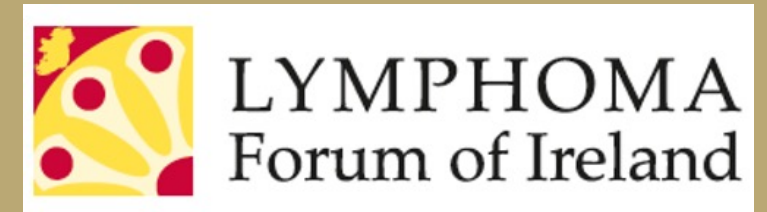


Diffuse large B-cell lymphomas. Challenges and controversies in the diagnosis



Leticia Quintanilla-Fend
Institute of Pathology



20th lymphoma Forum of Ireland Plenary meeting



**Universitätsklinikum
Tübingen**

Diffuse large B-cell lymphomas

Challenges and controversies

Objectives

- Definition and classification
- Cell of origin
- Molecular classification of DLBCL
- *MYC* rearrangement
- Molecular high-grade signature/double-hit signature/ dark zone signature
- High grade B-cell lymphomas

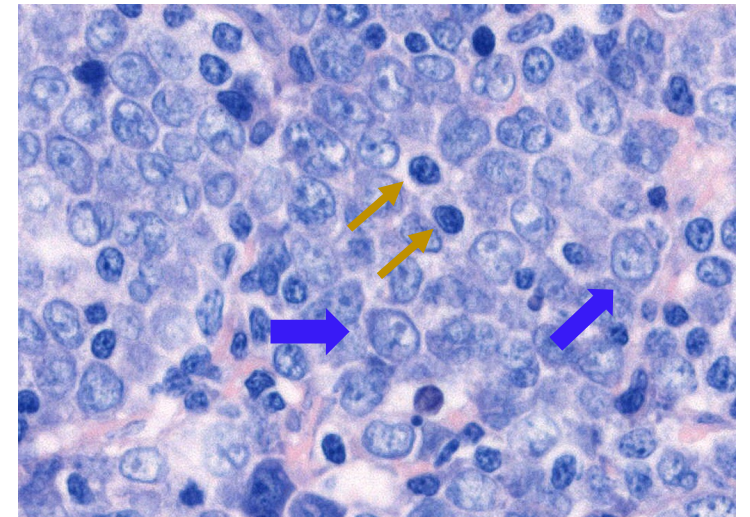
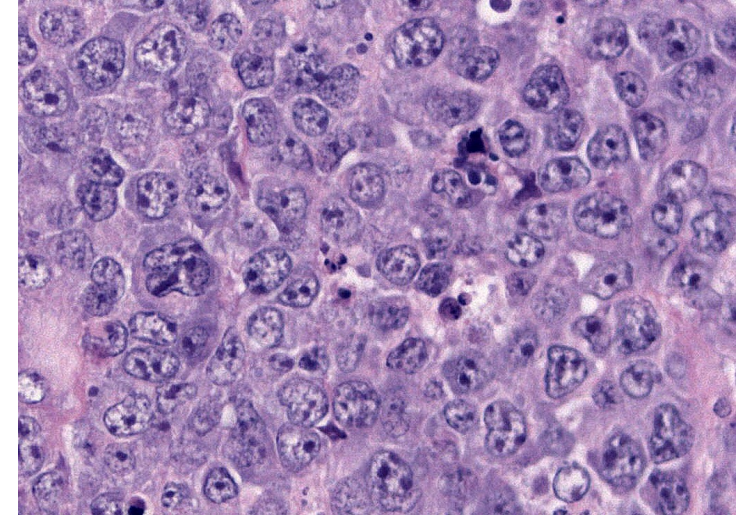


LYMPHOMA
Forum of Ireland

Diffuse large B-cell lymphomas, NOS

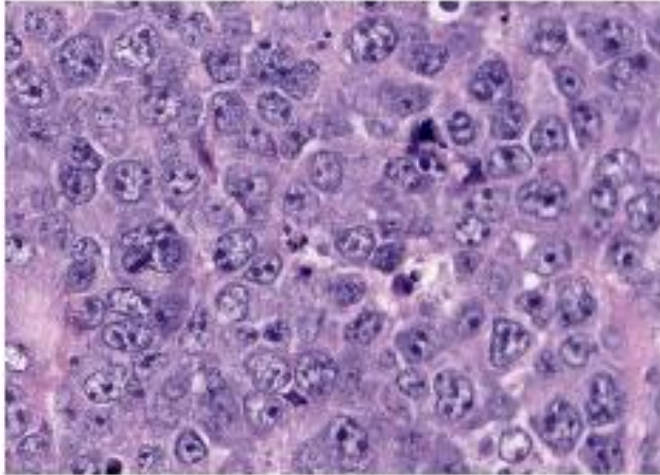
Definition: Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma is a neoplasm of large B lymphoid cells more than twice the size of a normal lymphocyte and with diffuse growth pattern.

➤ DLBCL is clinically, morphologically and biologically a heterogeneous disease reflected in the highly variable clinical course

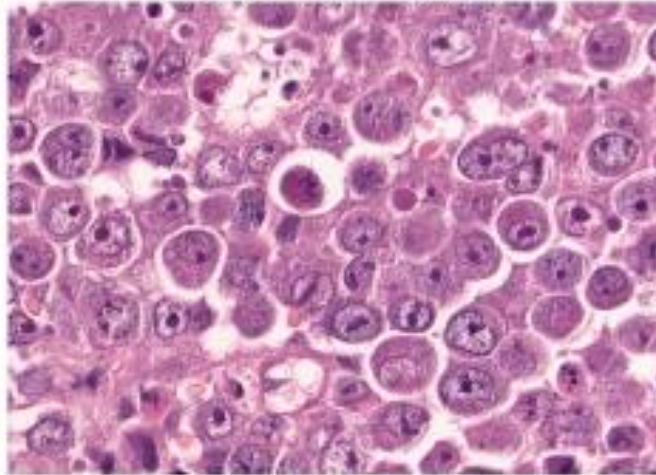


Diffuse large B-cell lymphomas, NOS

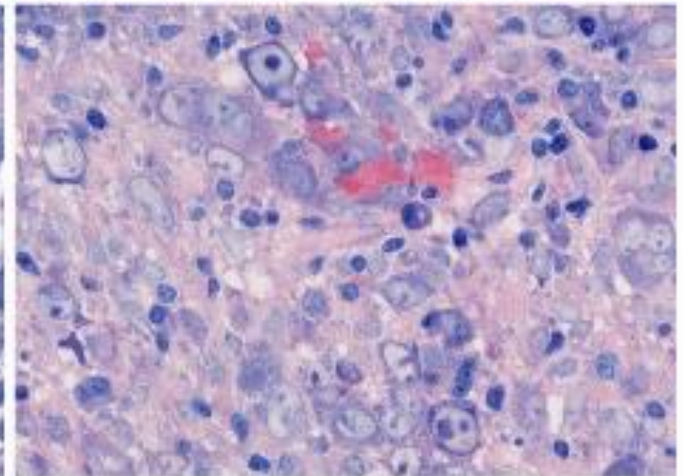
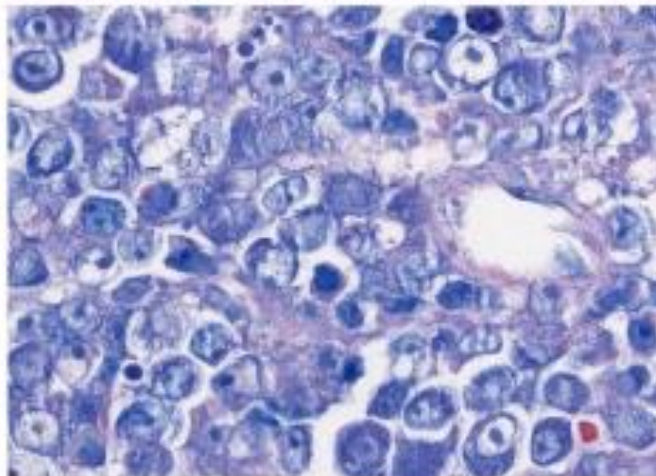
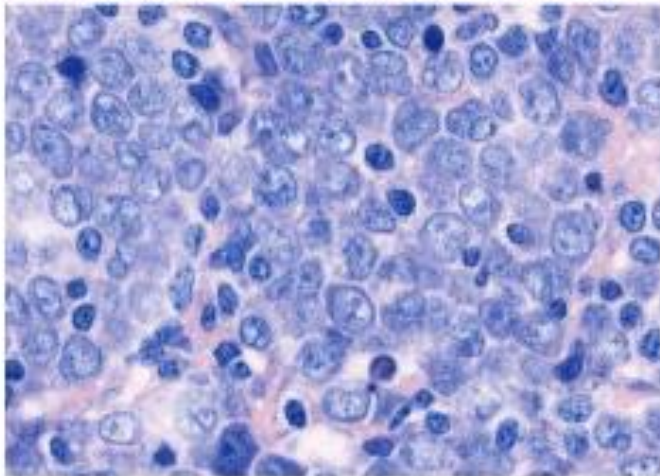
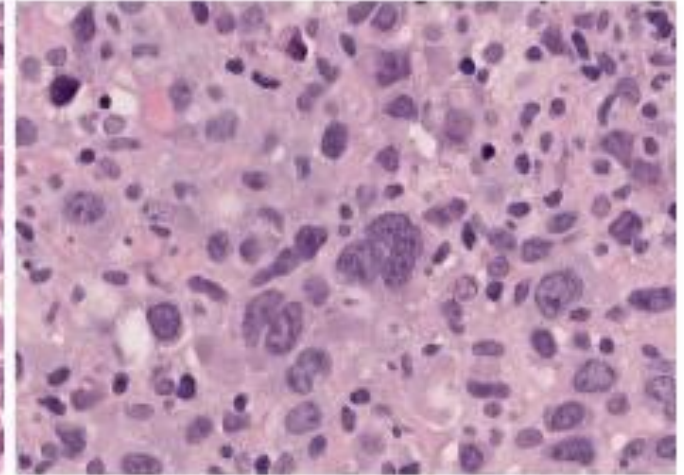
Centroblastic



Immunoblastic



Anaplastic



Diffuse large B-cell lymphomas

International Consensus Classification

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, NOS

Germinal center B-cell subtype

Activated B-cell subtype

Large B-cell lymphoma with 11q aberration*

Nodular lymphocyte predominant B-cell lymphoma*

T cell/histiocyte-rich large B-cell lymphoma

Primary diffuse large B-cell lymphoma of the central nervous system

Primary diffuse large B-cell lymphoma of the testis*

Primary cutaneous diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, leg type

Intravascular large B-cell lymphoma

HHV-8 and Epstein-Barr virus-negative primary effusion-based lymphoma*

Epstein-Barr virus-positive mucocutaneous ulcer*

Epstein-Barr virus-positive diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, NOS

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma associated with chronic inflammation

Fibrin-associated diffuse large B-cell lymphoma

Lymphomatoid granulomatosis

Epstein-Barr virus-positive polymorphic B-cell lymphoproliferative disorder, NOS*

ALK-positive large B-cell lymphoma

Plasmablastic lymphoma

HHV-8-associated lymphoproliferative disorders

Multicentric Castleman disease

HHV-8-positive germinotropic lymphoproliferative disorder

HHV-8-positive diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, NOS

Primary effusion lymphoma

5th Edition of the WHO

Large B-cell lymphomas

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, NOS

T-cell/histiocyte-rich large B-cell lymphoma

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma/ high grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL2* rearrangements

ALK-positive large B-cell lymphoma

Large B-cell lymphoma with *IRF4* rearrangement

High-grade B-cell lymphoma with 11q aberrations

Lymphomatoid granulomatosis

EBV-positive diffuse large B-cell lymphoma

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma associated with chronic inflammation

Fibrin-associated large B-cell lymphoma

Fluid overload-associated large B-cell lymphoma

Plasmablastic lymphoma

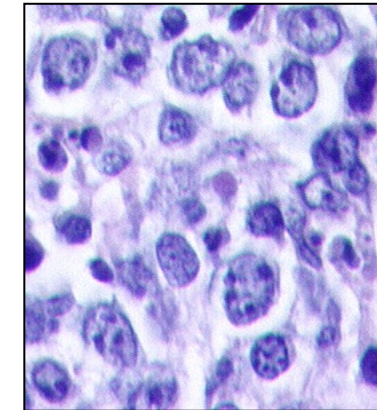
Primary large B-cell lymphoma of immune-privileged sites

Primary cutaneous diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, leg type

Intravascular large B-cell lymphoma

Primary mediastinal large B-cell lymphoma

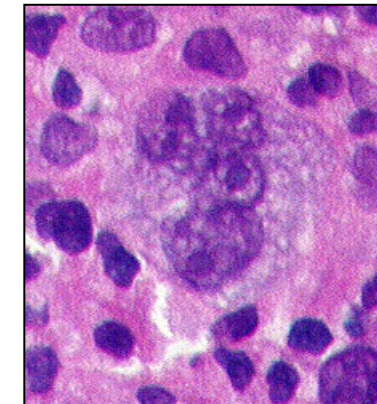
Mediastinal grey zone lymphoma



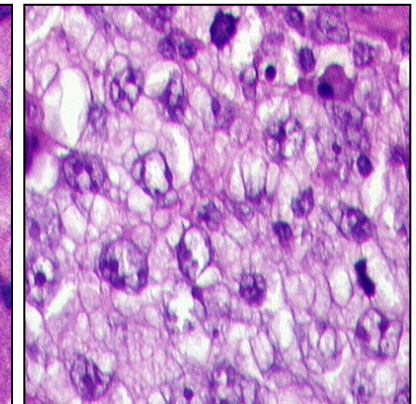
Centroblastic



Immunoblastic



T-cell rich



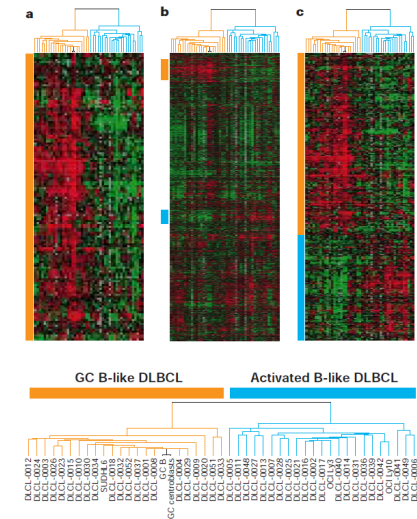
Mediastinal LBCL

Alaggio R. Leukemia 2022

Campo E. Blood 2022

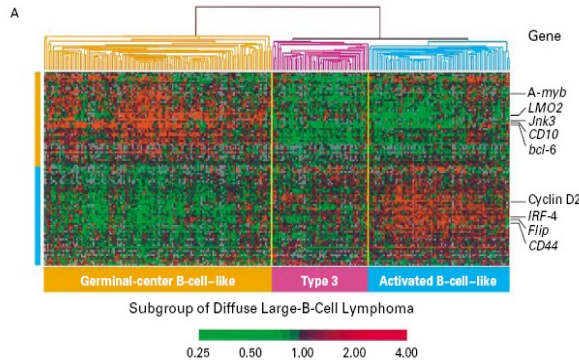
DLBCL and the Cell of origin

Molecular signature DLBCL Cell of origin



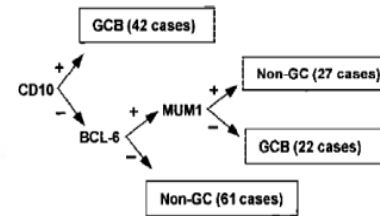
Alizadeh et al, Nature 2000

Molecular profiling to predict survival after chemotherapy



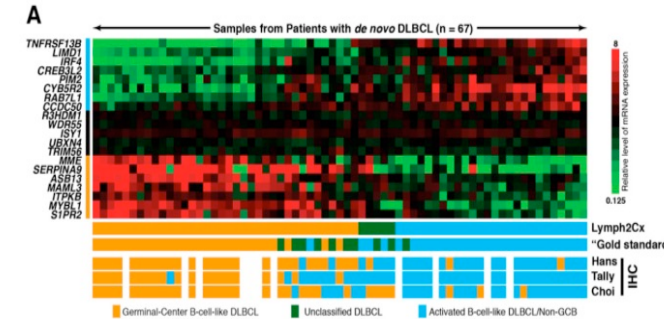
Rosenwald et al, NEJM 2002

Hans Algorithm



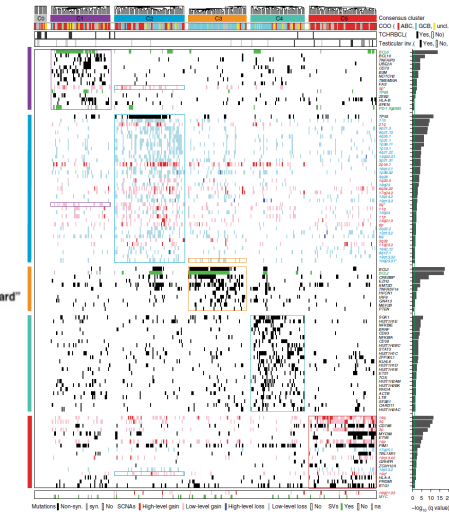
Hans et al, Blood 2004

Determining COO using GEP in FFPE



Scott et al, Blood 2014

Molecular subtypes



Chapuy et al, Nature Med 2018

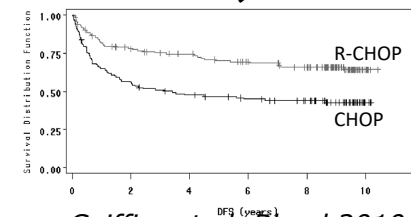
2000

R-CHOP as treatment
for DLBCL

2008

COO introduced in the
WHO classification

*Does not currently
determine therapy



Coiffier et al, Blood 2010

2010

2017

COO required in the
WHO classification

*Clinical trials showed a
benefit of bortezomib to R-
CHOP in the ABC subtype

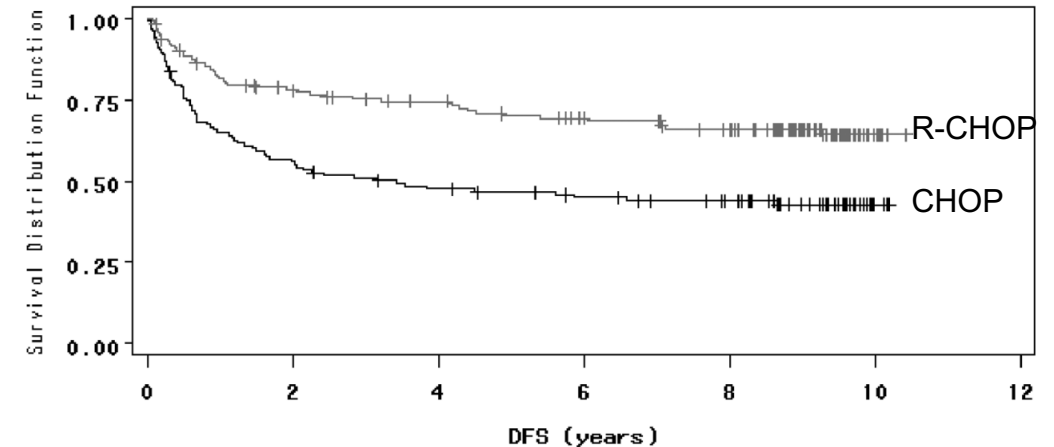
2018

2022

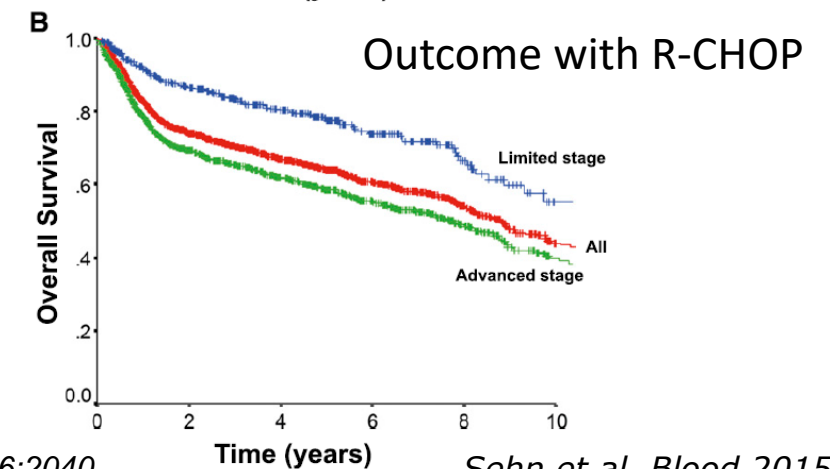
COO...?
Molecular
subgroups?
WHO 5
ICC 2022

DLBCL and the Cell of origin

- COO GEP did not establish in routine diagnosis beyond IHC
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Available mainly in research centers
 - Limited to clinical trials
- Limited impact on the choice of frontline treatment
 - R-CHOP (70% success)
- Attempts to improve the outcome of specific subgroups had limited success



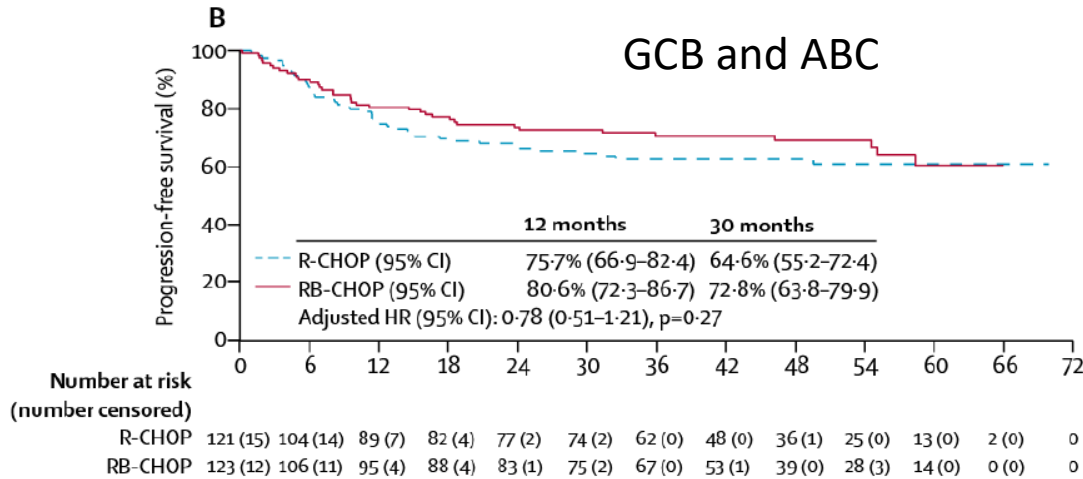
STRATA: — BRAS_RAND=Arm A : CHOP
+ + + Censored BRAS_RAND=Arm A : CHOP
— BRAS_RAND=Arm B : CHOP + Rituximab
+ + + Censored BRAS_RAND=Arm B : CHOP + Rituximab



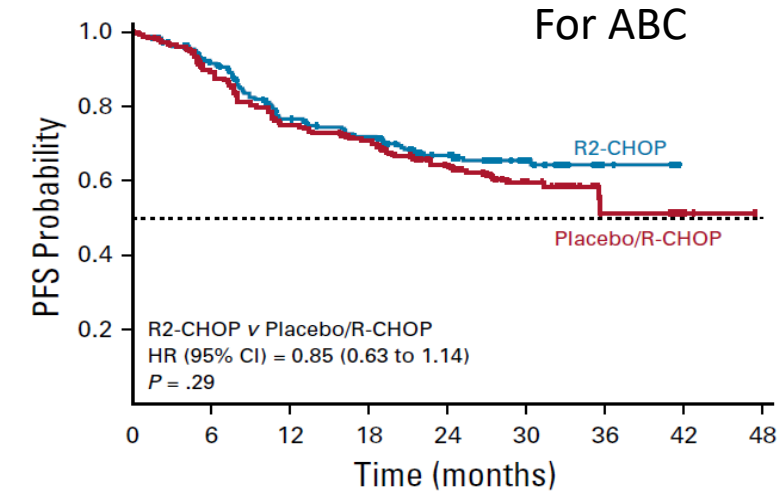
Coiffier et al, Blood 2010;116:2040

Sehn et al, Blood 2015;125:22

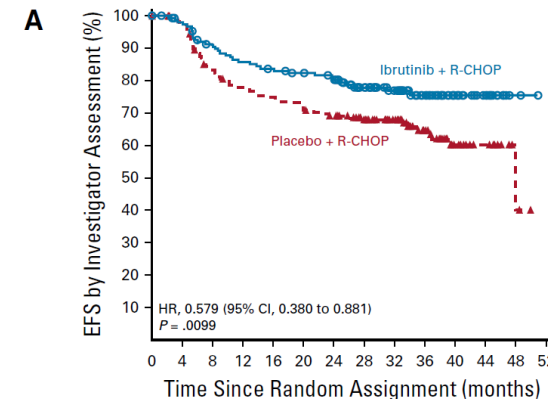
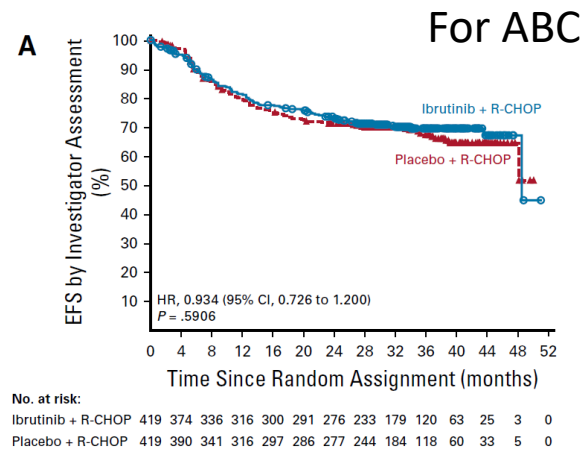
Attempts to improve the outcome of ABC subgroup has limited success



ROBUST
R-CHOP ± Lenalidomide
Nowakowski GS, et al,
J Clin Oncol 2021
COO by GEP
Results: no difference observed



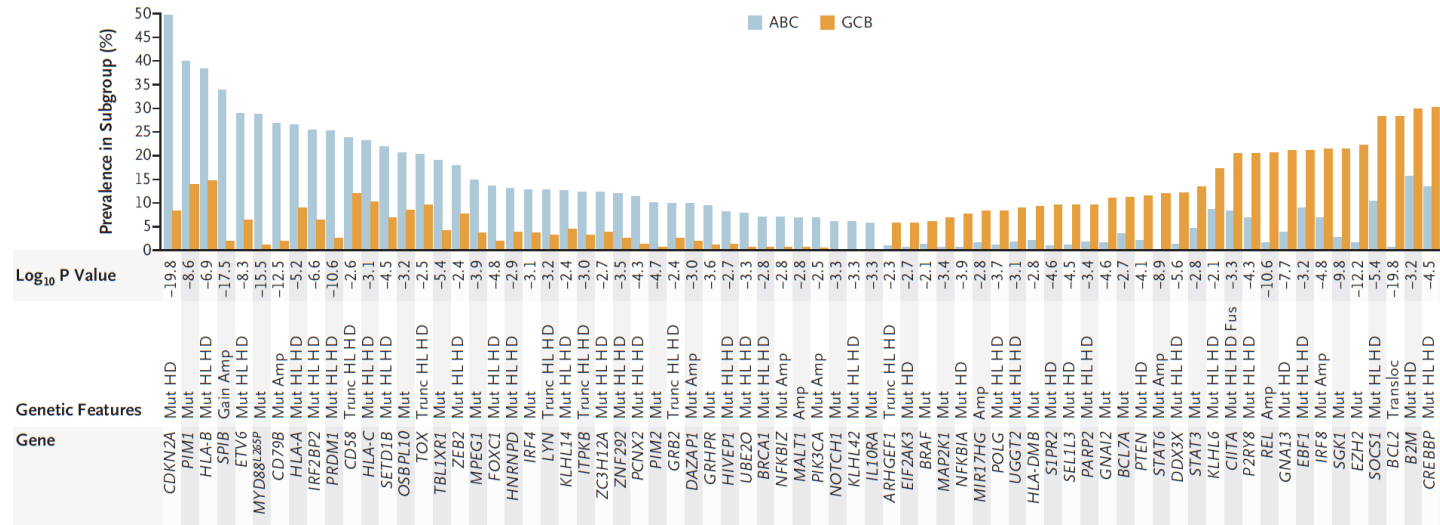
RMoDL-B
R-CHOP ± bortezomib
Davies AJ et al Lancet Oncol 2019
COO by GEP
Results: no difference observed



<60 years

PHOENIX
R-CHOP ± ibrutinib
Younes A, et al, J Clin Oncol 2019
COO by Hans algorithm
Results: in <60 years improved
EFS, PFS and OS

Cell of origin distinct biology



Differentiation



ABC-DLBCL

Up to plasmablastic stage
- *BCL6*, *PRDM1*

Proliferation



Active BCR signaling

Survival



BCL2 amplification

GCB-DLBCL

Up to the light zone stage
- Epigenetics

Tonogenic BCR signaling

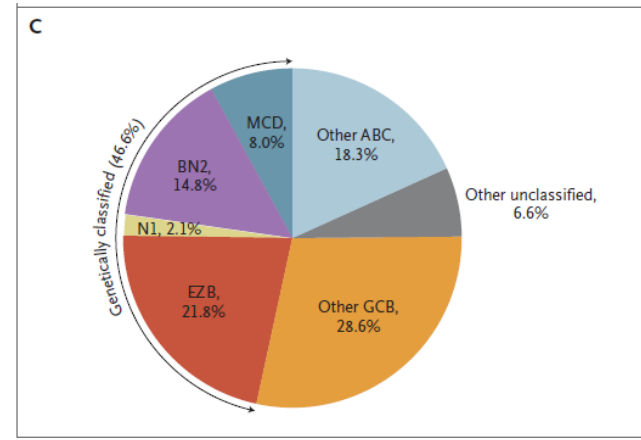
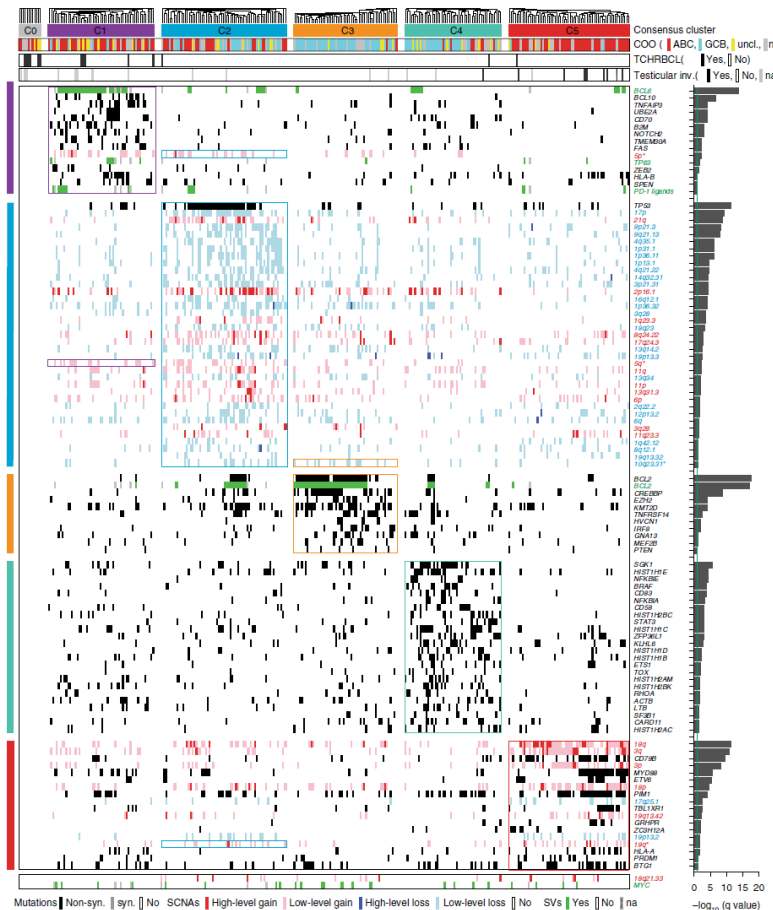
BCL2 rearrangement

N ENGL J MED 378;15 NEJM.ORG APRIL 12, 2018



DLBCL molecular classification

Biologic and molecular based classifications: Translocations, CNAs, mutations

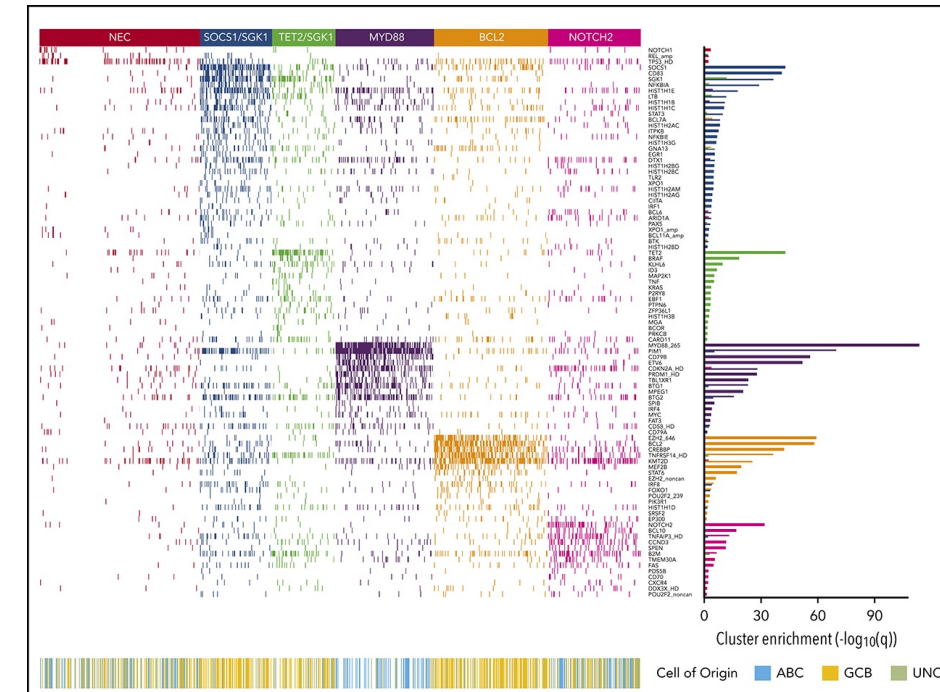


C

Genetic Feature	Log ₁₀ P Value	Unclas- GCB sified prevalence (%)	ABC
CD79B+ MYD88-265P double mutation	-6.4	0.6	1.7
CD79B mutation	-13.8	0.6	6.1
MYD88-265P mutation	-17.0	1.2	7.8
NOTCH1 mutation	-3.8	0.0	0.9
BCL6 fusion	-4.1	11.6	33.0
NOTCH2 mutation	-5.3	3.0	20.0
BCL2 translocation	-20.4	28.0	5.2
EZH2 mutation	-12.1	22.0	5.2

ABC-GCB Gene-Expression Predictor Score

GCB Unclassified ABC

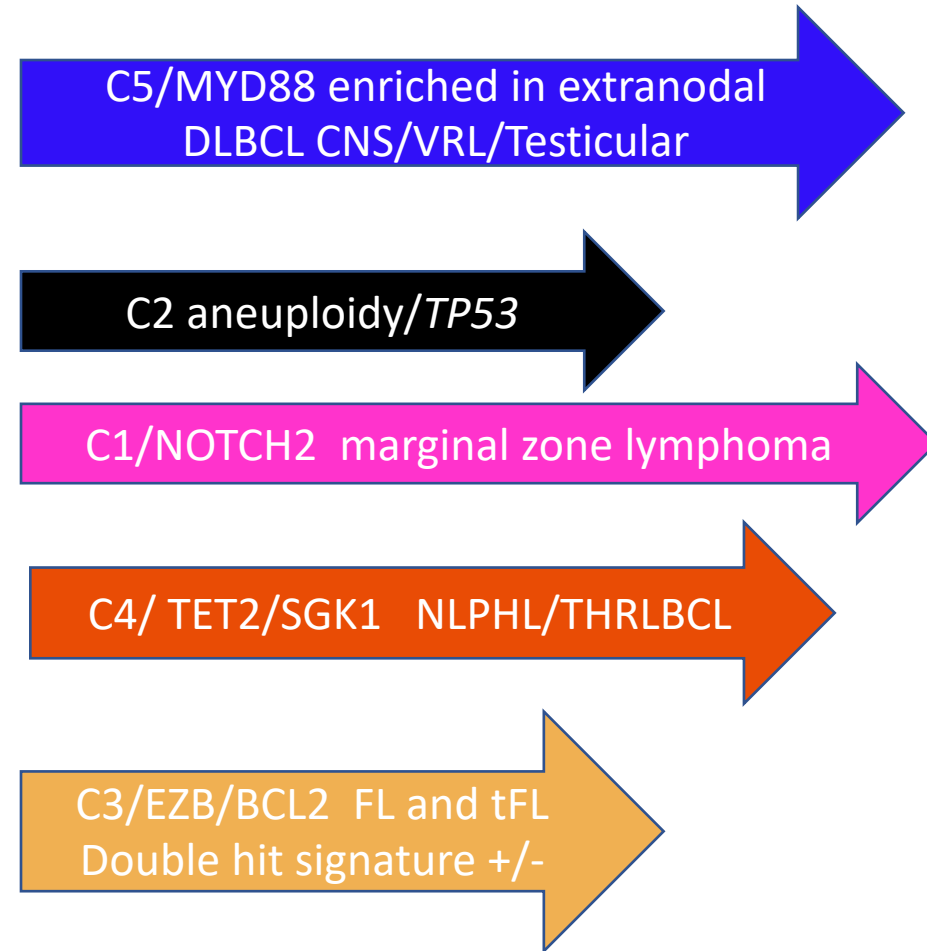
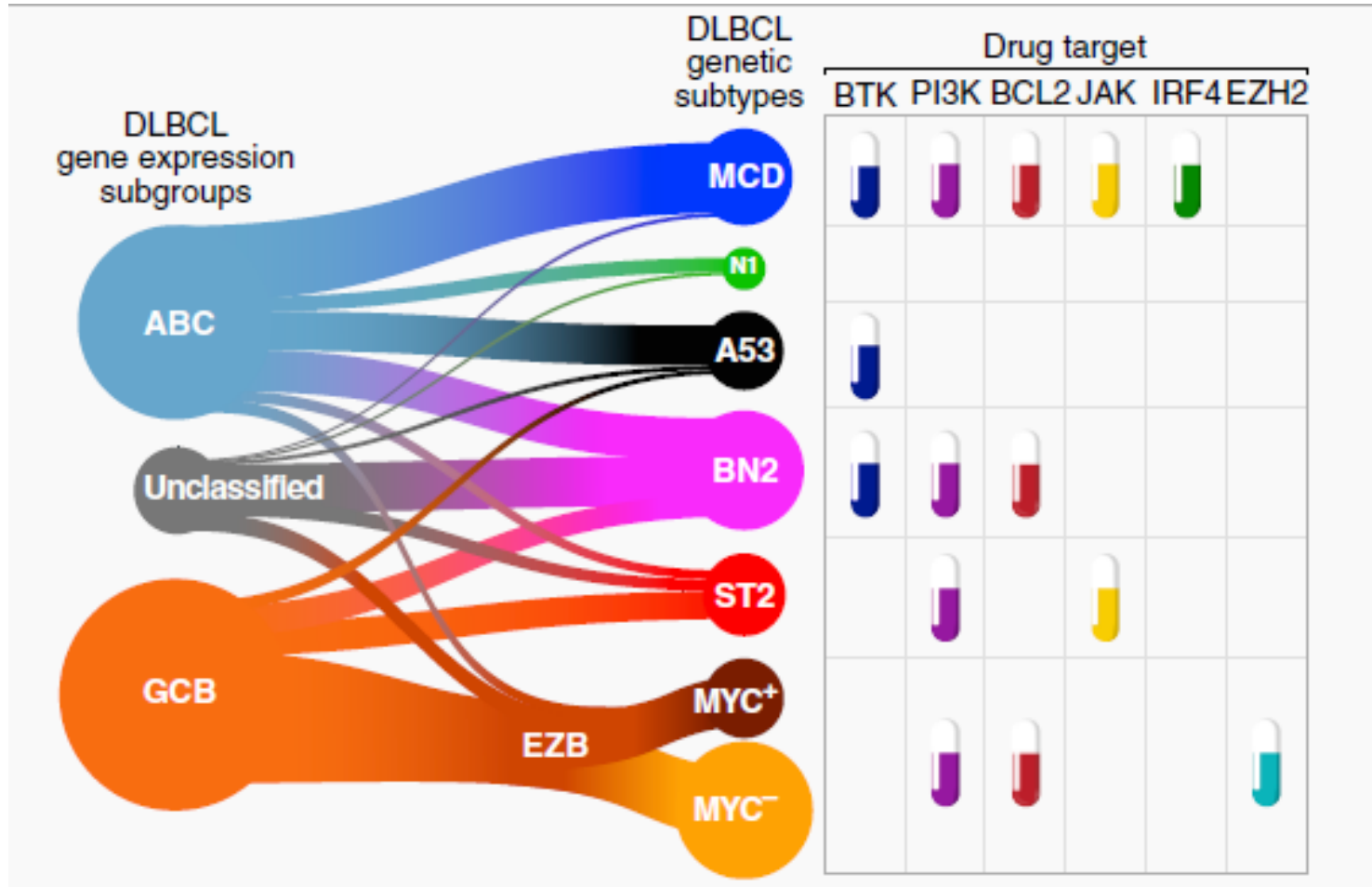


Chapuy et al, Nature Med 2018

Schmitz et al, N Engl J Med 2018

Lacy et al, Blood 2020

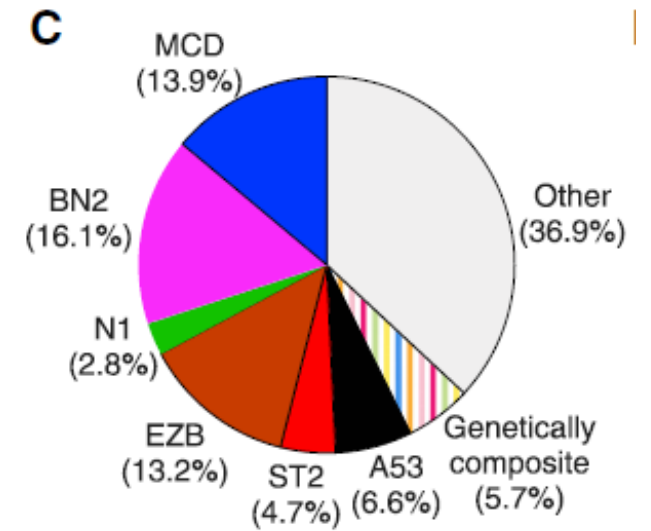
DLBCL molecular classification



Wright et al, Cancer Cell 2020

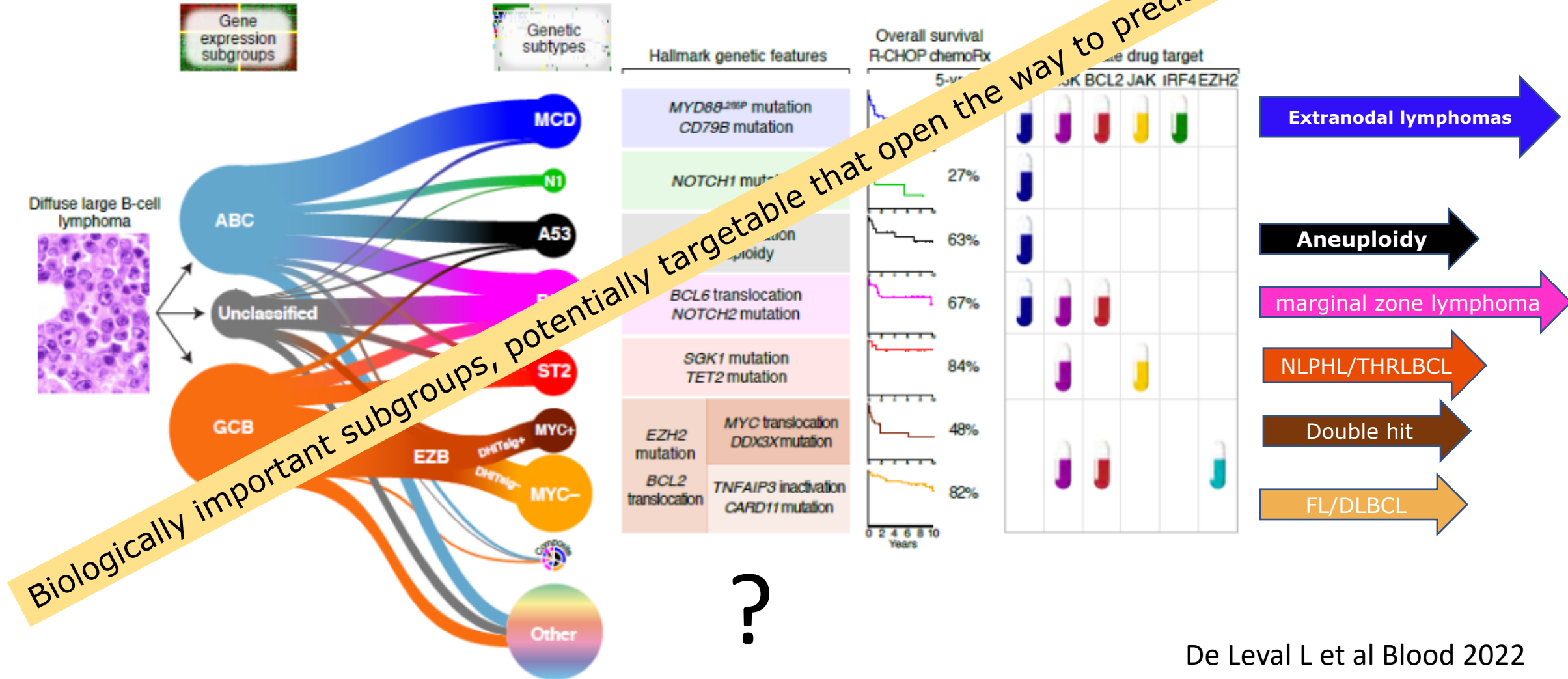
DLBCL molecular classification

Wright 2020	Chapuy 2018	Lacy 2020	Frequency
MCD	C5	MYD88	14-21%
BN2	C1	NOTCH2	16-19%
EZB-MYC-	C3	BCL2	13-18%
EZB-MYC+ Double hit			
A53	C2		7-21
ST2	C4	SOCS1/TET/SGK 1	5-17
N1		NEC	3
Unclassifiable			37



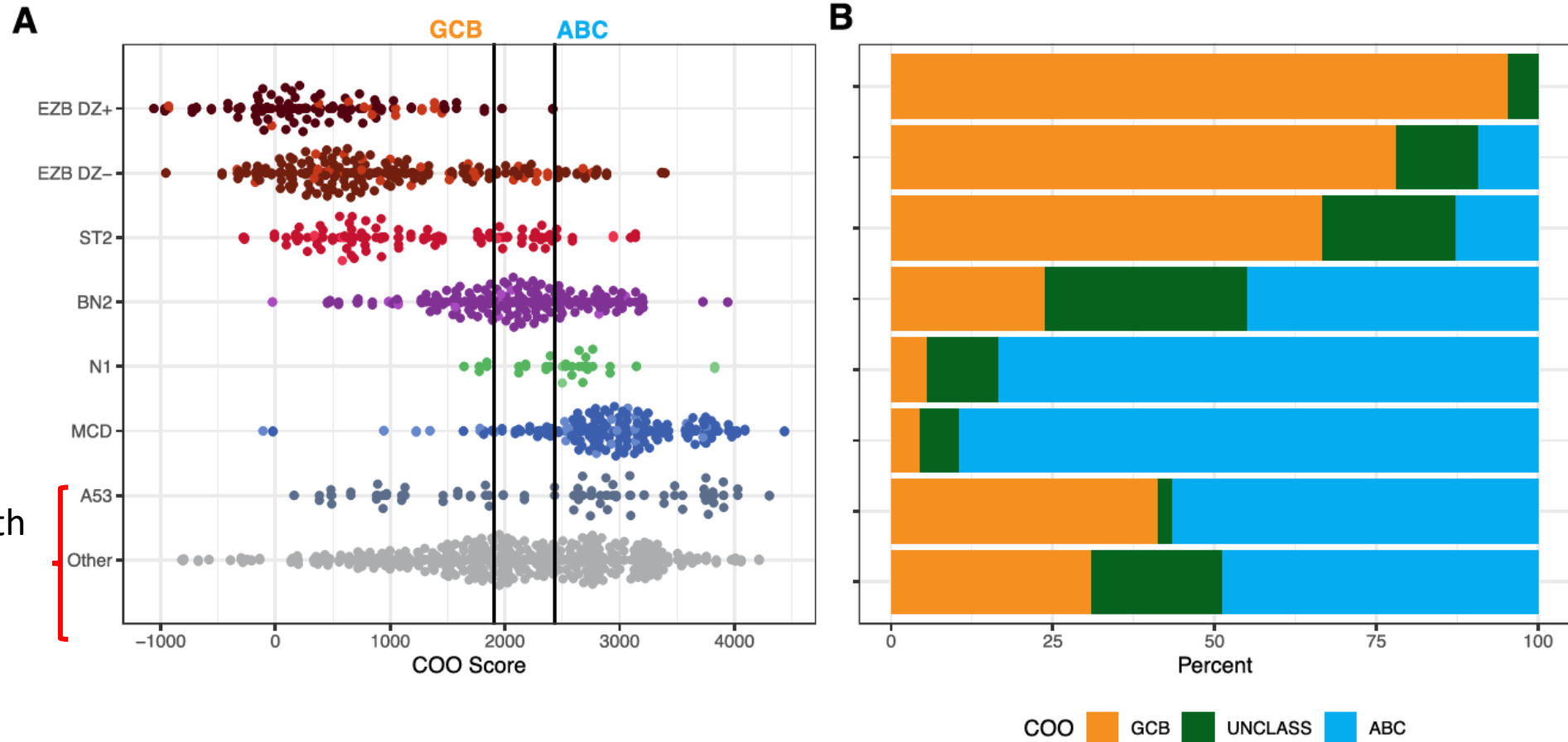
Chapuy B et al Nat Med 2018; Wright GW et al Cancer Cell 2020; Lacy SE et al Blood 2020

DLBCL molecular classification

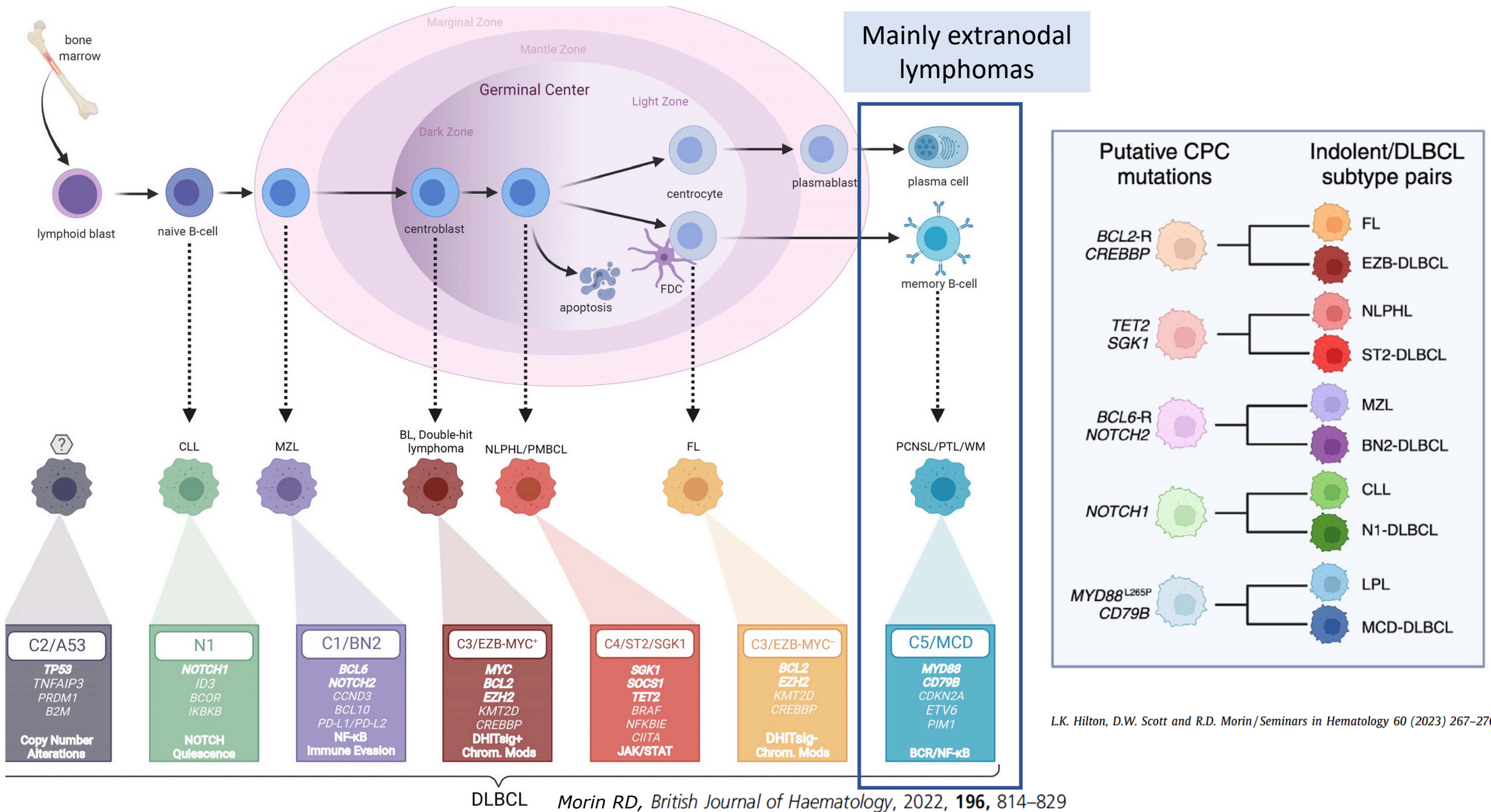


De Leval L et al Blood 2022

DLBCL molecular classification



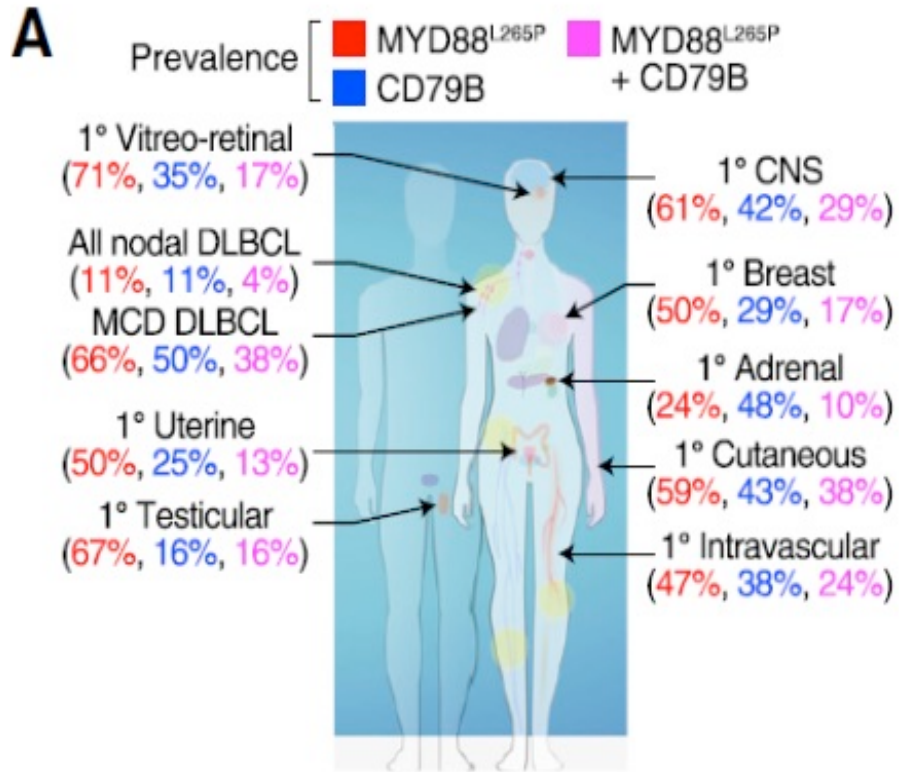
L.K. Hilton, D.W. Scott and R.D. Morin/*Seminars in Hematology* 60 (2023) 267–276



L.K. Hilton, D.W. Scott and R.D. Morin/*Seminars in Hematology* 60 (2023) 267–276

Are extranodal DLBCL ABC-type an entity?

Still premature



Wright GW et al Cancer Cell 2020

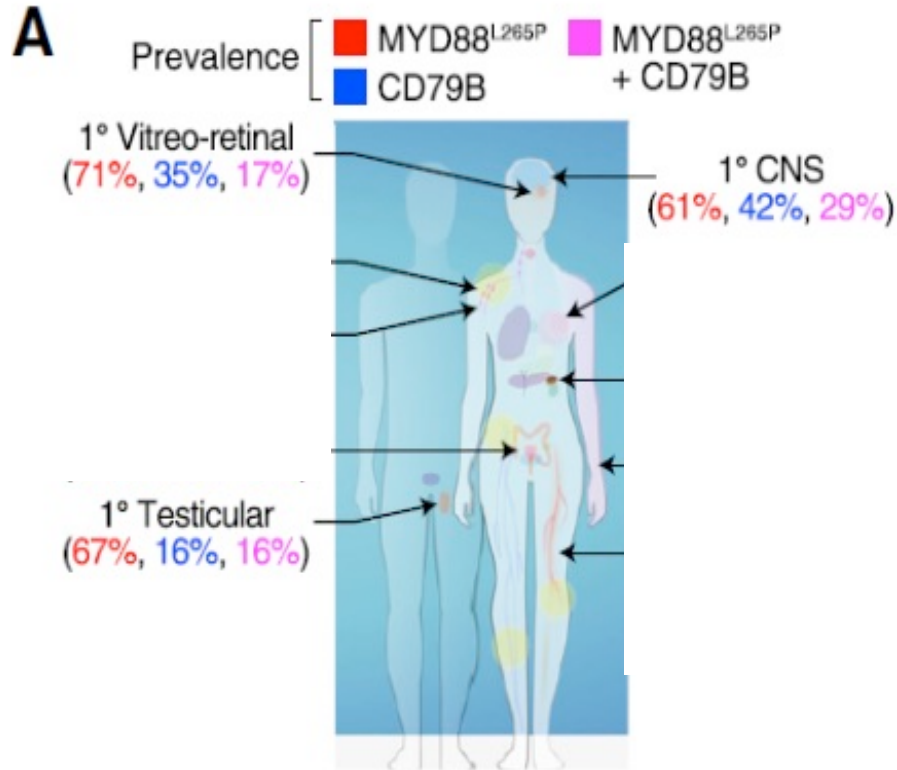
- Extranodal DLBCL, ABC, share biological features (MCD/C5)
- Close relationship of primary CNS and testicular DLBCL
- Some subtypes better defined by the topographic site (IVLBCL)
- Not enough information on the relationship between tumors in different extranodal sites (e.g. Breast, Adrenal, Uterine)
- Difficult to define homogeneous clinical guidelines

ICC Proposal

- Maintain current defined entities
- Recognize this group of lymphomas as deserving more specific studies to clarify their relationship

Campo E. Blood 2022

Are extranodal ABC-type an entity?



Modified from Wright GW et al Cancer Cell 2020

5th edition WHO approach

Primary large B-cell lymphomas of immune-privileged sites



Intravascular
Breast
Adrenal
Cutaneous
Uterine
Nodal

?

Alaggio R. Leukemia 2022

Is the CNS immune privileged?

neuro-immune responses occur at the borders of the brain

Review


Brain borders at the central stage of neuroimmunology

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05474-7>

Received: 28 July 2022

Accepted: 24 October 2022

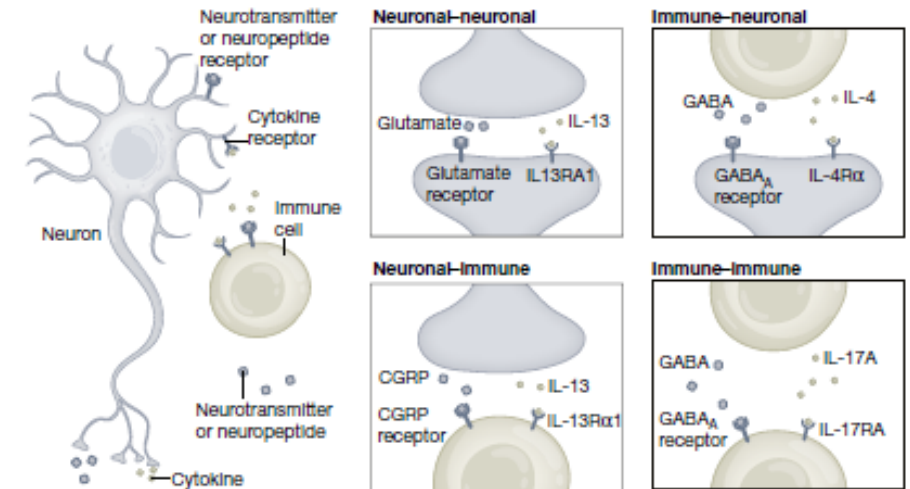
Published online: 14 December 2022

 Check for updates

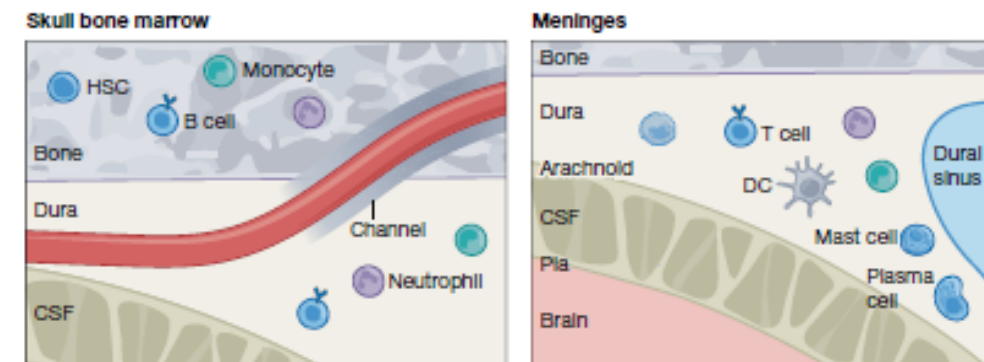
Justin Rustenhoven^{1,2,3,4} & Jonathan Kipnis^{1,2}

The concept of immune privilege suggests that the central nervous system is isolated from the immune system. However, recent studies have highlighted the borders of the central nervous system as central sites of neuro-immune interactions. Although the nervous and immune systems both function to maintain homeostasis, under rare circumstances, they can develop pathological interactions that lead to neurological or psychiatric diseases. Here we discuss recent findings that dissect the key anatomical, cellular and molecular mechanisms that enable neuro-immune responses at the borders of the brain and spinal cord and the implications of these interactions for diseases of the central nervous system.

Nature | Vol 612 | 15 December 2022 | 417



Cells of the CNS and immune system communicate using numerous different signalling molecules



MYC

Double hit
lymphomas

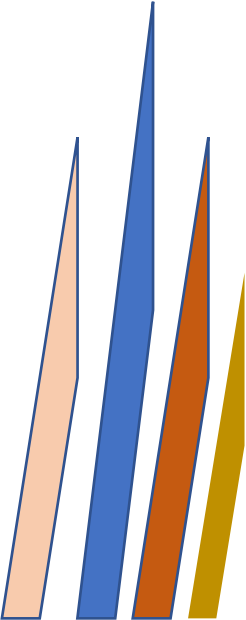
Double
expressers



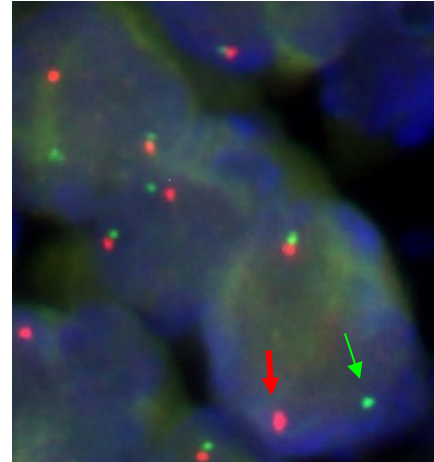
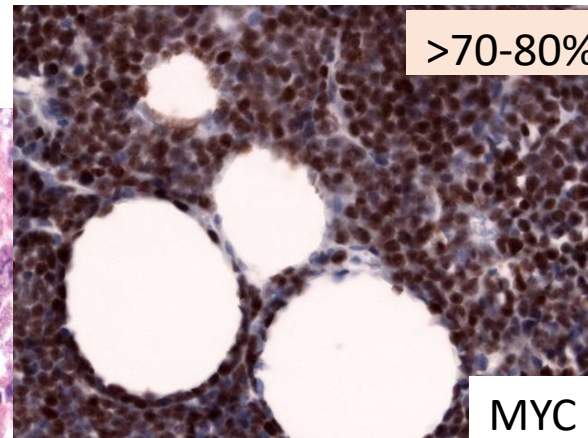
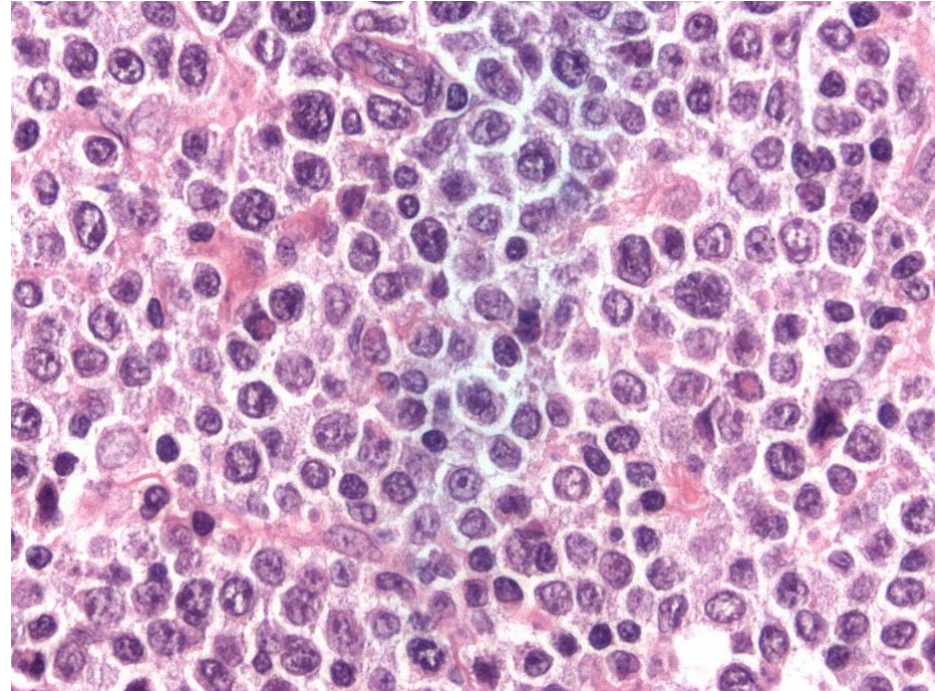
MYC

Double hit
lymphomas

~~Double~~
~~expressers~~

- 
- Introduced in the 2017 WHO classification
 - Deemphasized in the ICC and the 5th edition of the WHO, because may not be prognostically independent

MYC translocation in DLBCL



MYC break-apart probe

Selection of cases

- **Clinical presentation**

Extensive disease, CNS involvement, BM involvement and Leukemic presentation

- **Morphology**

All BCL-U morphology

All blastoid morphology

➤ **DLBCL of GCB type**

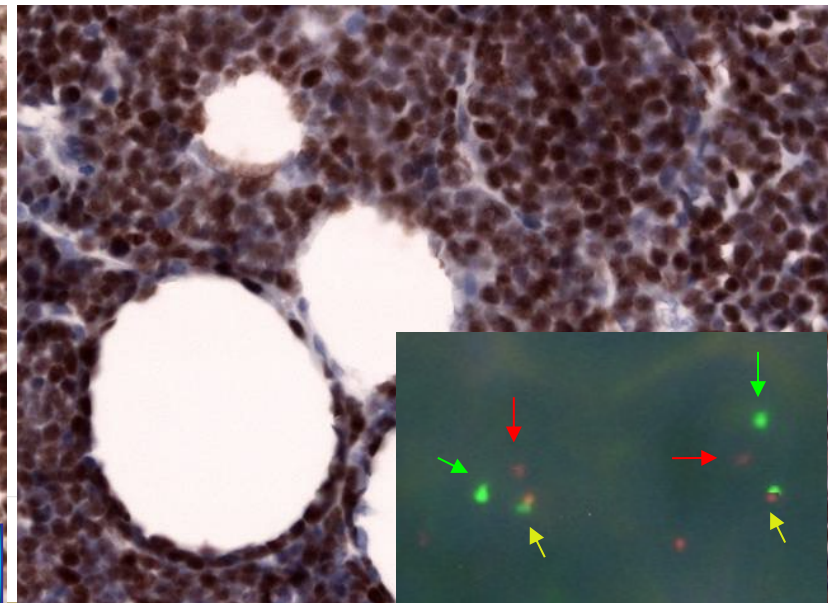
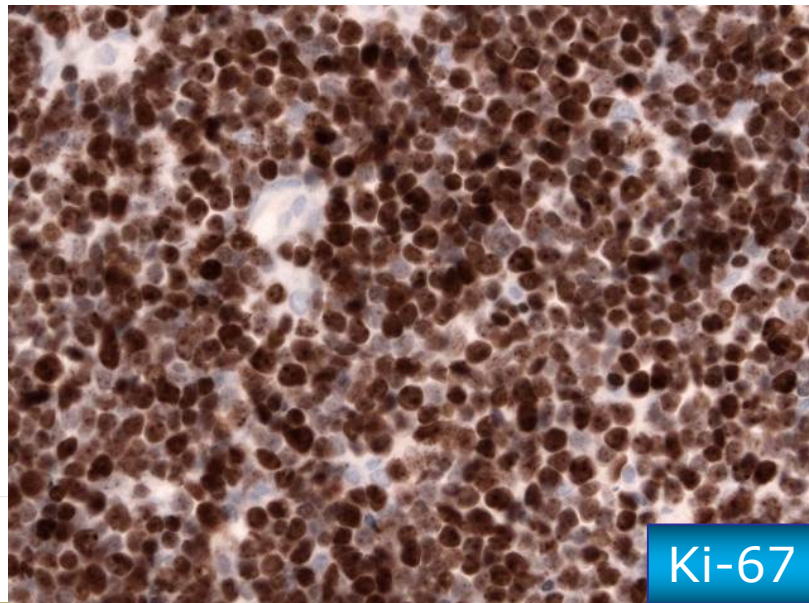
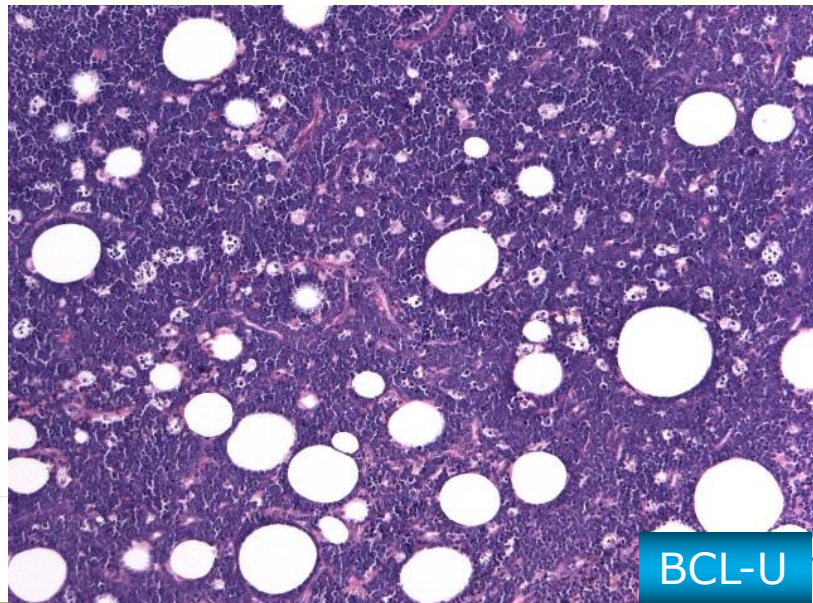
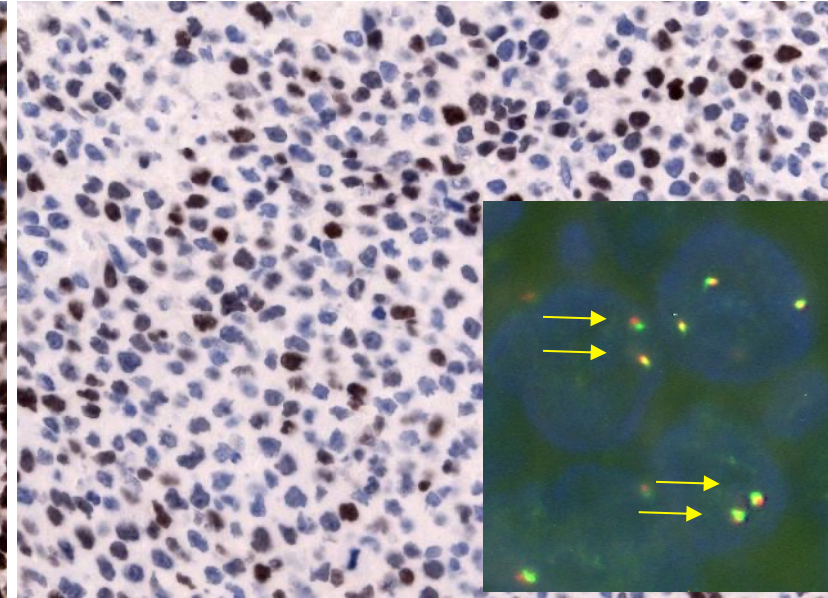
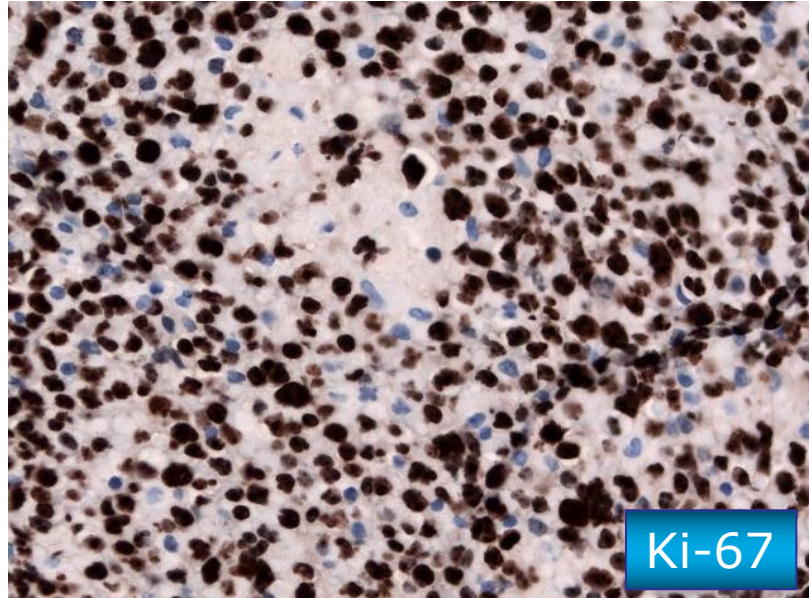
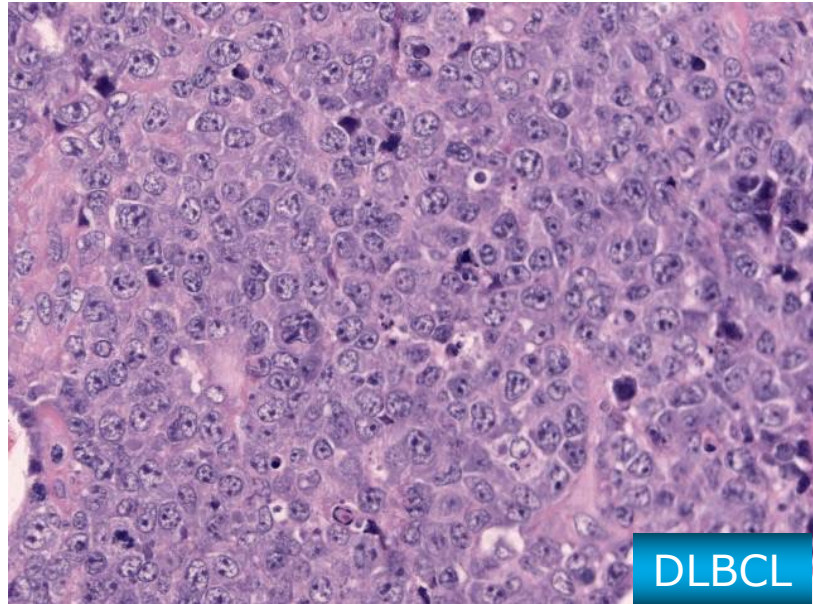
- **FISH**

Start with break-apart probes for *MYC* followed for *BCL2* and *BCL6*.

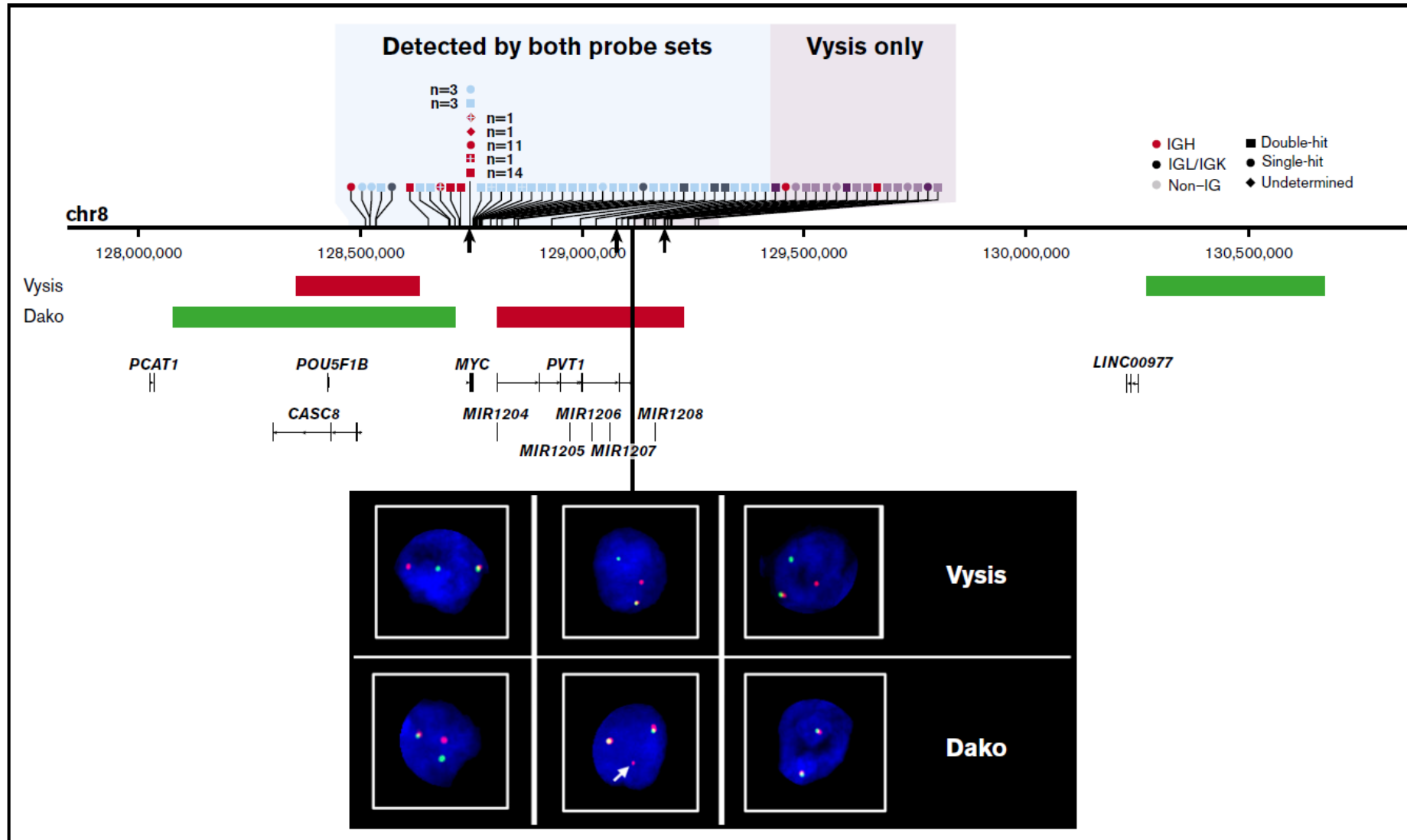
Ott et al, Blood 2013;122:3884-91

Karube K & Campo E, Semin Haematol 2015;52:97

MYC translocation in DLBCL

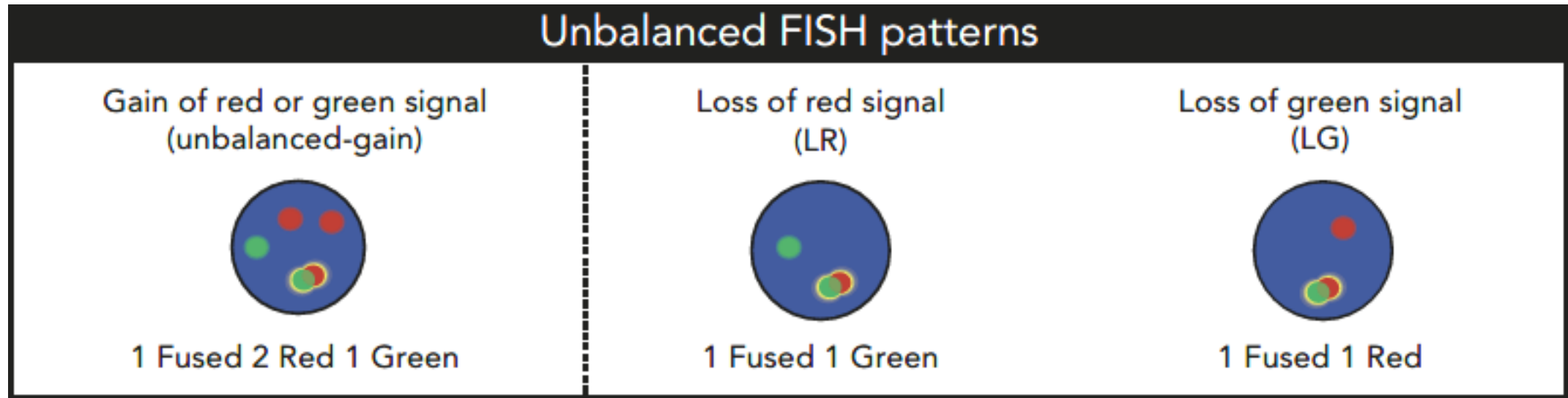


MYC translocation in DLBCL



- Comercially available FISH probes do not detect all the *MYC* rearrangements
- Break apart probes are more sensitive and therefore recommended in routine diagnosis
- Around 20% cryptic
- In negative cases with BAP fusion probes (IGH/*MYC*) are recommended.

MYC translocation in DLBCL



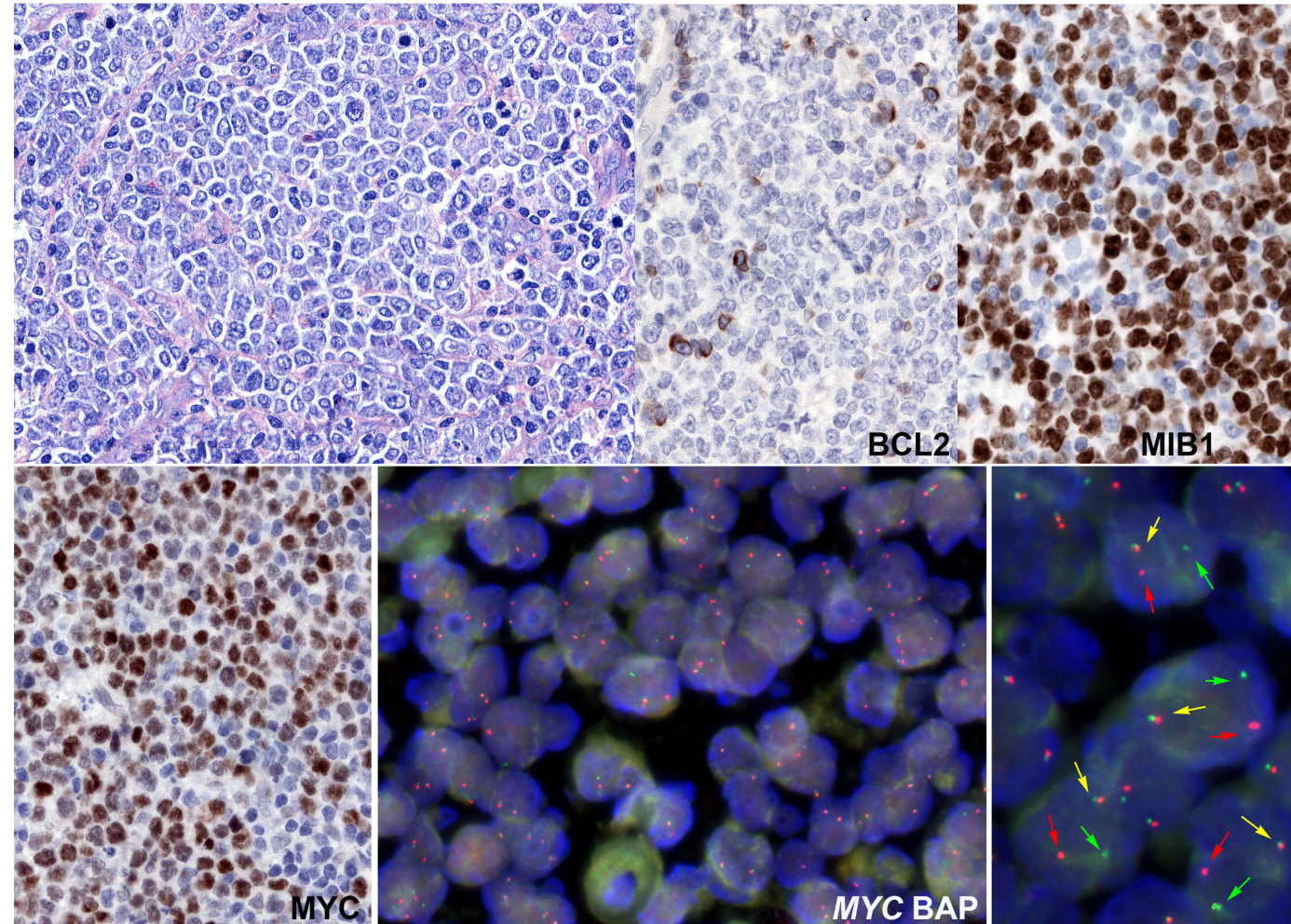
Balanced and unbalanced *MYC* rearrangements have the same biological consequences and should be reported as positive for rearrangement

MYC translocation in DLBCL

Prognostic Significance of *MYC* Rearrangement and Translocation Partner in Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma: A Study by the Lunenburg Lymphoma Biomarker Consortium

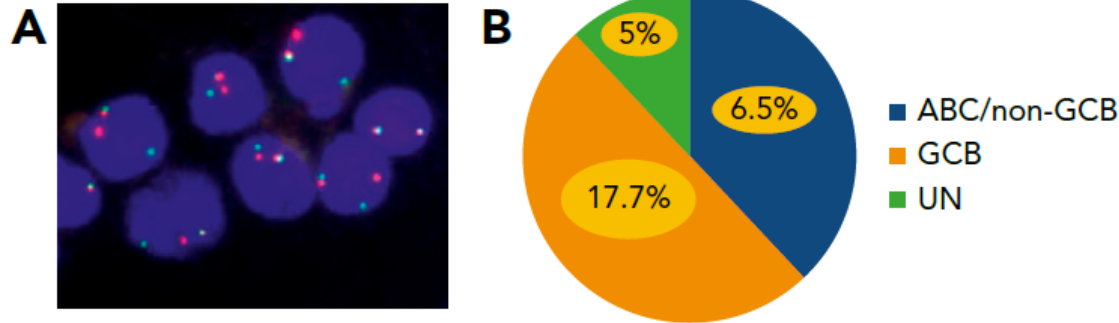
Andreas Rosenwald, MD¹; Susanne Bens, MD²; Ranjana Advani, MD³; Sharon Barrans, PhD⁴; Christiane Copie-Bergman, PhD⁵; Mad-Helenie Elsensohn, PhD^{6,7}; Yaso Natkunam, PhD⁸; Maria Calaminici, PhD⁹; Birgitta Sander, PhD^{10,11}; Maryse Baia, MSc⁵; Alexandra Smith, PhD¹²; Daniel Painter, PhD¹²; Luu Pham, MD³; Shuchun Zhao, PhD⁸; Marita Ziepert, PhD¹³; Ekaterina S. Jordanova, PhD¹⁴; Thierry J. Molina, PhD¹⁵; Marie José Kersten, PhD^{14,16}; Eva Kimby, PhD¹⁰; Wolfram Klapper, MD¹⁷; John Raemaekers, PhD¹⁸; Norbert Schmitz, MD¹⁹; Fabrice Jardin, PhD²⁰; Wendy B.C. Stevens, MD²¹; Eva Hoster, PhD²²; Anton Hagenbeek, MD^{14,16}; John G. Gribben, MD⁹; Reiner Siebert, MD²; Randy D. Gascoyne, MD²³; David W. Scott, PhD²³; Philippe Gaulard, MD⁵; Gilles Salles, PhD²⁴; Catherine Burton, MD⁴; Daphne de Jong, PhD^{14,25}; Laurie H. Sehn, MD²³; and Delphine Maucourt-Boulch, PhD^{6,7}

- 2383 patients with DLBCL (JCO, 2019):
 - 264 (11.1%) with *MYC* rearrangement
 - 40 (1.7%) with *MYC*-SH (IG)
 - 17 (0.7%) with *MYC*-SH (non-IG)



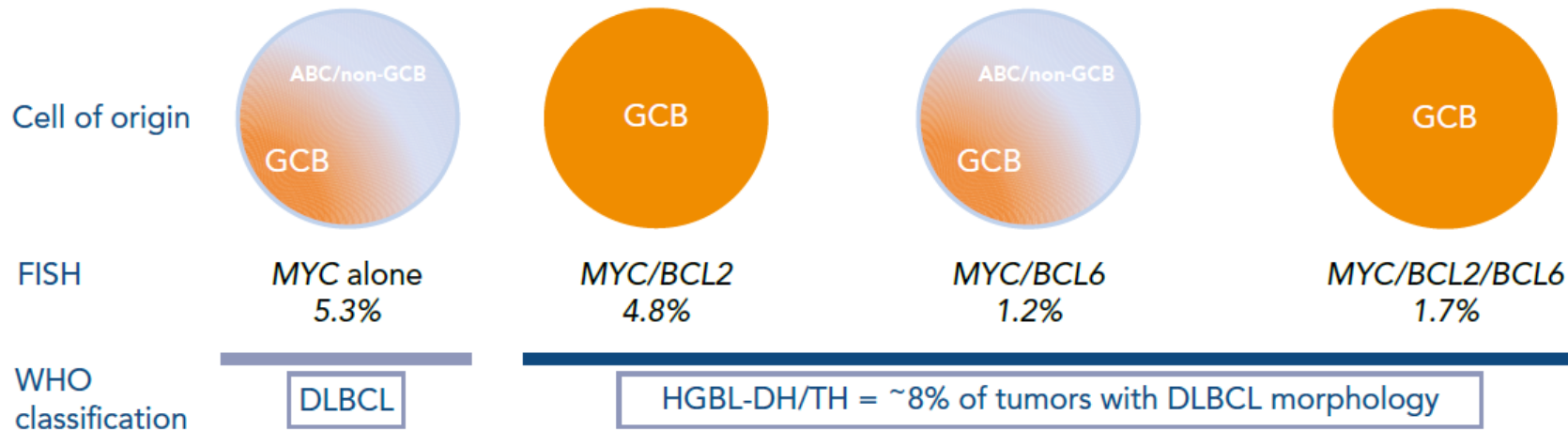
MYC translocation in DLBCL

HGBL-DH/TH WITH DLBCL MORPHOLOGY



C

MYC-R = 12.2% of 1228 biopsies with DLBCL morphology



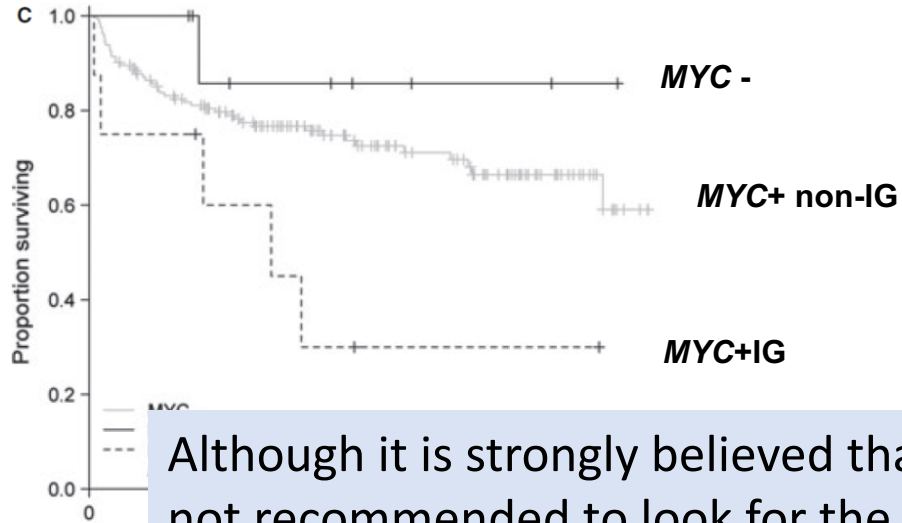
- HGBL *MYC/BCL2*
- GCB type 6.5%
- HGBL *MYC/BCL6*
- 1.2% of the cases
- 30% pseudo DH

KEY POINTS

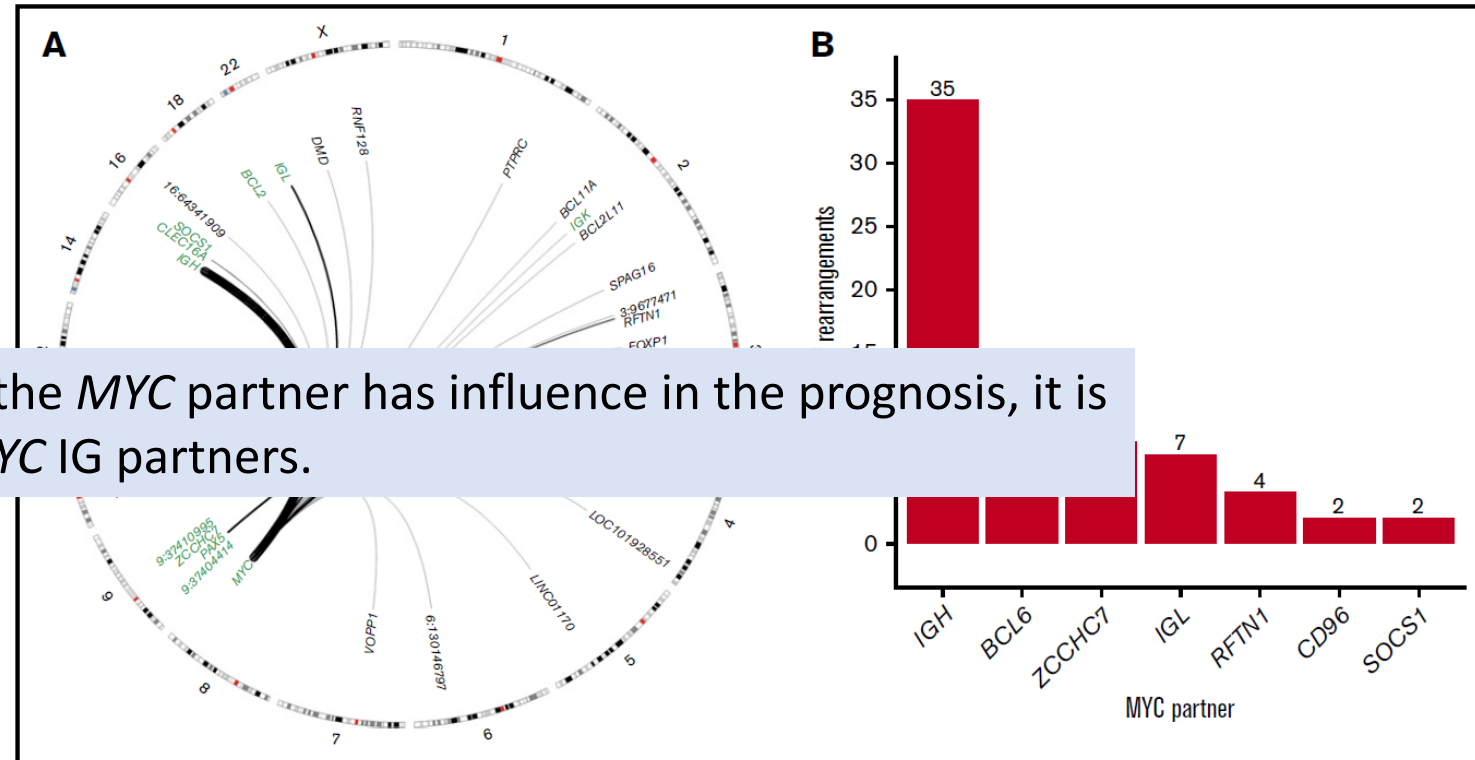
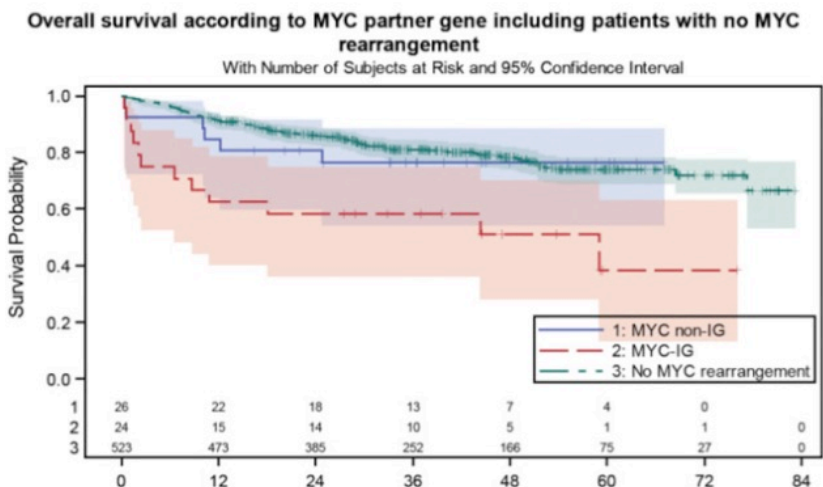
- HGBL-DH/TH makes up 8% of de novo DLBCL, with HGBL-DH/TH with *BCL2* rearrangement being a GCB phenomenon.
- Restricting FISH testing to tumors with dual protein expression and GCB subtype results in testing <15% of tumors, but missing ~35% of HGBL-DH/TH.

blood® 3 MAY 2018 | VOLUME 131, NUMBER 18

Not all *MYC* translocations are the same *MYC* partner matters? Ig vs non-Ig

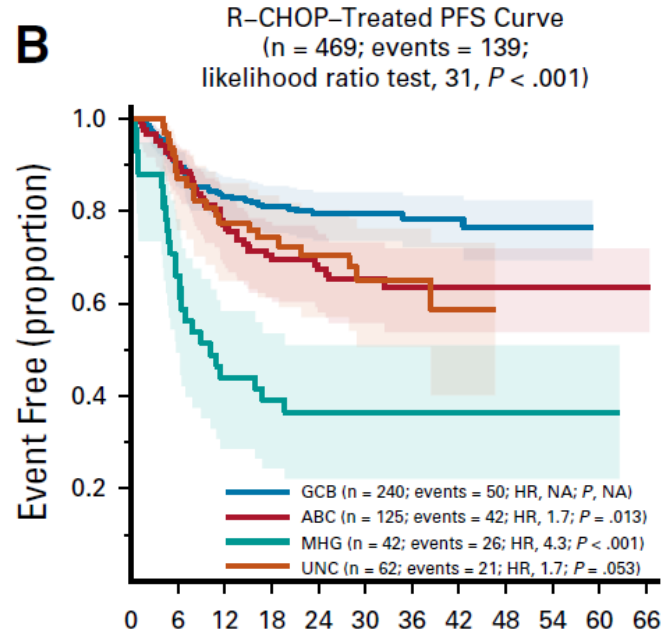
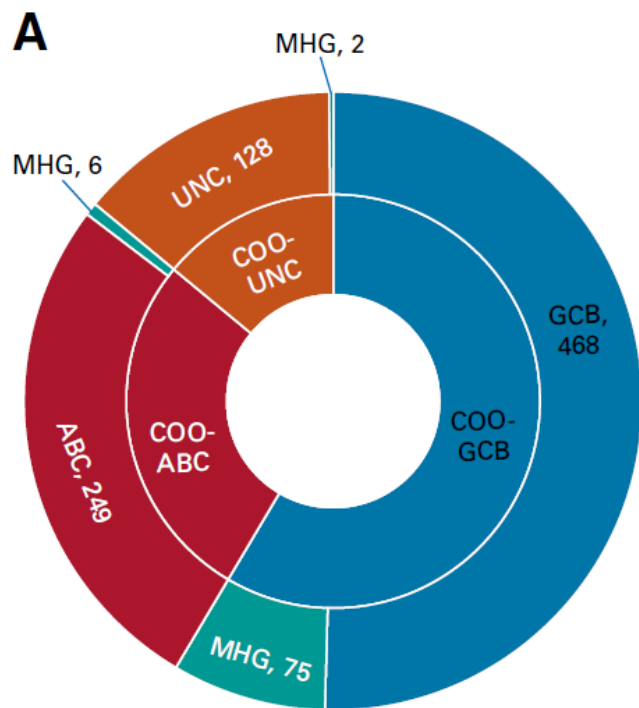


MYC-IG



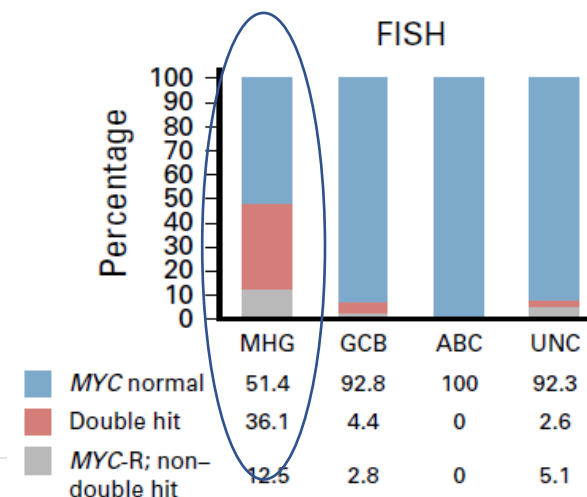
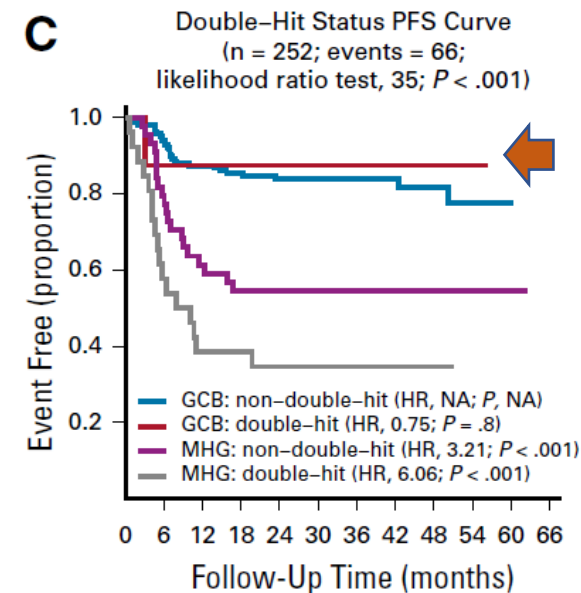
- *MYC*::*BCL6* occurs in 30% the cases „pseudo-DH“
- t(3;8)(q27;q24)

Molecular high grade signature DLBCL



No. at risk

GCB	240	213	195	167	134	94	75	43	22	10
ABC	125	110	93	79	63	44	28	16	9	4
MHG	42	27	18	15	13	10	9	5	4	1
UNC	62	54	48	42	33	21	12	4		



1

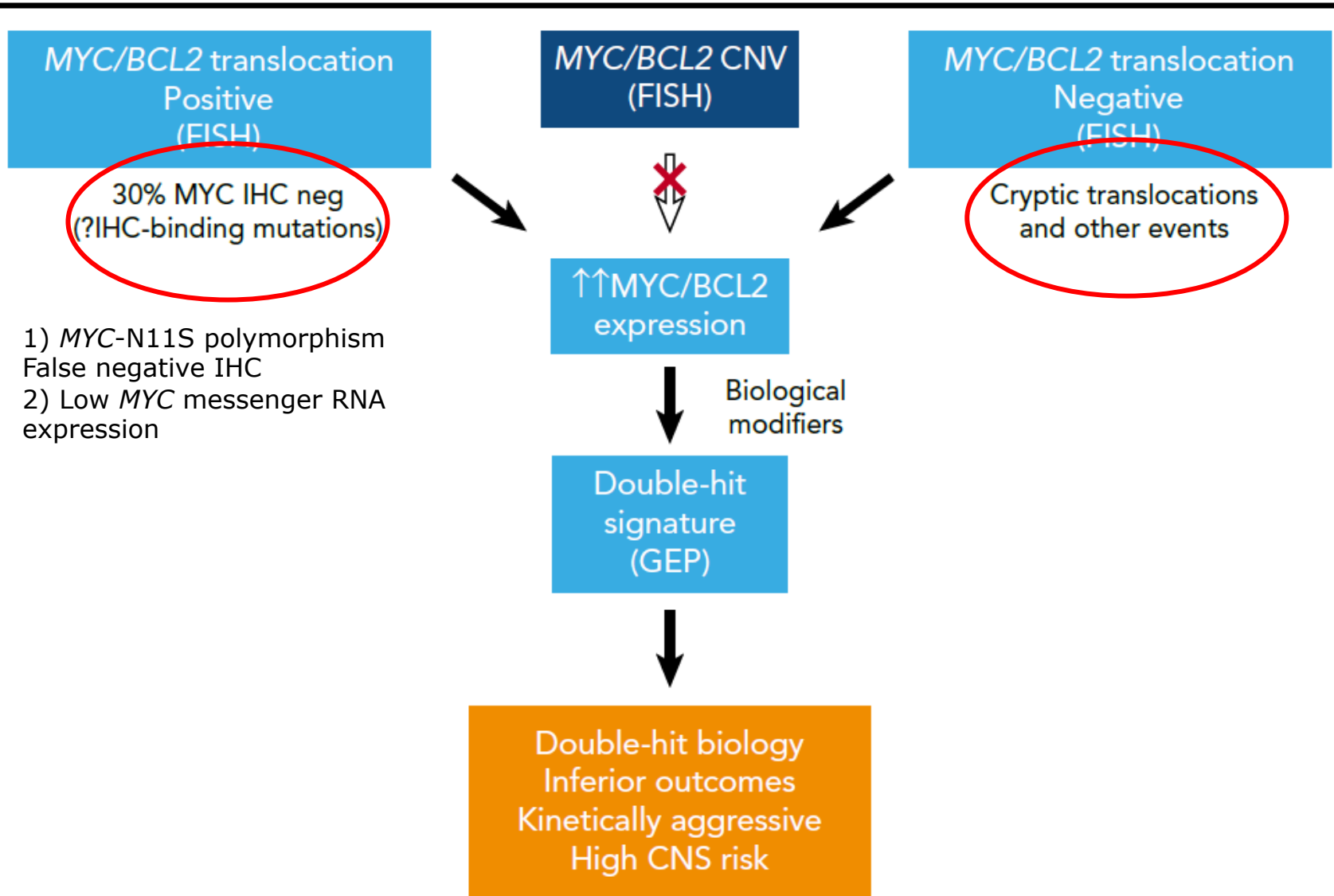
- 9% of all DLBCL
- Only 50% of the MHG signature carried DH
- The majority GCB (75/83)
- Some ABC

2

DH lymphomas without the MHG signature did not performed worse

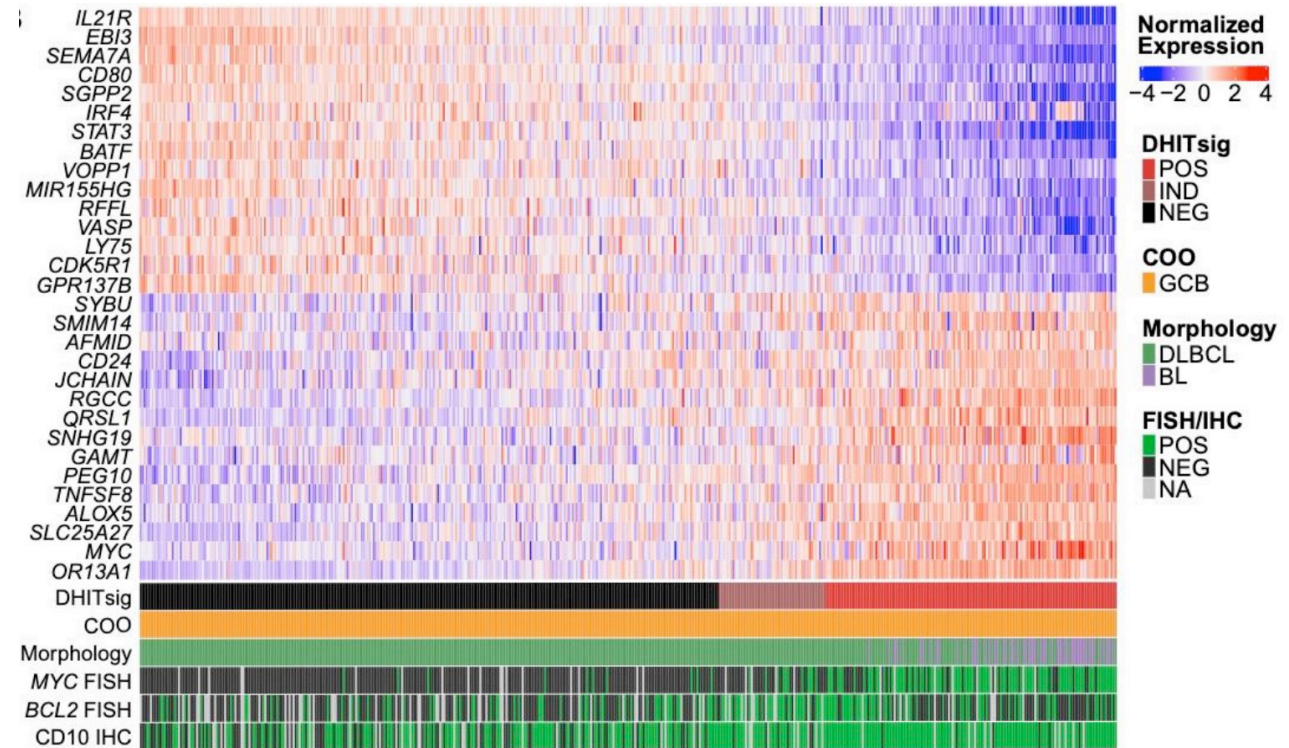
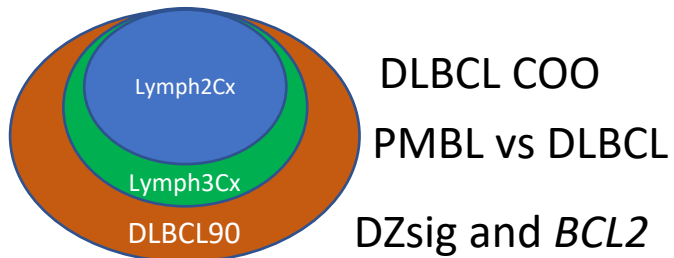
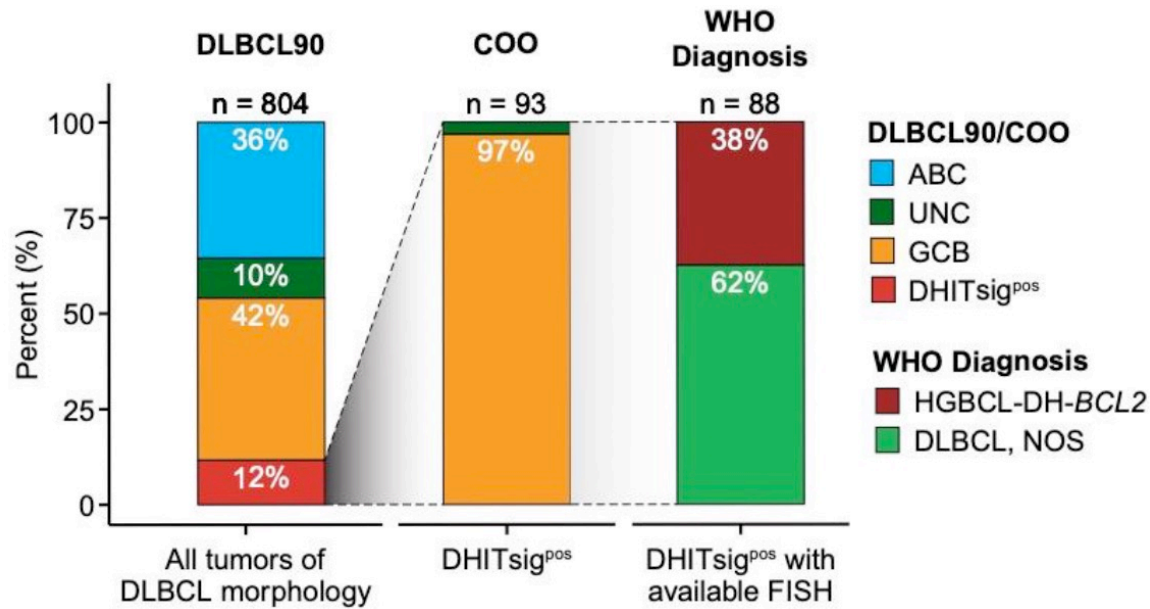
Are all *MYC* translocation the same?

MYC and *BCL2* structural variants in DLBCL



- Only 50% of the DHITsig harbor *MYC* and *BCL2* rearrangements
- GCB-DLBCL without the DHITsig have an overall survival of 90%
- *MYC* expression in GC is restricted to cells selected within the LZ for re-entry into the DZ.
- High incidence of mutations within chromatin modifier genes.
- High incidence of low MHC-I and MHC-II expression
- High oxidative phosphorylation

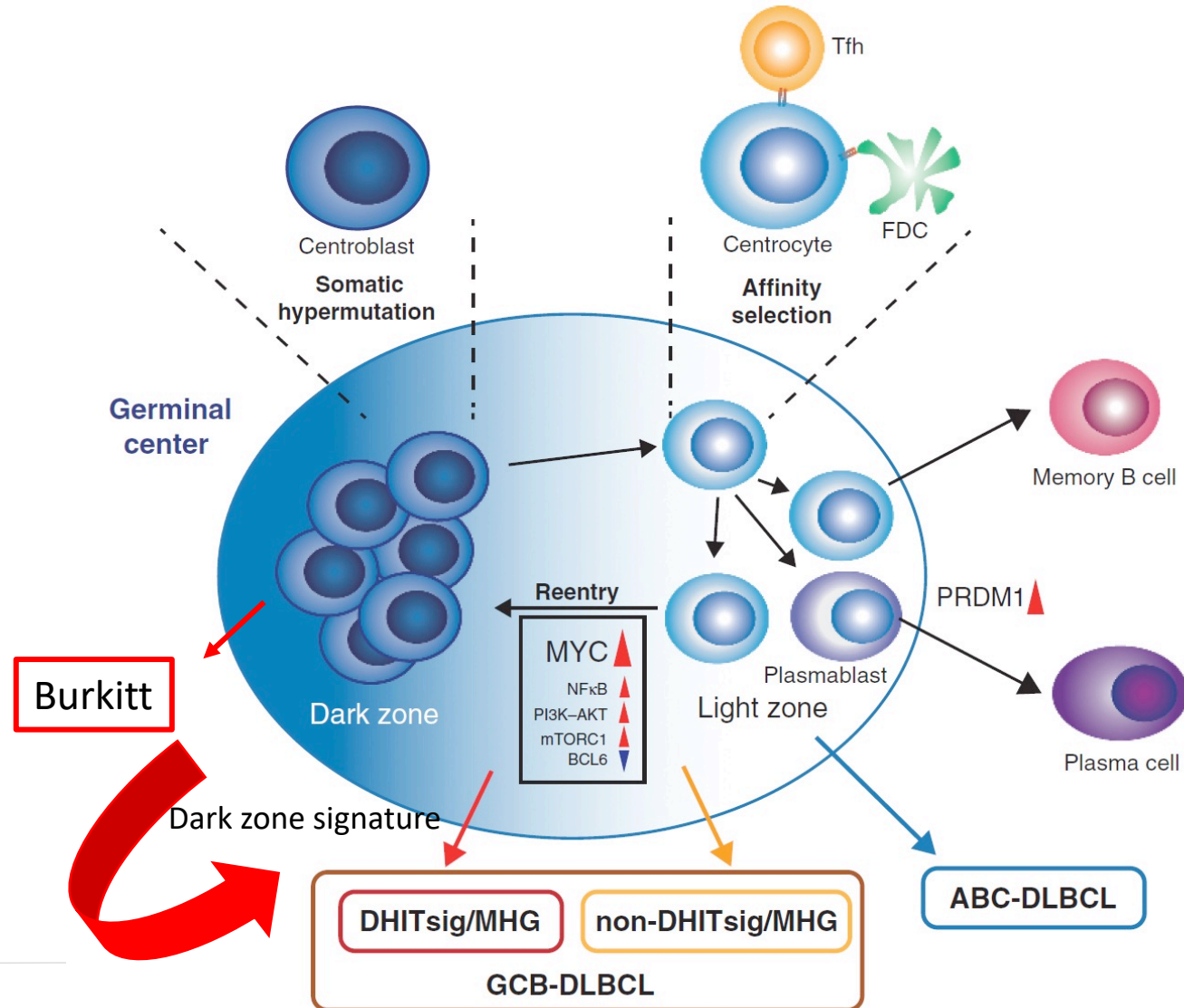
DHS is now renamed “dark zone signature”



DZ signature refines the COO classification by identifying patients with GCB-DLBCL with inferior outcomes

Aduaij W, et al, Blood 2022 on line

Cell of origin and the dark zone signature



- In the dark zone GCB cells proliferate and undergo SHM
- The light zone is devoted to antigen-based affinity selection through GCB cells interaction with FDC's and TFH
- GCB cells differentiate into memory B cells and plasma cells. Plasma cell differentiation and exit of the GC are controlled by PRDM1 (BLIMP1)

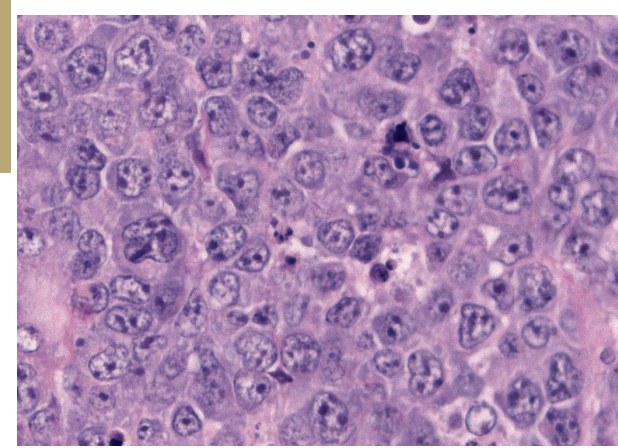
High-grade B-cell lymphomas

Biology or morphology?

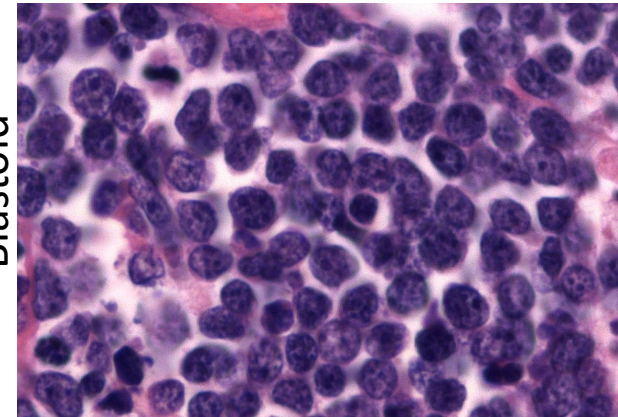
High-grade lymphomas

- WHO 4th edition 2008:
 - B-cell lymphoma, unclassifiable, with features intermediate between diffuse large B-cell lymphoma and Burkitt lymphoma (BCLU)
 - Cases morphologically resembling BL but with morphological and phenotypical deviations
 - Includes but not limited to DHL.
- WHO 4th edition update 2017:
 - High grade B-cell lymphomas
 - High-grade B-cell lymphomas with *MYC* and *BCL2* and/or *BCL6* rearrangements (double or triple-hit)
 - Specify whether DLBCL, blastoid or BCLU morphology
 - Cases of FL or LBL with DH are not included!
 - High-grade B-cell lymphoma, NOS
 - Cases with BCLU or blastoid morphology or other high-grade features and no DH
- 2022 ICC
 - High grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL2* (WHO and ICC)
 - High grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL6* (DLBCL in WHO)
 - High grade B-cell lymphoma, NOS

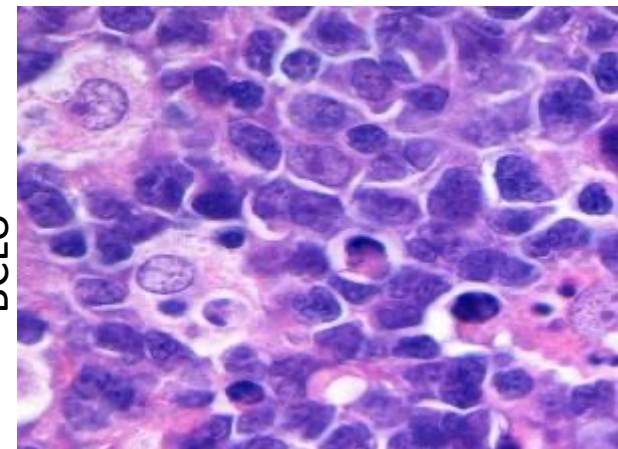
DLBCL



Blastoid



BCLU



The ICC approach to the HGBCL

ICC classification

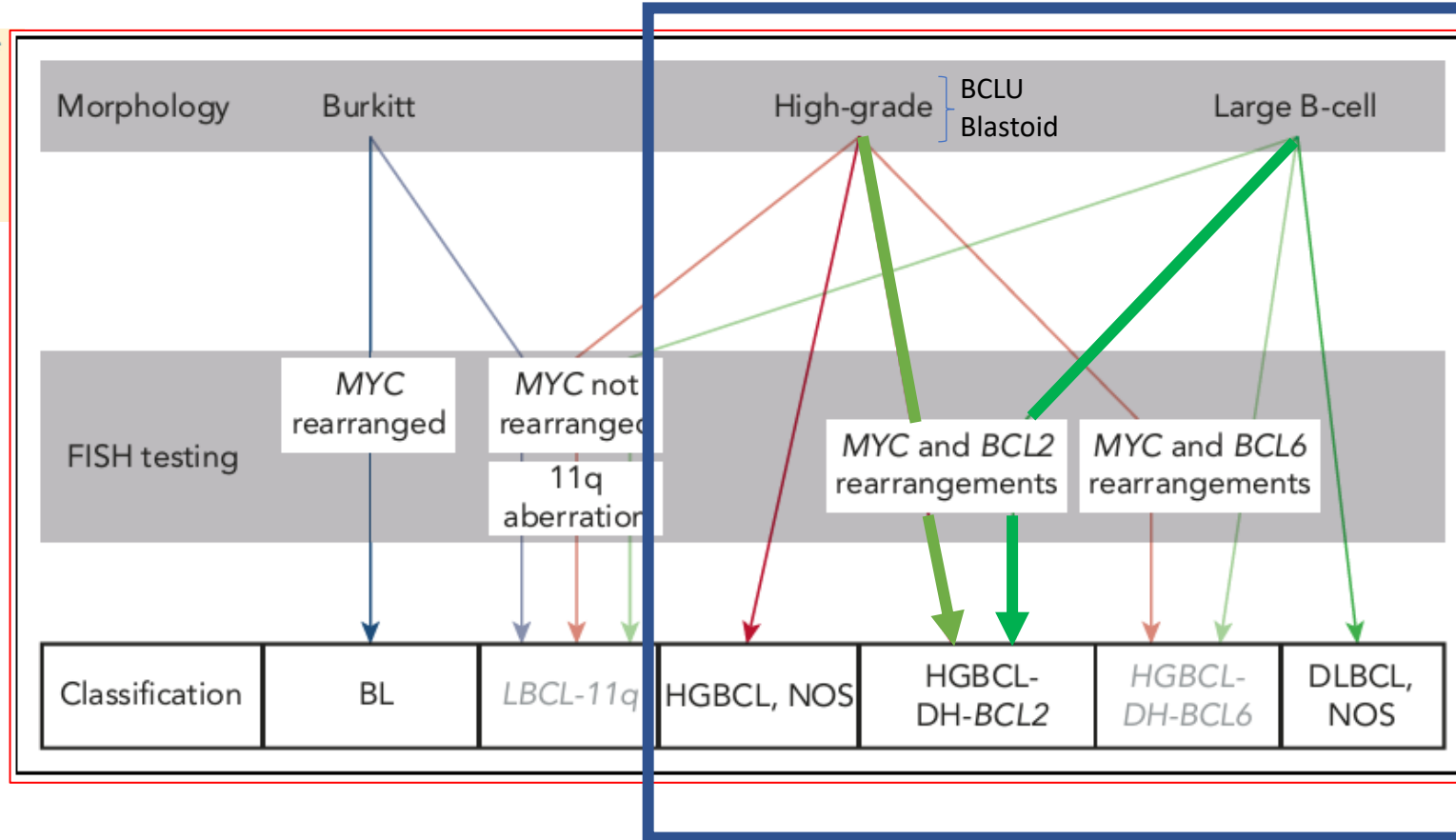
High-grade B-cell lymphoma, with *MYC* and *BCL2* rearrangements*

High-grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL6* rearrangements*

High-grade B-cell lymphoma, NOS

Campo E, Blood 2022

- The term is used to identify a group of tumors with very aggressive biological behaviour and poor response to current therapeutical strategies indepently of the specific morphology



GENOMIC PROFILING OF LYMPHOMAS 24 NOVEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 140, NUMBER 21

The ICC proposal for HGBCL

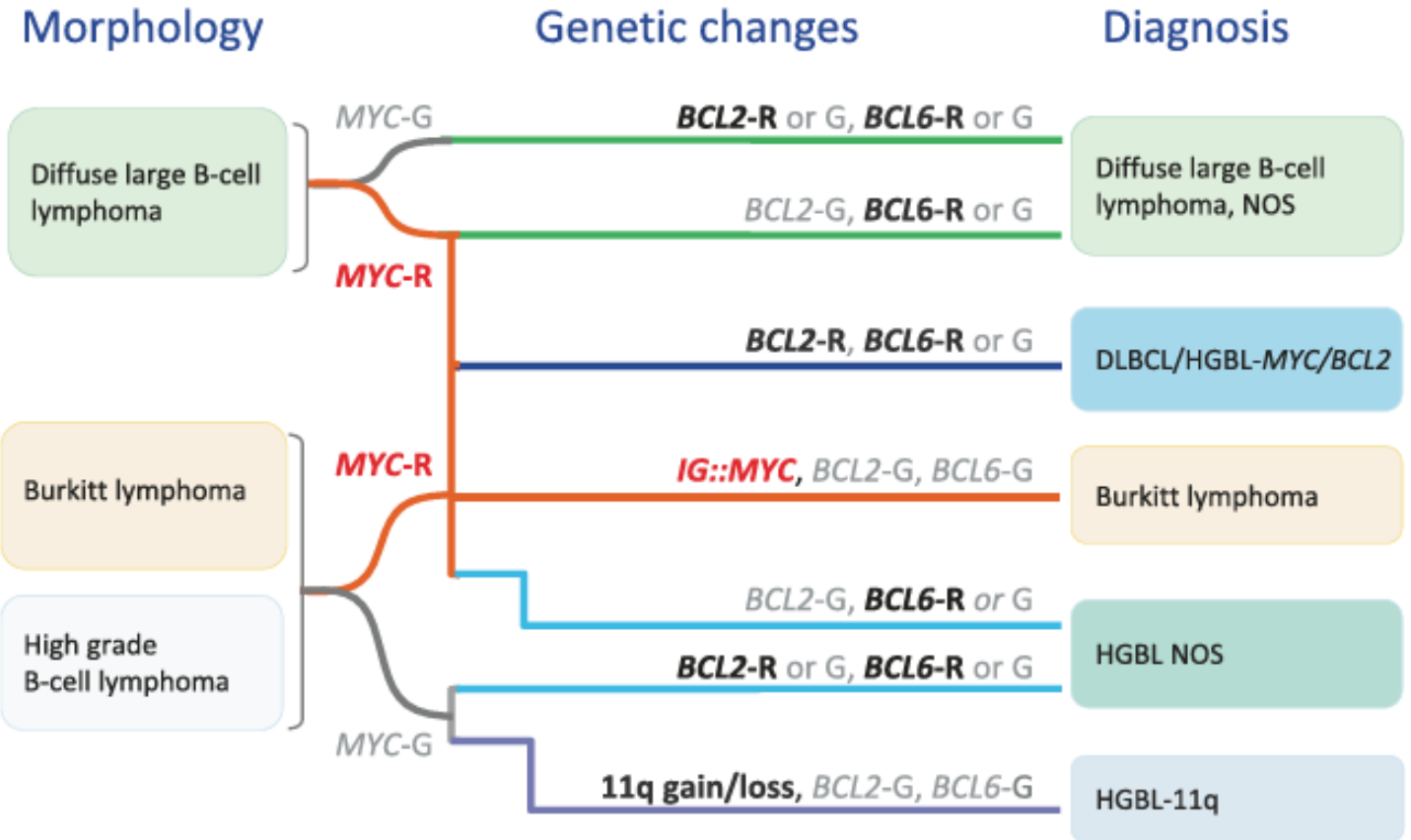
- **High-grade B-cell lymphomas with *MYC* and *BCL2* rearrangements**
 - Specify whether DLBCL, blastoid or intermediate morphology
 - FISH break apart probes recommended but may miss up to 20% cases (cryptic)
 - IG or non-IG translocated partner inconclusive results and not required in daily practice
 - Do not consider CNA (amplification and copy numbers)
 - Germinal center origin
 - Gene expression signature of centroblast in the GC dark zone
 - Mutational profile similar to “aggressive” FL (*BCL2*, *MYC*, *KMT2D*, *CREBPP*, *TNFRS14*, *EZH2*)
- ***High-grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL6* rearrangements***
 - Heterogeneous in cell of origin and mutational profile (less FL –type, *NOTCH2*)
 - 30% may be “pseudo double” hit
- **High-grade B-cell lymphoma, NOS**

The 5th edition WHO approach to HGBCL

5th edition of the WHO

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma/ high grade B-cell lymphoma with *MYC* and *BCL2* rearrangements

- The term „High-grade“ is used to name tumors based on their cytology, composed either blastoid or intermediate morphology between Burkitt lymphoma and DLBCL (BCLU)
- Double hit lymphomas *BCL6*/*MYC* are no longer recognized by the WHO. They are classified as DLBCL, NOS or HGBL, NOS



R. Alaggio et al. *Leukemia* (2022) 36:1720 – 1748

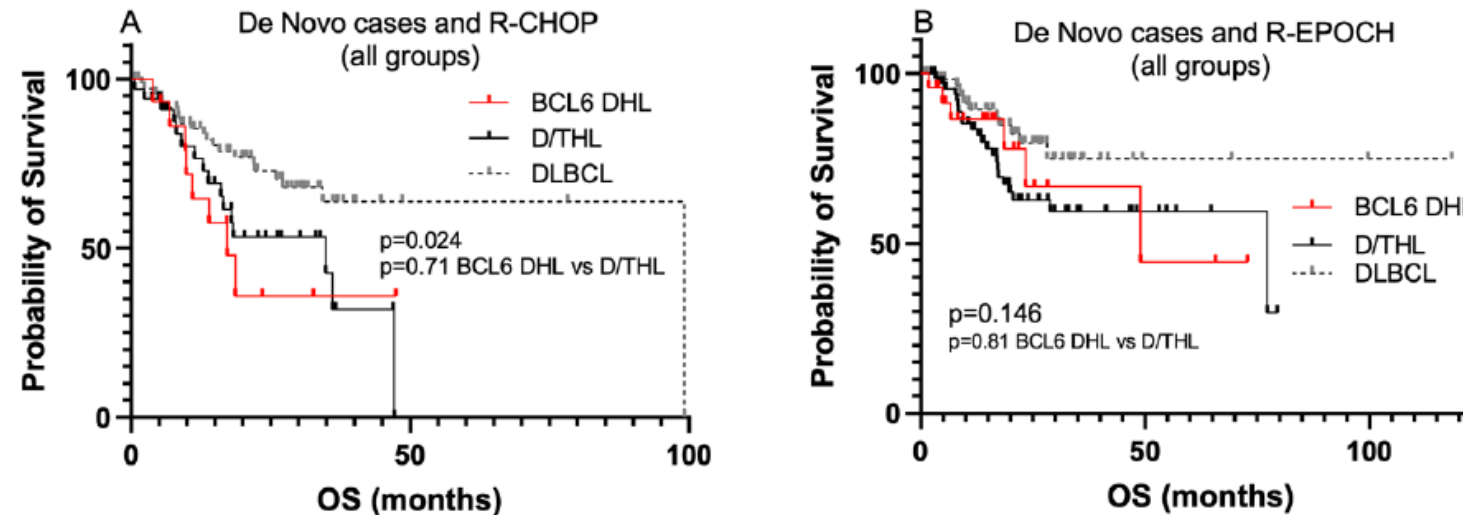
HGBCL with MYC/BCL6-R

1134 MYC and BCL6 Double Hit Lymphoma (DHL): A Clinicopathologic Study of 60 Cases in Comparison to BCL2-DHL and Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma (DLBCL)

Do Hwan Kim¹, Guilin Tang^{1,2}, Pei Lin¹, Jie Xu¹, Sa Wang¹, Lianqun Qiu², C. Cameron Yin¹, Wei Wang¹, L. Jeffrey Medeiros¹, Shaoying Li¹

¹The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, ²University of Washington - Pathology, Houston, TX

Figure 1: Overall survival of *BCL6*-DHL patients vs *BCL2*-DHL and DLBCL-NOS patients.



Conclusions: *BCL6*-DHL patients show aggressive clinical characteristics similar to *BCL2*-DHL patients and more aggressive than DLBCL patients. The major difference between *BCL6*-DHL and *BCL2*-DHL was immunophenotype, with *BCL6*-DHL having less often MYC and BCL2 double expression and GCB type. R-EPOCH, but not R-CHOP, improved the survival of *BCL6*-DHL patients, similar to *BCL2*-DHL patients. These data suggest that *BCL6*-DHL needs a separate recognition other than DLBCL for optimal patient management.

MYC translocation in DLBCL

Title: *MYC/BCL6* double hit lymphoma negative for *t(3;8)* *BCL6::MYC* fusion is associated with inferior survival, in contrast with *t(3;8)* positive pseudo-double hit lymphoma

Author(s): B. D. Maybury¹, L. James², N. Chadderton², J. Dowds², I. Venkatasari³, J. Riley⁴, I. Qureshi⁵, G. Talbot⁶, H. V. Giles⁶, N. J. Phillips⁶, M. Vega Gonzalez⁷, P. Rakesh⁸, A. Haslam⁴, D. Davies⁹, S. Moosai¹⁰, S. A. Lane¹¹, A. Shenouda⁸, G. V. Cherian¹¹, P. K. Kaudlay³, J. Starczynski², Z. Rudzki², S. Chaganti¹

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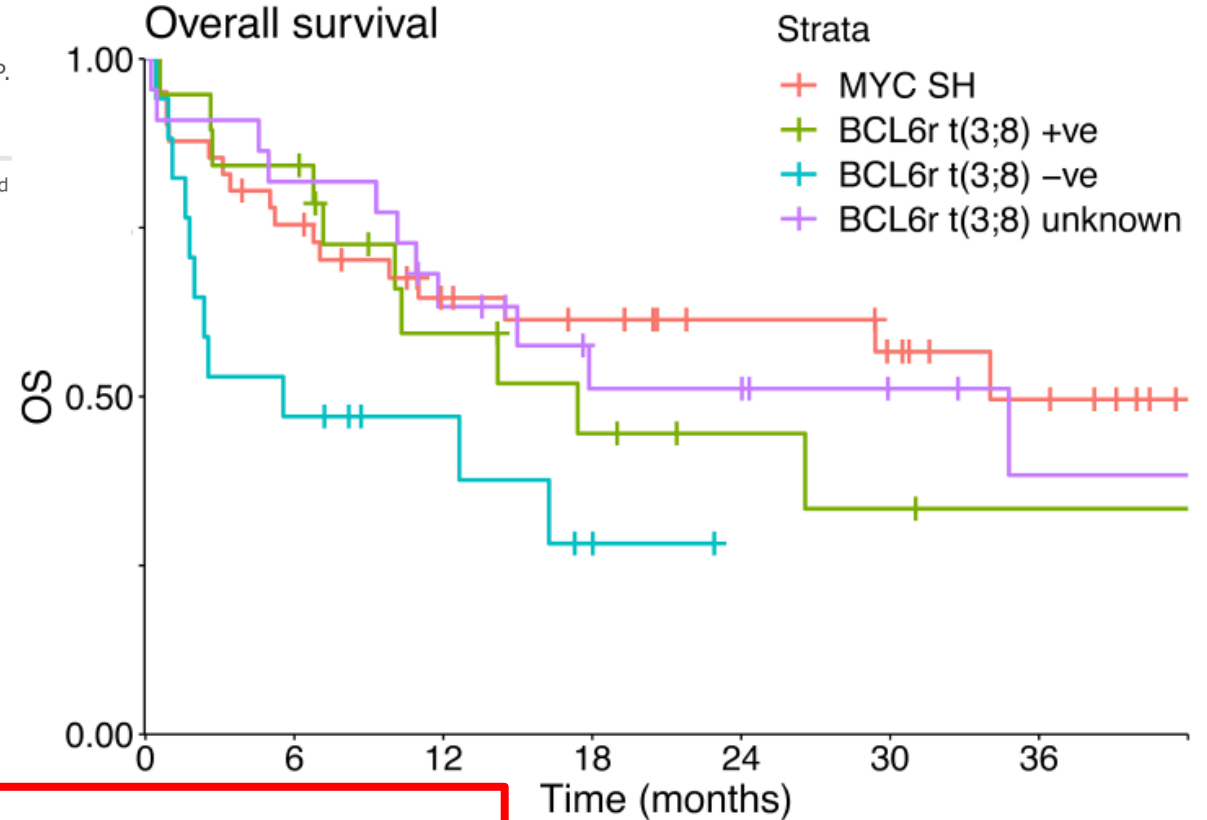


MYC and BCL6 re-arrangements (BCL6r) detected by FISH break-apart probes



Tested for presence of *t(3;8)* *BCL6::MYC* by FISH fusion probe

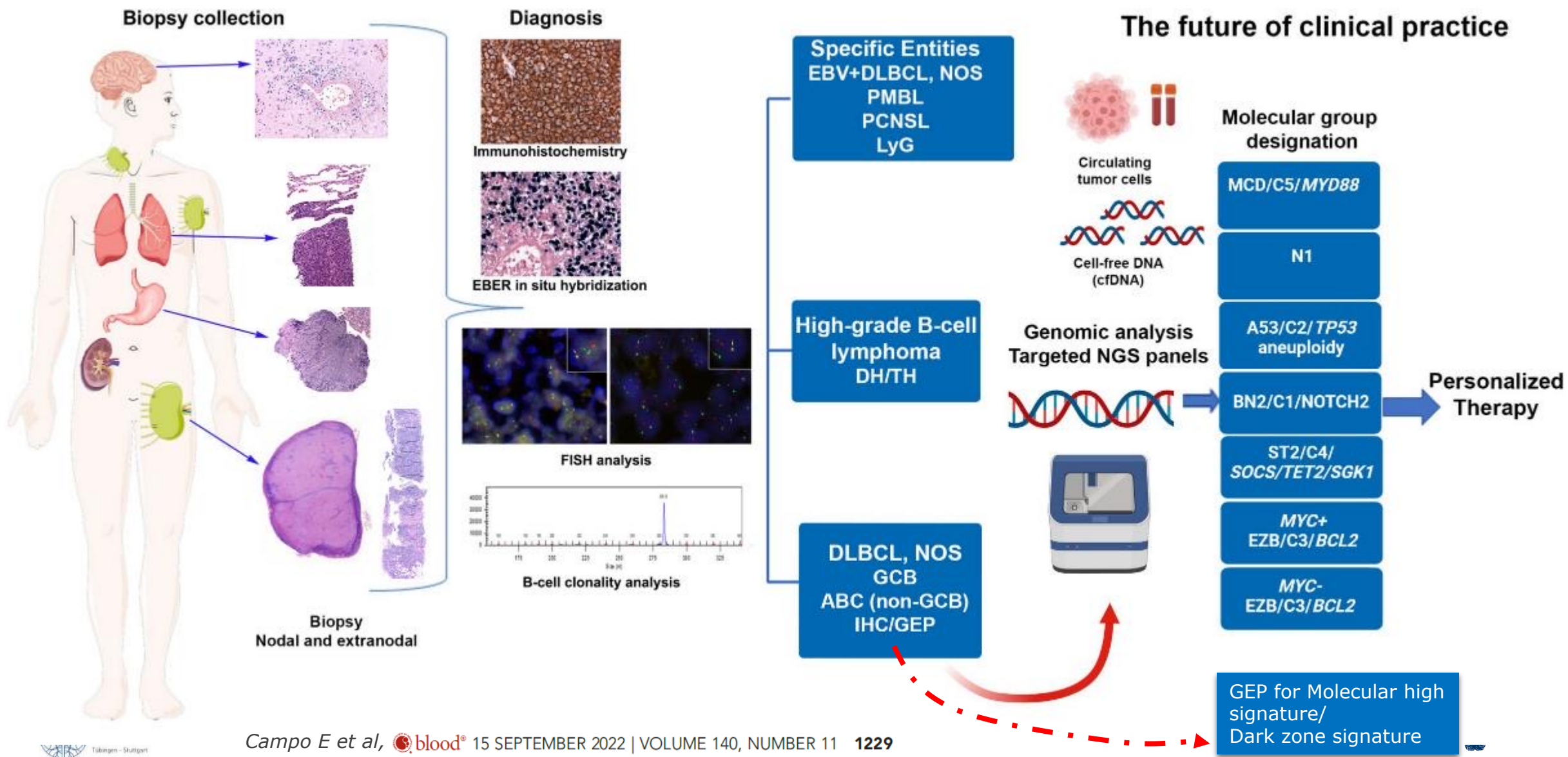
Regional retrospective cohort study studying the effect of *t(3;8)* status on survival



In high grade B cell lymphoma:

- the presence of *t(3;8)* is not associated with inferior survival.
- true MYC BCL6 double hit lymphomas, without *t(3;8)* have inferior survival.
- this association is independent of established prognostic risk factors.

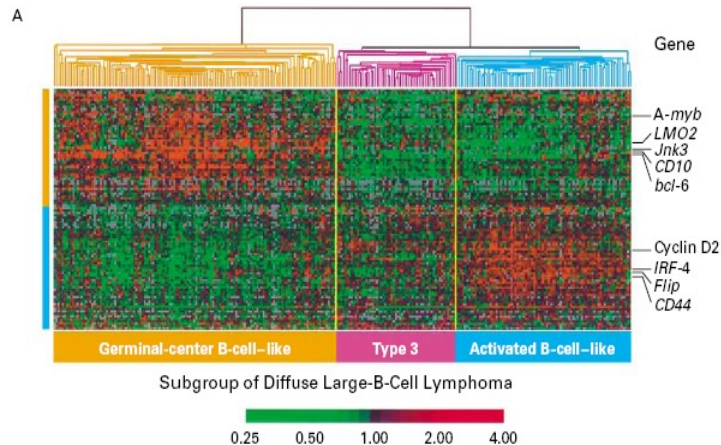
Current and future diagnostic approach to aggressive lymphomas



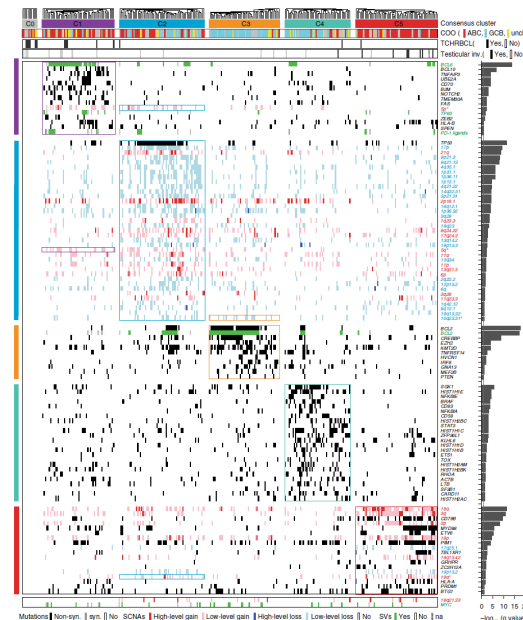
Molecular subtypes of DLBCL

- Cell-of-origin in DLBCL, NOS is maintained because it reflects a basic biological distinction
- It is recognized the limitation of this binary system to capture DLBCL complexity

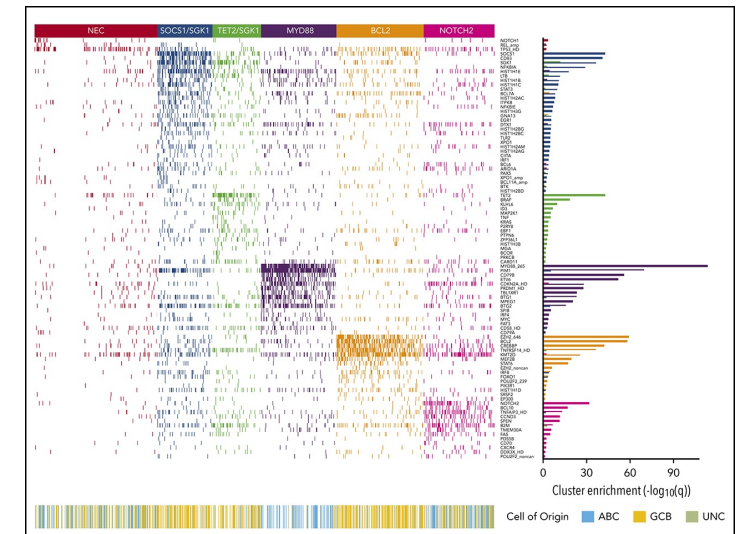
- Genetic subgroups capture biological complexity **but not ready for clinical use**



Rosenwald et al, NEJM 2002



Chapuy et al, Nature Med 2018



Lacy et al, Blood 2020

What needs to be improved?

Pathology

- Consensus and standardization of methods
 - ✓ Paraffin embedded
 - ✓ validated
 - ✓ harmonized minimal gene sets and bioinformatics
 - ✓ Affordable
 - ✓ Turn around time of 3-5 days
- Widely available

Clinical setting

- If this molecular classification will guide treatment choices
 - ✓ The treatment of choice should be available
 - ✓ Clinical studies should demonstrate the efficacy of the treatment
 - ✓ First line vs R/R treatment
 - ✓ Understanding of the biological and clinical implications of this knowledge

Thank you for your attention