

# **HBV: *Is It a Curable Disease***

Marion Peters MD

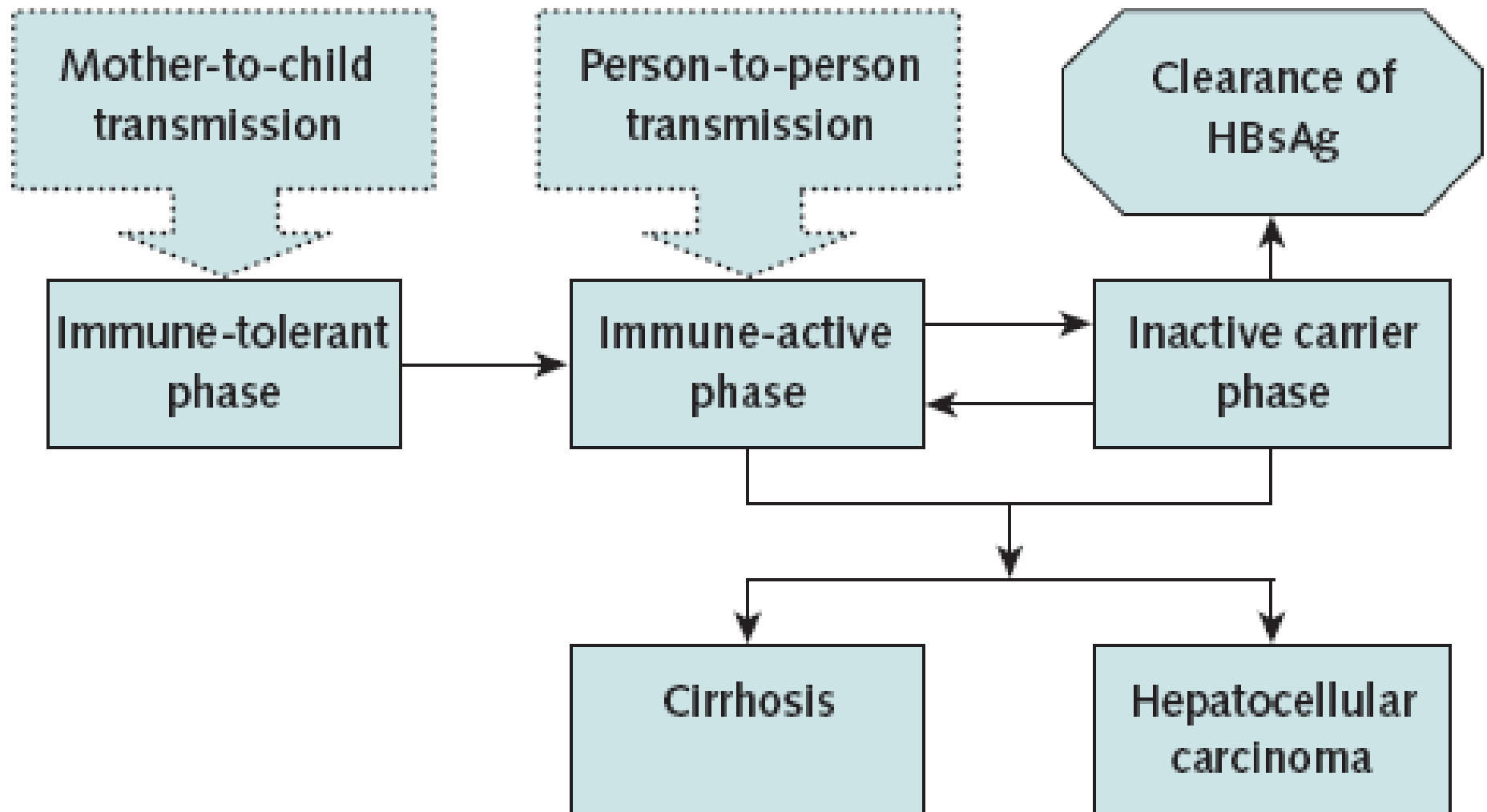
University of California, San Francisco

12-2016

# Potential conflicts of interest

- Honararia from Gilead, J&J, Merck, Genetech, Abbott
- Spouse works for Hoffmann La Roche

# Natural history of HBV

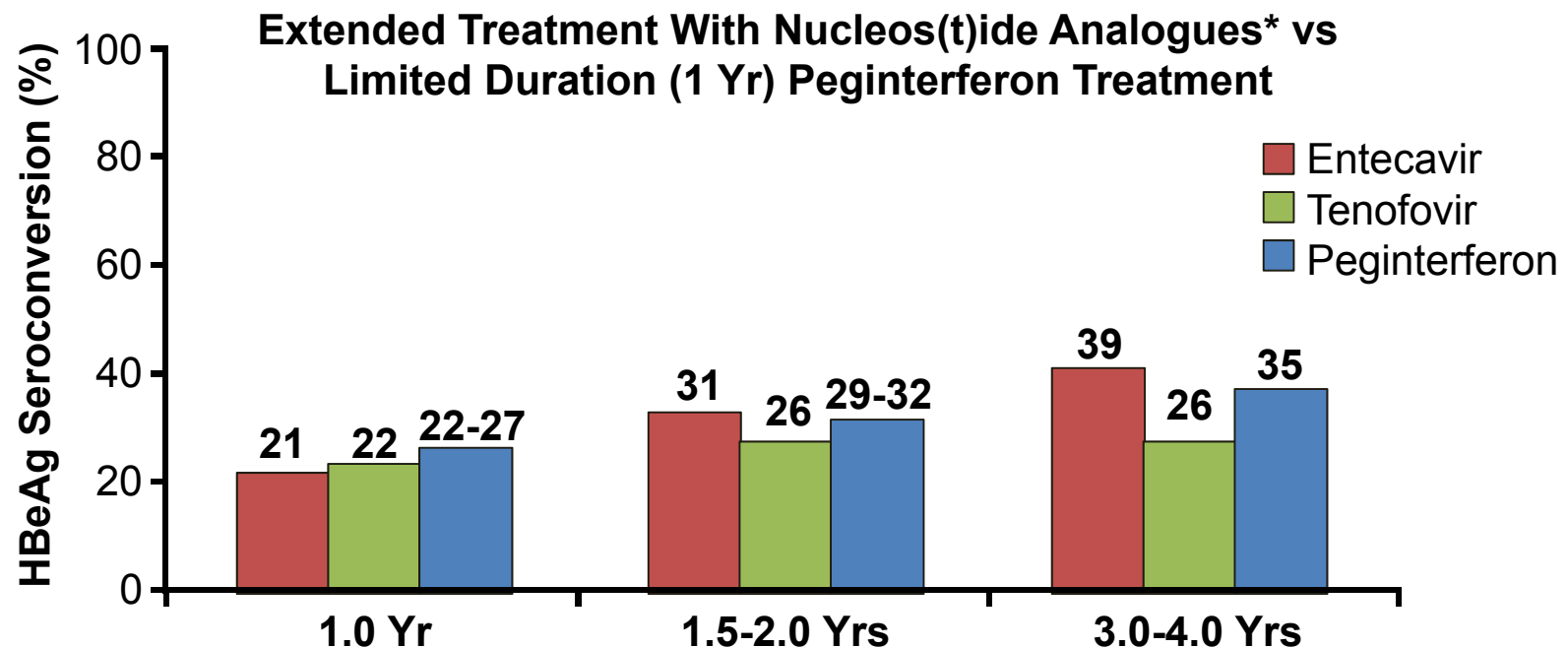


# HBV Control

- **Inflammatory**: normalize serum ALT, biopsy
- **Virologic**: decrease HBV DNA
- **Immune**: seroconversion
  - HBeAg to anti-HBe
  - HBsAg to anti-HBs
- HBV as of 2016 not “cured” but controlled

# HBeAg Seroconversion Rates Over Time in HBeAg Positive Patients

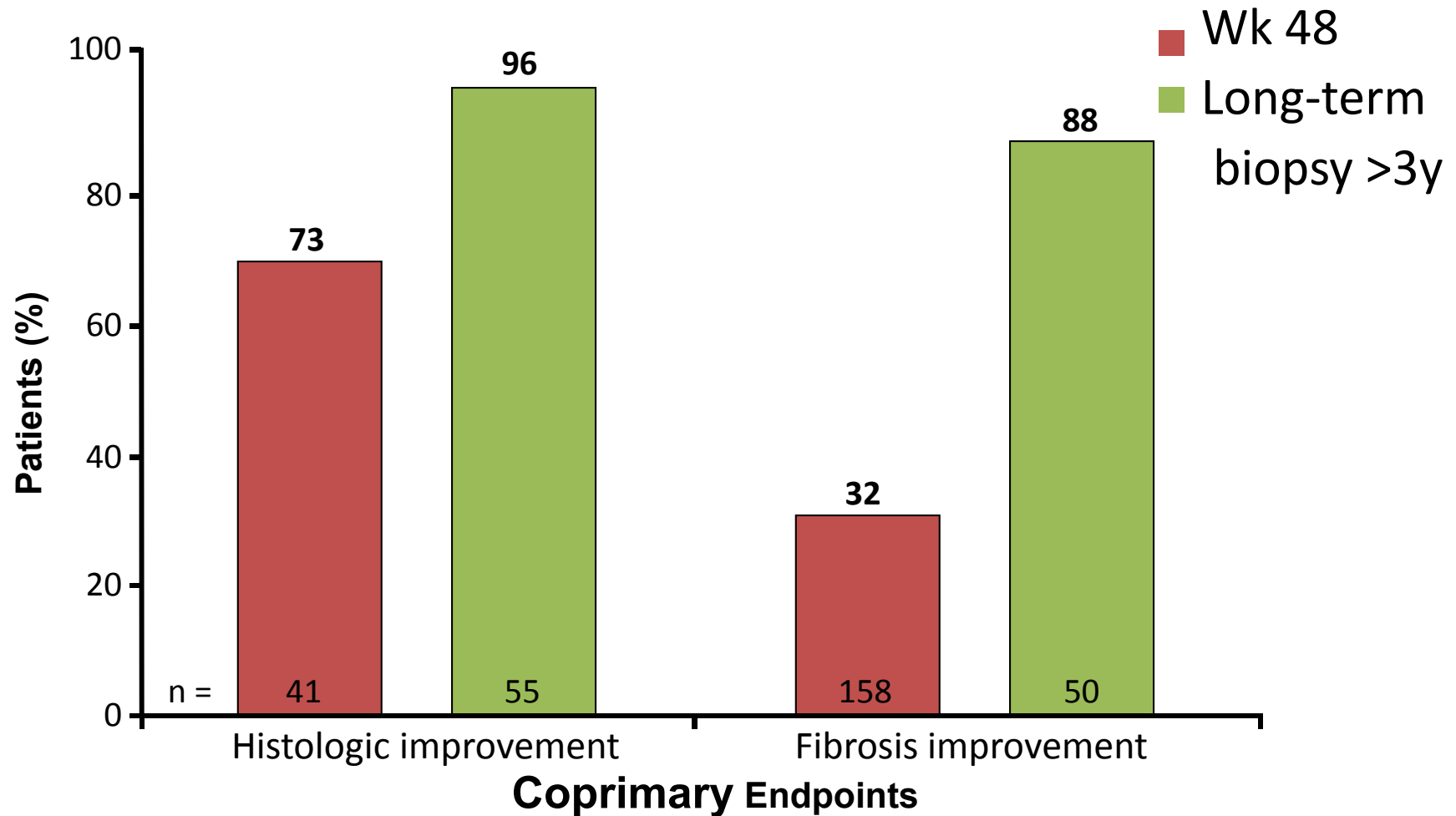
*Not head-to-head trials; different patient populations and trial designs*



\*With sustained undetectable HBV DNA.

Chang TT, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2009;16:784-789. Chang TT, et al. AASLD 2006. Abstract 109. Lau GK, et al. N Engl J Med. 2005;352:2682-2695. Marcellin P, et al. N Engl J Med. 2008;359:2442-2455. Buster EH, et al. Gastroenterology. 2008;135:459-467. Heathcote J, et al. AASLD 2008. Abstract 158. Heathcote J, et al. AASLD 2009. Abstract 483. Janssen HL, et al. Lancet. 2005;365:123-129.

# Long-term Entecavir Treatment Improves Liver Histology and Fibrosis

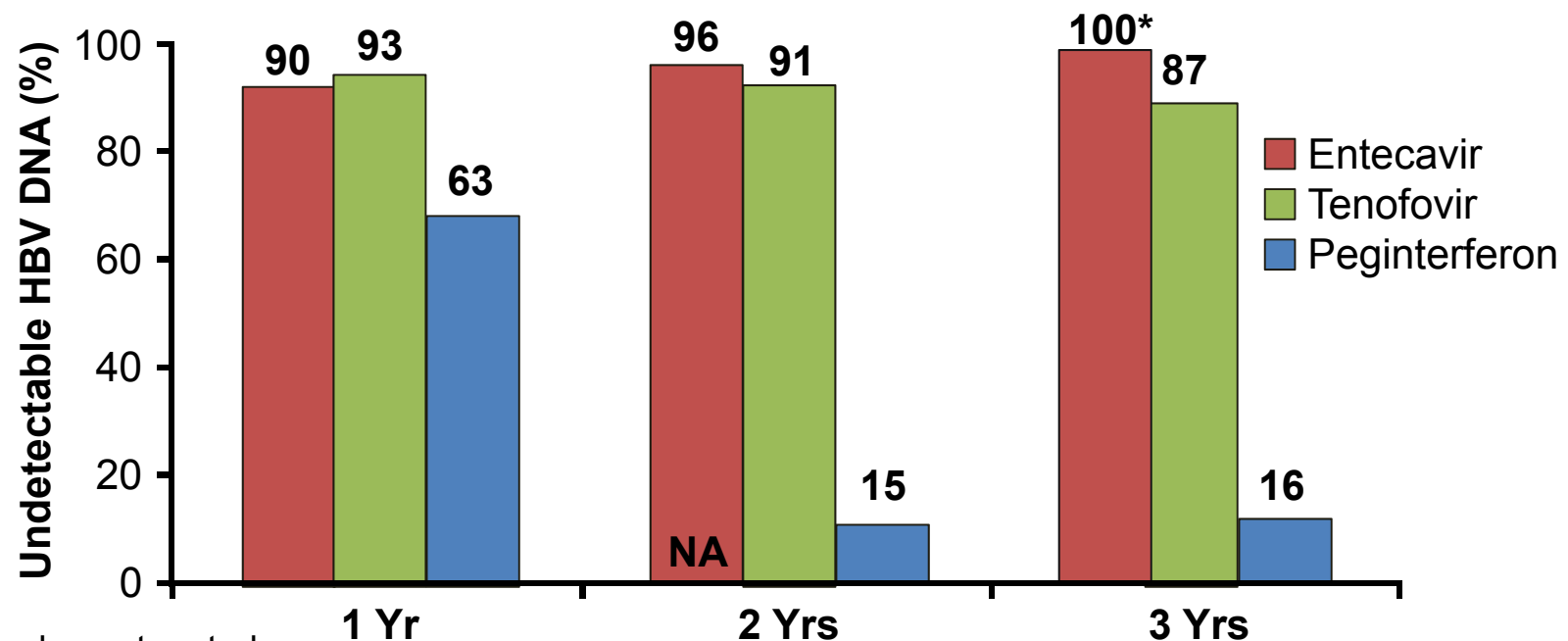


Chang TT, et al. Hepatology. 2010;52:886-893 CCO Hepatitis.

# Undetectable HBV DNA Over Time in HBeAg Negative Patients

*Not head-to-head trials; different patient populations and trial designs*

## Extended Treatment With Nucleos(t)ide Analogues vs 1 Yr Peginterferon Treatment

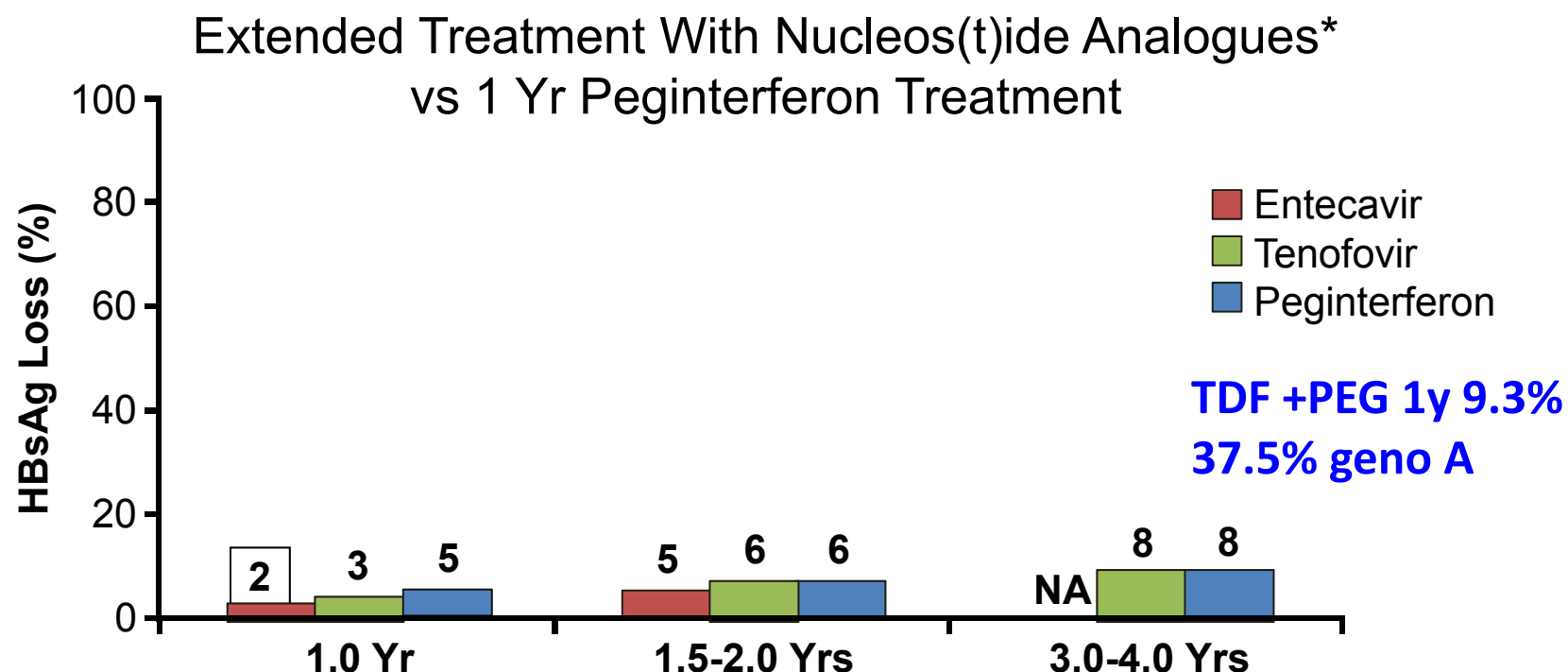


\*Single center study.

Lok AS, et al. Hepatology. 2009;50:661-662. Marcellin P, et al. AASLD 2008. Abstract 146. Marcellin P, et al. AASLD 2009. Abstract 481. Marcellin P, et al. Gastroenterology. 2009;136:2169-2179. Baqai S, et al. AASLD 2009. Abstract 476. Lai CL, et al. Hong Kong International Liver Congress 2006.

# HBsAg Loss Over Time in HBeAg Positive Patients

*Not head-to-head trials; different patient populations and trial designs*



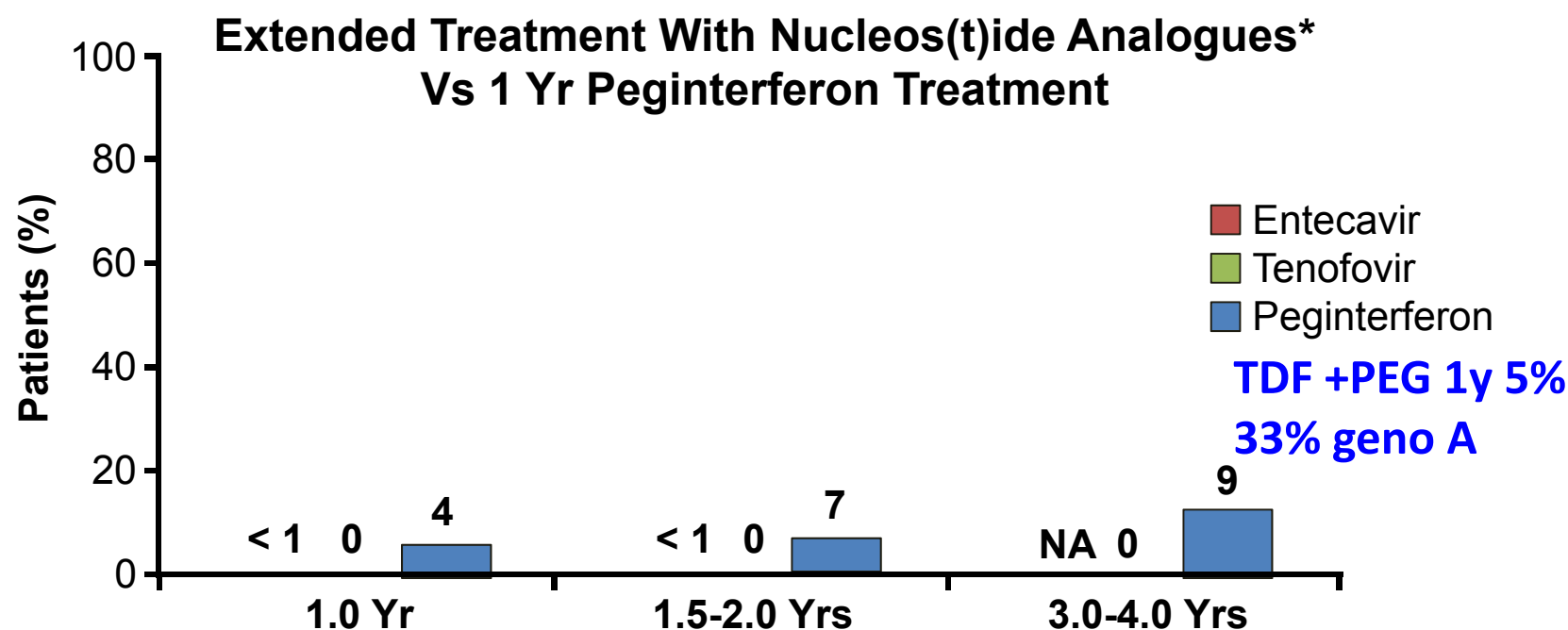
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Marcellin P, et al. AASLD 2009. Abstract 481. Brunetto M, et al. EASL 2008. Abstract 683. Marcellin Gastro 2016

# Types of HBV cure

## **Functional Cure- clinical resolution**

Sustained, off drug:

- No inflammation: ALT and liver biopsy
- HBsAg loss
- HBsAb gain

## **Complete cure- virological cure**

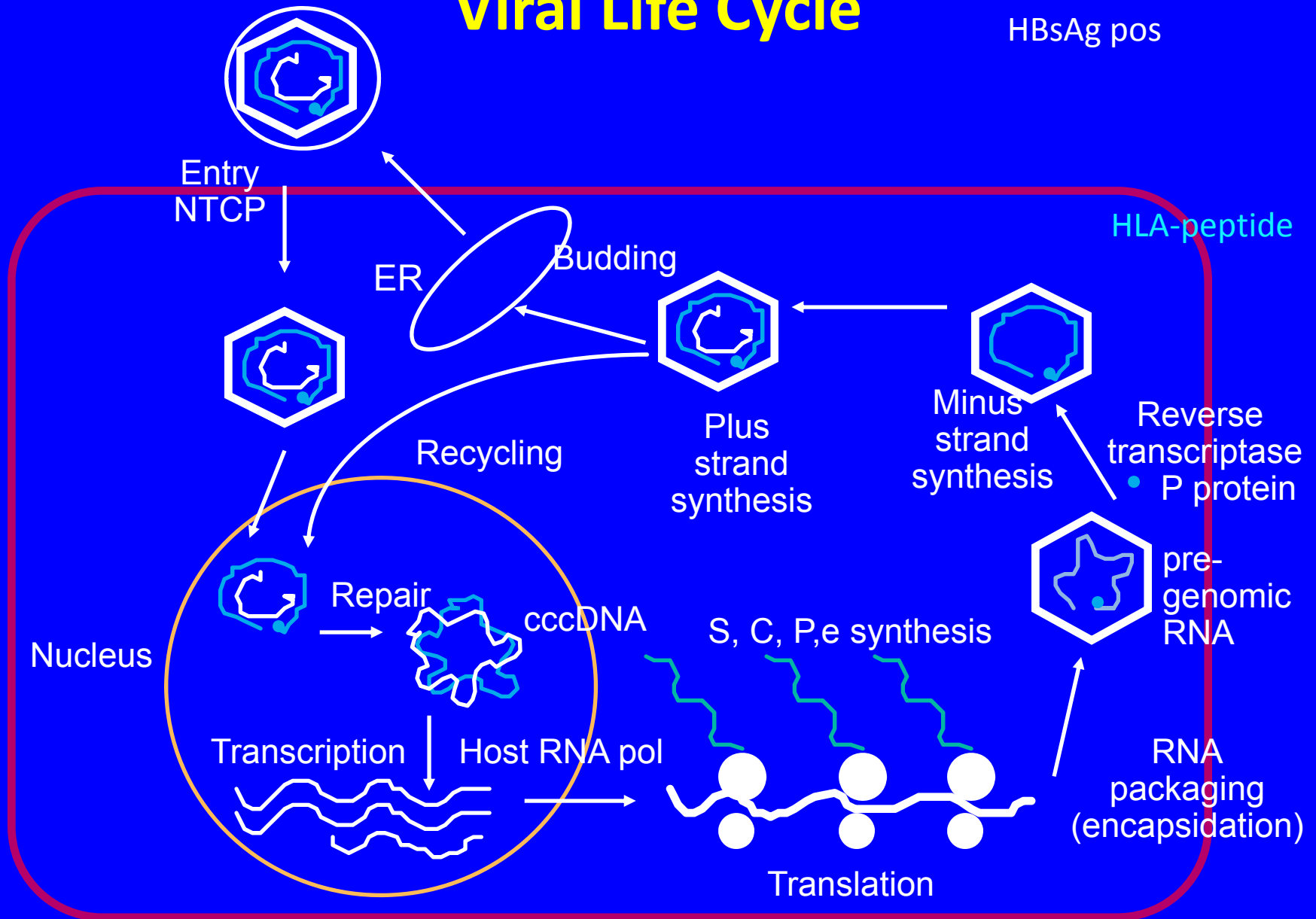
- All of above plus
- Loss of cccDNA in liver

## **Inactive state -an interim goal?**

- No inflammation: ALT and liver biopsy
- HBV DNA low or u/d
- HBsAg positive

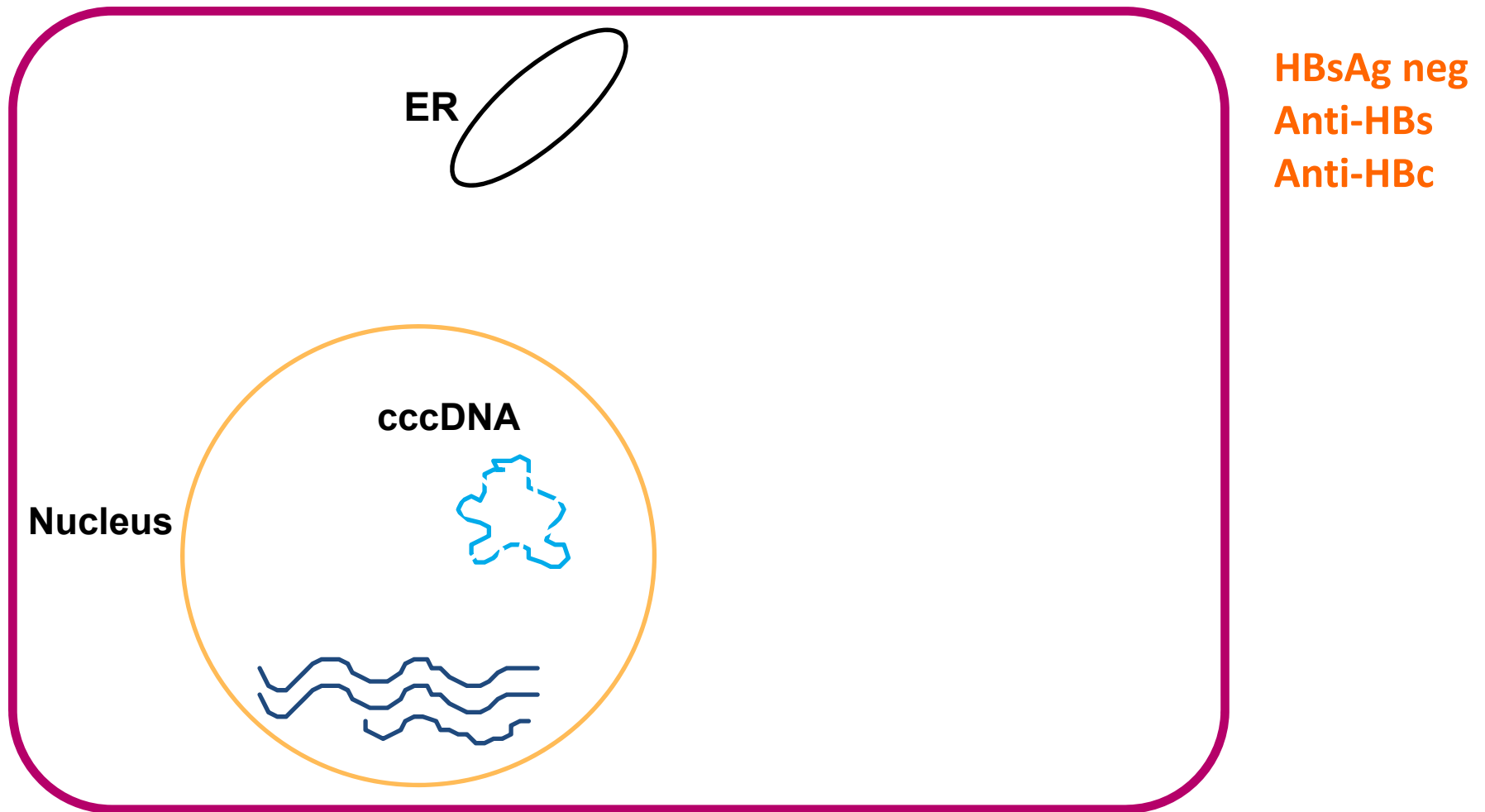
# Viral Life Cycle

HBsAg pos



# Viral Life Cycle- “latent or recovered” HBV: functional cure

Immune system considers this “recovered”  
BUT cccDNA remains: template for viral replication



# Strategies to Eradicate HBV

## Virologic approaches

- Entry inhibitors
- Block cccDNA
- Transcription inhibitors
- RNA interference
- HBV capsid inhibitor
- polymerase inhibitors
- Secretion inhibitors

## Host immune approaches

- Interferons
- TLR-7
- PD-1/ PDL-1
- IL-7
- Therapeutic vaccines
  - Immune complex vaccines
  - Nasal HBV (NASVAC) vaccines
  - DNA vaccines
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  - Adenovirus based vaccines (TG1050)
  - Yeast based vaccines

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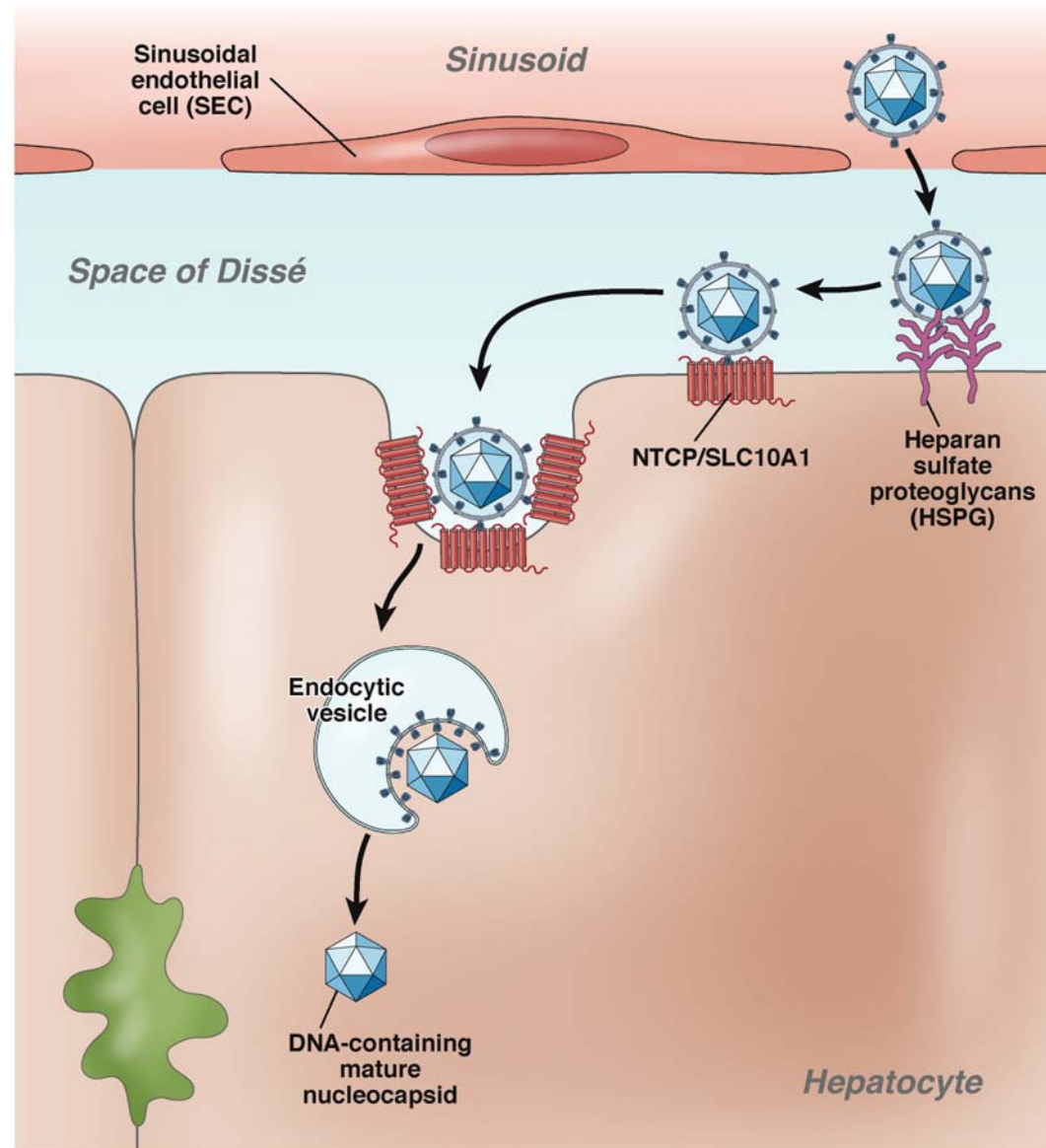
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# HBV entry through NTCP receptor

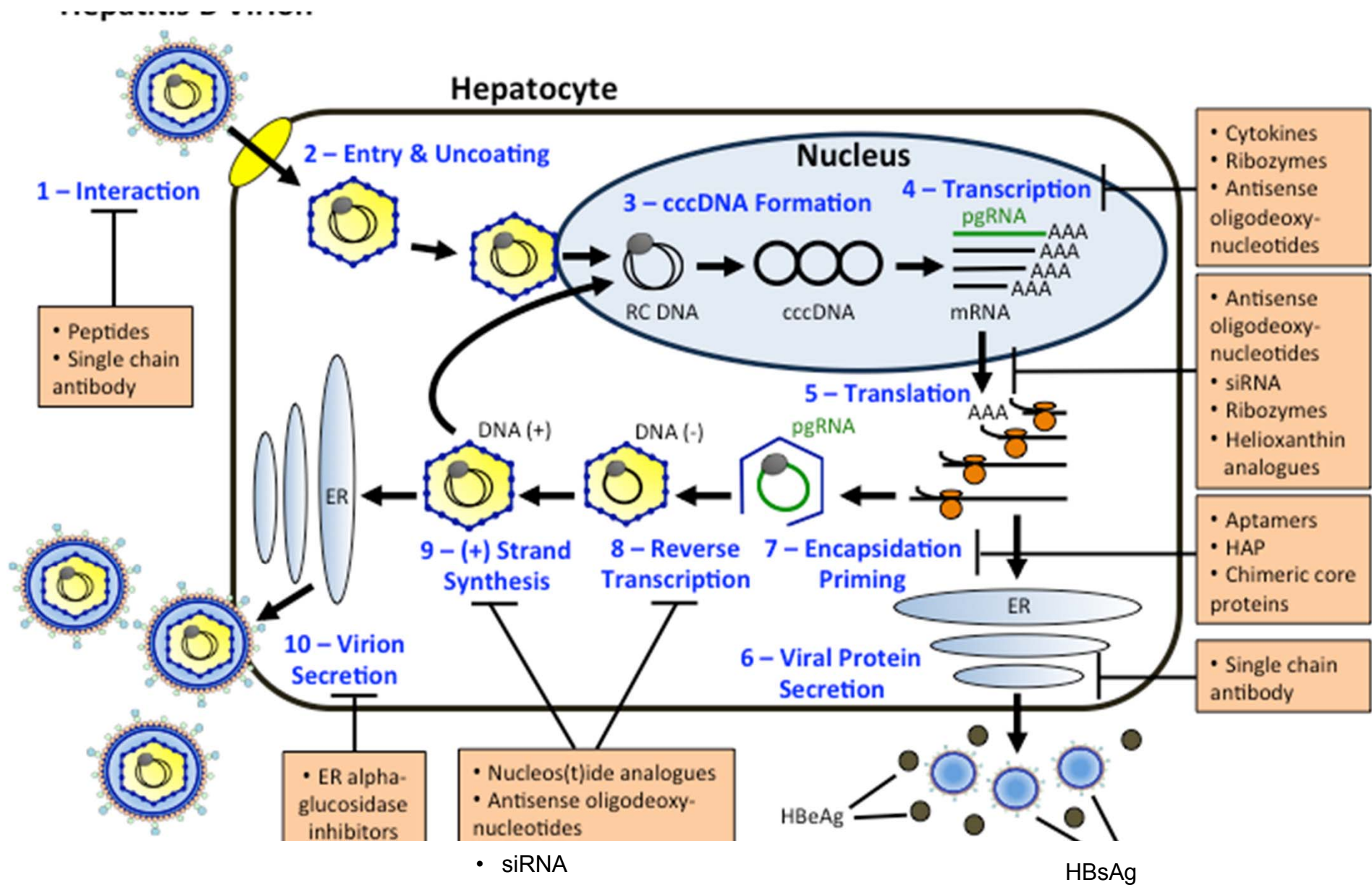


# HBV Targeting cell entry

Small molecule compounds binding to Sodium taurocholate cotransporting polypeptide (NTCP)

- HBV pre-S1-derived lipopeptide Myrcludex-B competes with HBV/HDV for binding to NTCP
  - prevents HBV/HDV entry
- Phase II in Russia (HBeAg -, naïve, ↑ALT, DNA >2k
  - ➔nl ALT 5/8, ↓qHBsAg 5/8, myr preSAbs 3/8, HBV DNA dec 5/8; reactivation in 2 post Rx.
  - Blocks entry at pM concentrations increased serum bile acids
  - Decrease new cccDNA production





Gonzalez 2015 Antimicrobe

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# cccDNA

- Cannot replicate itself but is replenished from cytoplasmic nucleocapsid rcDNA
- Complexes with HBc, histones to form a minichromosome
  - Not static has inactive and active forms
  - Long half life
  - Stable in quiescent cells
  - Turnover with cell death
  - Diluted by cell proliferation but survives cell division

# Potential Mechanisms to Target cccDNA

- preventing cccDNA formation
- eliminating cccDNA
- silencing cccDNA transcription
- Control of cccDNA
  - capsid disassembly
  - inhibition of rcDNA (relaxed circ cccDNA precursor) entry into the nucleus
  - inhibition of conversion of rcDNA to cccDNA
  - physical elimination of cccDNA
  - inhibition of cccDNA transcription (epigenetic control)
  - inhibition of viral or cellular factors contributing to cccDNA stability/formation.
  - HBx regulates cccDNA (Levrero AASLD 2015)

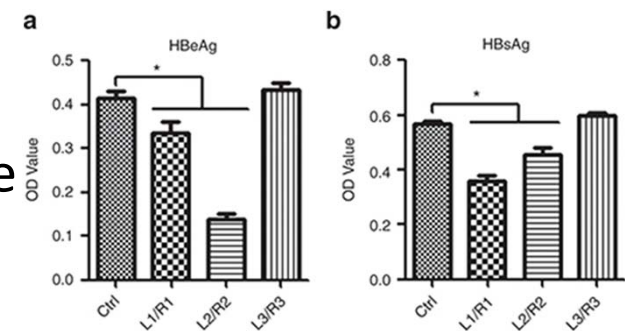
# HBV targeting cccDNA formation/ decay

disubstituted sulfonamide (DSS) compounds

- inhibitors of cccDNA in cell-based assays.
- inhibit de novo cccDNA formation by interfering with rcDNA conversion into cccDNA

DNA cleavage enzymes, specifically targeting the cccDNA are currently being engineered

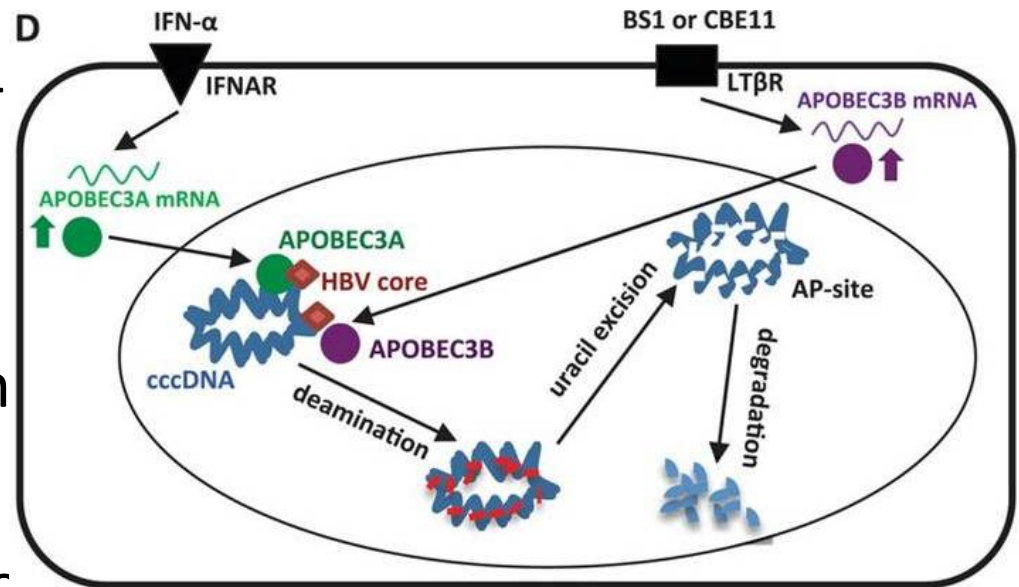
- homing endonucleases or meganucleases
- zinc-finger nucleases introduce ds breaks and cleave HBV DNA targets
- *TALEN* effector nucleases HBeAg/sAg (right)
- CRISPR(clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats)/Cas9 as platform to mutate or inactivate viral genomes (Cullen)



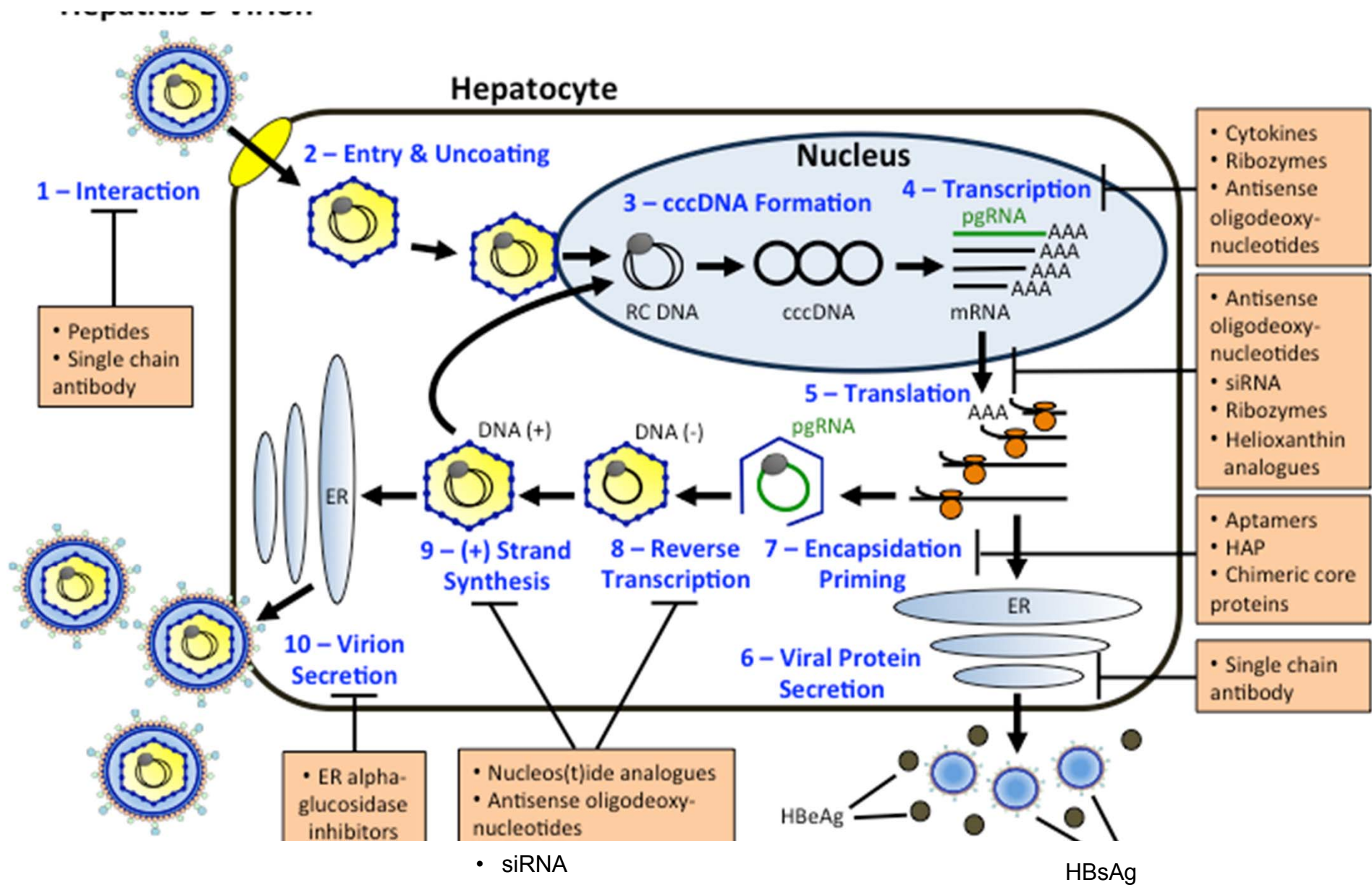
Chen et al, *Molecular Therapy* 2014; Weber 2014; Zimmerman 2008 Ren 2014

# APOBEC3A/3B and cccDNA modification by IFN- $\alpha$ /LT $\beta$ R

- IFN- $\alpha$ , LTBR activation up-regulated APOBEC3A/B cytidine deaminases
- Binds to HBV core protein
  - interaction with nuclear cccDNA- resulting in cytidine deamination, apurinic/apyrimidinic site formation, and finally cccDNA degradation that prevents HBV reactivation
- No effect on inactive cccDNA
- New therapeutic target







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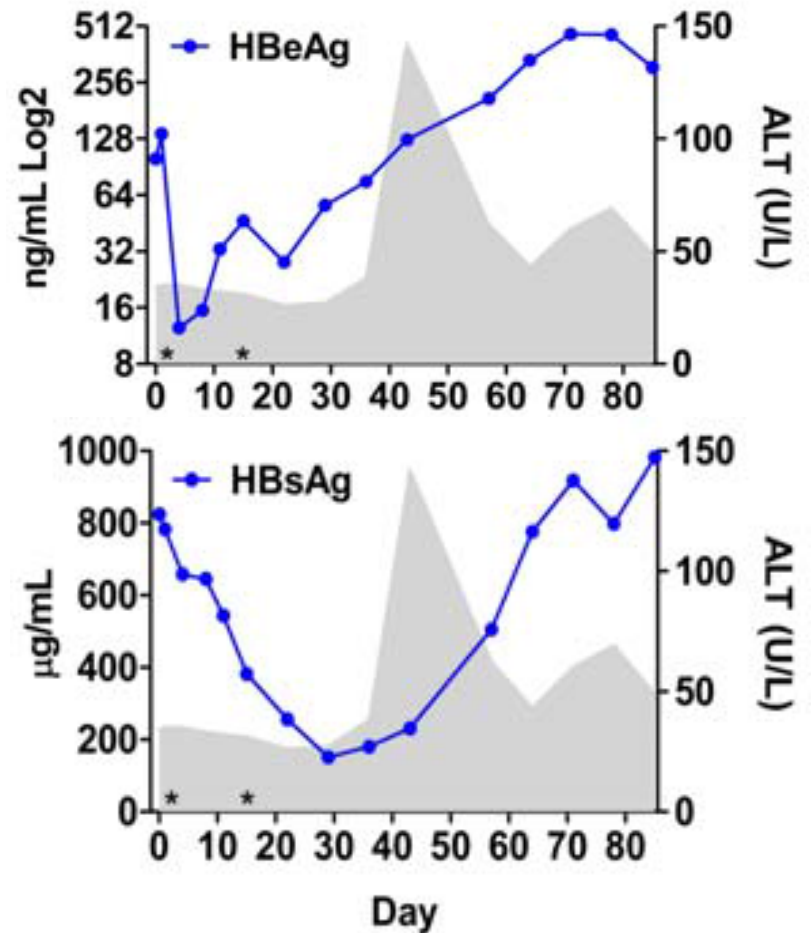
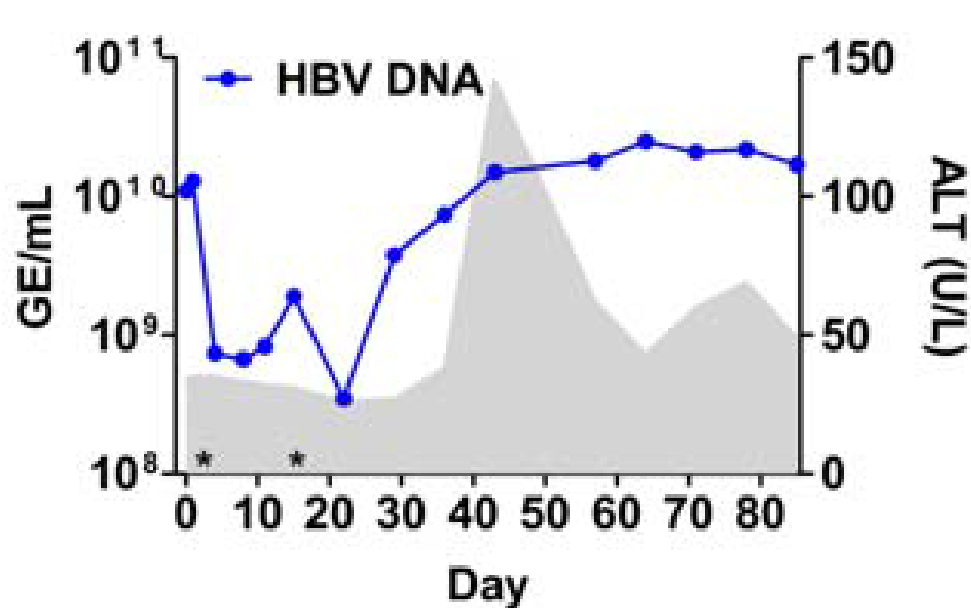


# Silencing HBV gene expression using RNAi-based therapy

- ARC-520 is a combination of siRNAs directed against conserved HBV RNA sequences and efficiently knocks down HBV RNA, proteins and DNA levels.
  - phase II clinical trial NCT02065336
- 2 siRNAs (cover 99.6% of known HBV sequences) conjugated to cholesterol and hepatocyte-targeted ligands
- Taken up by endosomes in hepatocyte then released into cytoplasm after lysis of endosomal membrane
  - Given (Arrowhead Hepdard 2015)
  - Arbutus ARB-1740 decreases HBsAg, HBeAg, HDV RNA (AASLD 2016)

# siRNA: ARC520

- suppressing both viral load and HBsAg: Data from chimp model



Phase IIb iv q mo in  
HBV suppressed (Given-2015)  
On clinical hold 11-16 for animal tox

Lanford et al, AASLD 2013

# Strategies to Eradicate HBV

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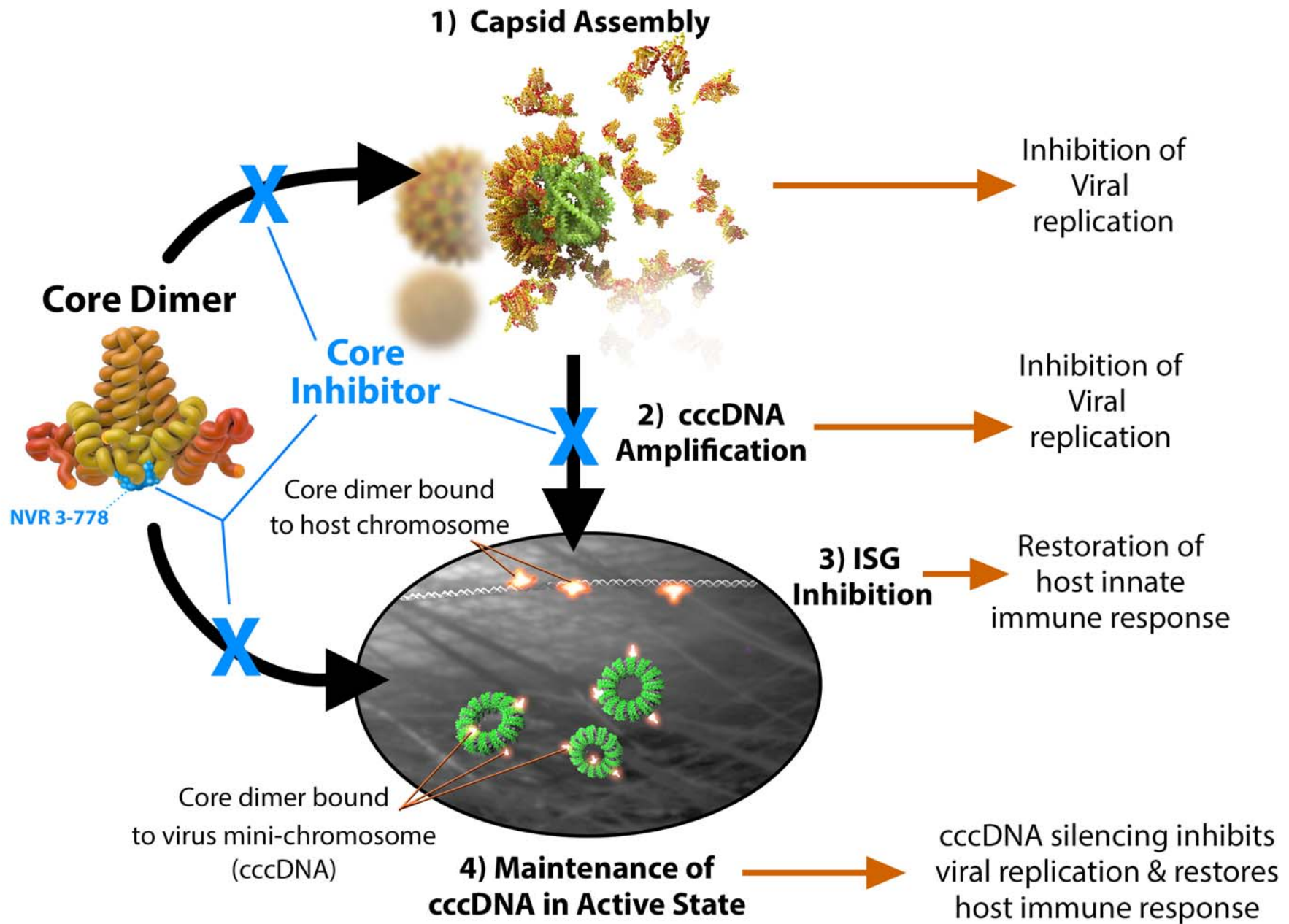
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# HBV capsid

- It is essential for
  - HBV genome packaging
  - reverse transcription
  - intracellular trafficking
  - maintenance of chronic infection as encapsidated HBV genomes are imported into the nucleus.
- NVR- 3-778- capsid inhibitor
  - Small molecule and direct acting antiviral through aberrant core protein assembly that inhibits capsid assembly and viral replication
  - Phase IIa Novira -HBsAg pos, ↑ALT
  - Endpoints normal ALT then HBsAg decrease/loss

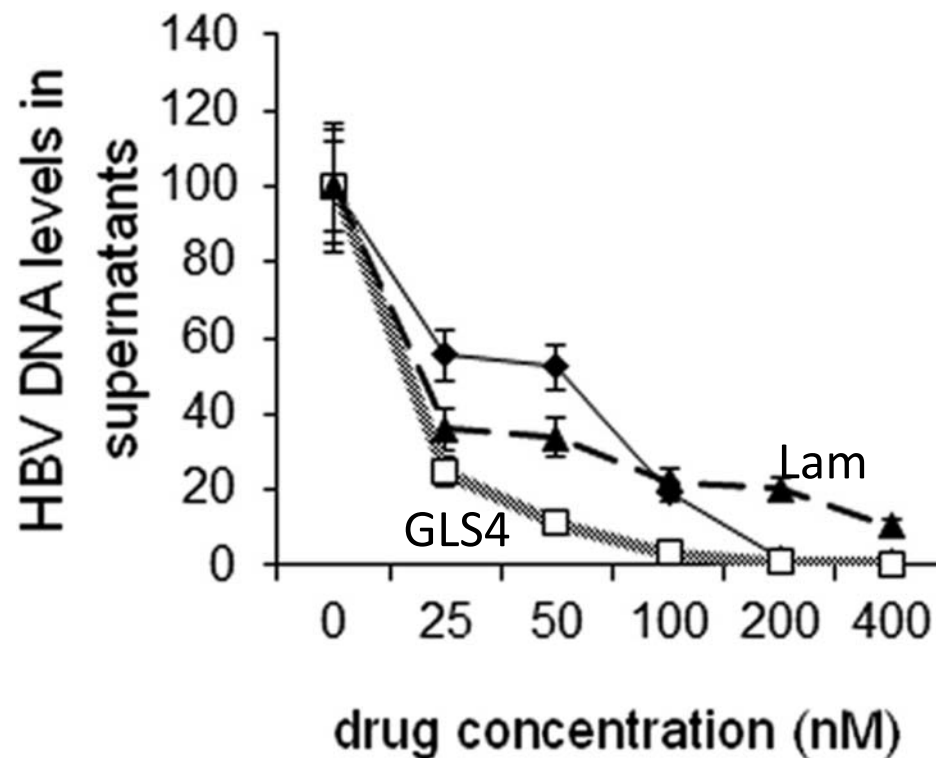


# HBV Nucleocapsid Inhibitors

## Heteroaryldihydropyrimidines (HAPs)

- bind to core particles to reduce both HBV DNA and HBcAg levels, the latter via degradation by the proteasome pathway.
  - enhance viral assembly
    - favour assembly of aberrant particles, indicating that HAPs interfere with capsid formation/stability in a complex manner.
  - Similar to phenylpropenamide derivatives, HAPs are able to efficiently inhibit “nuc” resistant viral variants
  - CpAMs: core protein allosteric modifiers
- Assembly Biosciences

# Nucleocapsid inhibitors: GLS4 first member of HAP nucleocapsid compounds

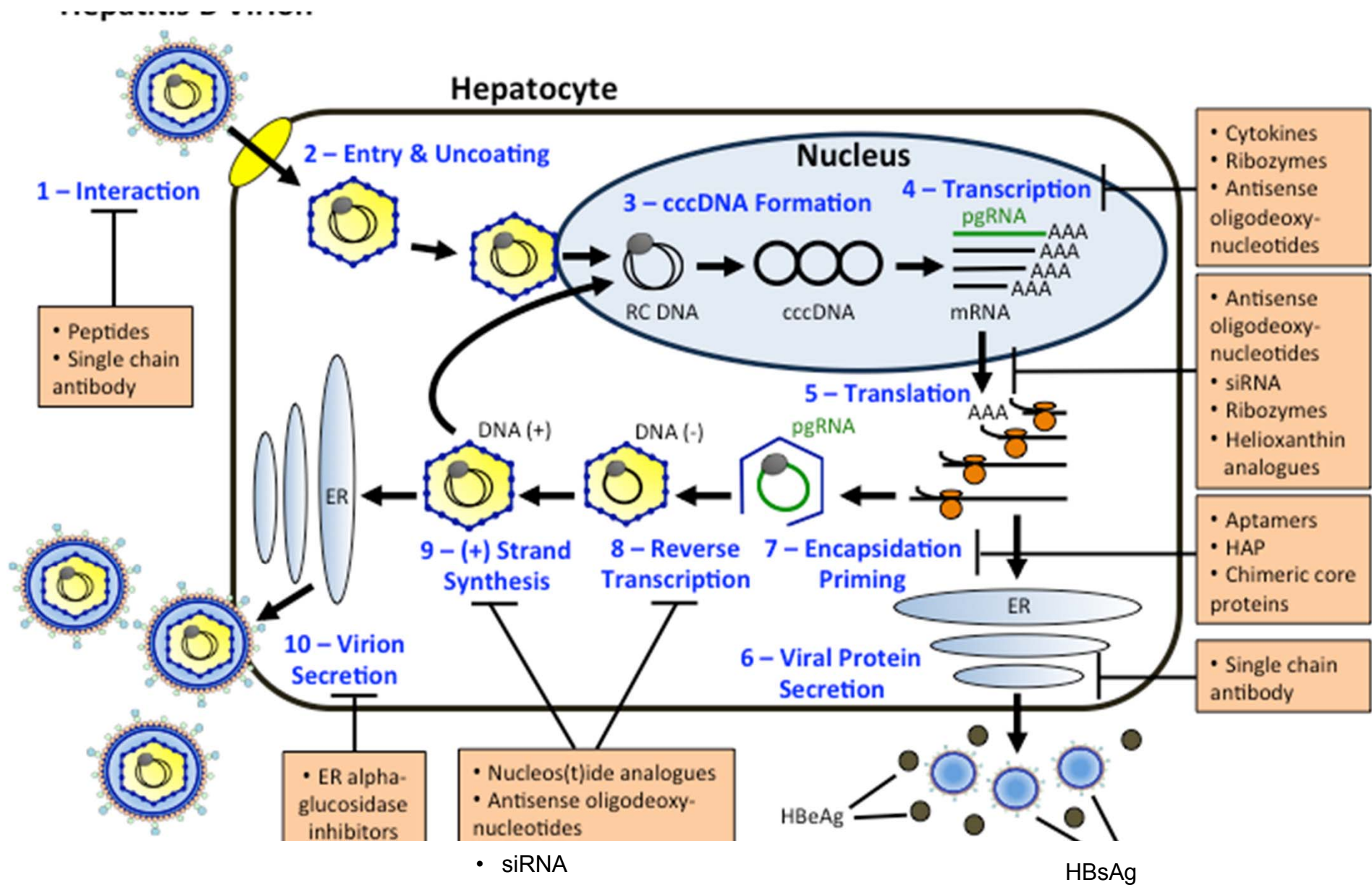


Morphothiadine mesilate  
(GLS4)

- Triggers aberrant core particle assembly
- Hep AD38 cells

Phase I/ II trials in China





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# GS-108/110: Changes in BMD With TAF vs TDF in HBV Pts

- Randomized, double-blind, active-controlled phase III studies in which pts with chronic HBV infection\* treated with TAF 25 mg QD (n = 866) or TDF 300 mg QD (n = 432)<sup>[1]</sup>
  - Noninferior efficacy between groups previously shown<sup>[2,3]</sup>

Mean Change in BMD at Wk 72, %	TAF	TDF	P Value
Hip	-0.29	-2.43	< .001
Spine	-0.60	-2.52	< .001

- TDF also associated with significantly decreased hip and spine BMD at Wks 24 and 48 vs TAF ( $P < .001$  for all comparisons)

\*HBV DNA  $\geq 20,000$  IU/mL, ALT  $> 60/38$  U/L (male/female).

1. Seto WK, et al. AASLD 2016. Abstract 67.

2. Buti M, et al. Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2016;1:196-206.

3. Chan HLY, et al. Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2016;1:185-195.



## When to use TAF or TDF

- Tenofovir (disoproxil fumarate or alafenamide) can be used in all HBV patients
- TAF (25mg) should be used if
  - renal disease
  - bone disease
  - older
  - No data about Fanconi's: recurrence or resolution

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# HBsAg Release Inhibitor- Nucleic Acid Polymer (NAP) REP 2139

- Taken up by hepatocytes, targets apolipoprotein, block entry and formation of subviral particles (not virion production)
- Phase Ib: iv q w x15 lead in then, 15w plus peg IFN, then PEGIFN for 48w in 12 HBV HDV pts
  - ↓HBsAg and HDV RNA.
  - Many patients had u/d serum HBsAg or HDV RNA at 15w
    - 24w f/u HBsAg lo 7/12; ud 5/12; HDVAg <LLQ 7/12; 4 anti-HBs
    - Does not decrease HBV DNA by itself ?need NA or IFN
- Phase II +/- PEG-IFN
  - Combination of REP 2139 and immune stimulant and oral nucleos(t)ide being tested

# HBV Inhibit Secretory Pathway

- Benzimidazole BM601
  - selectively inhibit intracellular relocalisation of the HBV surface protein to the Golgi apparatus
  - Thus decreases HBsAg and HBV release
  - without affecting HBeAg secretion
- iminosugar derivatives of butyldeoxynojirimycin and related glycolipids
- $\alpha$ -glucosidase inhibitors
- triazol-o-pyrimidine derivatives
- Will suppression of HBsAg in serum restore T cell responsiveness?

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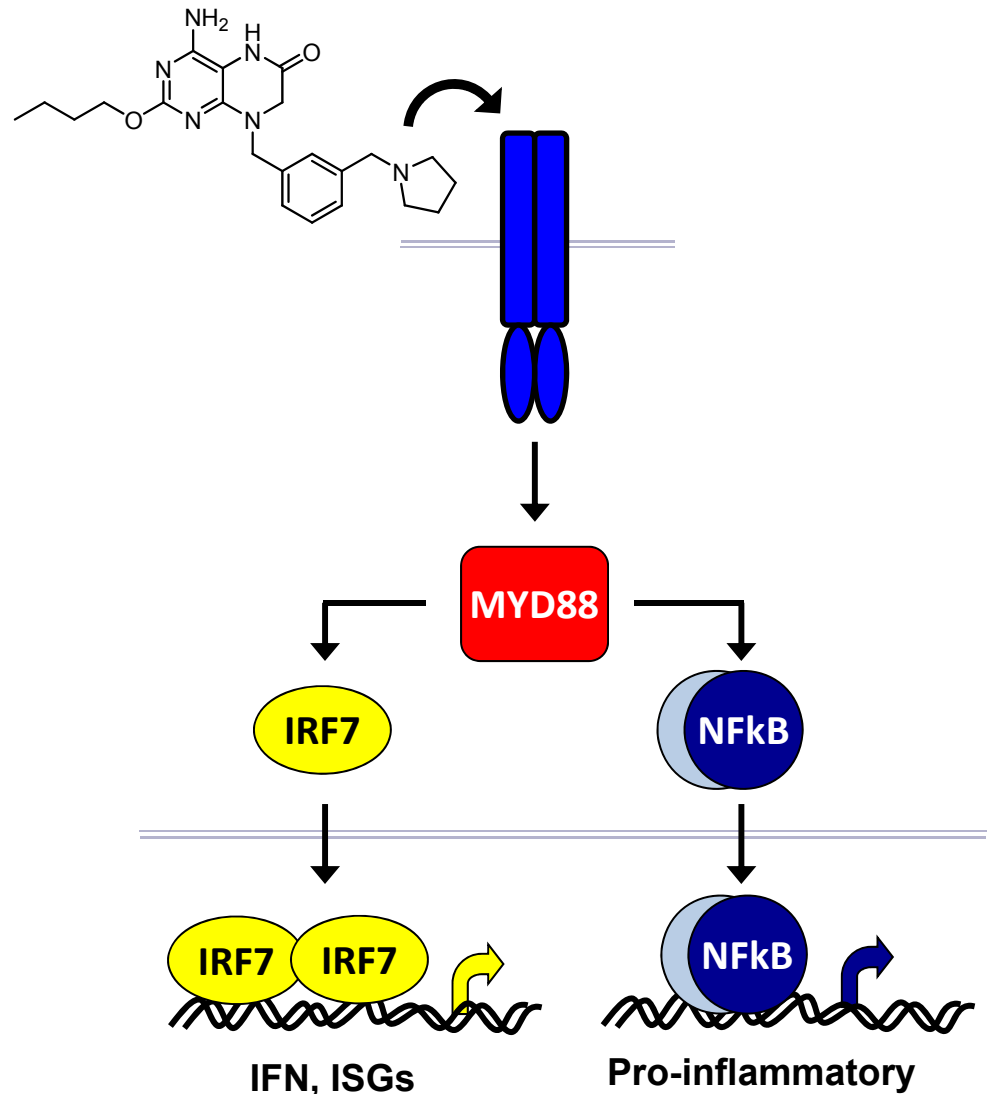
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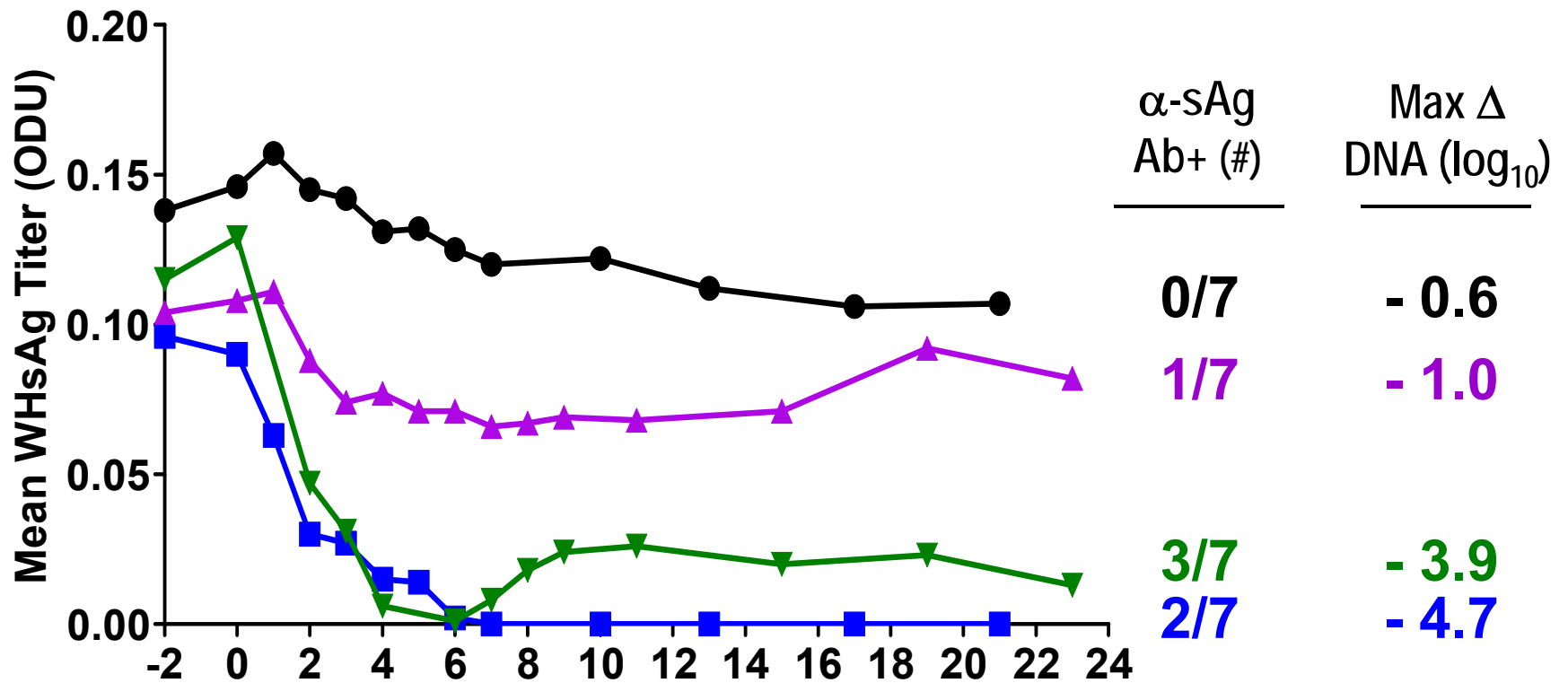
# TLR-7 Agonist for HBV

- GS-9620, an orally available agonist
- Selective for antiviral vs proinflammatory response
- Preclinical studies: Reduces sAg, viral DNA in woodchucks & chimpanzees
- Phase 1a (SAD) complete: Safety shown in healthy volunteers





# TLR-7 agonist Induces sAg Seroconversion in Chronically Infected Woodchucks



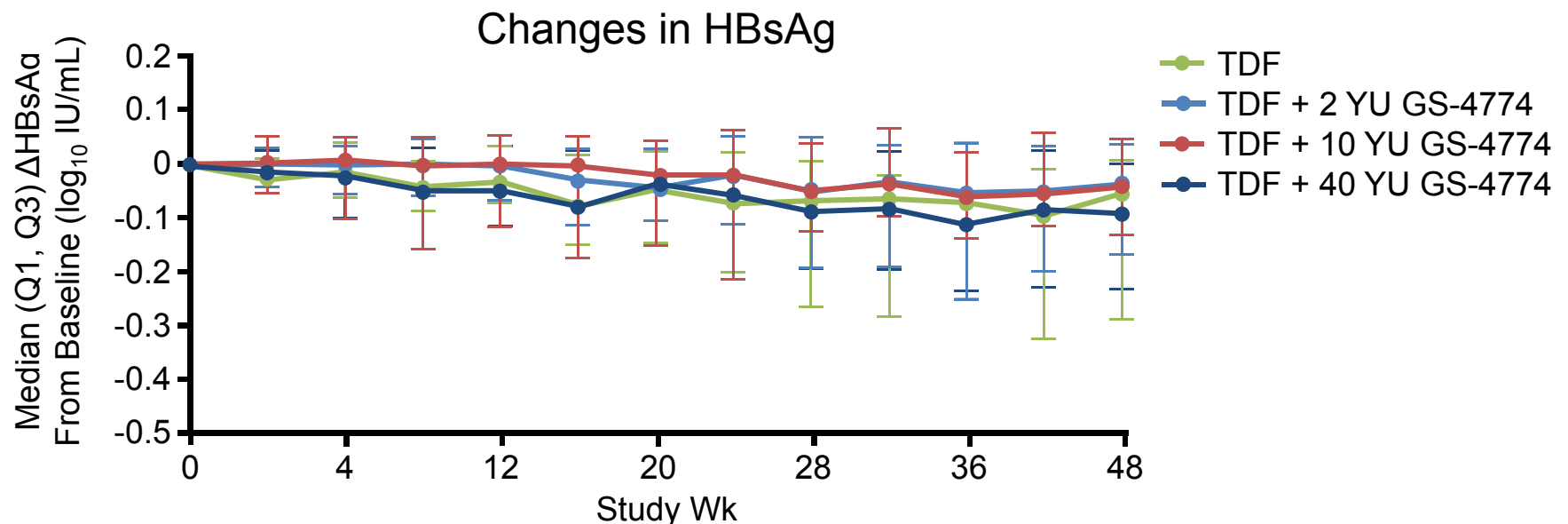
5 mg/kg ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑  
 5/2.5 mg/kg ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑  
 5/2.5 mg/kg ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑  
 Placebo ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

Week

GS-9620 Phase II in  
suppressed HBV patients

# GS-4774, a Heat-Inactivated, Yeast-Based T-Cell Vaccine for Pts With Chronic HBV

- Randomized phase II study assessing the GS-4774 vaccine\* + TDF in pts with chronic HBV who were not on antivirals (HBV DNA  $\geq 2000$  IU/mL) (N = 195)
- Through Wk 48, HBsAg changes similar between GS-4774 + TDF and TDF alone groups; no pts lost HBsAg



- At Wks 24 and 48, similar rates of pts in GS-4774 + TDF and TDF alone groups with HBV DNA  $< 20$  IU/mL

\*Includes HBV core, surface, and X proteins.

Janssen HL, et al. AASLD 2016. Abstract 231. Reproduced with permission.



Slide credit: [clinicaloptions.com](http://clinicaloptions.com)

# GS-1059: TLR-7 Agonist GS-9620 for Pts With Suppressed Chronic HBV Infection

- Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase II trial analyzing the immunomodulatory effects of GS-9620
  - Pts with chronic HBeAg-negative GTD HBV infection suppressed with nucleos(t)ide analogue for  $\geq 3$  yrs were randomized to 12 wks GS-9620 1, 2, or 4 mg PO QW (N = 26) or placebo; all pts continued nucleos(t)ide analogue
- Key results:
  - At Wk 24, no pts treated with GS-9620 had HBsAg change  $> 0.5 \log_{10}$ ; no pts lost HBsAg
  - Improvements in specific T-cell responses observed with GS-9620 (eg, IFN- $\gamma$  and IL-2 production)

# Strategies to Eradicate HBV

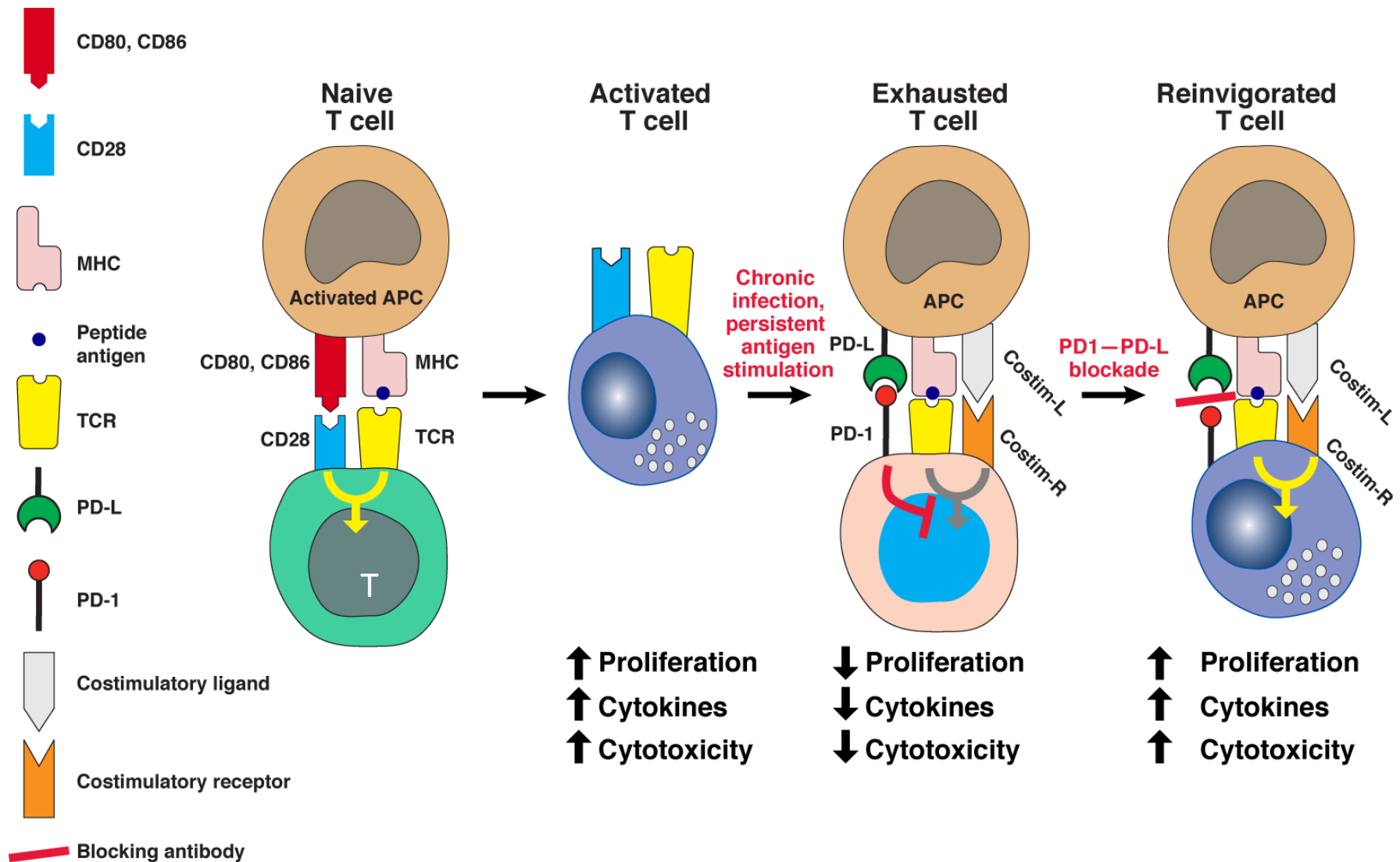
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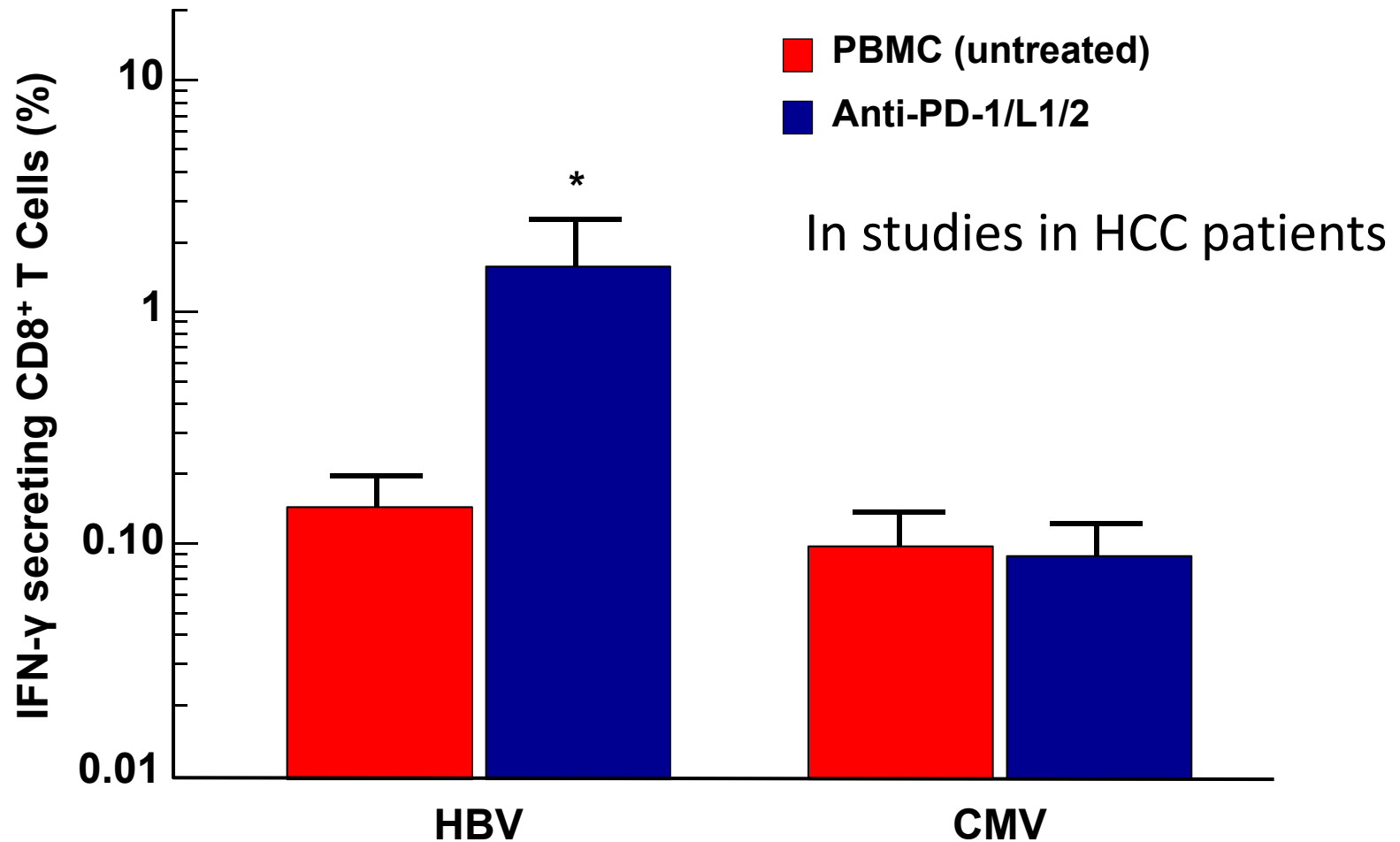
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# Effect of PD-1/L1 on Antiviral Immunity



# Expansion of HBV-specific CD8 T Cell Response by Blocking PD-1/L1/2 Interaction *In Vitro* (mice)

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## Published Efficacy Data in HCC: Nivolumab, ASCO 2015 (BMS)

	Uninfected (n = 21)	HBV+ (n = 10)	HCV+ (n = 11)	Total (N = 42)
Duration of response (months, range)	7.2 – 12.5	11.9	1.4 – 8.3	1.4 – 12.5
Duration of stable disease (months, range)	1.1 – 17.3	2.9 – 14.0	2.7 – 6.9	1.1 – 17.3
Overall survival at 9 months (% , 95% CI)				70 (52 – 82)
Overall survival at 12 months (% , 95% CI)				62 (42 – 76)
Objective response*	3 (14%) (10 stable, 8 progressive)	1 (10%) (5 stable, 4 progressive)	4 (36%) (5 stable, 2 progressive)	8 (19%) (20 stable, 8 progressive)
Complete responses*	2 (10%)			2 (5%)

## Published Safety Data in HCC: Nivolumab (anti-PD-1)

- 32/47 (68%) reporting one or more drug-related AE's
  - Most frequent (>10%): transaminase ↑, lipase ↑, amylase ↑, rash
- 9/47 (19%) experienced related Grade ≥3 AE
  - ALT: 4 patients (9%)
  - AST: 5 patients (11%)
  - Increased lipase: 4 patients (8%)
- 2 discontinuations due to AE's
  - 1 unrelated increased total bilirubin
  - 1 related increased ALT/AST
- Failed naïve lung (non small cell) cancer trial 8-2016
- Pembrolizumab (Merck PD-1) approved 10-2015
- Tecentriq PDL-1 approved for bladder ca 5-2016 (GNE)

El-Khoueiry A, J Clin Oncol 33, 2015  
ASCO



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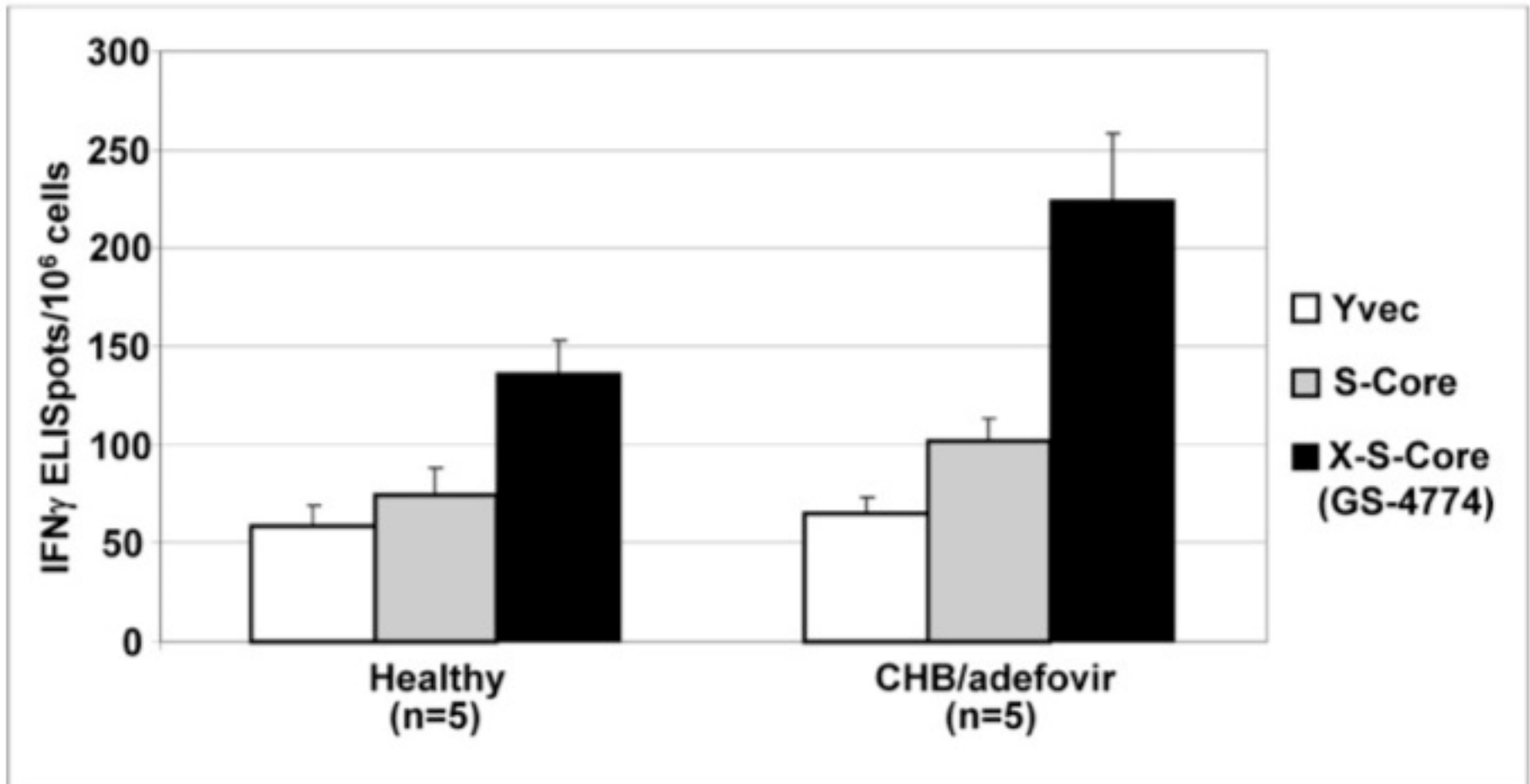
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# Tarmogens can induce HBV-specific T cell response in vitro

GS-4774  $\pm$  TDF Phase 2:  $\downarrow$  qHBsAg



# Emerging DAAs against HBV

Many currently in the pipe-line

- novel polymerase inhibitors
- capsid inhibitors
- cccDNA inhibition or eradication
- Packaging inhibitors- not very potent alone
- small interfering RNA (siRNA)-based strategies
- Immune activators

Combination therapy will likely be required for cure

- inhibitors of polymerase, entry, core, cccDNA etc
- IFN, immune stimulant, TLR 7
- Checkpoint inhibitors PD-1/L1

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BUT     Selection of HBV patient will be critical  
         Optimization of HBV endpoints needed

# For HBV Cure studies

- What surrogate markers of efficacy are needed to monitor success?
  - Immunologic
  - Virologic
  - Pathologic
- Which patients should and can we treat with new drugs?
  - Should patients be already suppressed on nucs?
  - Is risk/ benefit different depending on therapy, age of patient or phase of disease?
  - Do different phases need different therapies?

