

**Topic Area:**

What's New in T and B cell Lymphoma Diagnostic and Therapeutic Landscapes

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**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute



# ***What's New in T and B cell Lymphoma Diagnostic and Therapeutic Landscapes***

**Marianne Tawa, RN, MSN, ANP**

Nurse Practitioner Dermatology and Cutaneous  
Oncology

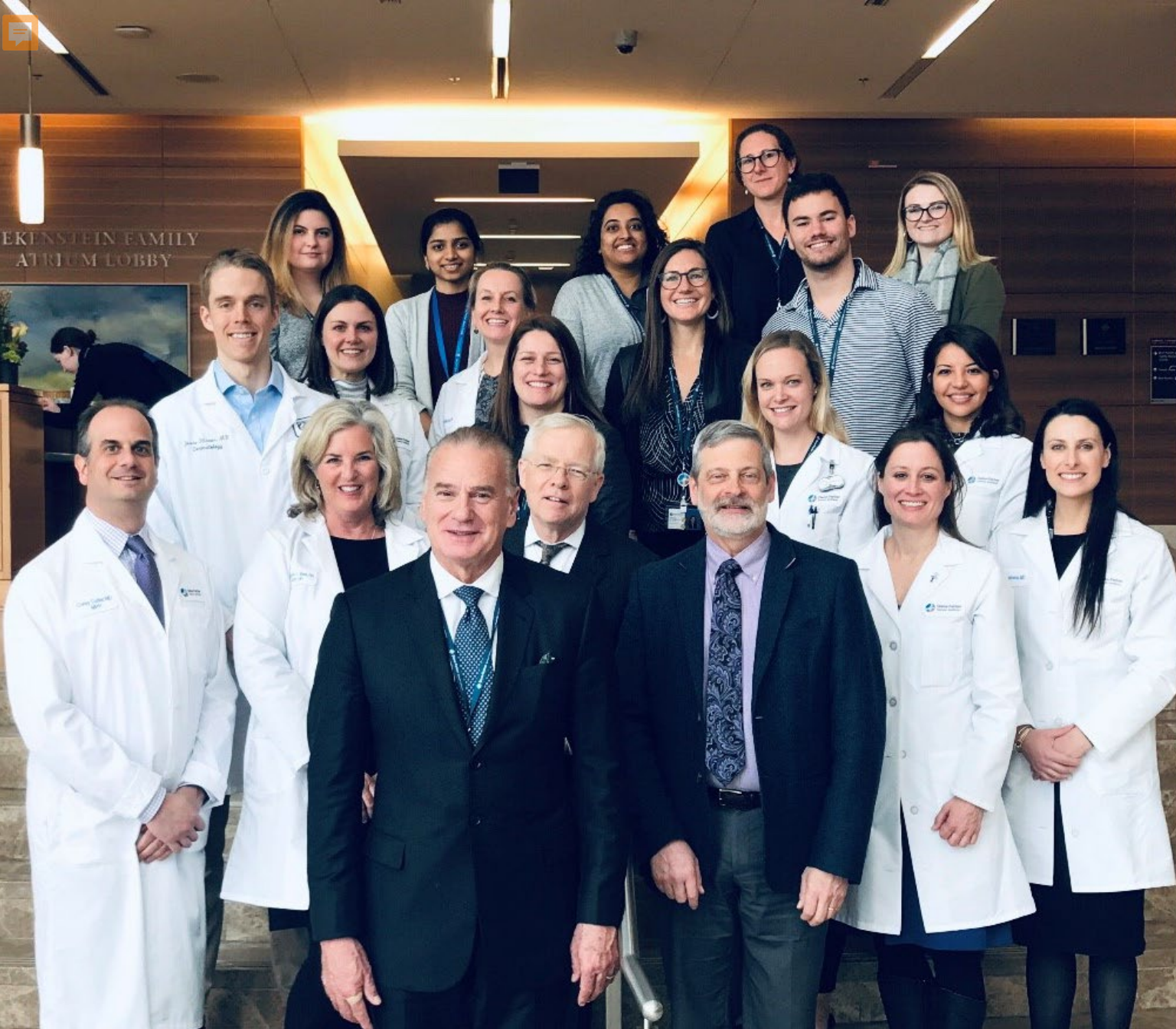
Dana Farber Cancer Institute

**SDNP Annual Meeting 4/23**



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute

**No Conflict of Interest to Disclose**



# DFCI CTCL Team

**Dermatology (MDs, NP, PA, RNs, Fellows & Residents)**

**Medical Oncologist & Transplant Oncology**

**Infusion Service**

**Radiation Oncologist & RT Service**

**Pathology-Derm/Heme/Molecular**

**Radiology**

**Photopheresis & Phototherapy Centers**

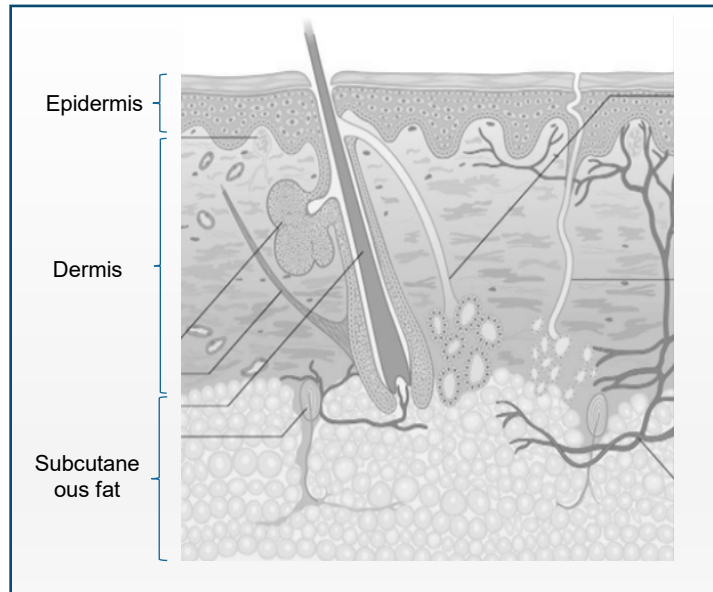
**Research Teams- Clinical Trials & Bench**

**New Patient Coordinator**

**Medical Assistants & Scheduling Staff**

**Patient and Family**

# THE SKIN: More than a just physical barrier



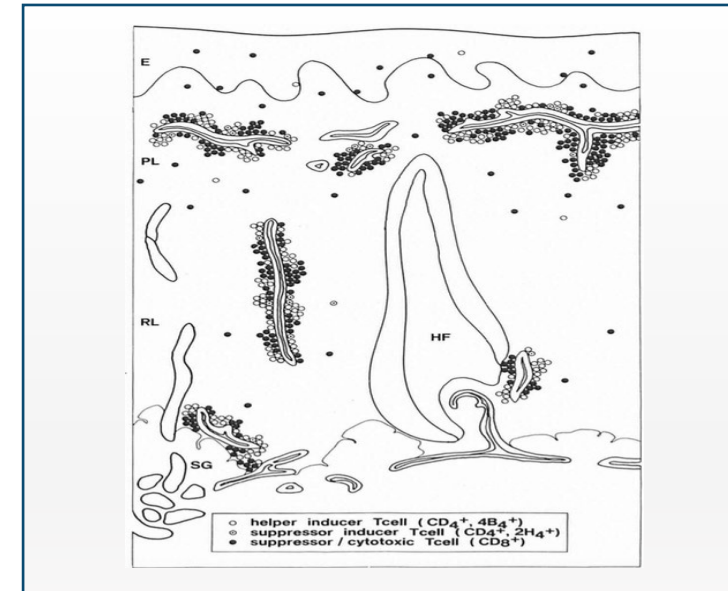
“Old View”

Current commonly held view



1922

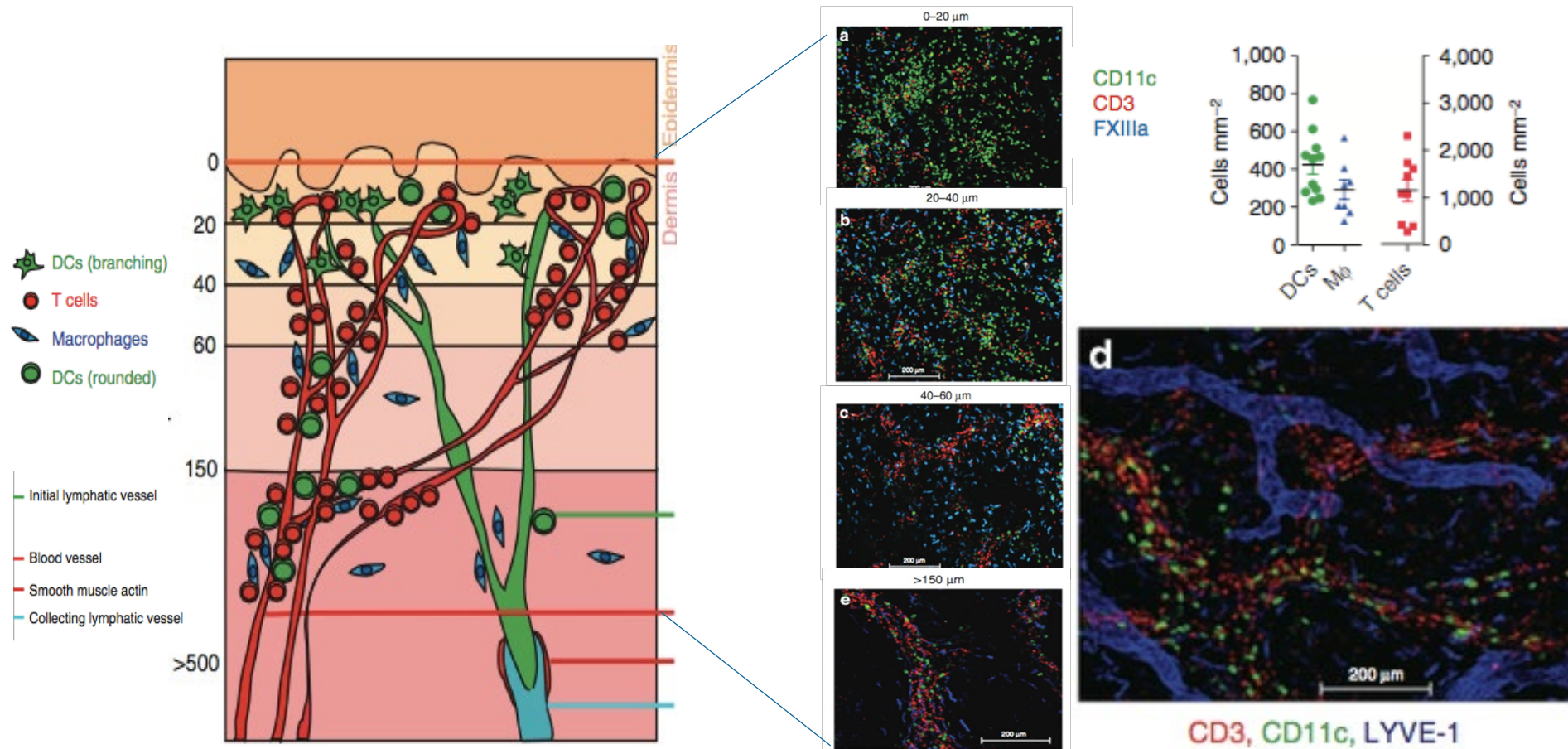
First reported observation of lymphocytes in normal skin



1970-1980's

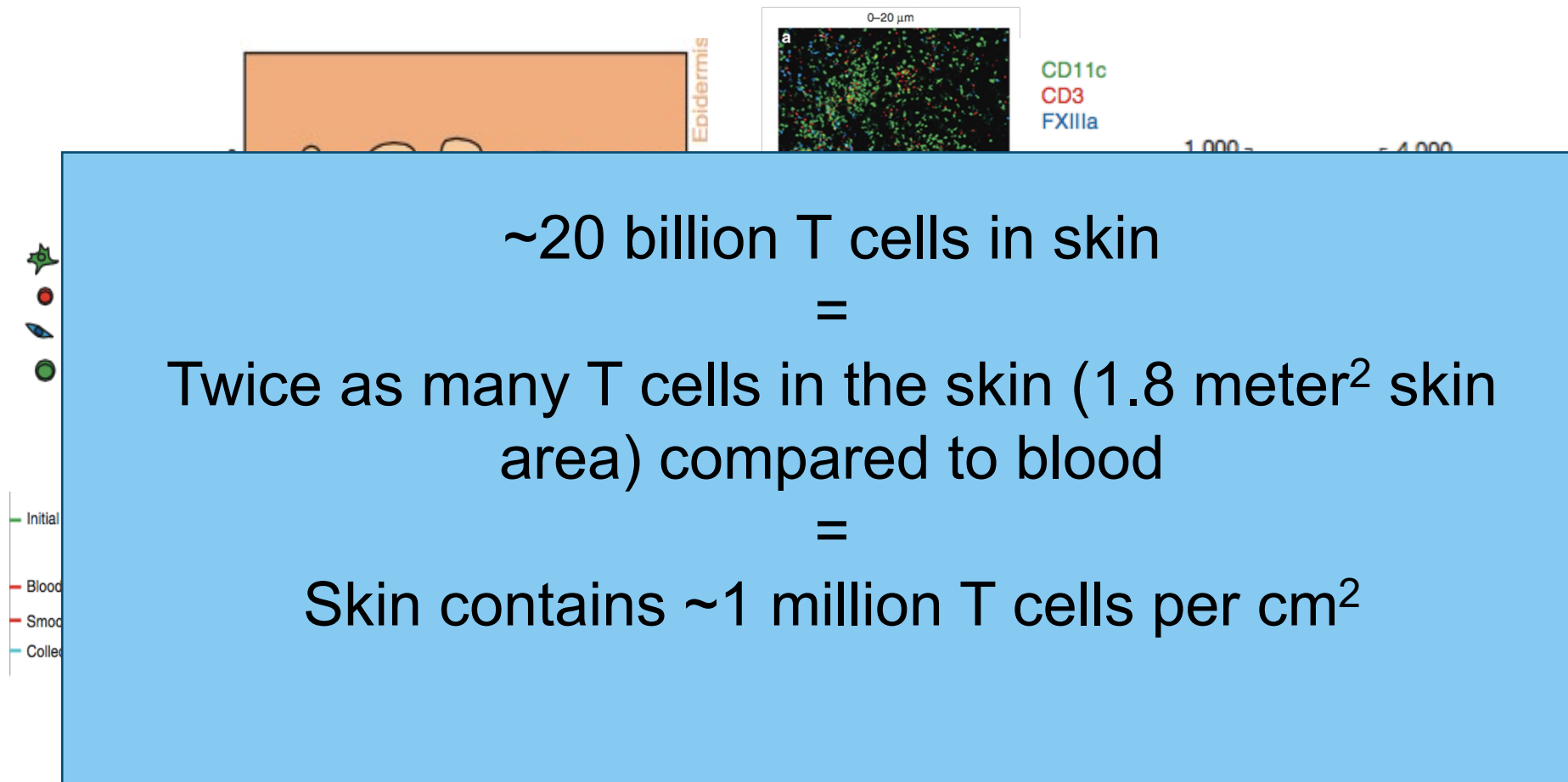
Identification of the “Skin Immune System”: presence of T cells in normal skin

# Skin contains a rich immune system



Wang XN et al. A three-dimensional atlas of human dermal leukocytes, lymphatics, and blood vessels. *J Invest Dermatol.* 2014 Apr;134(4):965-974.

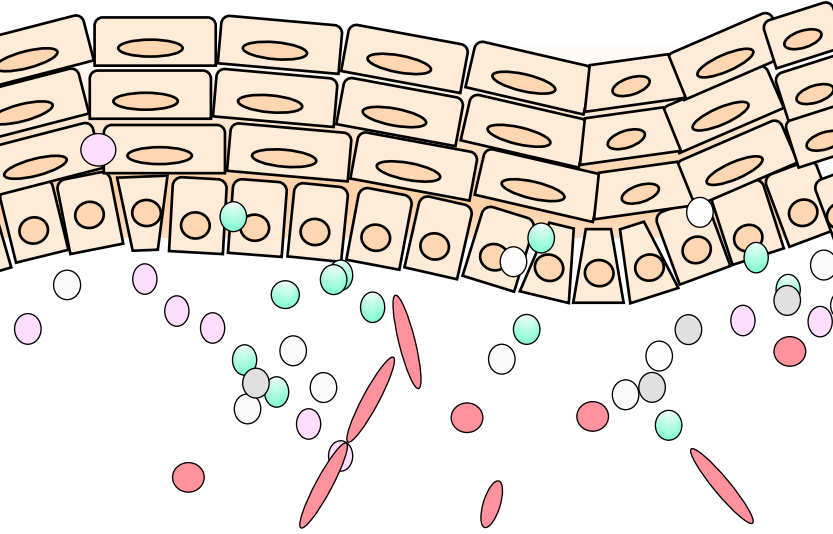
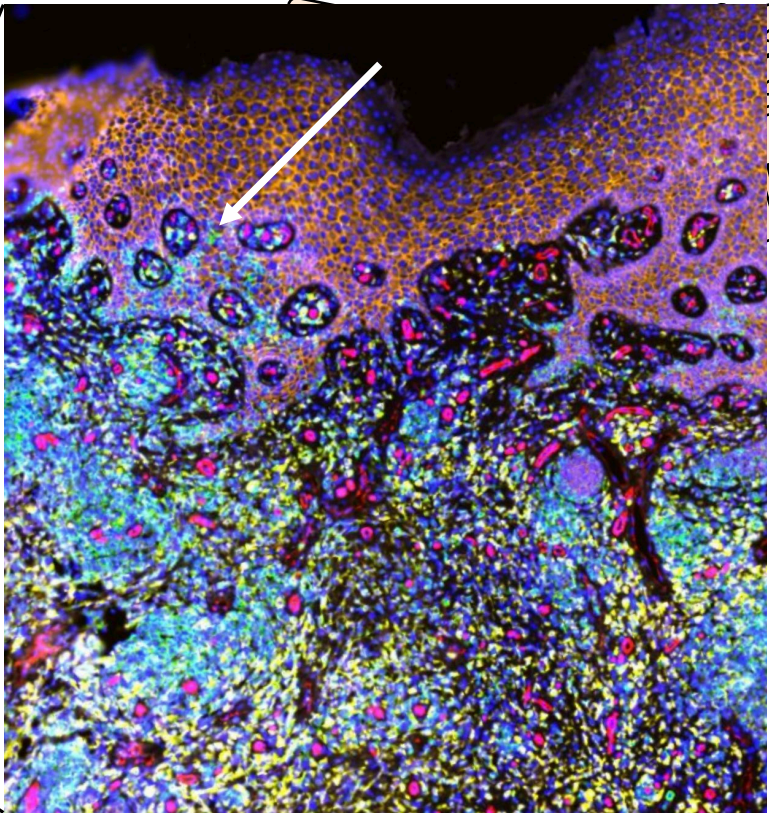
# Skin contains a rich immune system

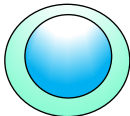
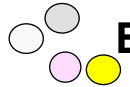




# Primary cutaneous T cell lymphomas (CTCL) are *rare cancers* of a skin-homing T cells

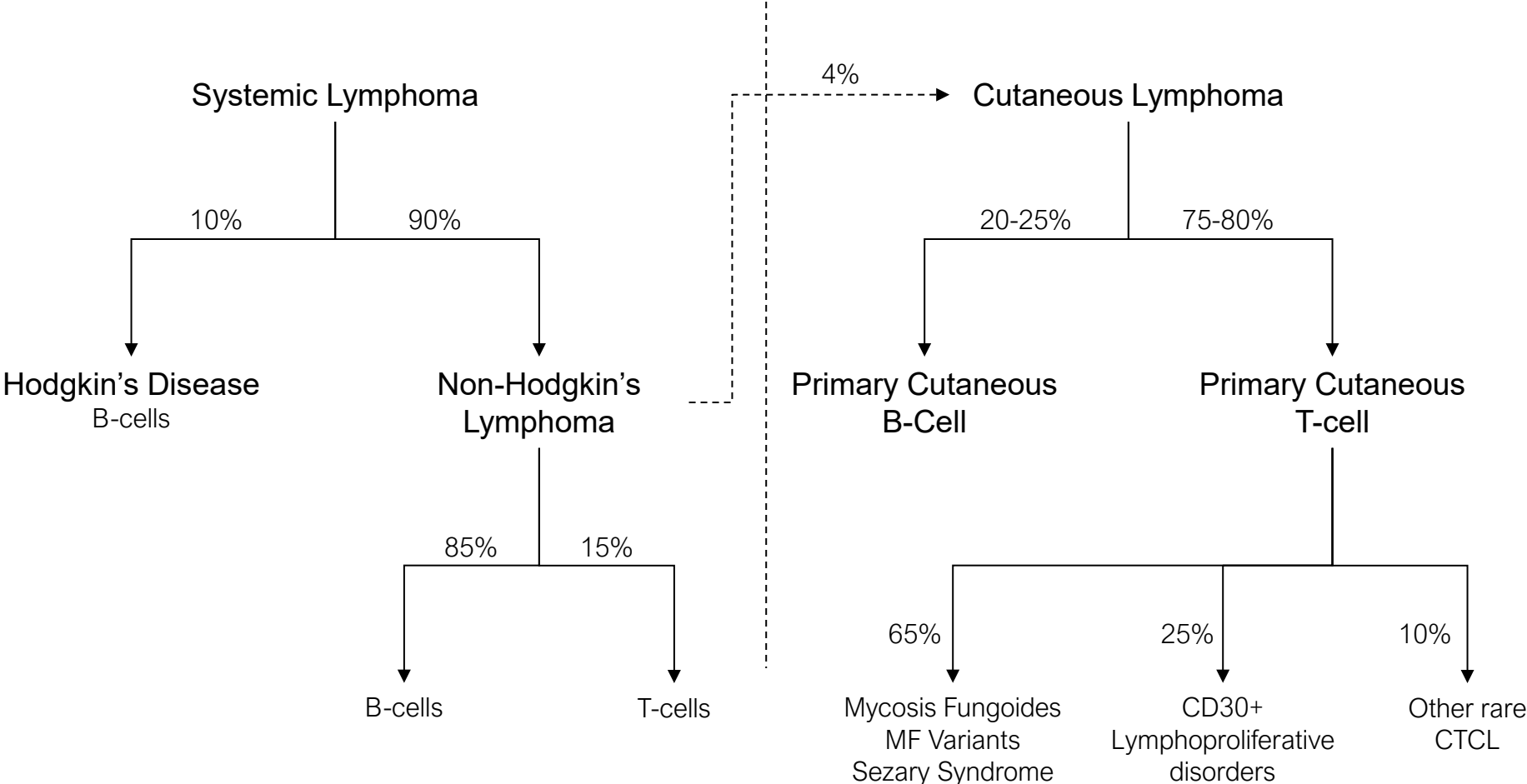
~10 cases per million in USA (Mycosis Fungoides and Sezary Syndrome subtypes)  
<4% of all non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)



 **Cancerous skin-homing T cells**  
 **Benign reactive inflammatory cells**



# Breakdown of Lymphomas by Type



A blue ribbon graphic with a 3D effect, featuring a darker blue shadow on the left side. The ribbon is horizontal and contains white text.

# Primary Cutaneous B-Cell Lymphoma Update

# Primary B- Cell Lymphomas *Fast Facts*

- Group of extranodal B-Cell non-Hodgkin Lymphomas  
B-cell derived
- Primarily involve skin without evidence  
extracutaneous disease at the time of DX ( completion of staging w/u (scans/ blood/ bx)
- 25% of all Cutaneous Lymphomas
- Incidence 4 per million persons>unique  
entities/features/ pathology/prognosis
- WHO, 2018- **3** major subtypes
- Primary cutaneous marginal zone(pcMZL)
- Primary cutaneous follicle center lymphoma (pcFCL)
- Primary cutaneous large B cell lymphoma, leg type

# pcMZL

2-7% of all primary cutaneous lymphomas

Cause unknown, but...pc MZL has been associated with tattoo pigments, tick bites and antigen injection.

*Borrelia burgdorferi* infection established in Europe, but not USA

Red-violaceous small, solitary or multiple papules or nodules.

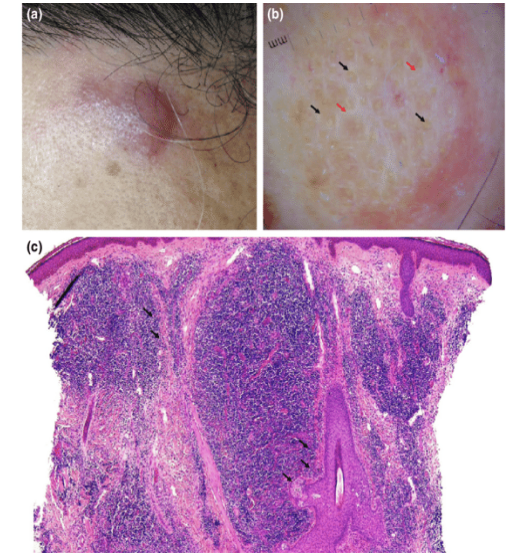
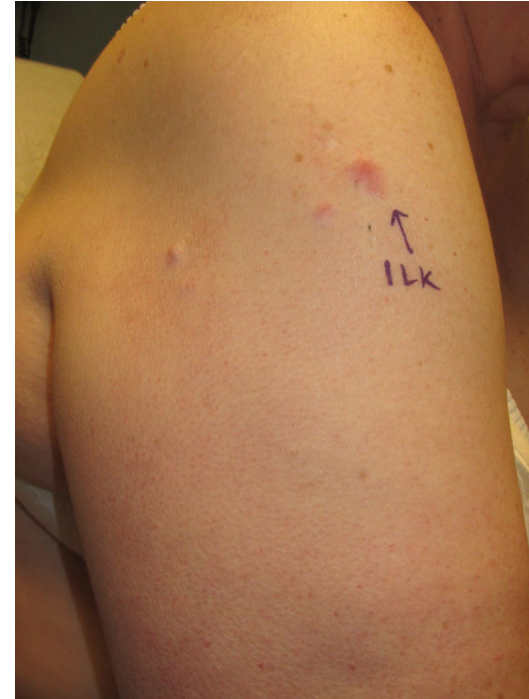
INDOLENT course

Preferentially located on trunk, arms and occasionally the head

Pathology reveals dense dermal lymphocytic infiltrates arranged in nodular or diffuse pattern.

IHC stains+ CD20, +CD22,+ CD79a + BCL 2: absence of CD3

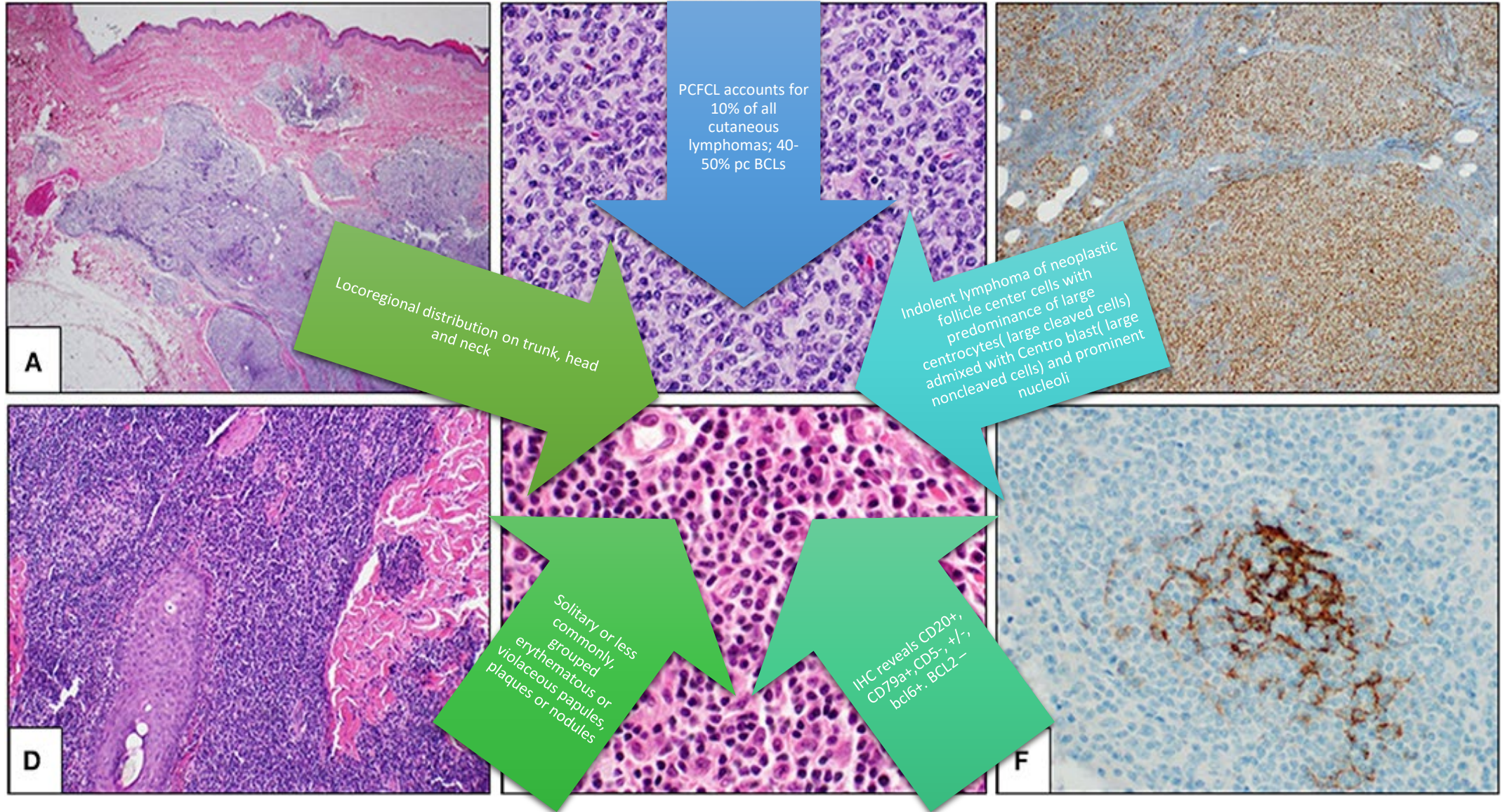
Genetic studies to document clonality



# Establishing the DX and Planning TX

- Skin biopsy- 4mm at a minimum
- r/o systemic disease- absence of B sx/nl blood counts/ nl LDH/negative CAP or PET CT
- Differential DX- reactive hyperplasia/pseudo lymphomas= polyclonal
- **Excellent** prognosis
- Rare disorder, thus large trials lacking
- Treatment approach based on # lesions, location & presence of Sx (itch)
- Localized Radiation/ Excision/ Intralesional Tac/ Topical corticosteroids/ imiquimod
- IV Rituximab for multiple localized lesions

# Primary Cutaneous Follicle Center Lymphoma

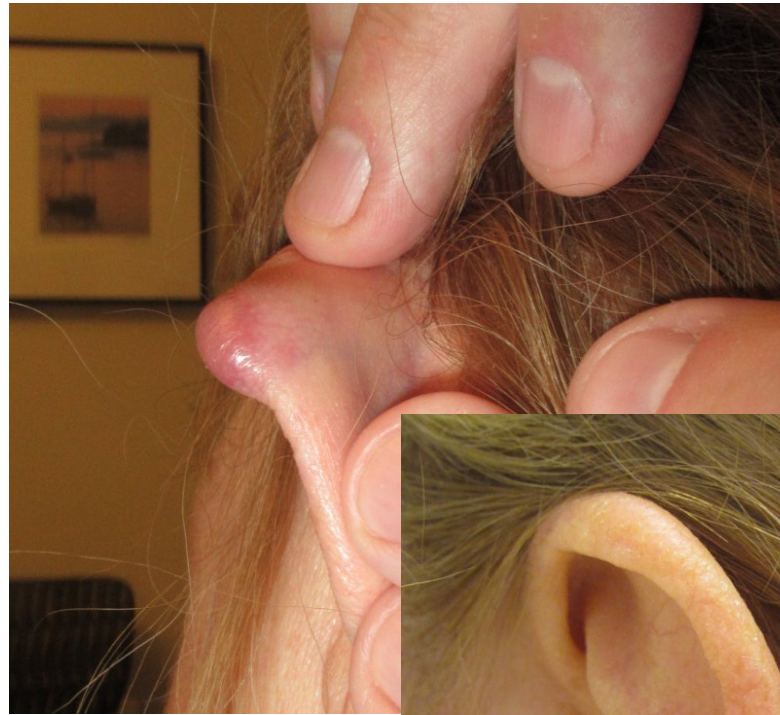


# Making the DX and Planning TX

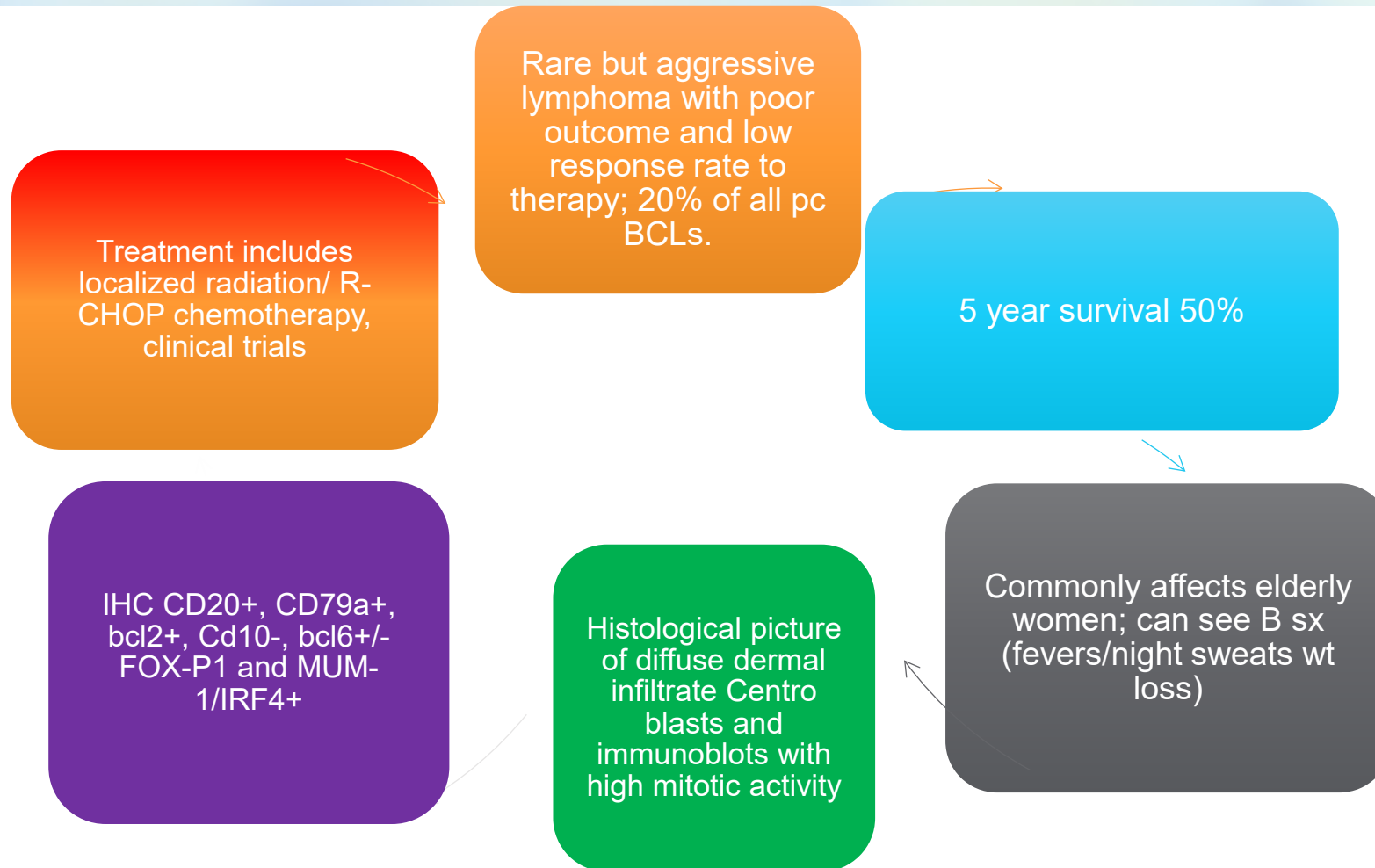
## Punch Biopsy

Treatment largely based on # and distribution of lesions

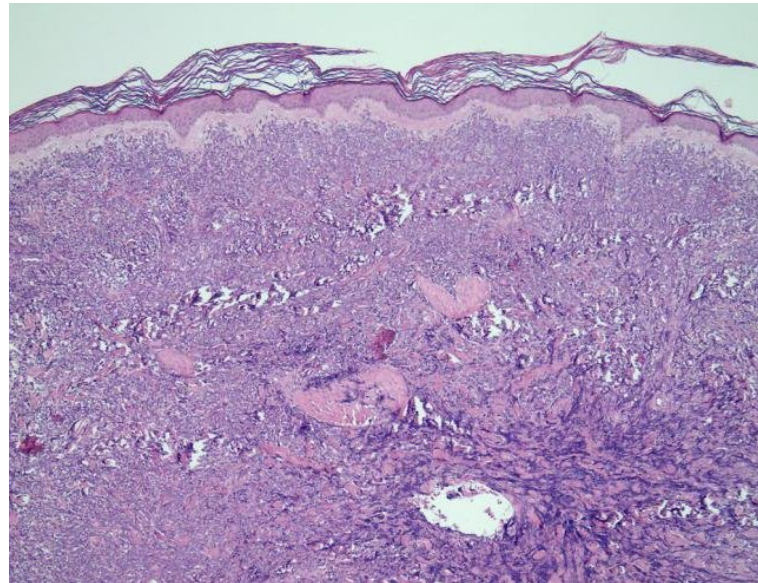
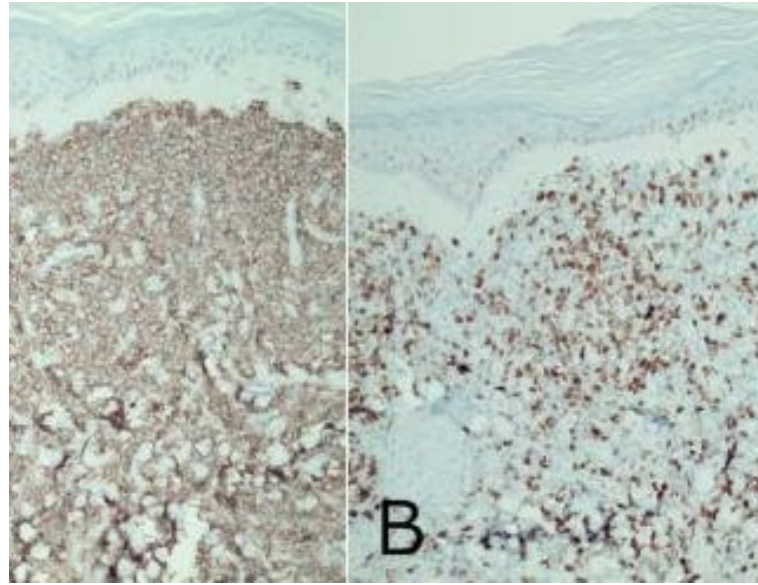
- Wait and watch
- Localized radiation
- IV Rituximab
- Cutaneous recurrences are common 30-46.6%



# Primary Cutaneous Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma, Leg Type







Lower extremity  
infiltrative  
nodulo-tumors  
+ B sx

What to do?

- Multi-agent chemotherapy
- Rarely localized radiation- *if single site*

# The World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) Classification of CTCL

## Cutaneous T cell Lymphoma

### Indolent clinical behavior

- **Mycosis fungoides:** variants include
  - Folliculotropic mycosis fungoides
  - Pagetoid reticulosis
  - Granulomatous slack skin
- **Subcutaneous panniculitis-like-T-cell lymphoma**
- **CD30+ Lymphoproliferative disorders**
  - Primary cutaneous anaplastic large cell lymphoma
  - Lymphomatoid papulosis

### Aggressive clinical behavior

- **Sezary Syndrome**
- **Primary cutaneous CD8+ aggressive epidermotropic T cell lymphoma**
- **Primary cutaneous gamma/delta T cell lymphoma**
- **Extra-nodal natural killer/T cell, nasal type**

### Variable clinical behavior

- **Primary cutaneous peripheral T cell lymphoma, Not Otherwise Specified**

Aggressive clinical behavior will be seen in patients with advance-stage MFor in those with LCT. Folliculotropic MF has also been shown to have worse prognosis.

# Affected Populations

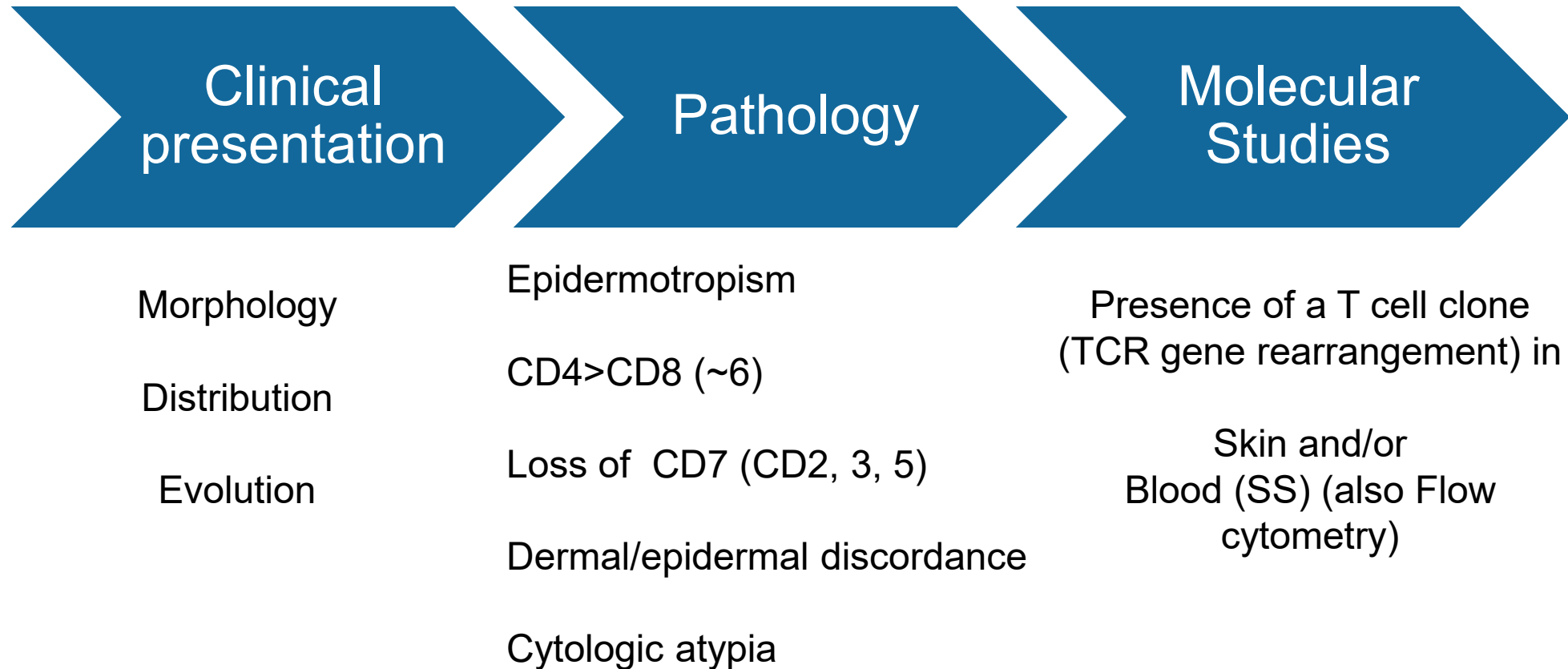
- CTCL affected males twice as often as females.
- One study estimated that from .5 to 5% of CTCLs occur in children.
- Occurs twice as often in African American vs. European/ Asian decent.
- ~1,000 new cases/yr of skin lymphoma diagnosed in the US



Is this CTCL?



# Making the diagnosis: Requires clinical-pathologic correlation



# CTCL is a malignancy of skin homing T cells with distinct clinical presentations that correlate with molecular T cell subtype

Diagnosis	T cell origin	Surface Markers	Histology
Mycosis fungoides	Resident Memory (T <sub>RM</sub> )	CCR4+ CLA+ CCR7- L Selectin -	Epidermotropism Pautrier microabscesses
MF/SS	Migratory Memory (T <sub>MM</sub> )	CCR4+ CLA + CCR7+ L Selectin +/-	Intermediate phenotype
Sézary Syndrome	Central Memory (T <sub>CM</sub> )	CCR4+ CCR7+ L Selectin +	Spongiosis

## Clinical presentation



**Malignant T cells:**  
Confined to fixed plaques in skin



**Malignant T cells:**  
-Found in all areas of skin  
-Accumulate in blood and lymph nodes



Clinical  
presentation

# Typical Patient Presentation (MF/SS)

**Fixed, persistent or  
progressive, patch**

**PATCH**

**PLAQUE**

**Size/shape variation**

**TUMOR**

**Often sun-protected  
sites**

**ERYTHRODERMA**

**Other:  
Poikiloderma**

Most often misdiagnosed as chronic contact dermatitis, atopic dermatitis psoriasis or drug eruption;  
conflicting clinical presentations and pathology

# Regression within Lesion Poikiloderma



Excellent prognosis





# MF in skin of color





# Hypopigmented MF





However, consider other rare subtypes when patients present with:

**Tumors first**, no patch/plaque stage

→ cutaneous PTCL, NOS,  $\gamma\delta$  TCL, ALCL

**Wide-spread ulceration**

→ primary cutaneous aggressive  
epidermotropic CD8+ TCL

**Infiltration into fat**

→  $\gamma\delta$  TCL

# Making the diagnosis: Pathology

*Ahhhh the biopsy.....*

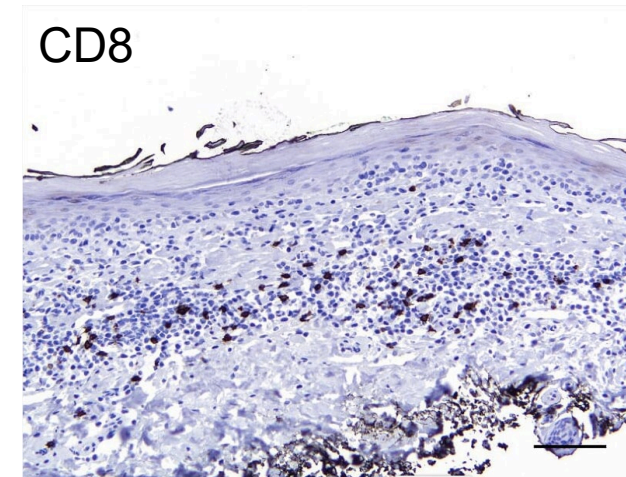
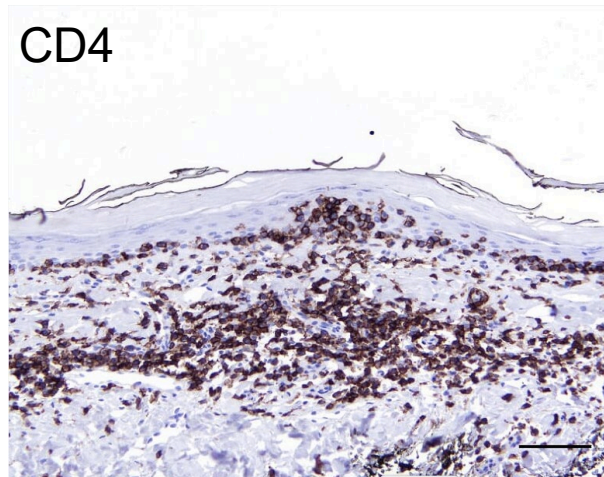
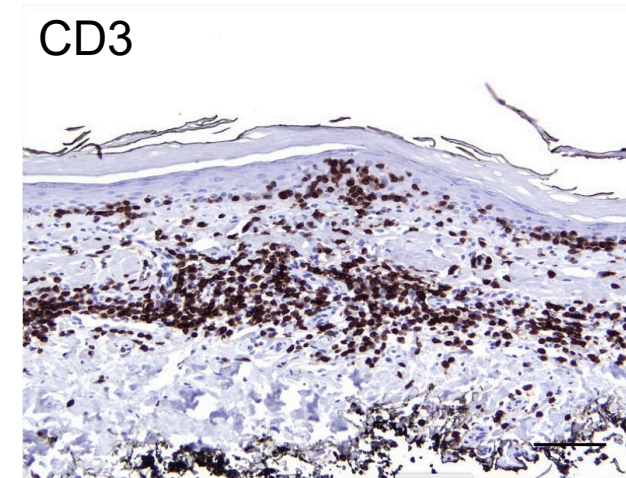
**Biopsy site selection is paramount (aim for 6 mm punch)**

**May need more than 1 biopsy from different lesion types**  
(look for matching clones in different sites)

**Untreated skin preferred aka no topical steroids (> 2 weeks, > 4 weeks from phototherapy)**

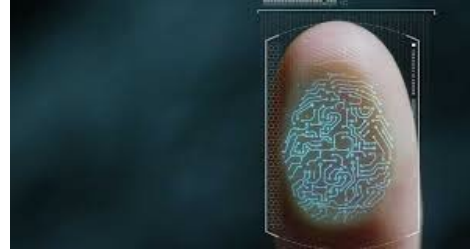
# Key pathology findings

- **Pathology report will say...**
  - Superficial perivascular → dense band-like infiltrates of lymphocytes
  - Epidermotropism (and tagging DEJ), without spongiosis (but in SS spongiosis/eos typical)
  - Pautrier micro abscesses (<25% of cases)
  - Cytologic atypia?
- **Immunophenotyping**
  - <50% CD2,CD3,CD4,CD5+ T cells
  - <10% CD7+ T cells
  - *Other: CD30 (for subtyping)*



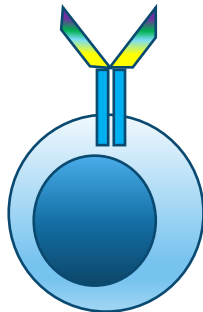
# Making the diagnosis: Molecular tests

## Is there a T cell clone?

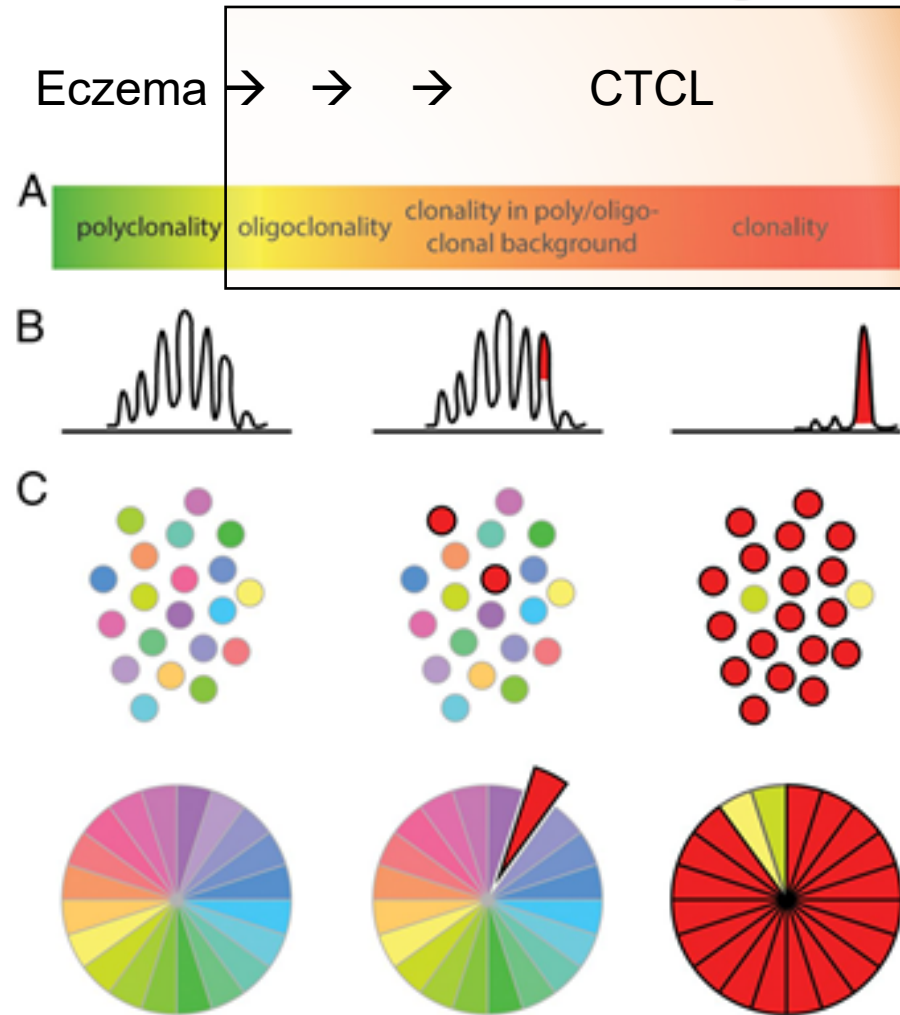


Unique antigen receptor serves as a specific marker for that cell and its clonal progeny

TCR is like a fingerprint



# What is clonality?

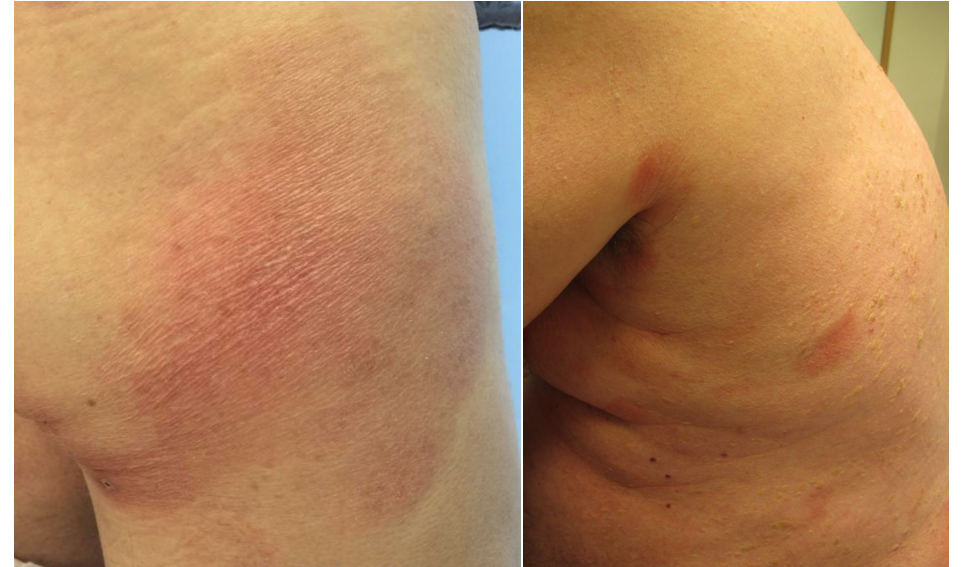


Anton W. Langerak et al. J Immunol 2017;198:3765-3774



# Diagnosing early MF is challenging!

- Average 3-6 years from symptom onset to dx
- Average 6 bx prior to dx
- Lack of cytologic atypia
- TCR clone + in ~50% of patches of MF (PCR 80% sensitivity)



# Dupilumab-associated CTCL

- Risk:
  - CTCL diagnosed after dupilumab started for presumed AD (bx neg)
  - Rapid disease progression with mortality reported
  
- 23 cases of CTCL diagnosed after dupilumab given for presumed AD
  - 83% had NO personal/family history of atopy (adult-onset AD)
  - Only 56% had pre-tx skin biopsies
  - NONE had TCR gene rearrangement studies
  - No peripheral flow cytometry was obtained in erythrodermic patients
  - 7/23 had initial improvement with dupi
  - 82% dx with MF, 18% with SS
  - CTCL diagnosed 1-15 months after initiation of dupi

Rule out CTCL BEFORE started dupi (flow cytometry for erythrodermic pt)  
and

Re-evaluate for CTCL if patients are not improving or getting worse!

# MAJOR ADVANCE IN CTCL DIAGNOSIS

- High throughput TCR sequencing of **COMPLEMENTARITY DETERMINING REGION 3 (CDR3)** region of TCR

clonoSEQ®

Next generation high throughput sequencing technology

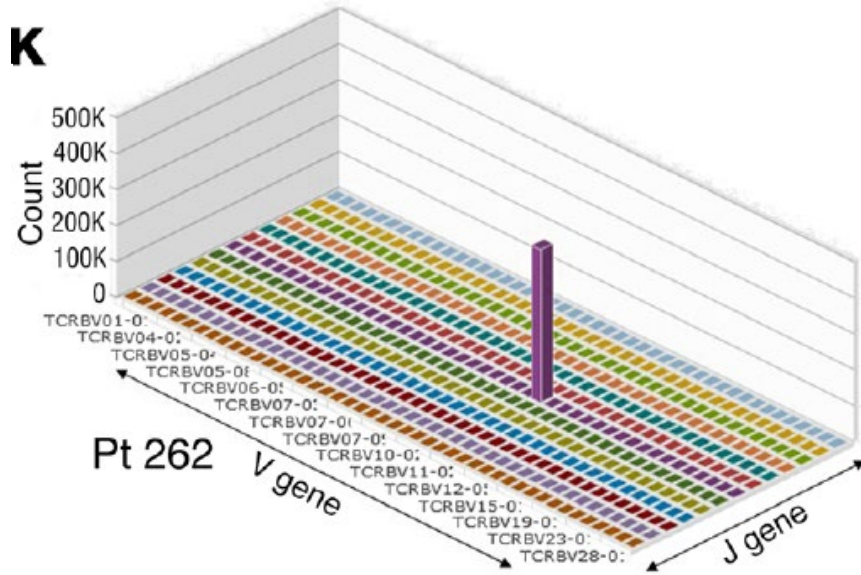
Fancy and enormous # of PCR primers  
(corrected for amplification bias)

TCRB and TCRG genes evaluated

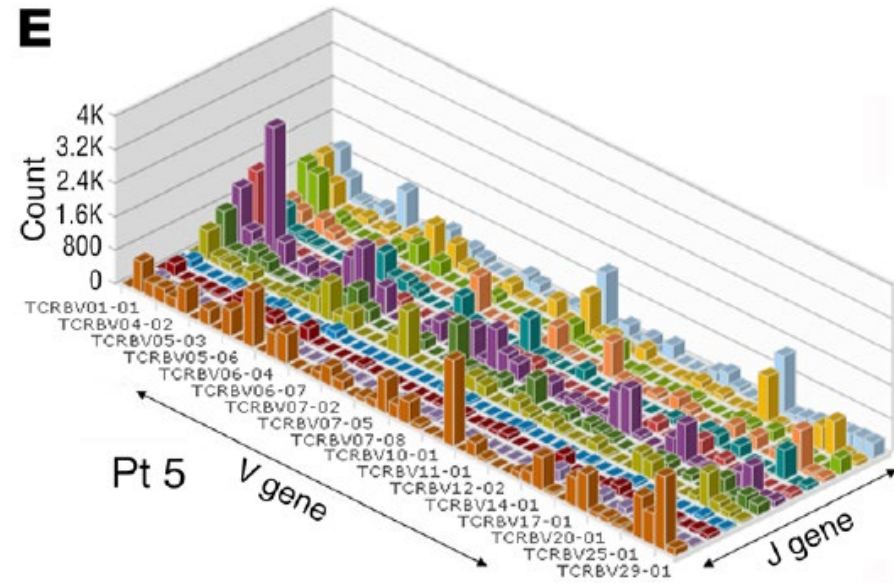
Sophisticated bioinformatic analysis



# Monoclonal expansions predominate in early-stage MF compared to psoriasis



Stage IA mycosis fungoides



Active psoriasis lesion

# Important applications of HTS of TCR

1

Diagnosing early MF

- Start treatment sooner
- Prognostic tool



2

Prior to starting dupilumab

- Dupilumab may unmask CTCL or lead to rapid disease progression in previously undiagnosed CTCL

3

Skin rash from cancer Tx?

- Helps distinguish disease progression from treatment side effect

4

Monitor disease

- Prior to transplant
  - Clearance of disease in skin/blood?
- Following transplant
  - Relapse vs GVHD?

What is my  
prognosis?



# Cutaneous manifestations (TNMB stage) directly linked with prognosis



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**T1:** <10% Body Surface Area Affected

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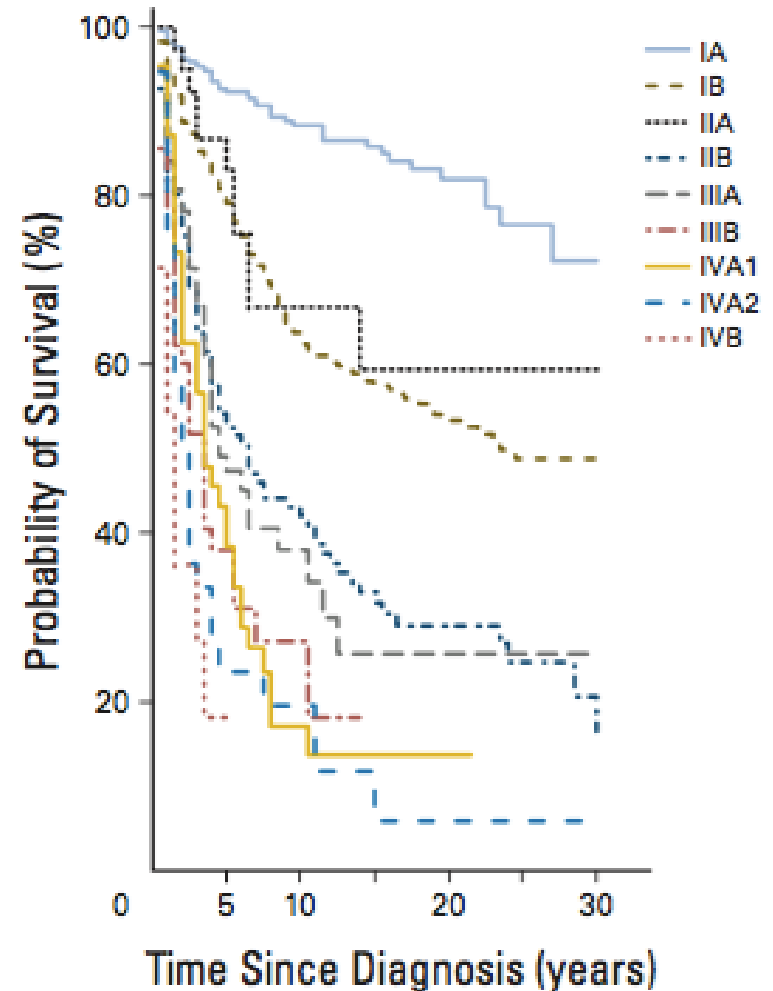
**T2:** >10% Body Surface Area Affected

# Patients can experience indolent (chronic) or aggressive (fatal) disease

Excellent prognosis in early stage, consider a chronic illness

	Stage	Median OS (years)	10-year <sup>6</sup>		
			OS (%)	DSS (%)	RDP (%)
Indolent	IA	35.5	88	95	12
	IB	21.5	70	77	38
	IIA	15.8	52	67	33
Aggressive	IIB	4.7	34	42	58
	IIIA	4.7	37	45	62
	IIIB	3.4	25	45	73
	IVA1	3.8	18	20	83
	IVA2	2.1	15	20	80
	IVB	1.4	18 (5 year)	18 (5 year)	82 (5 year)

Increasing risk of mortality across stages

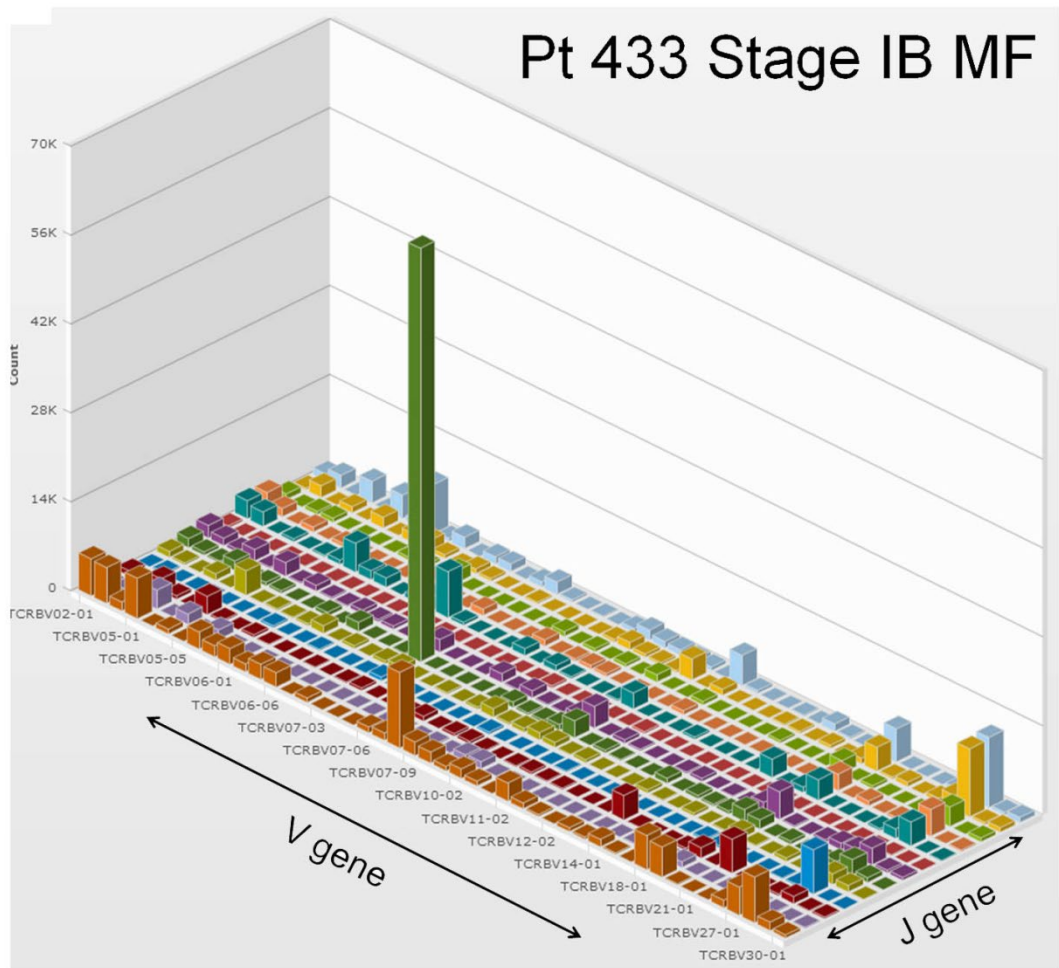


**Risk of disease progression even for early-stage patients**

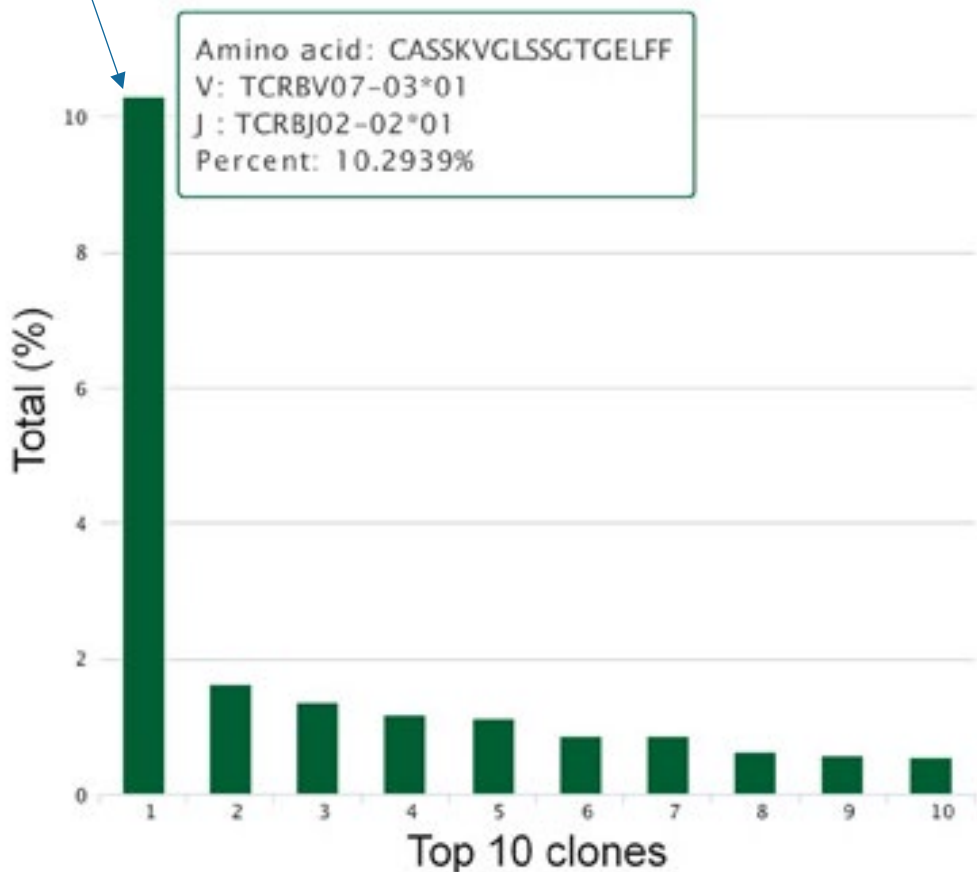


# Determining the malignant clone and tumor clone frequency (TCF)

Pt 433 Stage IB MF

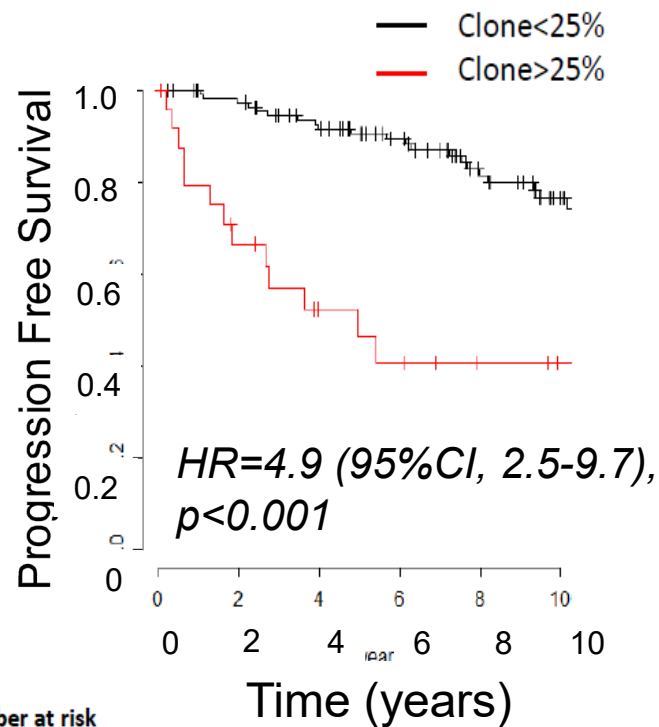


$$\text{TCF} = \frac{\text{\# of reads of top TCRB gene sequence}}{\text{\# of reads of all rearranged TCRB gene sequences}}$$



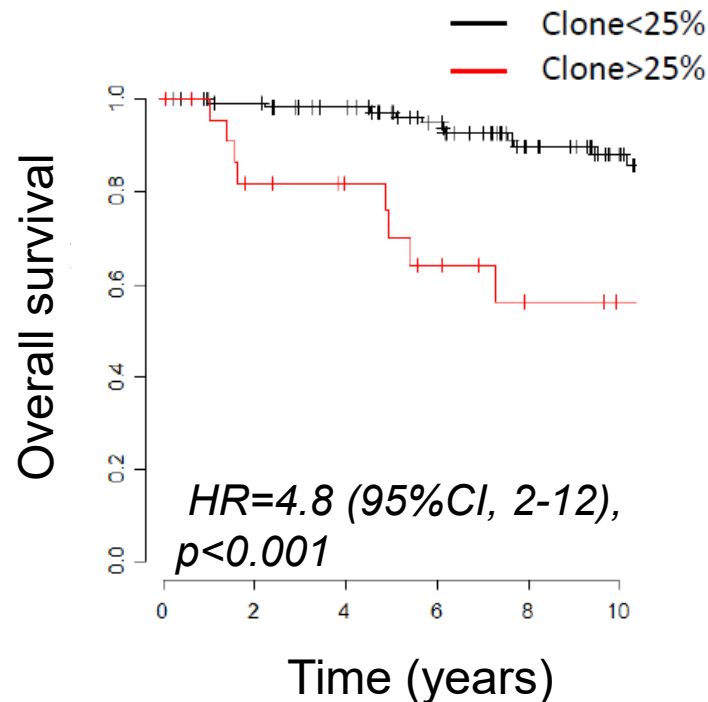
# The skin TCF is highly predictive of disease progression in early-stage MF patients

Discovery set  
Early-stage mycosis fungoides



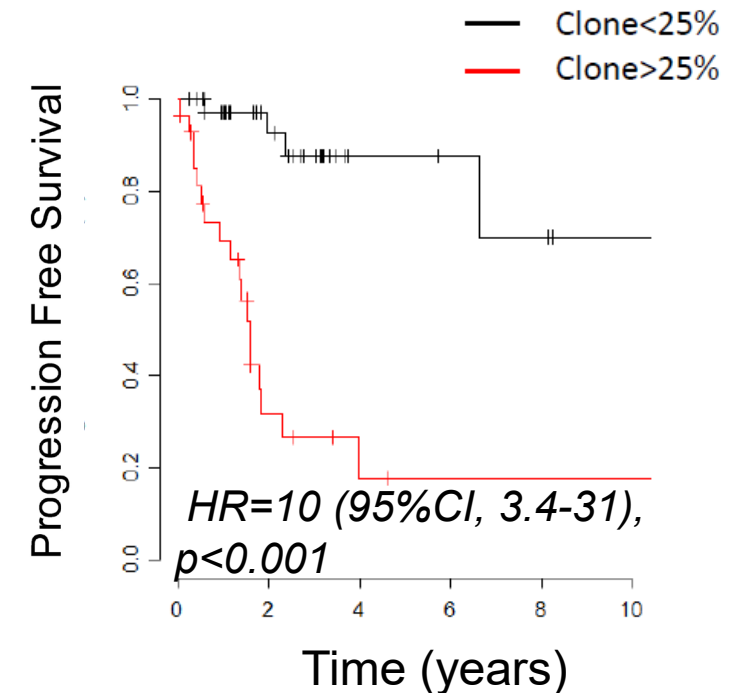
Number at risk	0	2	4	6	8	10
Clone < 25%	116	107	94	78	56	37
Clone > 25%	25	15	9	7	4	2

Discovery set  
Early-stage mycosis fungoides



Number at risk	0	2	4	6	8	10
Clone < 25%	116	108	100	83	59	41
Clone > 25%	25	17	14	10	6	4

Validation set  
Early-stage mycosis fungoides



Number at risk	0	2	4	6	8	10
Clone < 25%	41	20	6	5	4	2
Clone > 25%	28	6	2	1	1	1

We are better at diagnosing CTCL but are we better at treating it?

# What factors impacts decision making on treatment selection?

- What is the tenor and pace of the disease?
- What is observed under the microscope e.g. folliculotropism/ LCT
- B sx/ elevated LDH
- Degree of immunosuppression associated
- Pruritus level
- \$ and access to therapies
- CTCL MF/ SS are chronic diseases requiring chronic courses of therapy
- **HRQOL**

# Treatment is Multidisciplinary



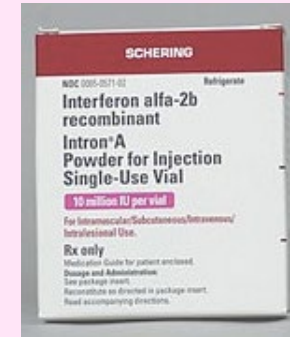
Phototherapy  
nbUVB  
PUVA

Topical agents



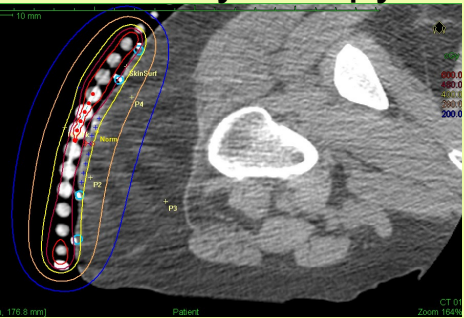
Dermatology

Retinoids  
Bexarotene  
MTX  
IFN a



Extracorporeal  
photopheresis

Brachytherapy



Local XRT

Radiation  
Oncology

Medical  
Oncology

Targeted therapy  
Chemotherapy  
Stem cell transplant



TSEBT

Where?

**SKIN**

**BLOOD**

**LYMPH NODE**

**VISCERA**

Severity?

**Body Surface area?**

**Tumors?**

High risk features?

**Folliculotropism?**

**Large cell transformation?**

Special site?

**Difficult to treat locations?  
(e.g. eyelids, feet)**

Severity?

**LOW?**

Sezary  
count

**HIGH?**

Goals?

**PALLIATION**

**Or**

**Transplantation?**

# SKIN-DIRECTED THERAPY FOR EARLY CTCL

Treatments in CTCL are rarely if ever a cure (except for allogeneic transplantation)

## *Treatment goals*

- Symptomatic relief (decrease itch)
- Prevented disease progression
- Aim for disease improvement/stable disease (may not be spotless)

## *Patient counseling*

- Can take time to be effective
- May appear worse before it improves
- May experience transient disease flares





# Topical treatments for Mycosis Fungoides

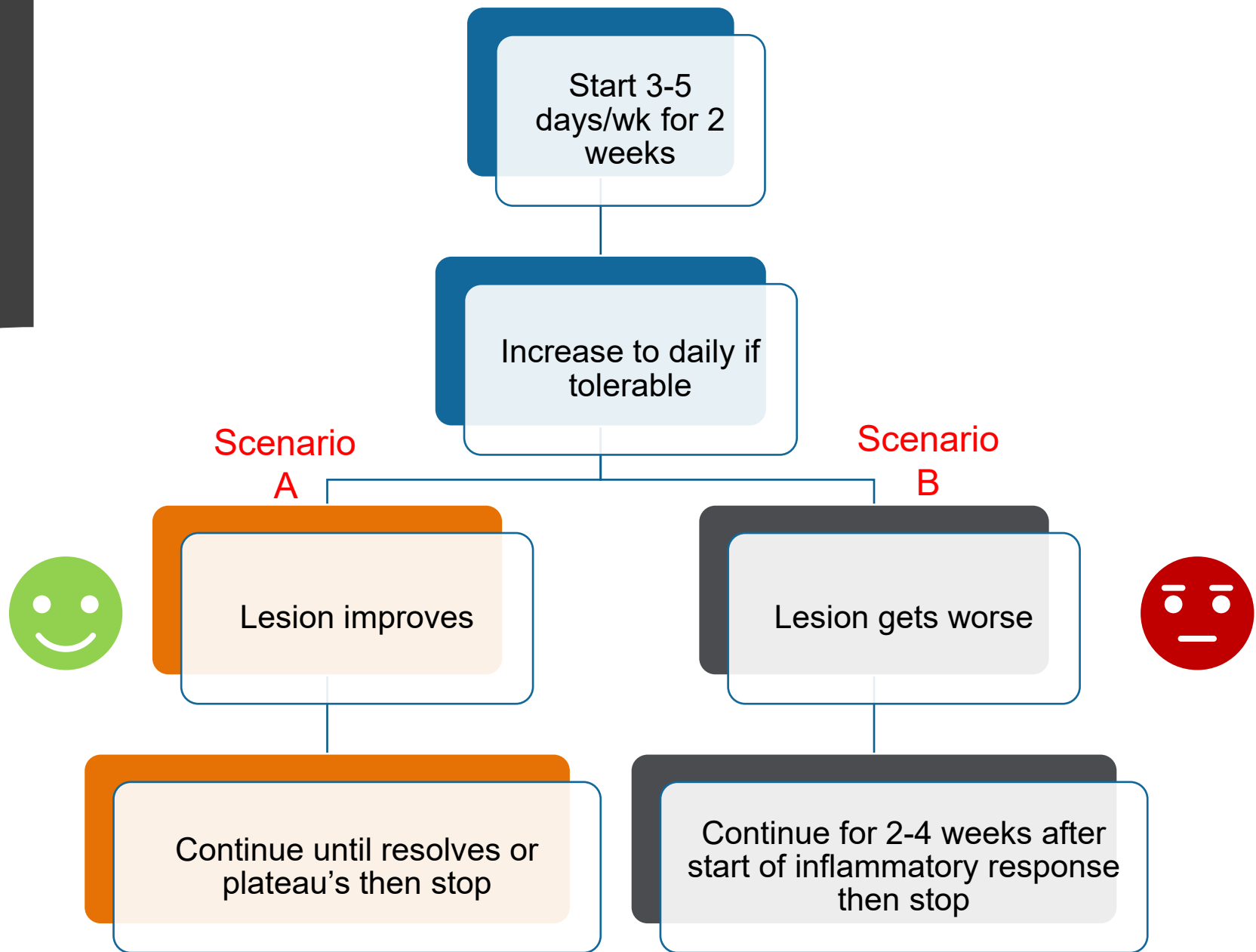
Type	Anti-inflammatory	Chemotherapy	Targeted: Retinoid/Rexinoid	Immunotherapy
Agent	Topical steroids	Nitrogen mustard (mechlorethamine HCl)	Bexarotene* Tazarotene <sup>†</sup>	Imiquimod
ORR	75-95%	50-90%	*50-75% <sup>†</sup> 58%	50%
Pros	Very effective against itch Does not cause irritation	Whole body application	No risk of atrophy Safe for face	Thicker plaques tx/FMF Safe for face Lasting remission?
Cons	Steroid atrophy etc.	Not for use on genitals Not w/ phototx Irritating/allergy	Irritating	Inflammation (mild) Limited to small BSA
Onset of response	n/a (~1 month)	~ 6 months	~ 5 months	n/a (~2 months)

Arch Dermatol 2003;139:165 , J AM Acad Dermatol 2003;49:801. J AM Acad Dermatol 2002;47:191 Arch Dermatol 2005: 141;305, Arch Dermatol 2011:147;561, Arch Dermatol 2001:2001: 137:581, J Clin Oncol 2007;25:3109, J Clin Oncol 2010: 28:4485





# Imiquimod



# When topicals are not enough..... **Phototherapy**

*Excellent candidates:*

**Stage IB: Numerous, scattered lesion (e.g. BSA>10%)**

**Hypopigmented mycosis fungoides**



**Folliculotropic disease:** *some FMF patients have indolent behavior*



Thinner disease is amenable to treatment with nbUVB, PUVA preferred for thicker lesions

# Phototherapy Guidelines

Goal: long-lasting remission off therapy or minimize active disease

<b>Induction/clearing phase:</b> Increasing dose, 3/week to achieve CR	Time variable
<b>Consolidation phase:</b> Maintain dose/frequency after CR	1-3 months
<b>Maintenance phase:</b> Taper down phototherapy	3 months

## nbUVB

- ORR 54-90%
- May be used in combination with other tx

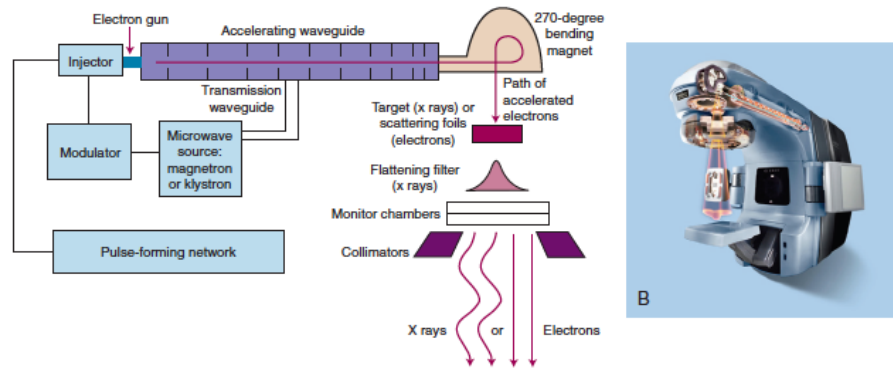
## PUVA

- ORR 85-100%
- May be used in combination with other tx
- Better for thicker disease/FMF
- Increased risk of skin cancer

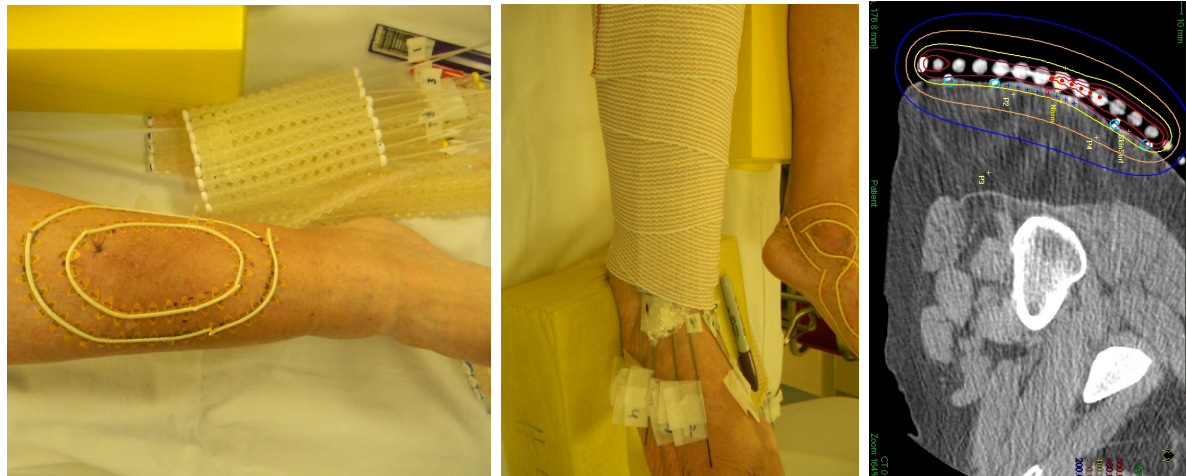
# Low-Dose Radiation is Highly Effective for MF

## Localized therapy (8-12 Gy)

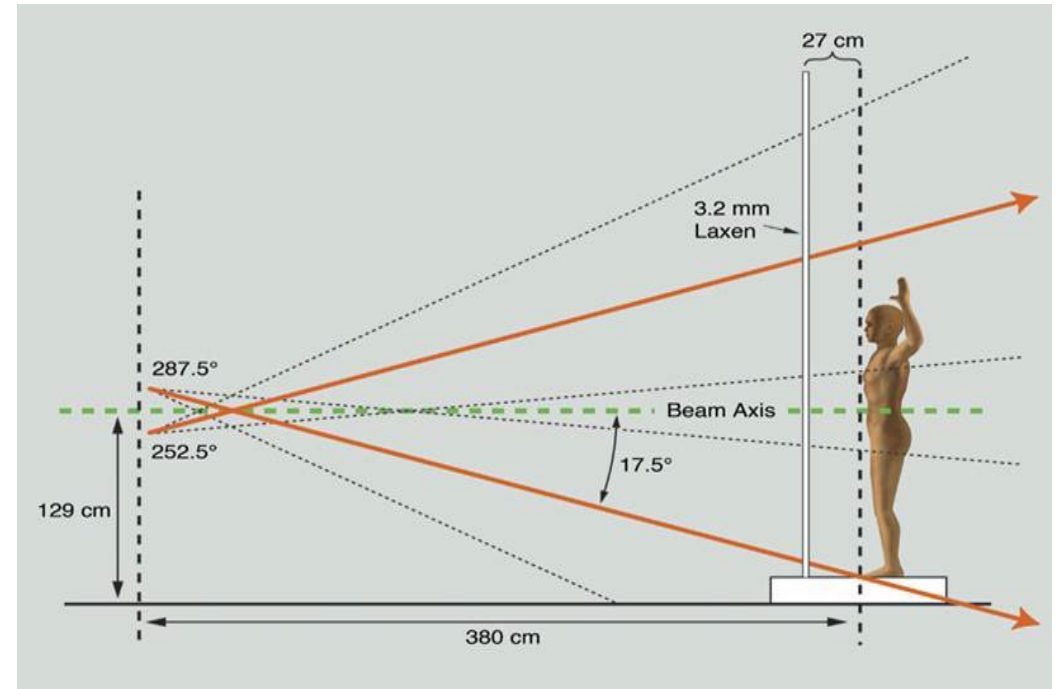
### • External beam (electron)



### • Brachytherapy (photons)



## Total skin electron beam therapy (10-12 Gy)



# Local external electron beam XRT



**Before**



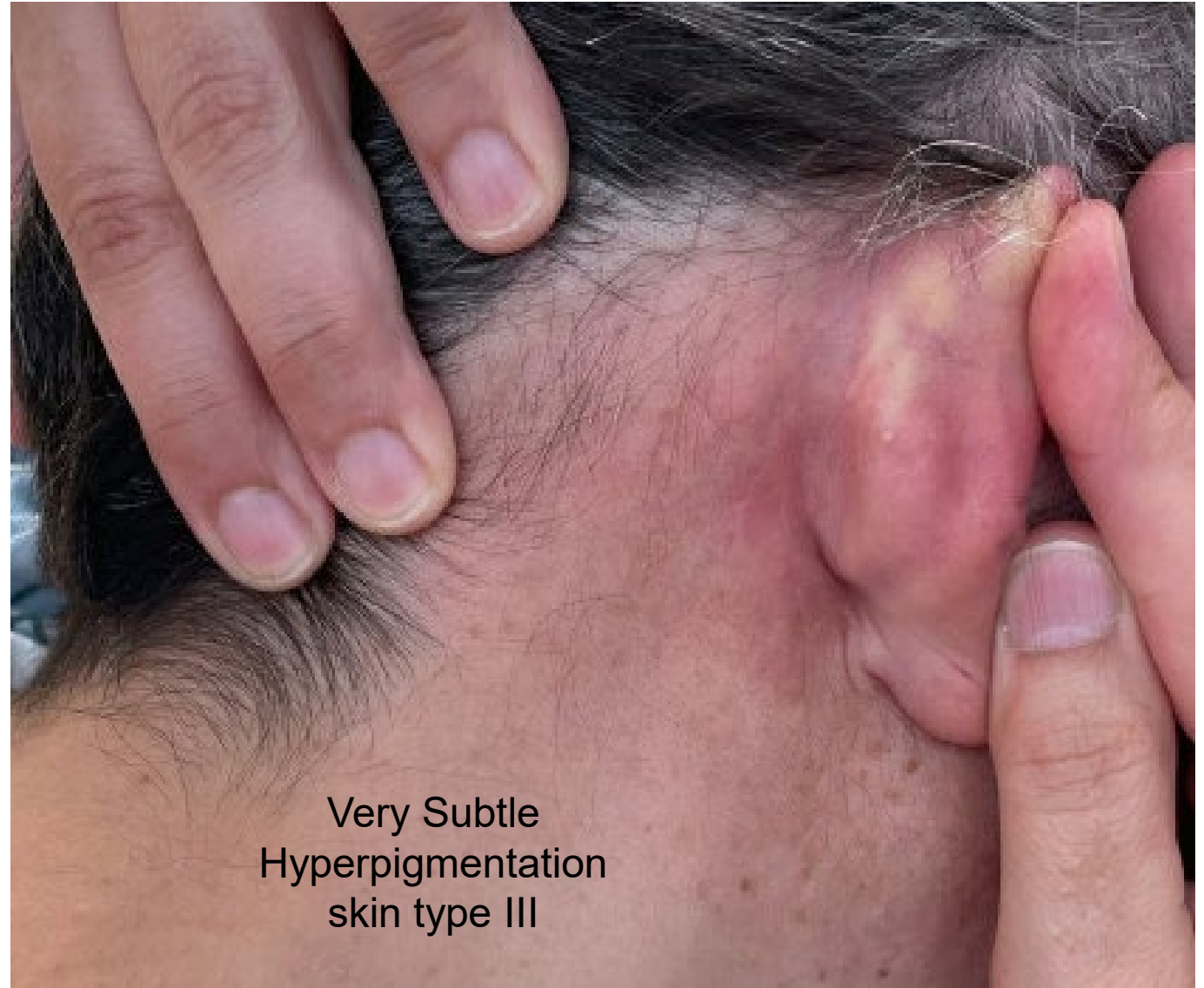
**After 30 Gy (PCALCL)**

Hyperpigmentation  
skin type V

# Local external electron beam XRT



Before



Very Subtle  
Hyperpigmentation  
skin type III

8 weeks after

# Local external electron beam XRT

Subcutaneous panniculitis-like TCL



**Before**



**After**

Subtle  
Hyperpigmentation  
skin type III (~20 Gy)



# Brachytherapy (surface mold, photons)



 Dana-Farber Cancer Institute **Before**



**During**      **8 weeks After 8 Gy**

Low dose  
no significant  
erythema/pain

# Radiation is a powerful tool

How good is it?

# Low dose radiation vs. Topical steroids



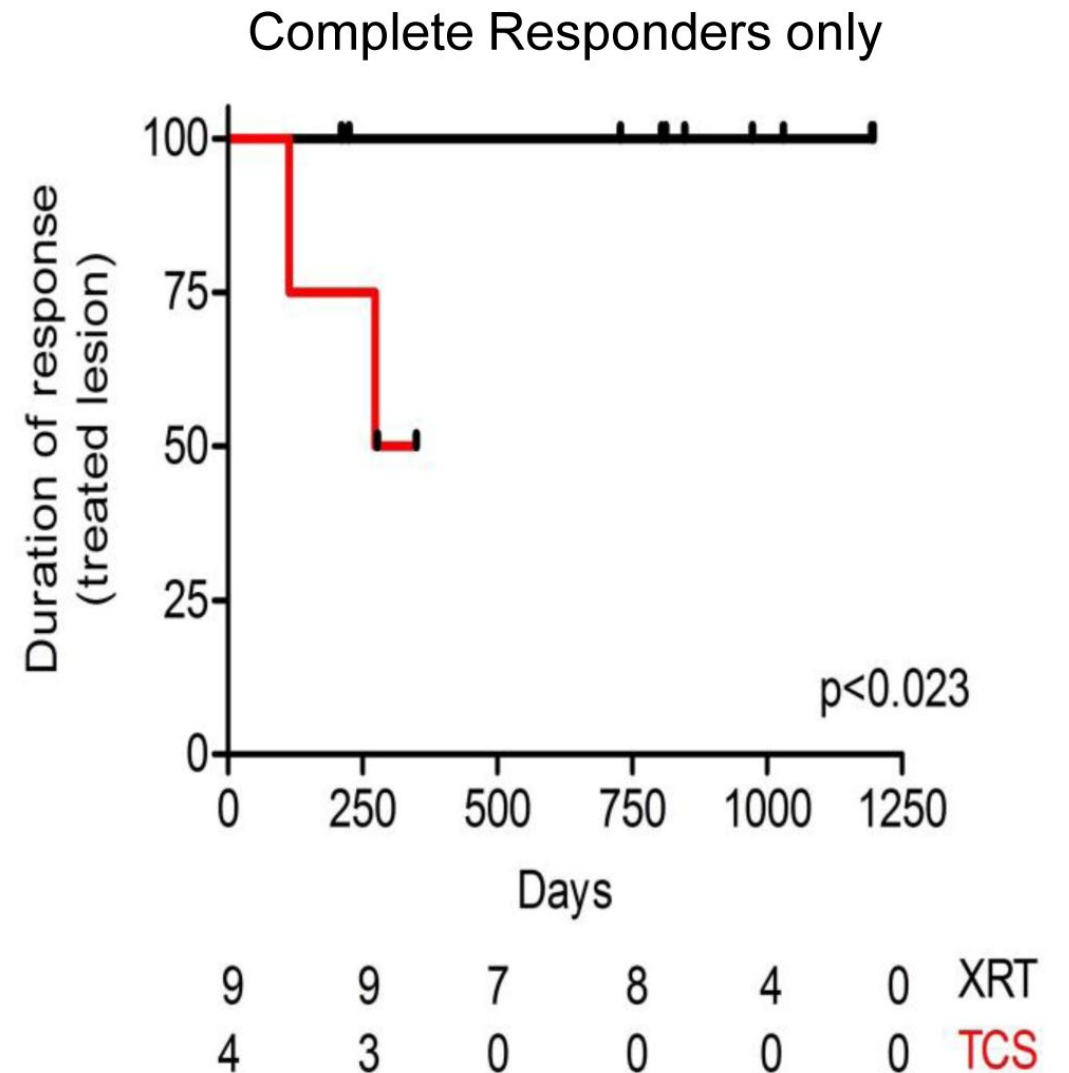
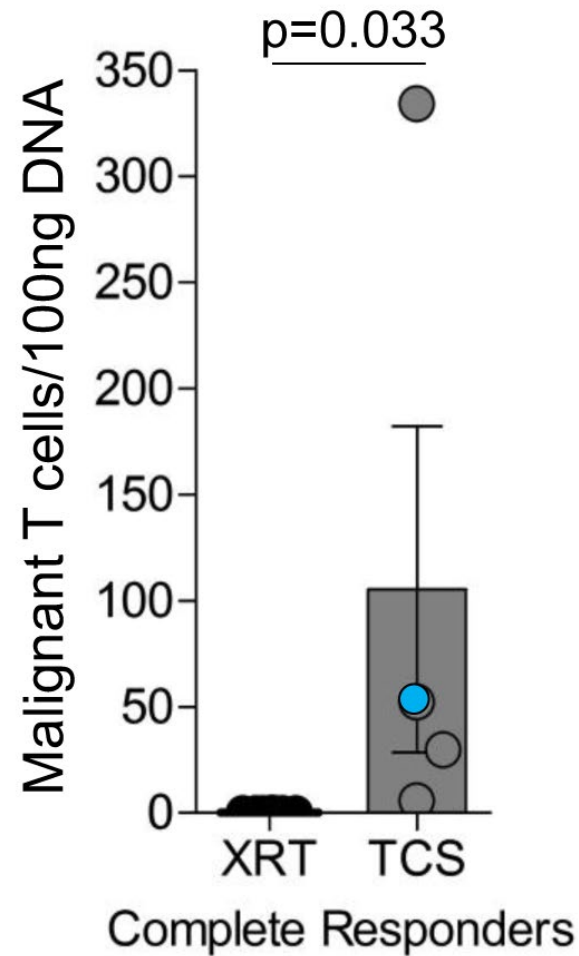
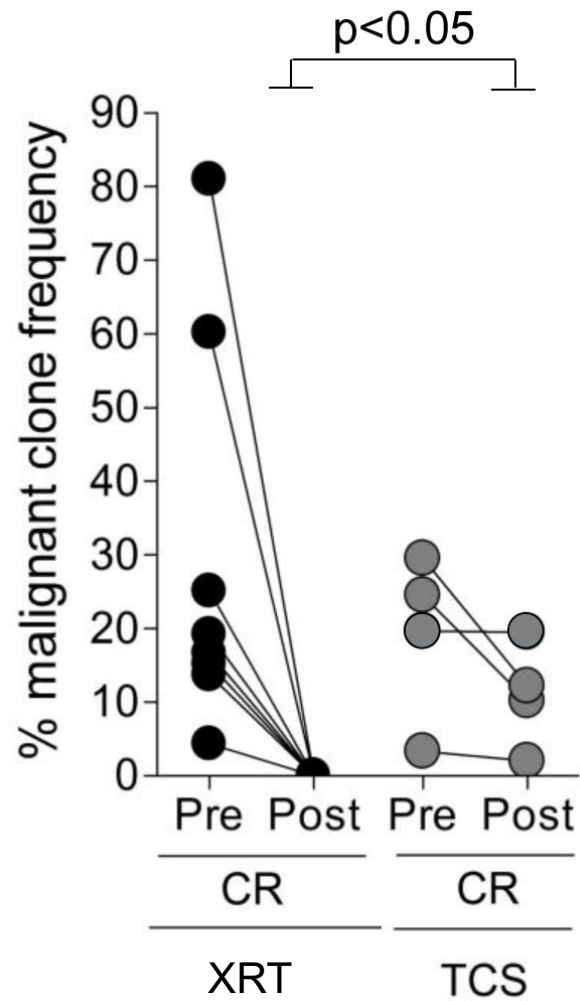
John O'Malley  
MD, PhD

- Class 1 alternating with Class 4 steroids q2weeks (total 12 weeks)

vs.

- Low dose radiation (4 Gy x 2)

# Radiation eradicates clone but topical steroids do not



**BUT....**

**....skin-directed therapy is not for everyone!**

# Currently Available Systemic Treatments (Pivotal publication)

<1980's

1990's

2000-2010

2010-present

Multi-agent  
chemo

Methotrexate

Single agent chemo  
-Gemcitabine (2000)  
-Doxil (2002, 2012)

Pralatrexate (2011)

Interferons

Brentuximab Vedotin (2015)

ECP

*Denileukin Diftitox (1999)\**

Bexarotene (2001)

Pembrolizumab (PII, 2018)

\*taken off market 2014

Alemtuzumab (2003)

Mogamulizumab (2018)

Bortezomib (2007)

Vorinostat (2007)

Romidepsin (2009)

# Systemic therapies recognized by NCCN guidelines for MF/SS

## First-line

- Bexarotene
- Methotrexate
- Interferon alpha/gamma
- Retinoids (acitretin, isotretinoin)

## Second-line\*

- Brentuximab (LCT, CD30+, skin)
  - Pralatrexate (skin)
  - Mogamulizumab (blood)
  - Alemtuzumab (blood)
  - Romidepsin/vorinostat (both)
  - Pembrolizumab (both)
  - Gemcitabine (both)
  - Doxil (both)
- Complete  
Response rates  
~30%

\*May be 1<sup>st</sup> line in select cases

# Oral Bexarotene

RXR agonist-selectively inhibits cell growth and induces apoptosis

Category X

Oral, titratable daily dosing up to 300mg/m<sup>2</sup> (= **300-600mg daily**)

Side effects usually dose dependent

→elevated TG, hypothyroidism (follow Free T4 only), HA, fatigue, neutropenia

- Start Bexarotene 150mg daily → increase by 75mg q2-12 weeks
- Start synthroid and statin in everyone (can be before, at initiation, or after)
- Labs q2 weeks with dose changes, then q3 months
  
- AVOID gemfibrozil (inc. dose of bex): USE omega 3 fatty acids or fenofibrate
- Risk of hypoglycemia with certain diabetes medications





## Systemic therapy have different response across disease compartments (and disease subtypes)

### Skin

- Brentuximab
- Pralatrexate
- Romidepsin

### Blood

- ECP
- Mogamulizumab
- Romidepsin
- Alemtuzumab

### LN

- Brentuximab
- Chemotherapy

# Consider combination therapy when need to escalate therapy in MF/SS (or skin + blood)

## Skin-Directed + Systemic

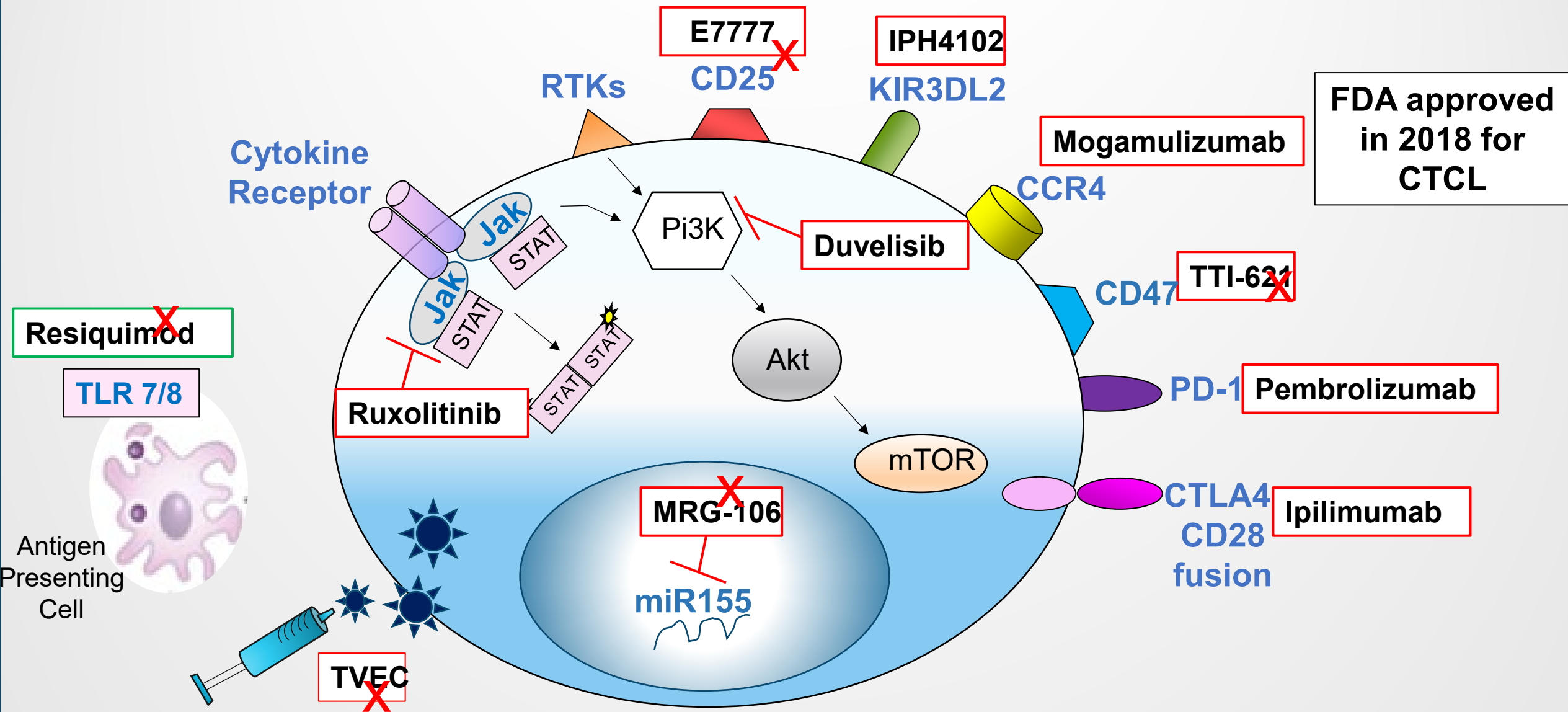
- Phototherapy + Retinoid
- Phototherapy + IFN
- Phototherapy + Photopheresis
- TSEBT + Photopheresis

## Systemic + Systemic

- Retinoid + IFN
- Photopheresis + retinoid
- Photopheresis + IFN
- Photopheresis + retinoid + IFN

**No clear data that any one combination therapy is better**

# Therapies in clinical development for CTCL





# CTCL Management considerations

- CRs are rare: PRs more likely
- Can take 4-24 months to achieve full response
- Maintenance therapy; may return to prior therapies
- Monitor for secondary infections
- Assess and manage pruritus
- Immunosuppression
- Manage long term sequelae of skin TX (NMSC/ MM/ atrophy)
- Body Image and relationship challenges
- QOL compromise



# The Trials and Tribulations of Designing CTCL Interventions

## Progress underway

- Greater number of therapeutic options
- Finely tuned diagnostic measures e.g. IHC/TCR HTS
- Oncopanel/genomic sequencing
- Clinical trial landscape expanding
- US and international CTCL collaborations e.g. USCL/ISCL/EORTC/CLIC/Proclipi/IDEOM
- Patient advocacy via CLF/ LRF/ LSS

## Ongoing struggles

- CTCL is a heterogeneous disease  
→ *One size does not fit all*
- Many of the therapeutic interventions are at risk of extinction e.g. IFN/ PUVA
- Pricy disease to be diagnosed with= \$\$ cost
- HRQOL CTCL- current tools do not capture
- Lingering pandemic environment of care



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute

**Thank you to the SDNP for this kind invitation**  
*Questions and comments welcomed!*