prevent CKD progression)
    - Uric acid  $> 9$  mg/dL (reasoning:  $\uparrow$  risk of gout progression), and/or
    - Urolithiasis (reasoning: ULT lowers 24-hour urinary uric acid excretion  $>$  placebo)

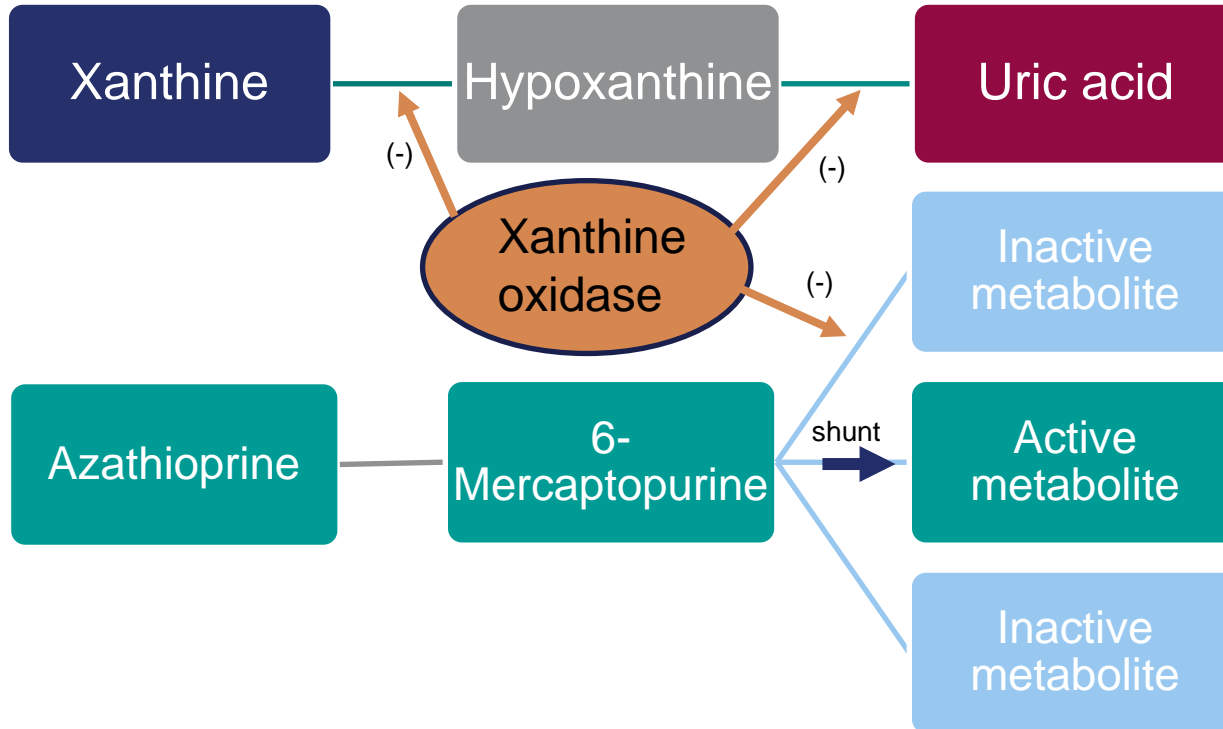
# Xanthine Oxidase Inhibitors (XOIs)

- ↓ uric acid “production”
- **Allopurinol**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> line
  - Less expensive
  - Long history of use
  - Effective in vast majority
  - Risk of drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS)
- **Febuxostat**
  - Can be used if DRESS during allopurinol
  - Unclear cardiovascular risk vs allopurinol
  - Less renally metabolized
  - Simpler dose titration
  - More potent urate-lowering



Source: J.T. DiPiro, R.L. Talbert, G.C. Yee, G.R. Matzke, B.G. Wells, L.M. Posey: Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 10th Edition, www.accesspharmacy.com Copyright © McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved.

# XOIs – Drug Interaction



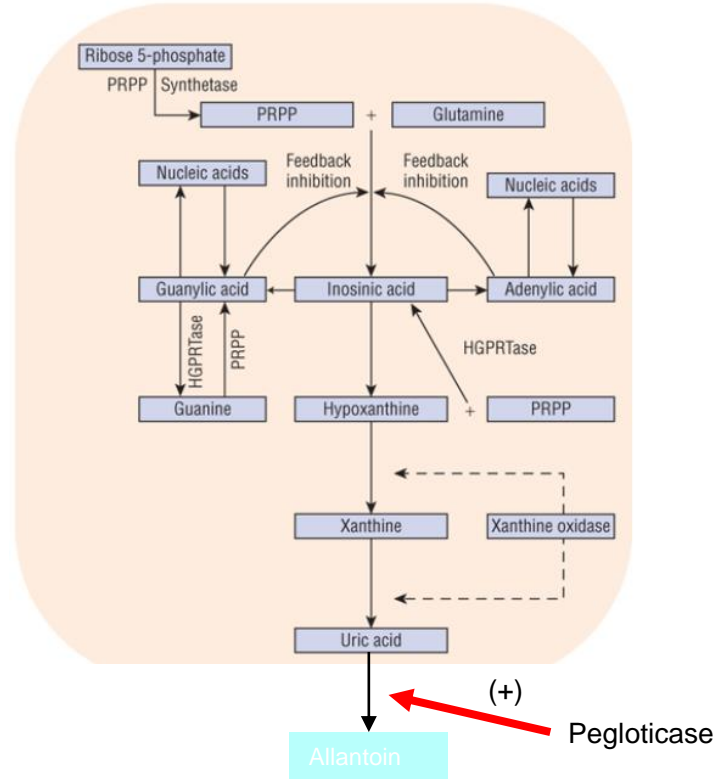
# Allopurinol - AEs

- Adverse effects:
  - Common: GI
  - Severe: **severe cutaneous reactions (DRESS, toxic epidermal necrolysis, Stevens-Johnson)**, bone marrow suppression, hepatic toxicity
- DRESS (allopurinol hypersensitivity syndrome):
  - Rash (tell patients to stop the drug!), fever, AKI, hepatitis (↑ LFTs), eosinophilia
  - Very rare (0.1%) but mortality rate approaching 25%
  - ↑ risk in: CKD, HLA-B\*5801, high initial dose
    - CKD: major active metabolite is oxypurinol, whose half-life is prolonged in CKD; oxypurinol has been implicated in allopurinol toxicity including DRESS
    - HLA-B\*5801: check in Han Chinese, Korean, Thai, and African American patients, and if (+) do not use allopurinol
    - Low initial doses ( $\leq 100\text{mg/day}$ ) reduce risk of DRESS

# Probenecid

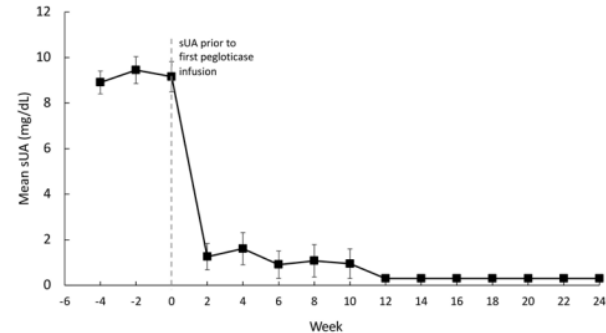
- MOA: uricosuric agent (=causes uricosuria), not a xanthine oxidase inhibitor
  - Acts by blocking the reabsorption of uric acid in the renal tubules
- Uses:
  - When XOIs can not be used or are not tolerated
  - In combination with XOIs when maximal doses do not achieve goal uric acid levels
- Relies on kidney to work → not likely to be effective in CrCl < 30 mL/min, no monotherapy if CrCl < 50
- Do not use in patients with a history of urinary stones
- Drinking plenty of water while on this medication will help to prevent stone formation

# Pegloticase - MOA



# Pegloticase

- Indicated as monotherapy for gout refractory to other therapies
- Dose: 8 mg IV infusion over 2 hours every 2 weeks
- Premedication with antihistamines and steroids required due to infusion reactions (relatively high risk of anaphylaxis)
- Anti-drug antibodies may cause lack of efficacy → uric acid will start to rise
  - Methotrexate or other immunosuppressants can/should be used concurrently to reduce risk
- Must monitor uric acid and stop if rises to > 6



# Anti-Inflammatory Gout Flare Prophylaxis - Dosing

- Colchicine 0.6 mg po daily or BID (first-line due to more literature support)
  - Dose adjustments/avoid in CKD, liver insufficiency, drug interactions
- Low-dose NSAID (+ PPI), eg naproxen 250mg bid
- Prednisone 5mg daily



# MIRROR RCT

## Pegloticase and methotrexate

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### **Objective**

- To evaluate the safety, efficacy, pharmacokinetics and immunogenicity of Pegloticase with methotrexate administration versus placebo

# Pegloticase and methotrexate

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## Methods

- Uncontrolled gout patient's with a serum urate  $\geq 7$
- Urate lowering therapy failure
- Presence of ongoing gout flaring symptoms
- $\geq 1$  Tophus or  $\geq 2$  gout flares in 12 months

# Pegloticase and methotrexate

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- Patients were randomized 2:1 to 52 weeks of Pegloticase (8 mg biweekly) with either methotrexate 15 mg orally weekly or placebo.

# Pegloticase and methotrexate

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## **Primary endpoint**

- Proportion of treatment responders during a 6-month timeframe
- Defined as: Serum urate  $<6$  for  $\geq 80\%$  of visits throughout a 20-24 week trial

# Pegloticase and methotrexate

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## Results

- 152 patients were randomized
- 100 patient's received Pegloticase plus methotrexate
- 52 patient's received Pegloticase plus placebo
- 71% of patients on methotrexate versus 38.5% of patients on placebo

# Pegloticase and methotrexate

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## Conclusion

- Methotrexate coadministered increased pegloticase response rate over placebo 71% versus 38% during a 6-month trial with no increase in safety signals.
- Showed a higher treatment response rates
- Lower infusion reaction rates
- Lowered immunogenicity when Pegloticase was coadministered with methotrexate

# RECIPE

## Pegloticase and Mycophenolate

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### Objective

Evaluate mycophenolate mofetil immunogenicity and efficacy with use in Pegloticase infusions

# Pegloticase and Mycophenolate

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## Methods

- Patients were randomized 3:1
- Receiving 1000 mg mycophenolate twice daily or placebo for 14 weeks respectively
- 2 weeks prior to receiving pegloticase infusions
- Receiving intravenous pegloticase 8 mg biweekly for 12 weeks
- With all patients receiving Pegloticase alone from week 12-24



# Pegloticase and Mycophenolate

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## Primary endpoints

Proportion of patients who sustained serum urate level  $\leq 6$  at 12 weeks

## Secondary endpoints

Included 24-week durability of the serum urate level  $\leq 6$

# Pegloticase and Mycophenolate

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## Results

- At 12 weeks serum urate level of  $\leq 6$  was achieved in 86% of patients receiving mycophenolate versus 40% of patients in placebo arm
- At 24 weeks serum urate level  $\leq 6$  was achieved in 68% of patients receiving mycophenolate versus 30% of patients in placebo arm

# Pegloticase and Mycophenolate

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## Conclusion

- Mycophenolate therapy with Pegloticase was well-tolerated
- Showed meaningful improvement in target serum urate levels of  $\leq 6$  at 12 and 24 weeks with decreased immunogenicity

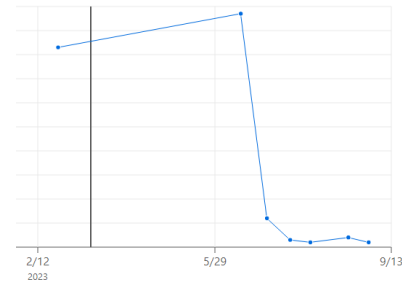
## Response rates of other immunomodulation cotherapy rates

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- Pegloticase monotherapy: 42%
- Oral methotrexate 90%
- Subcutaneous methotrexate 78%
- Mycophenolate 86%
- Leflunomide 67%
- Azathioprine 64%
- As reported in the MIRROR RCT trial: Data from other clinical settings and open label trials.

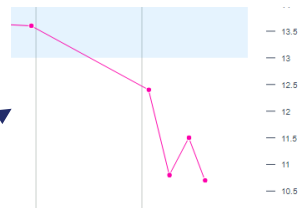
# Pegloticase Patient Case #1

- FW 49yo Latino male, tophaceous (right elbow)
  - PMH: ischemic stroke, HTN, obesity (BMI 46), psoriasis, depression, anxiety
  - H/o intermittent allopurinol, then in 2021 started consistent allopurinol
  - Allopurinol titrated to 500mg/day → sUA 8.3
- Physician ordered pegloticase. Agree?
  - Loratadine 10mg, methylprednisolone 100mg IV, acetaminophen 1000mg
  - G6PD checked, negative
  - Continued prednisone 5mg daily prophylaxis
  - Methotrexate 15mg/week + folic acid starting 4 wk prior
    - CMP, CBC+diff 2 wk after starting methotrexate, then every 4 wk, no issue
  - Allopurinol d/c'ed 1 week prior to 1<sup>st</sup> pegloticase
  - As of 9/13, has received 6 doses, sUA checked within 4 days prior to each
  - Itchy throat, throat swelling, warm ears with 1<sup>st</sup> → discovered pre-meds error
  - Lots of patient ed, sUA reminders/stat orders, 4-5 gout flares



# Pegloticase Patient Case #2

- NP 57yo white male, tophaceous gout, CLL
  - Enlarging/erupting tophi (right elbow, right heel, several DIPs s/p debulking surgery)
  - Intolerance to allopurinol (abdominal pain), rechallenges
  - Intolerance to febuxostat (abdominal pain, vision changes, memory issues, headache, “hangover”), “quite debilitating”, several rechallenges
  - Intolerance to probenecid (tinnitus, abdominal pain, dizziness)
  - 9 pegloticase infusions in 2015 with little change in sUA and “no noticeable change in tophi burden suggesting pre-formed antibodies (probably to PEG component)”
  - Rasburicase infusions 2015 for CLL associated with large swings of uric acid but did not improve gout flare severity or frequency/size of tophi
  - Has not tolerated losartan, fenofibrate
- Physician ordered pegloticase + methotrexate. Agree?
  - Continue prednisone 10mg daily, prn colchicine
  - Methotrexate 10mg/week barely tolerated (fatigue, anemia, sweating, tinnitus, headache), folic acid increased to 5mg/day, not titrated further
  - Pegloticase 1 infusion → no change to sUA, discontinued



# References for CPPD, Gout, Pegloticase

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# CARES AND FAST TRIALS

CARES: cardiovascular safety of febuxostat and allopurinol in patients with gout and cardiovascular morbidities,  
FAST: febuxostat versus allopurinol streamlined trial



# Cardiovascular Implications: CARES

## Population

- N = 6,190 in US, Canada, Mexico
- Inclusion: men  $\geq 50$  & women  $\geq 55$  yr, uncontrolled gout, **major CV disease**

## Study Design

## Results

## Impact & Interpretation

# Cardiovascular Implications: FAST

## Population

- N = 6,128 in UK, Denmark, Sweden
- Inclusion:  $\geq 60$  yr taking allopurinol for gout,  $\geq 1$  **CV risk factor**

## Study Design

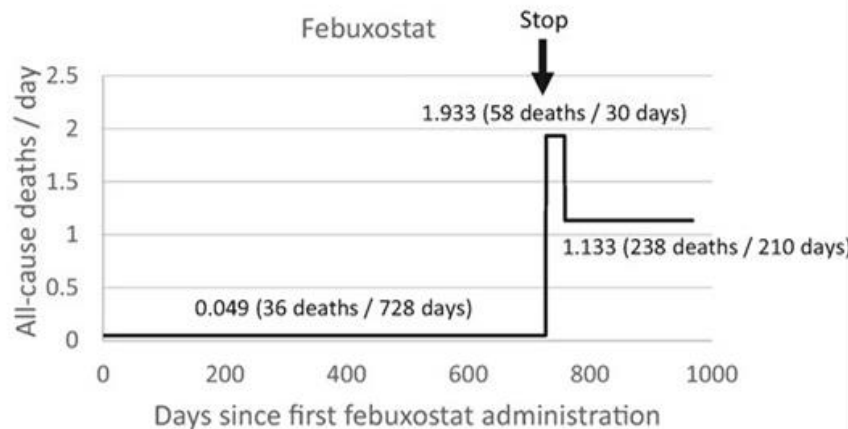
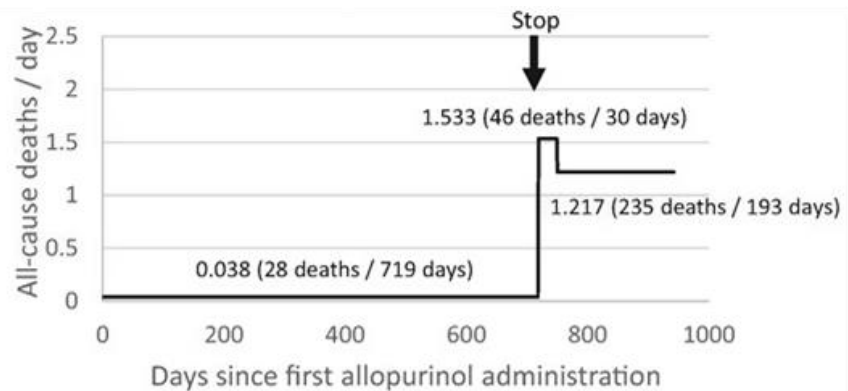
## Results

# Cardiovascular Implications: CARES, FAST

Characteristic	CARES	FAST
CV disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CV disease history – 100% CV disease at baseline</li><li>• Included HF of any severity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CV disease risk factor(s) – 33% CV disease at baseline</li><li>• NYHA Class III or IV HF excluded</li></ul>
Gout severity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 21% prevalence of tophi</li><li>• Included patients new to ULT</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10% prevalence of tophi</li><li>• Patients previously on allopurinol</li></ul>
Discontinuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 57% stopped febuxostat</li><li>• 55% stopped allopurinol</li><li>• 45% did not complete all study visits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 32% stopped febuxostat</li><li>• 17% stopped allopurinol</li><li>• 6% withdrew</li></ul>

# Discontinuation of ULT Affects CV Risk

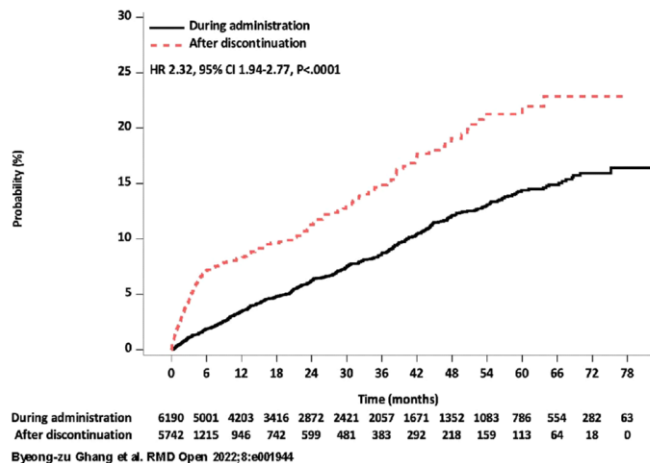
- Reanalyses of **CARES**
- Eg study (at right) postulated MACE induced by rapid sUA changes



# Discontinuation of ULT Affects CV Risk

- Same authors reassess **CARES**
- HR 2.32 for MACE after d/c, vs during ( $p < 0.0001$ )
- Changes in sUA\*, age, and BMI associated with MACE after d/c
- Similar risk found in **FAST** (3X)

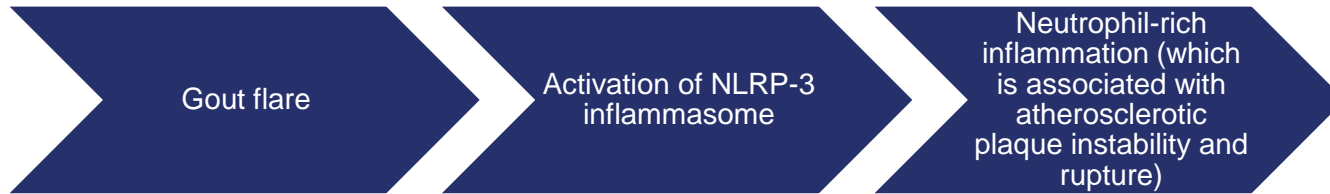
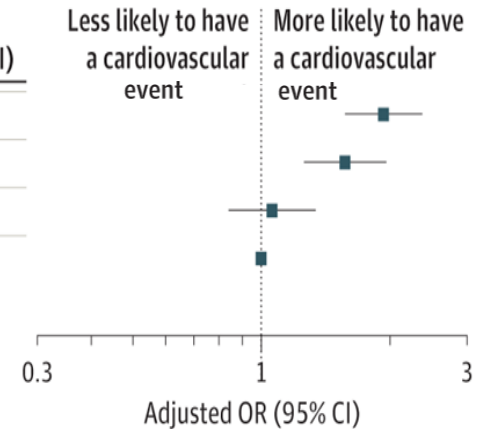
Cumulative Kaplan-Meier estimates of the time to the first occurrence of major adverse cardiovascular events (all study patients).



# Gout Flares May Affect CV Risk

- 2022 large database study: OR 1.9 for 0-60 days

Gout flare exposure window, d <sup>a</sup>	No. (%) of participants		Unadjusted difference, % (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
	Cases <sup>b</sup> (N=10475)	Controls <sup>c</sup> (N=52099)		
0-60	204 (2.0)	743 (1.4)	0.5 (0.2 to 0.9)	1.93 (1.57 to 2.38)
61-120	170 (1.6)	628 (1.2)	0.4 (0.1 to 0.8)	1.57 (1.26 to 1.96)
121-180	148 (1.4)	662 (1.3)	0.1 (-0.2 to 0.5)	1.06 (0.84 to 1.34)
>180 d or no flare <sup>e</sup>	9953 (95.0)	50066 (96.1)	-1.1 (-1.7 to -0.5)	1 [Reference]



# Post-CARES/FAST Trials

Favors  
allopurinol

Favors  
febuxostat

Neither  
favored

2022 Meta-analysis of CARES and FAST<sup>1</sup>

-CV mortality in patients with atherosclerotic disease

2021 Systematic review and meta-analysis<sup>2</sup>

-CV death

2021 Meta-analysis of long-term clinical trials of allopurinol and febuxostat<sup>5</sup>

-Urgent coronary revascularization  
-Nonfatal stroke

2022 Meta-analysis of CARES and FAST<sup>1</sup>

-MACE, CV mortality, all-cause mortality in all subjects

2021 Systematic review and meta-analysis<sup>2</sup>

-Major CV events

2021 Network meta-analysis<sup>3</sup>

-Adverse CV events

2022 arterial stiffness stable in both groups in patients with gout, elevated sUA, and ↑ CV risk<sup>4</sup>

2021 Meta-analysis of Long-Term Clinical Trials of Allopurinol and Febuxostat<sup>5</sup>

-Nonfatal MI

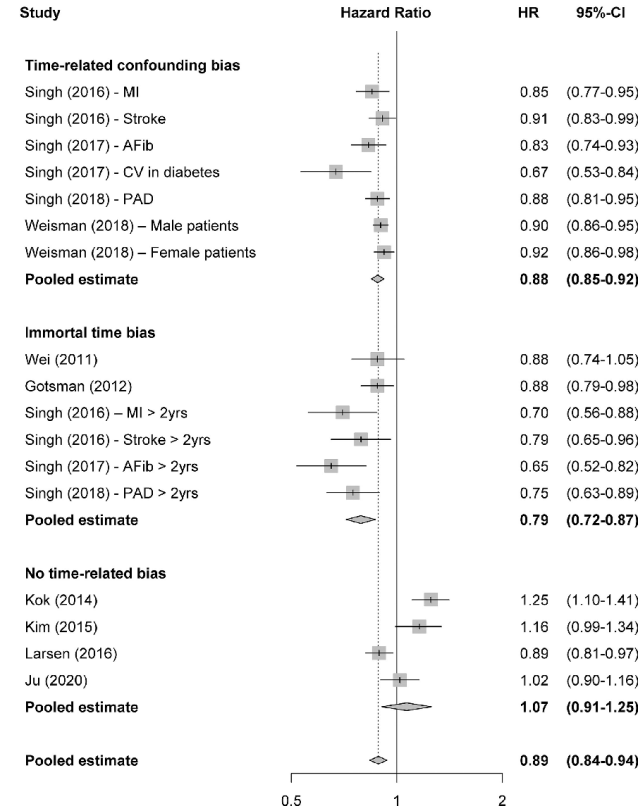
-CV death

-Death from any cause

<sup>1</sup>Front Pharmacol 2022;13:998441. <sup>2</sup>Ann Palliat Med 2021 Oct;10(10):10327-10337. <sup>3</sup>Front Med (Lausanne) 2021;8:698437. <sup>4</sup>Eur Heart J Cardiovasc Pharmacother 2022;8(3):236-242 (FORWARD). <sup>5</sup>Clin Cardiol 2021;44(7):907-916. 4

# Studies of Allopurinol and CV Risk are Flawed

- Allopurinol has been found in some studies to ↓ CV risk
- Many of these studies are subject to time-related bias
- Studies that had no time-related bias were less likely to find a benefit





# Summary

## **CARES and FAST**

Conflicting re: CV risk of allopurinol vs febuxostat

## **CV risk affected by**

Discontinuation of ULT, which could have impacted CARES, and gout flares

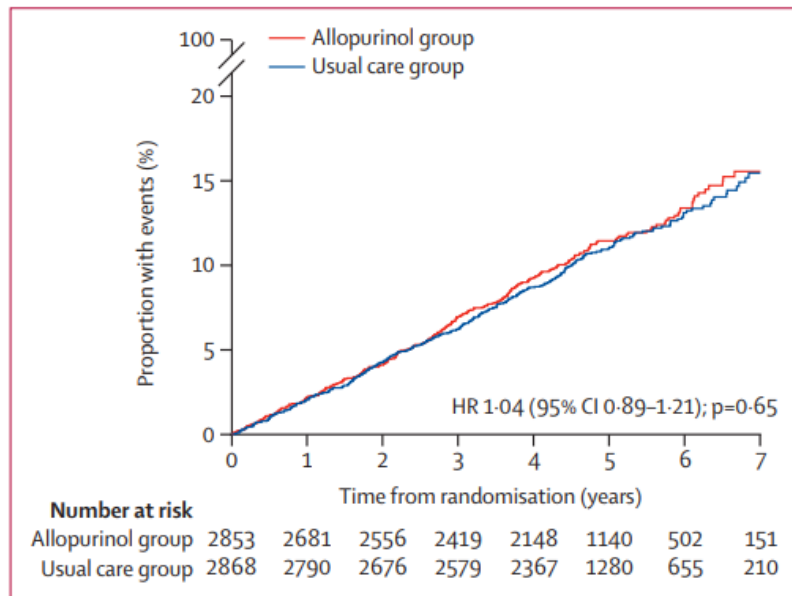
## **Follow-up studies**

Suggest similar or possibly better CV safety for allopurinol



# **CV RISK IN NON-GOUT POPULATION**

# Allopurinol Does not Affect CV Outcomes in Non-Gout Population



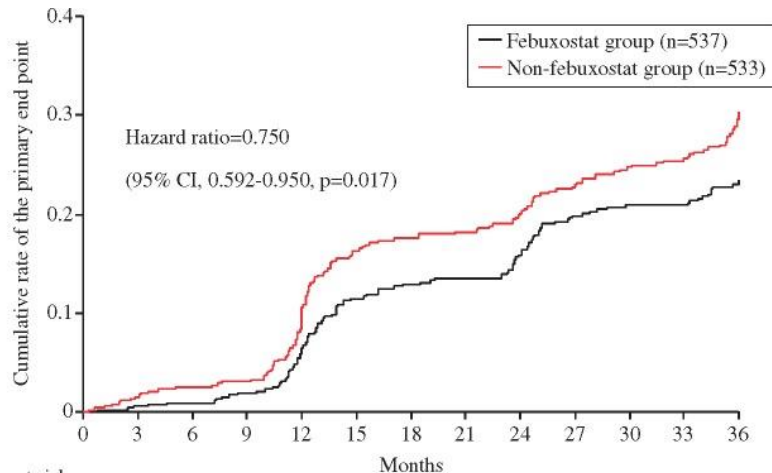
**Figure 2: Cumulative incidence functions for the primary composite endpoint of non-fatal myocardial infarction, non-fatal stroke, or cardiovascular death analysed in the modified intention-to-treat population**

The figure was adjusted for the competing risk of deaths not included in the endpoint. HR=hazard ratio.

- Randomized, open-label, blinded-endpoint
- $\geq 60$ yr, ischemic heart disease, no gout
- Allopurinol up-titrated to 600mg daily (300mg daily in moderate CKD)

# Febuxostat Lowers Cerebral/Cardiorenal Outcome in Non-Gout Population

Fatal and non-fatal cerebral, CV, and renal events, and death other than cerebral or cardiorenal vascular disease



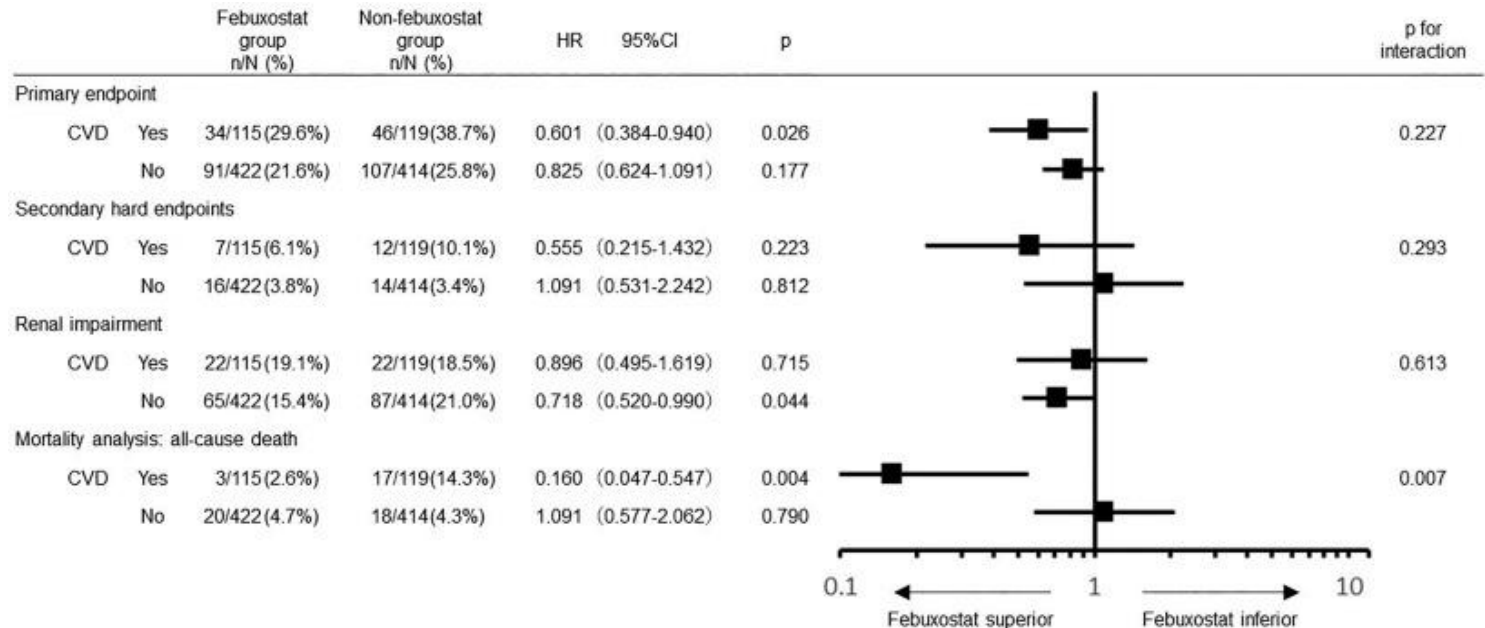
No. at risk

	0	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
Febuxostat	537	515	473	429	399	372	372	372	372	372	372	372	209
Non-febuxostat	533	501	451	391	370	341	341	341	341	341	341	341	188

- Randomized, open-label, blinded-endpoint
- $\geq 65$ yr, sUA 7-9mg/dL,  $\geq 1$  RF for cerebral, CV, renal dz
- Febuxostat 40mg/day
- $\downarrow$  outcome driven by renal esp albuminuria
- No increase in CV events

# Febuxostat Lowers CV Risk in Non-Gout Population with History of CV Disease

- Subgroup analysis of FREED study



# Colchicine Approved for CV Risk Reduction

☰ MENU

EVERYDAY HEALTH

NEWSLETTERS 🔍 SEARCH

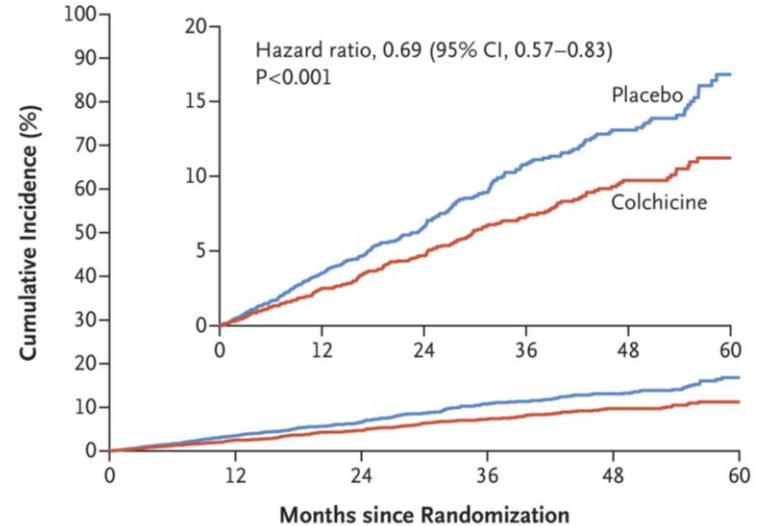
## FDA Approves Ancient Anti-Inflammatory Drug for Heart Disease

- Lodoco® 0.5 mg po daily
- Indication: ↓ risk of MI, stroke, coronary revascularization, and CV death in adult patients with established atherosclerotic disease or with multiple risk factors for CV disease

# Colchicine Reduces CV Risk Irrespective of Gout

- Patients:
  - 35-82yo
  - Coronary artery disease\*
  - GFR  $\geq 50$
  - 8% gout at baseline
- New gout in 1.4% colchicine vs 3.4% placebo

A Primary End Point \*\*



No. at Risk

Placebo	2760	2655	1703	821	590	161
Colchicine	2762	2685	1761	890	629	166

# Summary

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Colchicine reduces CV risk in high-risk non-gout population

Allopurinol remains first-line ULT

Febuxostat use in patients with CVD should involve shared decision-making



Questions?

