



## C. difficile: Spore to Vegetative to Spore and Everything in Between

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#### Overview of the World of C. difficile Infection



### **The Discussion Ahead**



#### Incidence of CDI in Hong Kong, 2006-2014



Ho et al. *Em Inf Dis* 23(10). 1671-1679

#### Incidence of CDI in Hong Kong, 2006-2014



Ho et al. *Em Inf Dis* 23(10). 1671-1679

#### Incidence of CDI in Hong Kong, 2006-2019



Guo et al. Em Inf Dis 27(12). 3036-3044

### **Risk Factors for C.** difficile Infection

#### Demographics

- Age older than 65
- Female gender
- Immunocompromised
  - Diabetes
  - HIV
  - Chronic Kidney Disease
  - IBD on biologic
- Prior episode of CDI

#### Exposures

- Exposure to antimicrobial agents
- Chemotherapy
- Gastrointestinal surgery
- Acid suppression medications

#### Environment

- Extended stay at a hospital and/or residence in a long-term care facility
- Contact with contaminated environment and/or health worker hand colonization
- Direct contact with a patient with CDI

Cohen SH, et al. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol*. 2010;31(5):431-455; Fekety R, et al. Clin Infect Dis. 1997; 24(3): 324-333 Shakov R, et al. *Am J Infect Control*. 2011;39(3):194-198.



#### What is *Clostridioides difficile*?



#### \* Gram positive

#### **\*** Spore forming

#### \* Anaerobic

\* Rod

## Microbiology



#### Vegetative Form

Survives on moist surfaces for up to 6 hours<sup>1</sup> Susceptible to:<sup>2</sup>

Gastric acid

Antibacterial soaps

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers



#### Spore Form<sup>2,3</sup>

Survives on surfaces for months **Resistant to:** Gastric acid Antibacterial soaps Alcohol-based hand sanitizers Rapidly changes to vegetative form

> Jump RL et al. Antimicrob Agents Chemother. 2007;51(8):2883–2887. Fordtran JS. Proc (Bayl Univ Med Cent). 2006;19(1):3–12. Cohen SH et al. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol. 2010;31(5):431–455.

#### **Pathogenesis and Transmission**







To best understand the modern treatments, we have to understand the pathophysiology of this infection and the targets of those treatments

#### Diversity of Microbiome in Initial and Recurrent CDI



Chang JY et al. J Infect Dis. 2008;197(3):435-8.

#### **Impact of Antibiotics Post-rCDI**

rCDI (%)



rCDI, recurrent *Clostridioides difficile* infection; Tx, treatment. Drekonja et al. *Am J Med.* 2011. 124 (11) 1081-1088.

## Pathophysiology



#### Pathophysiology: Ingestion of C. difficile Spores



#### Effect of Bile Acid Metabolism on C. difficile Life Cycle



Shen et al. PLOS Pathog 2015. 10; 1-7





#### **Diagnostic Tool: Toxin Detection**



*Sensitivity*: Low *Specificity*: Moderate

McDonald et al. Clin Infec Dis 2018. 66 (7) e1-e48

#### **Diagnosis: Organism Detection**



# Noah

- $\diamond$  50 year old man
- - $\diamond$  Hypertension
  - Diabetes

  - $\diamond$  Obesity
- Past Surgical History
  - $\otimes$  Appendectomy

- Presented with the sudden onset of 10-12 liquid bowel movements daily
- Cramping abdominal pains (6/10) relieved with bowel movement
- Subjective fevers
- No recent travel, sick contacts or antimicrobial exposures
- Initial:
  - $\odot$  WBC: 16,000 x 10<sup>3</sup>/mL
  - Cr: 0.9 mg/dL

## Noah

# What would be the most data driven treatment for Noah?



#### Treatment: What are we targeting?



#### Guideline Recommendations for Primary CDI Episode

Recommendation	IDSA/SHEA <sup>1,2</sup>	ESCMID <sup>3</sup>	ACG <sup>4</sup>
Preferred	<b>Fidaxomicin</b> 200 mg PO BID x 10 days	<b>Fidaxomicin</b> 200 mg PO BID x 10 days	Fidaxomicin 200 mg PO BID x 10 days Vancomycin 125 mg PO 4x/day x 10 days
Alternative	Vancomycin 125 mg PO 4x/day x 10 days If no other available agents (nonsevere): Metronidazole 500 mg PO 3x/day x 10-14 days	Vancomycin 125 mg PO 4x/day x 10 days If no other available agents: Metronidazole 500 mg PO 3x/day x 10 days	If no other available agents (nonsevere): Metronidazole 500 mg PO 3x/day x 10 days
Comments	In settings where logistics are not an issue, consider <b>addition of</b> <b>bezlotoxumab</b> in high risk of recurrence	Risk stratify for recurrence with selective use of <b>fidaxomicin</b> in limited access/resources Consider <b>addition of</b> <b>bezlotoxumab</b> in high risk of recurrence	Consider addition of bezlotoxumab in high risk of recurrence Consider FMT on case-by-case basis in severe CDI unresponsive to standard therapy

1. McDonald. Clin Infect Dis. 2018;66:e1. 2. Johnson. Clin Infect Dis. 2021;73:e1029.

<sup>3.</sup> van Prehn. Clin Microbiol Infect. 2021;27:S1. 4. Kelly. Am J Gastroenterol. 2021;116:1124.

#### Tolevamer vs. Metronidazole vs. Vancomycin Clinical Success-Overall Cohort



\*p<0.001, tolevamer (T) vs metronidazole (M) and T vs vancomycin (V) \*\*p=0.020, M vs V

Johnson S, et al. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2014;59:345-54.

## **CDI Antimicrobial Comparison**



#### Fidaxomicin and Vancomycin for Initial C. difficile Infection



Louie et al. N Engl J Med. 2011;364(5):422-431.

#### **CDI** Dysbiosis by Antibiotic in Mice



#### **CDI Antibiotic-associated Recurrence**



\*Difference was statistically significant

1. Louie. NEJM. 2011;364:422. 2. Cornely. Lancet Infect Dis. 2012;12:281. 3. Guery. Lancet Infect Dis. 2018;18:296. 4. Mikamo. J Infect Chemother. 2018;24:744.

# Noah

# What can we use next to treat Noah's recurrence?

#### **2021 IDSA/SHEA Treatment Recommendations for CDI in Adults: First Recurrence**

<b>Clinical Presentation</b>	Recommendation	Comments
	Preferred Fidaxomicin standard or extended dosing	
First Recurrence	Alternative Vancomycin in tapered and pulsed regimen Vancomycin standard dosing	Vancomycin tapered/pulsed example regimen: 125 mg 4x/day x 10-14 days, 2x/day x 7 days, 1x/day x 7 days, then every 2-3 days x 2-8 wk
		Consider if metronidazole was used for treatment of first episode
	Adjunctive	
	<b>Bezlotoxumab 10 mg/kg IV once during administration of SoC antibiotics</b>	May be considered during first episode if other risks for CDI recurrence are present

#### **Extended Pulsed Fidaxomicin vs Vancomycin**



Fidaxomicin (FDX): 200-mg oral tablets, twice daily on days 1–5, then once daily on alternate days on days 7–25 Vancomycin (VAN): 125-mg oral capsules, four times daily on days 1–10

Guery et al. Lancet Infect Dis. 2017;18(3):296-307

#### Vancomycin Taper and Pulse

## Taper and pulse

#### Effectiveness: 83%

(95% CI 69- 94%)

(range 58-100%)

(l<sup>2</sup> = 85%)

# Taper and pulse regimens are superior to:

Taper alone (WPR 83% vs 68%, p<0.0001) Pulse alone (WPR 83% vs 54%, p<0.0004)



Sehgal et al. Expert Rev Anti Infect Ther 2022 20 (4):577-583

## Noah

# What else can be done to minimize Noah's future risks for recurrence?
## Multimodal Approach to Therapy



#### Bezlotoxumab



## **Treatment: What are we doing?**



### **Bezlotoxumab RCT: MODIFY 1 and MODIFY 2**

MODIFY 1



\* ACT+BEZLO vs Pbo: p<0.0001 \*\* BEZLO vs Pbo: p=0.0003 MODIFY 2



% Recurrence

### Efficacy of Bezlotoxumab-Metanalysis

Study name	Statistics for each study					Even	t rate and 95	% CI					
	Event rate	Low er limit	Upper limit	Z-Value	p-Value	Total						Relative weight	Relative weight
Lopez R.S. 2022	0.075	0.029	0.184	-4.818	0.000	4/53	1			1	1	1.94	
Kerr 2019	0.083	0.012	0.413	-2.296	0.022	1/12				<u> </u>		0.48	
Pena 2022	0.107	0.064	0.172	-7.507	0.000	14 / 131						6.54	
Johnson 2022	0.113	0.052	0.230	-4.748	0.000	6/53						2.78	
Perreault 2020	0.115	0.038	0.303	-3.318	0.001	3/26				-		1.39	
Askar 2022	0.130	0.043	0.335	-3.064	0.002	3/23				_		1.37	
Escudero-Sánchez 2020	0.143	0.085	0.231	-5.981	0.000	13/91				0		5.83	
Wilcox/MODIFY II 2017	0.157	0.124	0.196	-12.153	0.000	62/395						27.36	
Hengel 2020	0.159	0.114	0.217	-8.506	0.000	31/195						13.65	
Wilcox/MODIFY12017	0.174	0.139	0.215	-11.612	0.000	67 / 386						28.98	
De La Villa 2023	0.196	0.109	0.327	-4.001	0.000	10/51				-		4.21	
Bradely 2022	0.200	0.050	0.541	-1.754	0.080	2/10						0.84	
Oksi 2019	0.261	0.155	0.405	-3.102	0.002	12/46						4.64	
	0.158	0.140	0.178	-23.135	0.000	228 / 1472			• •				
							-1.00	-0.50	0.00	0.50	1.00		
P-value: 0.00; Q-value	: 12; 1 <sup>2</sup> 05	%; Tau So	quared:	0.00				Favours A		Favours B			

- 13 studies, 2 randomized controlled trials, 11 observational trials
- 2,337 patients in total
- rCDI receiving SOC followed by Bezlo: 15.8%, SOC alone: 28.9%

Mohamed MFH et al. J Clin Gastro 2023. Jul 3

## Lorraine



- - $\otimes$  Hypertension
  - $\otimes$  Diabetes

  - ◊ C. difficile infection (3/22)
- Past Surgical History
  - $\otimes$  Appendectomy

## Lorraine, May 2023



- Presented in 5/23 with the sudden onset of 6-8 liquid bowel movements daily
- Cramping abdominal pains (3/10), diffuse and relieved with bowel movement
- Occasional sweats
- No recent travel, sick contacts or antimicrobial exposures
- Initial:
  - ♦ WBC: 11,000 x 10<sup>3</sup>/mL
  - $\diamond$  Cr: 1.1 mg/dL

## Lorraine, June 2023



- Treated with Vancomycin 125 mg PO Qid for 14-days and responds
- 4 weeks later she has the return of her abdominal pains with 6-9 liquid stools per day. She calls her primary care MD and is referred to your office for further assessment

Initial:

- ◊ WBC: 9,000 x 10<sup>3</sup>/mL
- $\odot$  Cr: 0.9 mg/dL

### Lorraine, June 2023



What would be the best treatment for Lorraine's recurrence?

Is there anything we can do in the future to prevent another recurrence?

## Multimodal Approach to Therapy



Bezlotoxumab Fecal Microbiota Transplantation







## **Treatment: What are we doing?**



#### **Guideline Recommendations: FMT for Recurrent CDI**

	IDSA/SHEA <sup>1,2</sup>	ESCMID <sup>3</sup>	ACG <sup>4</sup>
Recommendation	FMT may be used for patients experiencing a 2nd or subsequent CDI recurrence	FMT after SOC antibiotics is an option for a <b>2nd or further CDI recurrence</b>	Recommend FMT for patients experiencing a 2nd or further CDI recurrence
Commonts	Appropriate antibiotic treatment for <b>at least 2 recurrences (3rd</b>	An adequate multidisciplinary risk assessment and surgical consult is mandatory and FMT products	Recommend delivery of FMT by colonoscopy or capsules, or enema if other methods are unavailable
Comments	<b>episode)</b> should be tried prior to offering FMT	should be available with standardized preparation and screening	Suggest repeating FMT if patient experiences a recurrence within 8 wk of initial FMT

McDonald. Clin Infect Dis. 2018;66:e1. 2. Johnson. Clin Infect Dis. 2021;73:e1029.
 van Prehn. Clin Microbiol Infect. 2021;27:S1. 4. Kelly. Am J Gastroenterol. 2021;116:1124.

## **Resolution of rCDI with FMT/MRT**

#### **All Clinical Trials** (n=19 trials, 18 studies)



Efficacy: 78% (95% CI: 71-85%)

Van Nood 2013 Cammarota 2015 Kelly 2016 Hota 2017 Hvas 2019 McGovern 2021





523 patients Efficacy: 72% (95% CI: 60-82%)

Tariq et al. Ther Adv Gastro 2023 Vol 16:1-9

### **Acronyms Galore**



♦ LBP: Live biotherapeutic product

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening	<u>í</u>	
Sample Screening		
Good		
Manufacturing		
Procedure		
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data		
Ease of access		

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening	<u>é</u>	
Sample Screening	?	
Good Manufacturing Procedure		
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data		
Ease of access		

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening		
Sample Screening	?	
Good Manufacturing Procedure	?	
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data		
Ease of access		

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening		
Sample Screening	?	
Good Manufacturing Procedure	?	<u>i</u>
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data		
Ease of access		

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening		
Sample Screening	?	
Good Manufacturing Procedure	?	
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data	<u>þ</u>	
Ease of access		

	FMT	LBP
Donor Screening		
Sample Screening	?	
Good Manufacturing Procedure	?	
Clinical Trial Data		
Safety Data	<u>þ</u>	
Ease of access	?	<u>j</u>

#### Episodes of C. difficile Infection

#### **Risks of Recurrence of CDI**



- ✓ More episodes of CDI, more likely to recur in the future
- ✓ Does that translate to it being more challenging to restore the microbiota?
- ✓ Is earlier restoration of the microbiota better?

Pépin et al. *Clin Infect Dis.* 2005;40:1591–7 McFarland et al. *Am J Gastroenterol.* 2002;97:1769–75 McDonald et al. *Clin Infec Dis 2018. 66* (7) *e1-e48* 

# **Diagnosis:** Why is this Important?



Sensitivity: Low Specificity: Moderate

- EIA detects toxin but has challenges with false negative tests
- PCR accurately detects the genes coding for the toxins, but not toxin production
- ✓ PCR is the most commonly used test in the United States, accounting for ~80% of all tests
- Issue: PCR frequently over-diagnoses CDI and, if not combined with other clinical considerations, can result in patients with other diagnoses being treated and not responding

# Duration of Standard of Care Antimicrobial

#### Fidaxomicin Vancomycin Metronidazole



Vegetative phase

✓ Longer is not necessarily better

- ✓ Optimal duration prior to intervention is unclear, but standard treatment of at least 10 days is believe to be minimum
- ✓ Goal: Suppress the vegetative phase sufficiently to control symptoms and offer either the body the opportunity to replenish the microbiota to suppress the spore phase or restore the microbiota rapidly to prevent recurrence

# Washout Period



✓ Time from completion of standard of care antimicrobial to administration of LBP

- ✓ Minimize the impact of the standard of care antimicrobial on the administrated microbial species
- ✓ Goal: Clear as much of the antimicrobial from the patients system but also don't offer *C. difficile* the opportunity to re-germinate and recur

✓ Optimal timing unclear





# Fecal Microbiota Live-JSLM (Rebyota<sup>TM</sup>, RBL)

- Single-dose, microbiota-based live biotherapeutic agent
- Rectally administered
- 150 mL of therapeutic material
- $10^7$  microbes per mL or  $15 \ge 10^8$  microbes per treatment
- Broad consortium
- A proprietary manufacturing process preserves diverse spore-forming and non-spore-forming bacteria, including *Bacteroides*



Orenstein R et al. *Clin Infect Dis.* 2016;62:596-602. Blount KF et al. *Open Forum Infect Dis.* 2019;6:ofz095 Ray A, Jones C. *Future Microbiol.* 2016;11:611-616.

## **PUNCH-CD3:** Phase 3 Trial Design



### **PUNCH-CD3: Phase 3 RBL Superior to Placebo**



# **RBL PUNCHCD3: Microbiota Response**

#### **RBL Treated Responders**

#### **Placebo Treated Responders**



## **RBL Restoration of Bile Salt Milieu**



# **RBL Open Label Study**

#### **Treatment Success**



Week 8

Week 24

Khanna et al. ACG 2022 Oral Presentation

# How Do I do it...RBL





# Fecal Microbiota Spores, Live-BRPK (Vowst<sup>TM</sup>, VOS)

- Microbiota-based live biotherapeutic agent administered with 4 capsules daily over 3 days
- Orally administered
- 3 x 10<sup>7</sup> CFU per full treatment
- Narrow consortium
- A proprietary manufacturing process removes most fungi, parasites, viruses and non-spore forming bacteria resulting in predominantly Firmicutes spores



# **ECOSPOR-III: Phase 3 Trial Design**



# **ECOSPOR-III: Phase 3 VOS superior to Placebo**

Sustained Clinical Response, 8 weeks



# **Compositional and Metabolomic Changes Following VOS vs. Placebo**



#### **Concentration of Secondary Bile Acids**



# ECOSPOR IV: Open Label Study


# How I do it...VOS

#### **Before Dosing**

- Finish Antimicrobials for CDI 2-4 days prior to starting VOS
- The day prior, or at least 8 hours prior to administering the first dose, patient should drink 10 oz of magnesium citrate.
  - For those with renal impairment consider 250 mL of polyethylene glycol

#### Dosing

- Taken on an empty stomach prior to the first meal of the day
- 4 capsules administered daily for 3 days
- When not being taken, capsules are heat stable and can be left out until administered



### Lorraine, June 2023



Lorraine received 10-days of vancomycin followed by an LBP and she now remains symptom free

## **Treatment Algorithm**

> 2 Risk Factors

