



Introduction to the translational Research platform RegaVir

Robert Snoeck & Graciela Andrei

Leuven, February 22, 2022



RegaVir: Research Group for Antiviral Resistance



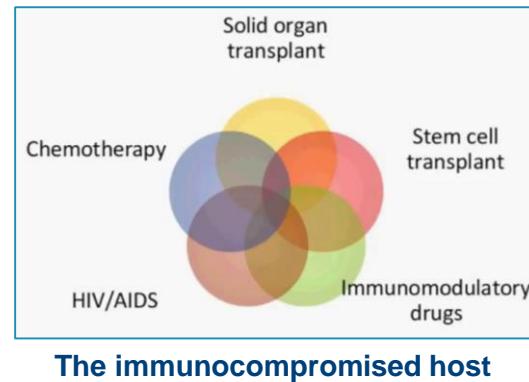
AIMS

- Provide rapid **genotyping and/or phenotyping** of clinical isolates of **herpesviruses** recovered from **immunocompromised patients** who **fail antiviral therapy** to:
 - determine viral drug-resistance as reason for failure of therapy
 - optimize antiviral therapy
 - avoid drug toxicity
 - improve patient care
 - reduce costs of antiviral treatment
- Get insights into **herpesvirus diversity & evolution** in the immunocompromised host

Immunocompromised (IC) patients

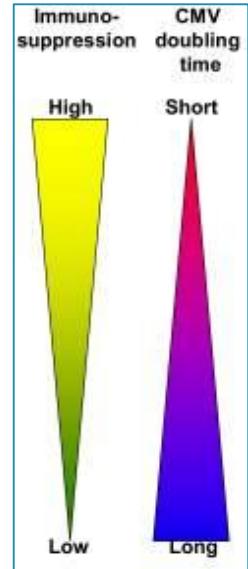
- **Increasing number**

- HIV/AIDS
- Solid organ transplant (SOT) recipients
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) recipients
- Chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy
- Immunomodulatory drugs
- Congenital immunodeficiency's



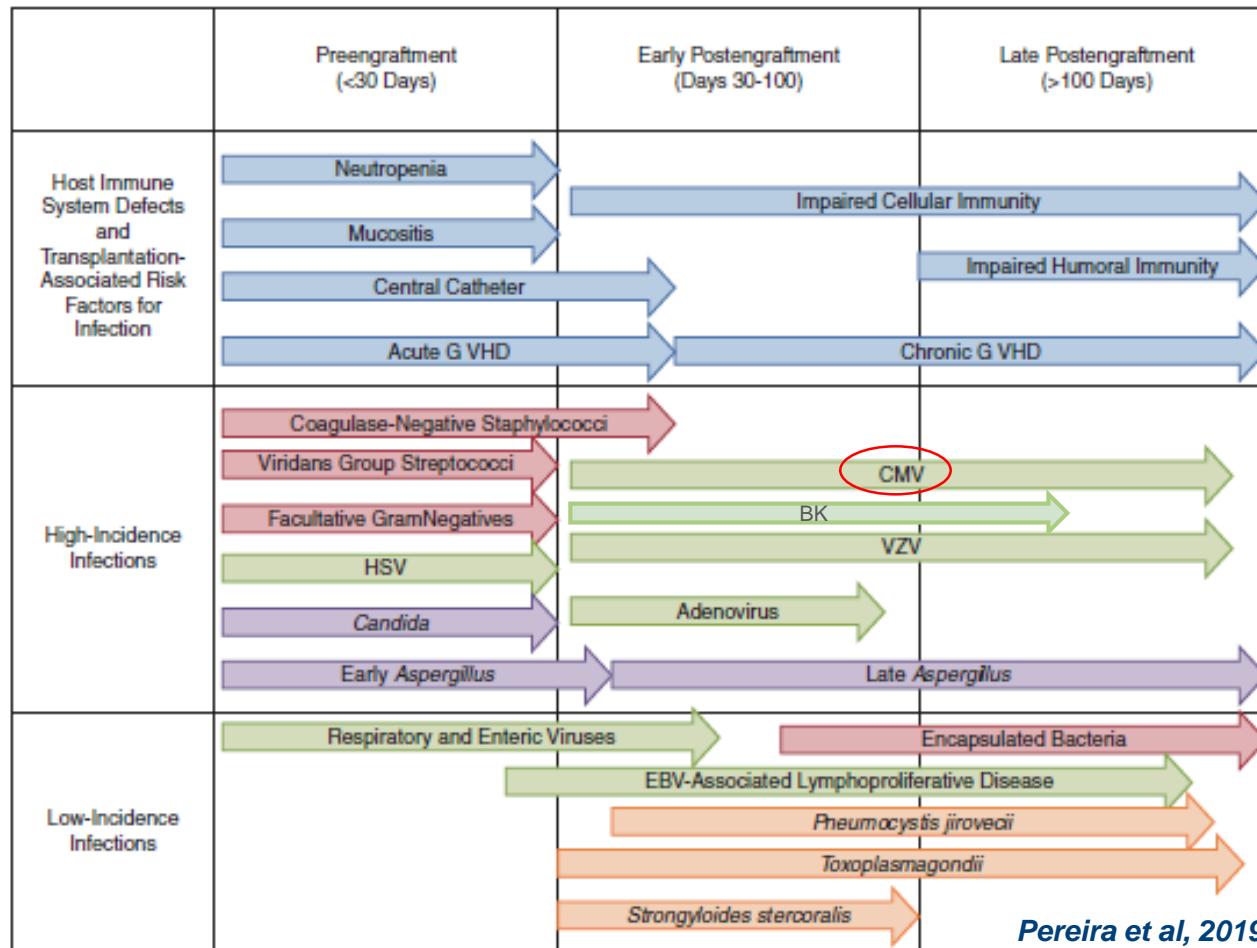
Immunocompromised (IC) patients

- More susceptible to viral infection and disease
 - Higher risk to develop persistent infection
 - More likely to have multiple infections
 - May develop unusual clinical manifestations which are not seen in immunocompetent patients
-
- All human herpesviruses (HHV) can lead to severe disease among IC patients, due to primary infection, reactivation or re-infection



Boeckh & Ljungman, 2009

Timeline of common post-transplant infections



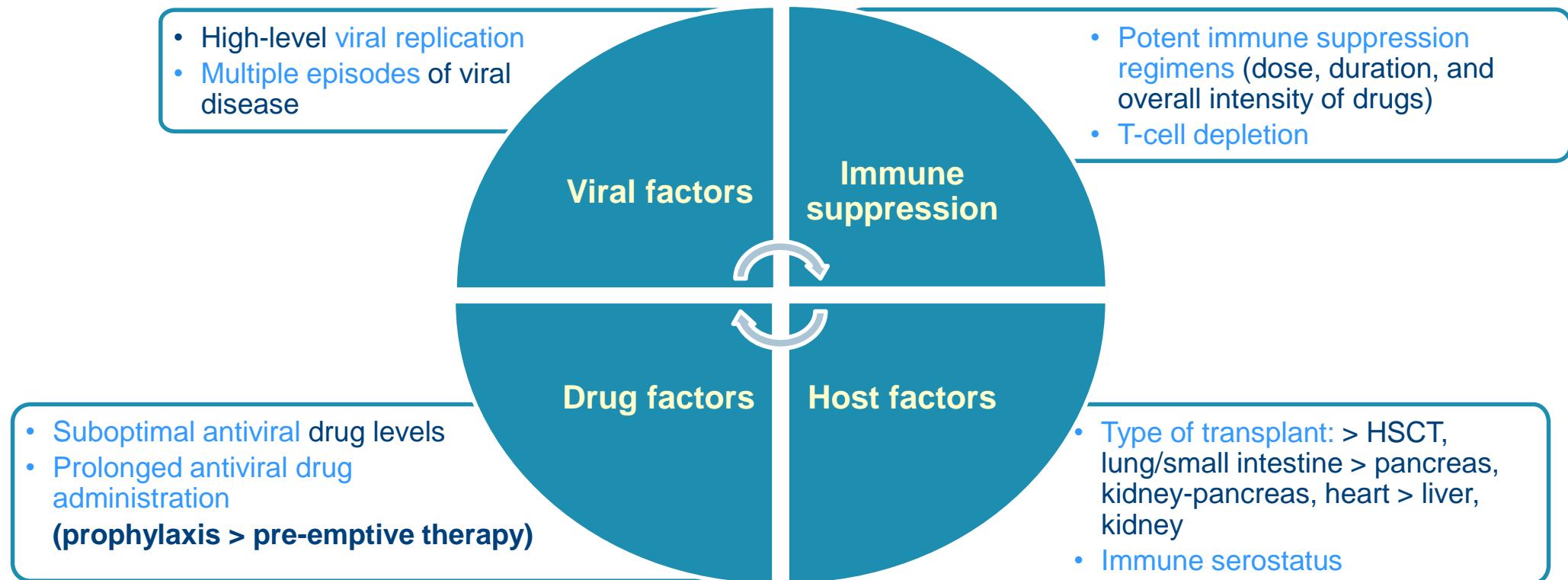
CMV: Most significant threat to patient and graft health

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Impact of HCMV on transplant outcomes

Direct effects	Indirect effects
CMV syndrome	Acute allograft rejection
Tissue-invasive CMV disease <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gastrointestinal disease- Pneumonitis- Hepatitis- CNS disease- Retinitis- Nephritis- Pancreatitis- Myocarditis	Chronic allograft rejection
Mortality	Opportunistic and other infections <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fungal superinfection- Bacterial superinfection- EBV and PTLD- Hepatitis C recurrence- Other viruses (HHV-6, HHV-7)
	New onset diabetes mellitus
	Malignancies
	Thrombosis
	Mortality

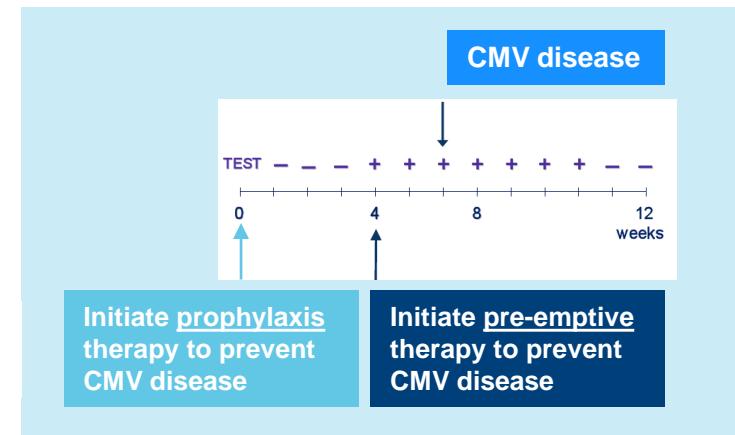
Risk factors for herpesvirus drug-resistance



Risk category	Type	Donor/Recipient Immune status
High	Primary infection	D+ /R-
Intermediate	Reactivation	D- /R+
Intermediate	Superinfection	D+ /R+
Low	Risk with exposure	D- /R-

Optimal care of transplant recipients is fundamental

- No universal agreement among transplant centers regarding:
 - Prophylaxis *versus* preemptive antiviral therapy



- < indirect effects
- Ease of administration

- < drug-exposure → < toxicity & costs
- < risk of resistance
- < late-onset CMV disease (may allow development of cell-mediated immune responses)

- Optimal duration of antiviral treatment (may vary among subpopulations (e.g. D+/R- *versus* D-/R+))

Herpesvirus drug-resistance

- Associated with progressive disease and treatment failure: cause significant morbidity and mortality
- Prevalence
 - Immunocompetent patients
Isolation of resistant isolates is <<1%
EXCEPTION: infection of immune-privileged sites!
 - Immunocompromised patients
HCMV: 1% to 13% among SOT recipients (> lung, small bowel transplants)
HSV: 4.3 to 14 % among all immunocompromised groups (up to 36% in HSCT patients)

Antiviral agents for the management of HSV and VZV infections

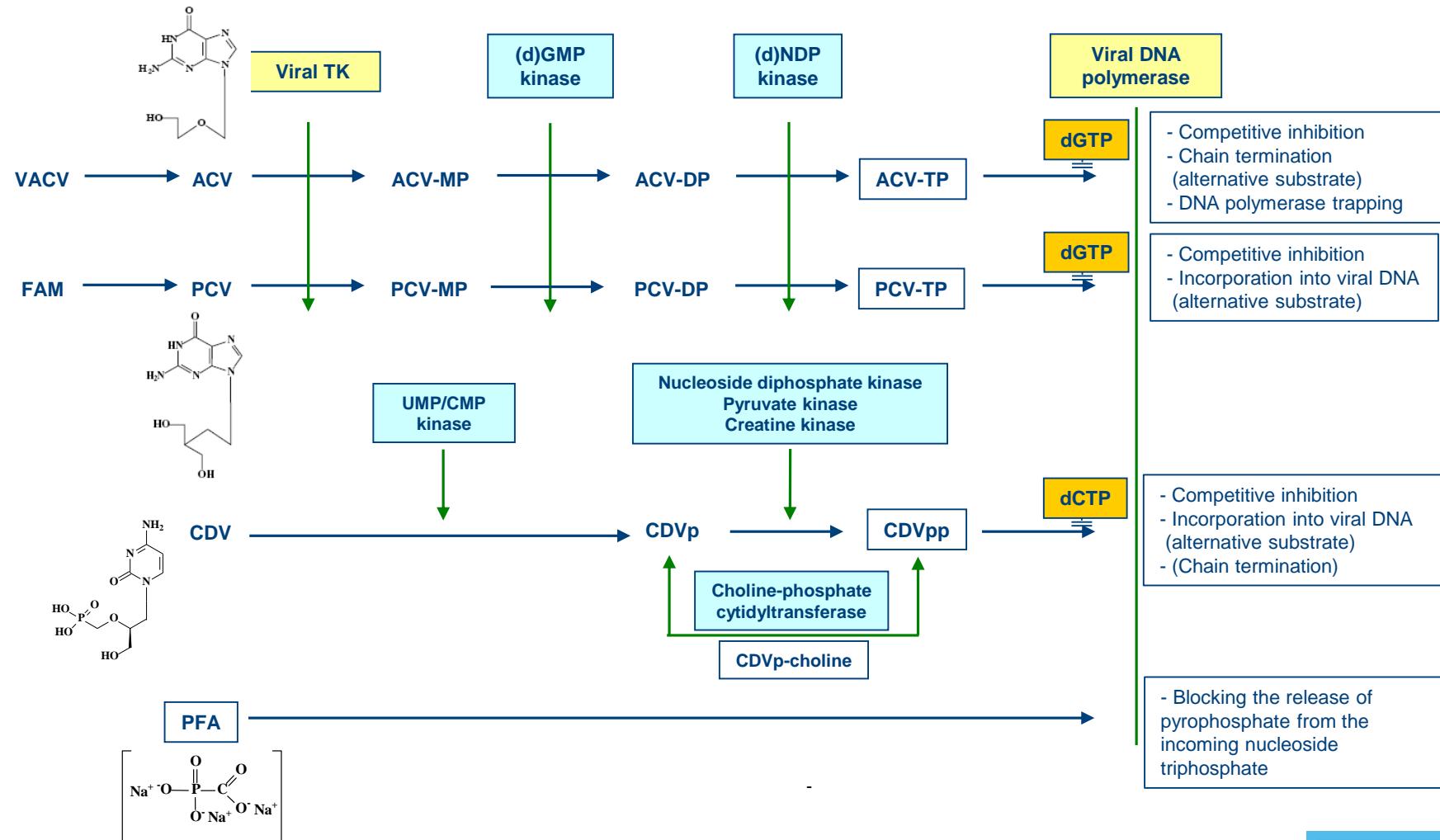
Anti-herpesvirus drug	Trade name	Indication	Route of administration
Acyclovir	Zovirax®	HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV	Oral, iv, topical
Valacyclovir (VACV)	Valtrex®, Zelitrex®	HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV	Oral
Penciclovir (PCV)	Vectavir®, Denavir®	HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV	Topical
Famciclovir (FAM)	Famvir®	HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV	Oral
Brivudine (BVDU)	Zostex®, Zerpex®	HSV-1, VZV	Oral
Ganciclovir (GCV)	Cytovene®, Cymevene®	HCMV	Oral, iv, intravitreal
Valganciclovir (VGCV)	Valacyte®	HCMV	Oral
Cidofovir	Vistide®	HCMV	iv
Foscarnet (PFA)	Foscavir®	HCMV, HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV	iv, intravitreal

Common target: viral DNA polymerase

Licensed anti-herpesvirus drugs

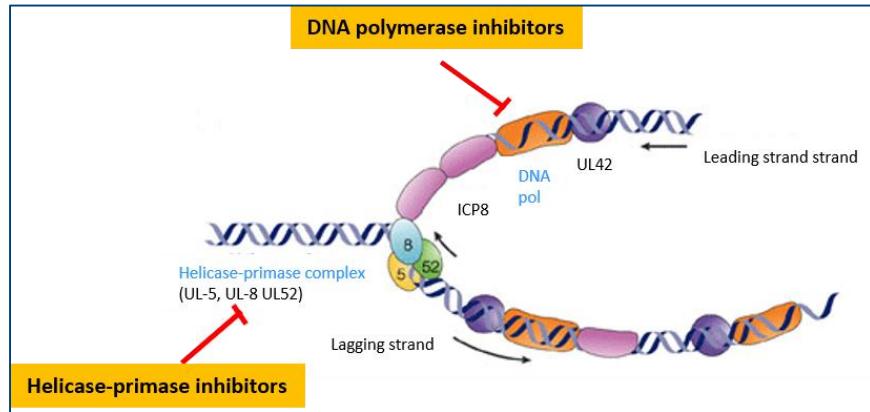
	DNA polymerase inhibitors					Terminase inhibitor	UL97 PK inhibitor
	Acyclovir Valacyclovir	Penciclovir Famciclovir	Ganciclovir Valganciclovir	Cidofovir	Foscarnet	Letermovir	Maribavir
HSV-1 (HHV-1)	1 st line	approved		resistance	resistance		
HSV-2 (HHV-2)	1 st line	approved		resistance	resistance		
VZV (HHV-3)	1 st line	approved		resistance	resistance		
EBV (HHV-4)			off-label	off-label	off-label		
HCMV (HHV-5)			1 st line	approved	approved	approved for prophylaxis	orphan Drug Designation
HHV-6A			off-label	off-label	off-label		
HHV-6B			off-label	off-label	off-label		
HHV-7			off-label	off-label	off-label		
KSHV (HHV-8)			off-label	off-label	off-label		

Mechanism of action of anti-HSV and anti-VZV agents

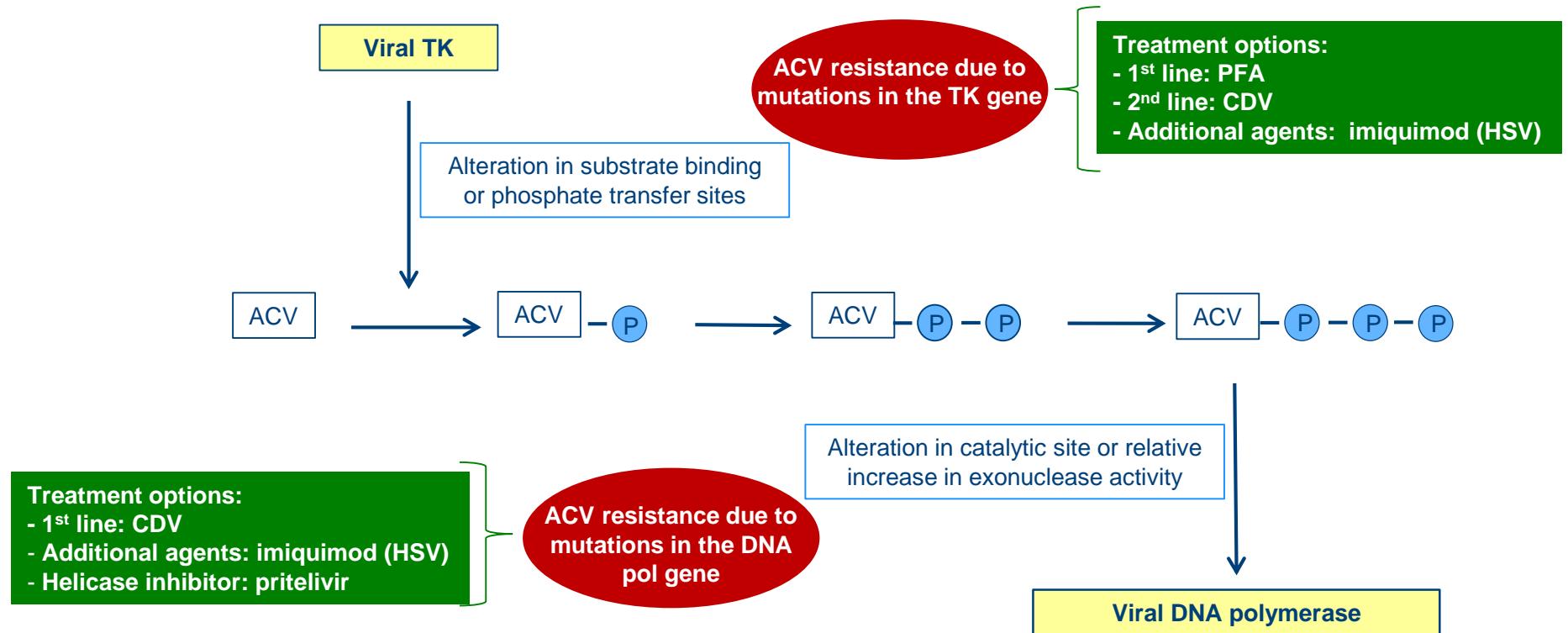


Therapy of HSV & VZV

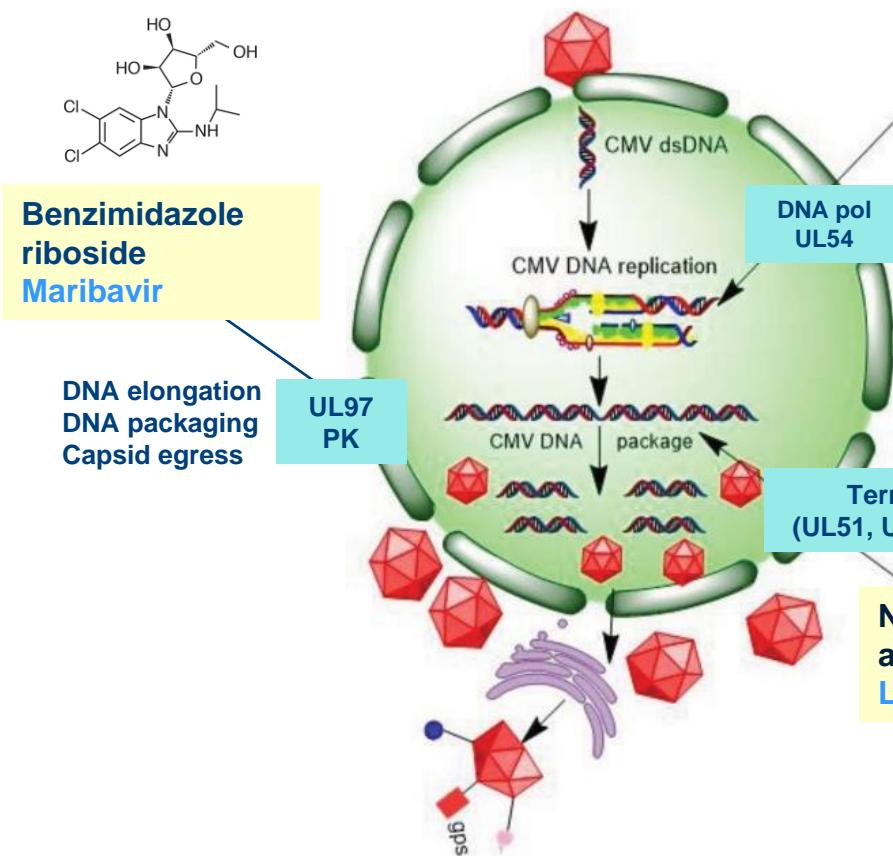
- Novel anti-herpesvirus drugs
 - Helicase-primase inhibitors
 - Amenavir (VZV)
 - Pritelivir (HSV)



Mechanisms of drug-resistance in HSV and VZV



Anti-HCMV drugs

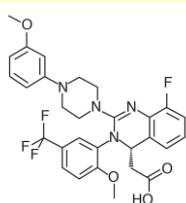
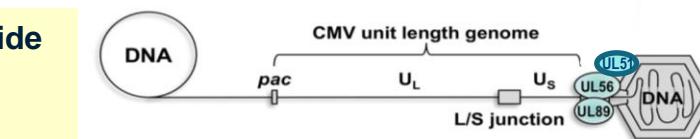
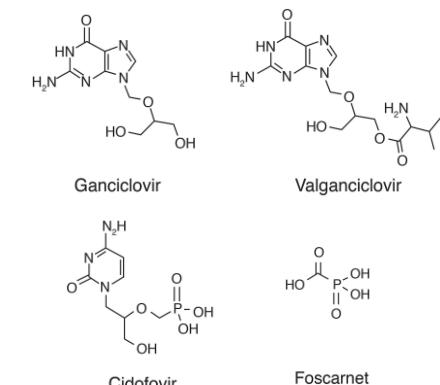


Nucleoside analogues
Ganciclovir (GCV) / valgancyclovir (VGCV)

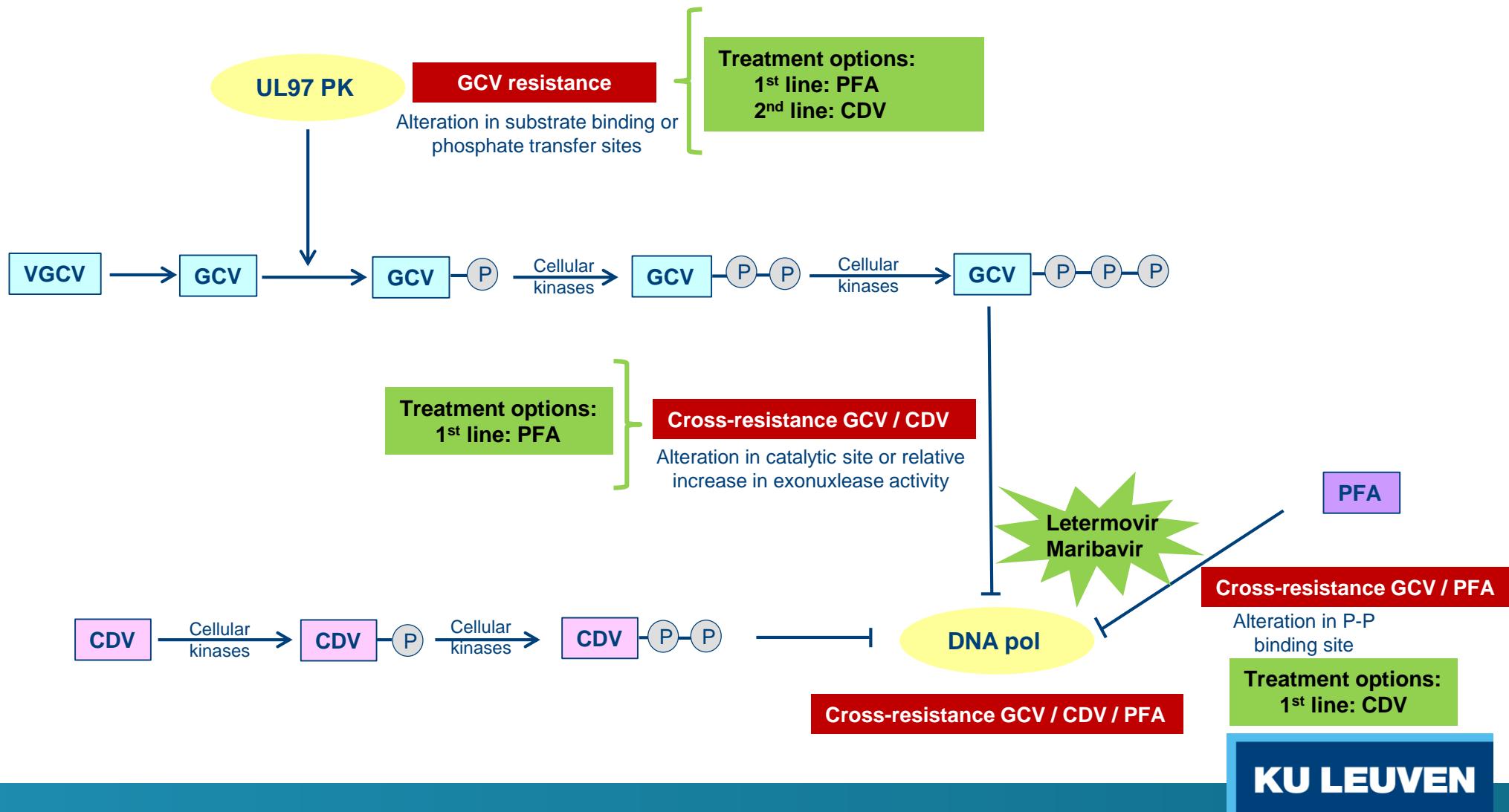
Nucleotide analogues
Cidofovir (CDV)

Pyrophosphate analogues
Foscarnet (PFA)

Viral genome replication



Mechanisms of drug-resistance in HCMV



Why treatment with antiviral agents may lead to clinical failure?

- Poor drug-compliance
- Pharmacological factors:
 - poor drug absorption
 - incorrect dosage
- **Viral drug-resistance**

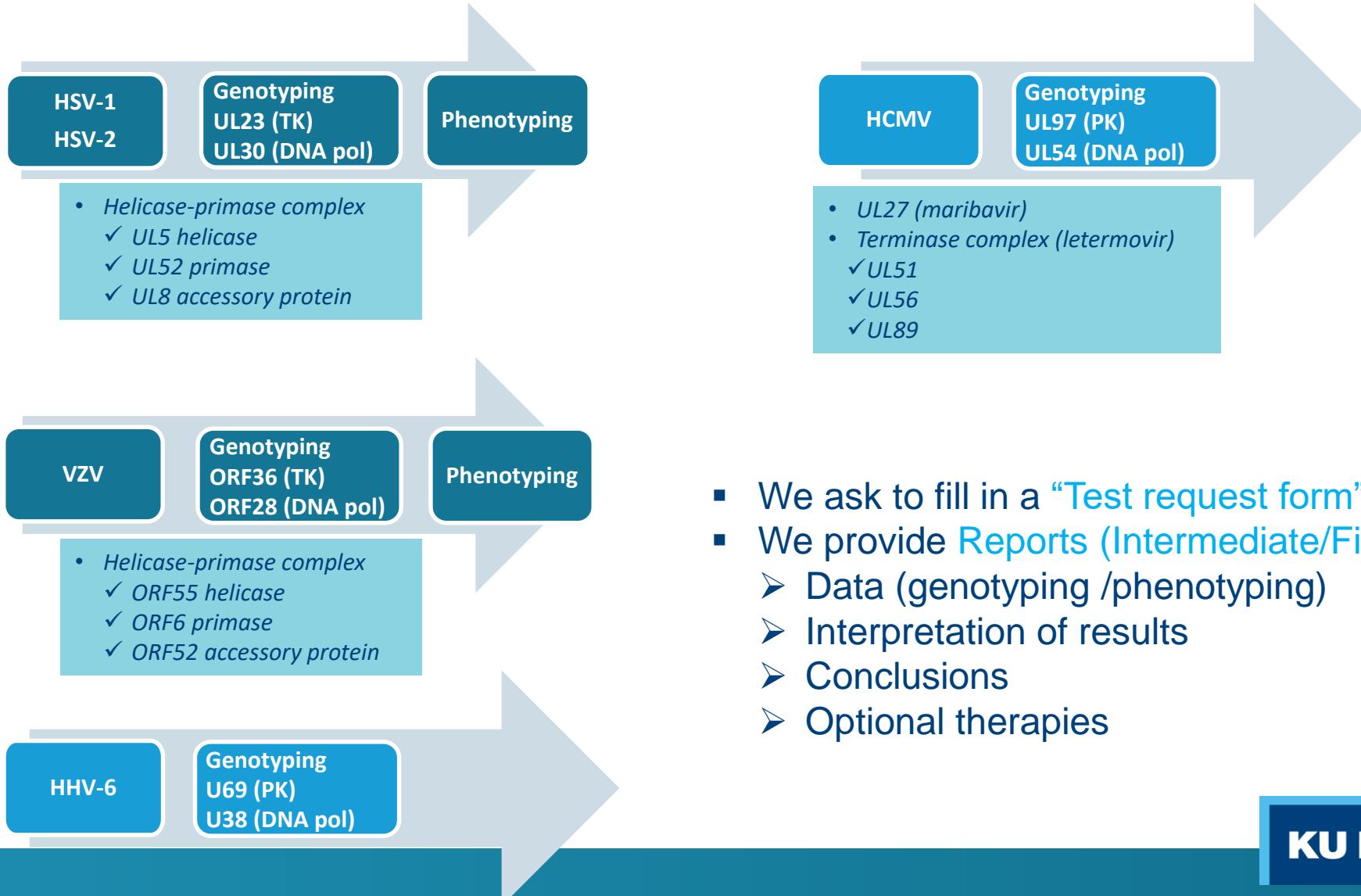
→ Clinical drug-resistance ≠ virological drug-resistance

Fundamental to evaluate virological drug-resistance

Herpesviruses drug-resistance

- Virologists have to provide clinicians with **fast and reproducible drug-resistance diagnosis**
- There is a **restricted number of active antivirals** against herpesviruses and a limited number of viral targets
→ limited options for alternative treatments in case of emergence of resistant viruses in IC patients
- In case of clinical evidence of resistance to the current available treatments, **monitoring of emergence of resistant viruses** is mandatory to **adjust antiviral therapy**

Antiviral resistance tests available at RegaVir





TEST REQUEST FORM FOR EVALUATION OF HERPESVIRUS DRUG-RESISTANCE

Patient identification

Name (Last, First):			
Date of birth: ___ / ___ / ___	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Address:			

Patient clinical information

Underlying disease :	<input type="checkbox"/> Transplant	<input type="checkbox"/> HIV	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____		
Transplantation:	<input type="checkbox"/> HSCT	<input type="checkbox"/> kidney	<input type="checkbox"/> liver	<input type="checkbox"/> heart	<input type="checkbox"/> lung	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify): _____
Transplantation date:	___ / ___ / ___					
Immunosuppressive treatment:						
Additional information:						

Clinical manifestations of viral infection

Disease and/or type of lesion:
Date of relapse and/or emergence of lesions: ___ / ___ / ___
Localization:
Additional information:

Antiviral treatment

Type of treatment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prophylactic	<input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic
Antiviral drug:	<input type="checkbox"/> Acyclovir (Zovirax) <input type="checkbox"/> Valacyclovir (Zelitrex) <input type="checkbox"/> Ganciclovir (Cymevene) <input type="checkbox"/> Valganclovir (Valcyte) <input type="checkbox"/> Foscarnet (Foscavir) <input type="checkbox"/> Cidofovir (Vistide) <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Posology:		
Duration:	___ / ___ / ___	
Additional information:		

Specimen information

Identification	
Date collected:	___ / ___ / ___
Type:	
Viral load:	
Additional information:	

Required pattern of antiviral resistance

Virus	<input type="checkbox"/> Human cytomegalovirus
	<input type="checkbox"/> Herpes simplex virus
	<input type="checkbox"/> Varicella-zoster virus
	<input type="checkbox"/> Human herpesvirus 6 (HHV-6)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____

Requesting doctor(s) / Laboratory

Name (Last, First) e-mail Hospital Department Address		
	Tel / Fax	Fax:
Date		
___ / ___ / ___		

Please, use only one form for each requested test and send the sample to the attention of Prof. Dr. Robert Snoeck to the address below:

For requests and complaints, please contact Prof. Dr. Robert Snoeck:

Prof. Dr Robert Snoeck

Rega Institute

Herestraat 49 – box 1030

3000 Leuven

Tel. 00-32-16-32.15.79

Fax. 00-32-16-33.00.26

Email: robert.snoeck@kuleuven.be

Rega Institute <http://rega.kuleuven.be/>

RegaVir <http://www.regavir.org/>

Type	Amount and preservation for shipment
Whole Blood	3 to 5 ml collected in EDTA tube, do not freeze
Bone Marrow	1 ml minimum, collected in EDTA tube, do not freeze
Bronchial Lavage / Bronchial Wash	1 to 3 ml, collected in sterile screw-cap tube
CSF	1 ml minimum, submitted in sterile screw-cap tube
Pleural Fluid	1 ml submitted in sterile screw-cap tube
Tissue	place fresh biopsy in a sterile screw-cap tube, add a small amount of saline to keep moist
Upper Respiratory Aspirate NP aspirate, nasal aspirate, tracheal aspirate, etc.	instill 1 to 2 ml sterile saline into desired location and gently aspirate contents, place collected fluid into sterile screw-cap tube
Swab NP swab, throat swab, etc.	swab the desired location with sterile flexible swab, preferably a flocked swab, place the swab into 1 to 2 ml sterile saline or viral transport media in sterile screw-cap tube do not use calcium alginate swab or wood shafted swab
Urine	5 to 10 ml sample collected in a sterile urinalysis container transfer to a 15 ml sterile screw-cap tube
Vitreous Fluid	place collected vitreous fluid into small sterile screw-cap tube
Viral Culture	culture supernatant or infected cells

Instructions for shipping samples

- Optimally, **pretreatment or early treatment samples** will enhance the diagnosis → provision of such samples is recommended
- All specimens must be labeled with the **patient's name and collection date**.
- A **RegaVir Test Request Form** must accompany each specimen.
- Please use a **separate Test Request Form** for each specimen when sending **multiple specimens**.
- The name and address of the **Requesting Doctor(s) / Laboratory** must be provided on the package.

Instructions for shipping samples

- **IMPORTANT**
- After sample collection, please store the specimens a.s.a.p. cooled (max. 4°C) and **always ship refrigerated.**
- Longer storage on room temperature diminishes successful genotyping analysis.
- Please, send **recent and fresh samples.**

Results provided by RegaVir

- Results on **genotyping** are provided as gene mutations associated with antiviral resistance or genetic polymorphism.
- Results on **phenotyping** are expressed as **EC₅₀** values (50% effective concentration) for each compound not only for the patient sample but also for the corresponding reference laboratory strains.
- Additionally, an interpretation of the results, conclusions and guidelines for treatment are included in the reports.



www.regavir.org

UZ
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Translational Research Project
REsearch Group for AntiViral Resistance

Initially founded by the Belgium National Cancer Plan

LEUVEN

FINAL REPORT HCMV GENOTYPING RV-XXX

TEST REQUEST: Antiviral resistance for human cytomegalovirus (HCMV)

TEST PERFORMED AT: Rega Institute for Medical Research (Laboratory of Virology and Chemotherapy, and Laboratory of Immunobiology)

DATE SAMPLE RECEIVED BY REGAVIR:

REPORT DATE:

Patient identification	Name (Last, First): XXXX		
	Date of birth:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
	Identification number:		
	Address:		

Patient clinical information	Disease: •				
	Antiviral treatment received previously •				
	Immunosuppressive treatment:				
	Additional information: Previous sample from this patient:				
	Original Identification	RegaVir Identification	Date	Type	Additional information
XXXX	XXX	XXX	Blood EDTA	CMV Log 5.33 CMV IU/ml, 211,565 CMV IU/ml <i>UL97: A594V (GCV-R) - heterogeneous population UL54 wild-type</i>	

Specimen information				
Original Identification	RegaVir Identification	Date	Type	Additional information
EX-XXXX	RV-2438	XXX	XXX	

Doctor(s)	Katrien Lagrou / Claeys Eveline / Laurent Godinas			
e-mail	katrien.lagrou@uz.kuleuven.be; lag.ua@uzleuven.be laboratoriumgeneeskunde@uzleuven.be; eveline.claeys@uzleuven.be;			

Hospital	UZ Leuven
Department	Laboratoriumgeneeskunde - Pneumologie
Address	Herestraat 49, 3000 Leuven
Telephone	Tel: 016 34 70 00 (Laboratoriumgeneeskunde) – 016 34 09 50 (Pneumologie)
Fax	Fax: 016 34 70 10

TESTS

- 1) Genotyping of UL97 (protein kinase responsible for ganciclovir phosphorylation)
- 2) Genotyping of UL54 (viral DNA polymerase)
- 3) Genotyping of UL51, UL56 and UL89 (terminase complex)

PROTOCOL

- 1) Isolation of viral DNA from the sample
- 2) Amplification of the UL97 (protein kinase), UL54 (DNA polymerase), and UL51, UL56, and UL89 (terminase complex) genes by PCR
- 3) Direct sequencing of the UL97, UL54, UL51, UL56, and UL89 genes
- 4) Sequence alignment (derived sequences of patient isolate were aligned with the strain AD-169 reference sequence)

RESULTS HCMV genotyping: RV-xxxx (EX-XXX) – XXX

Sample	Amino acid changes in UL97 protein kinase (707 amino acids) Partial sequence (amino acids 337-707)	
	Related to genetic polymorphism (inter-strain variability)	Known to be associated with drug-resistance
RV-XXX	None	A594V_mix population of wild-type and mutant virus Confirmed by two independent PCR's

Sample	Amino acid changes in UL54 (DNA polymerase) (1242 amino acids) Partial sequence (amino acids 263-1091)	
	Related to genetic polymorphism (inter-strain variability)	Known to be associated with drug-resistance
RV-XXX	A885T P887S S897L N898D	None (all positions could be verified)

CONCLUSIONS HCMV genotyping: RV-xxxx (EX-XXX) – xxx

- Similar to a previous sample from this patient (i.e. RV-XXX), the UL97 protein kinase A594V change was detected as a heterogeneous population in the RV-XXX sample. This mutation is known to confer (val)ganciclovir resistance.
- Mutations in the DNA polymerase gene known to be associated with drug-resistance were not found.
- Therefore, (val)ganciclovir therapy is not recommended for this patient but cidofovir and foscarnet (DNA polymerase inhibitors), maribavir (UL97 protein kinase inhibitor), and letermovir (terminase inhibitor) are alternative therapies.

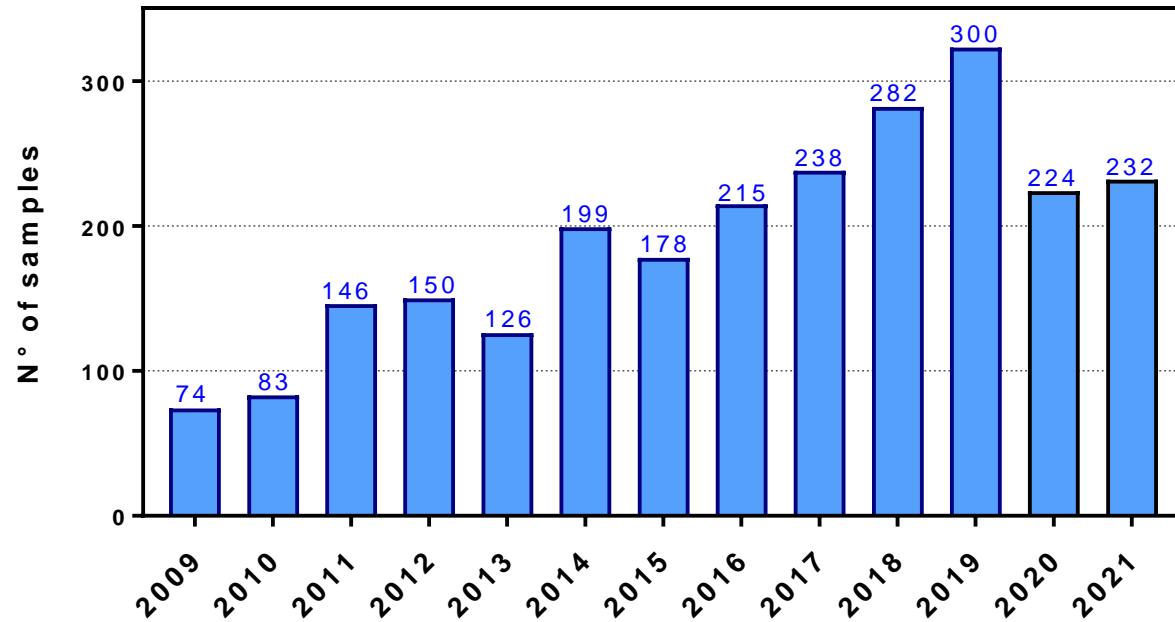
Prof. Dr Robert Snoeck
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Herestraat 49 – box 1030
3000 Leuven
Tel. 00-32-16-32.15.79
Fax. 00-32-16-33.00.26
Email: robert.snoeck@kuleuven.be
Rega Institute <http://rega.kuleuven.be/>
RegaVir <http://www.regavir.org/>

National collaborations	Number of samples
AZ Delta Roeselare-Menen	13
AZ Groeninge Kortrijk	11
AZ Nikolaas, Sint-Niklaas	5
AZ Sint Jan Brugge-Oostende	159
AZ Sint Lucas Brugge	3
AZ Sint Lucas Gent	4
AZ Turnhout	4
Clinique CHC MontLégia, Liège	8
Clinique Saint-Luc Bouge - Namur	1
Clinique St-Pierre Ottignies	1
Clinique Sud Luxembourg Arlon	3
Cliniques Universitaires Saint Luc, UCL, Brussels	68
Centre Hospitalier de Jolimont	10
CHIREC	11
CHR Citadelle Liège	30
CHU Ambroise Paré, Mons	6
CHU Charleroi	3
CHU Dinant Godinne - UCL Namur	31
CHU Liège, Sart Tilman, Liège	120
GasthuisZusters Antwerpen (GZA) ziekenhuizen	3
GHdC (Grand Hôpital de Charleroi)	8

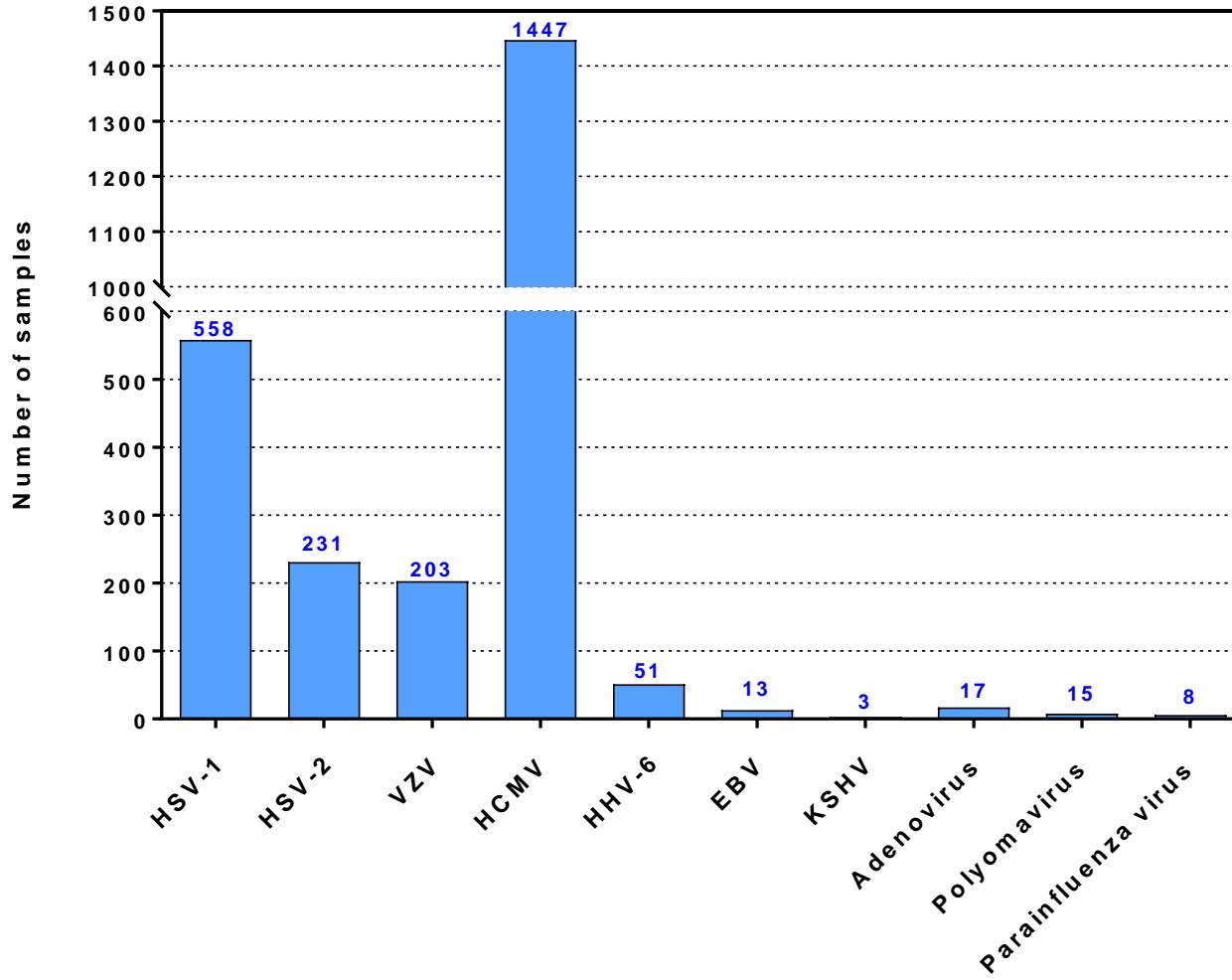
National collaborations	Number of samples
Imeldaziekenhuis, Bonheiden	54
Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp	1
Jan Yperman ziekenhuis, Ieper	5
Jessa ziekenhuis, Hasselt	57
LHUB (Laboratoire Hospitalier Universitaire de Bruxelles)-ULB - CHU Brugmann - CHU Saint-Pierre - Hôpitaux Iris Sud - Hôpital Universitaire des Enfants Reine Fabiola (HUDERF) - Institut Jules Bordet - Hôpital Erasme	803
LKO-LMC, Sint Truiden	5
Medisch Labo Medina Dendermonde	1
OLV Ziekenhuis Aalst Asse Ninove	32
UZA, Antwerpen	54
UZ Brussel	47
UZ Gent	182
UZ Leuven	510
ZNA Ziekenhuizen - ZNA Jan Palfijn - ZNA Middelheim - ZNA Stuivenberg	53
ZOL (Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg) Genk	16

International	Number of samples
CBN-IAI Lab Virology, Hôpital de la Croix Rousse, Lyon, France (EQA)	48 + 3
UMC Amsterdam, The Netherlands	53
AZ Maastricht, The Netherlands	2
Benioff Children's Hospital, San Francisco, CA, USA	3
Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg, Luxembourg	10
Centre Hospitalier Emile Mayrisch, Esch-sur Alzette, Luxembourg	1
CHU Lille, France	2
Erasmus MC Rotterdam, The Netherlands	12
Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil	1
Hôpital Foch, Paris, France	1
Hôpital Kirchberg, Luxembourg	1
Hôpital Necker – Enfants Malades, Paris, France	3
Hôpital Universitaire Pitié Salpêtrière, Paris, France (EQA)	6 + 6
Hôpitaux Universitaires Genève, Hôpital des Trois Chêne, Switzerland	1
Karolinska University Hospital, Huddinge, Sweden	3
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital University of Tennessee, Memphis, TN, USA	1
LNS Luxembourg Clinique Emile Mayrisch (ESCH/ ALZETTE), Luxembourg	1
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens Sotiria Hospital, Greece	3
Public Health England, Colindale, United Kingdom (EQA)	5
Uppsala University Hospital, Sweden	9
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, USA	3

N° of samples per year (Jan. 2009 – Dec. 2021)



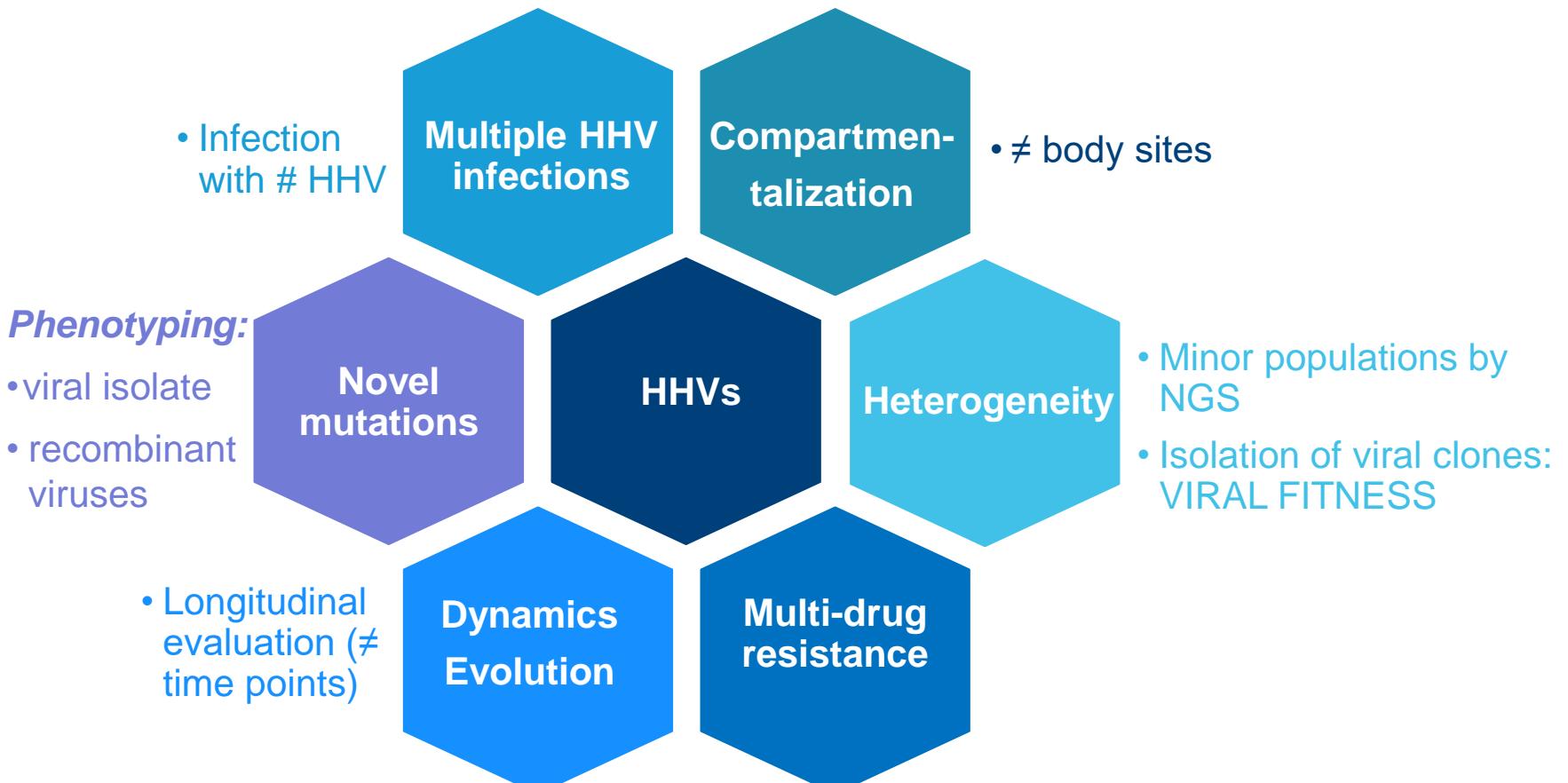
N° of samples per virus (Jan. 2009 – February 2022)



Total samples encoded by
RegaVir: 2447

Total number of tests performed
by RegaVir: 2546

RegaVir platform for translational research



Herpesvirus genotyping

- ❖ **Prospectively:** capillary (Sanger sequencing)
- ❖ **Retrospectively:** next-generation sequencing (NGS)

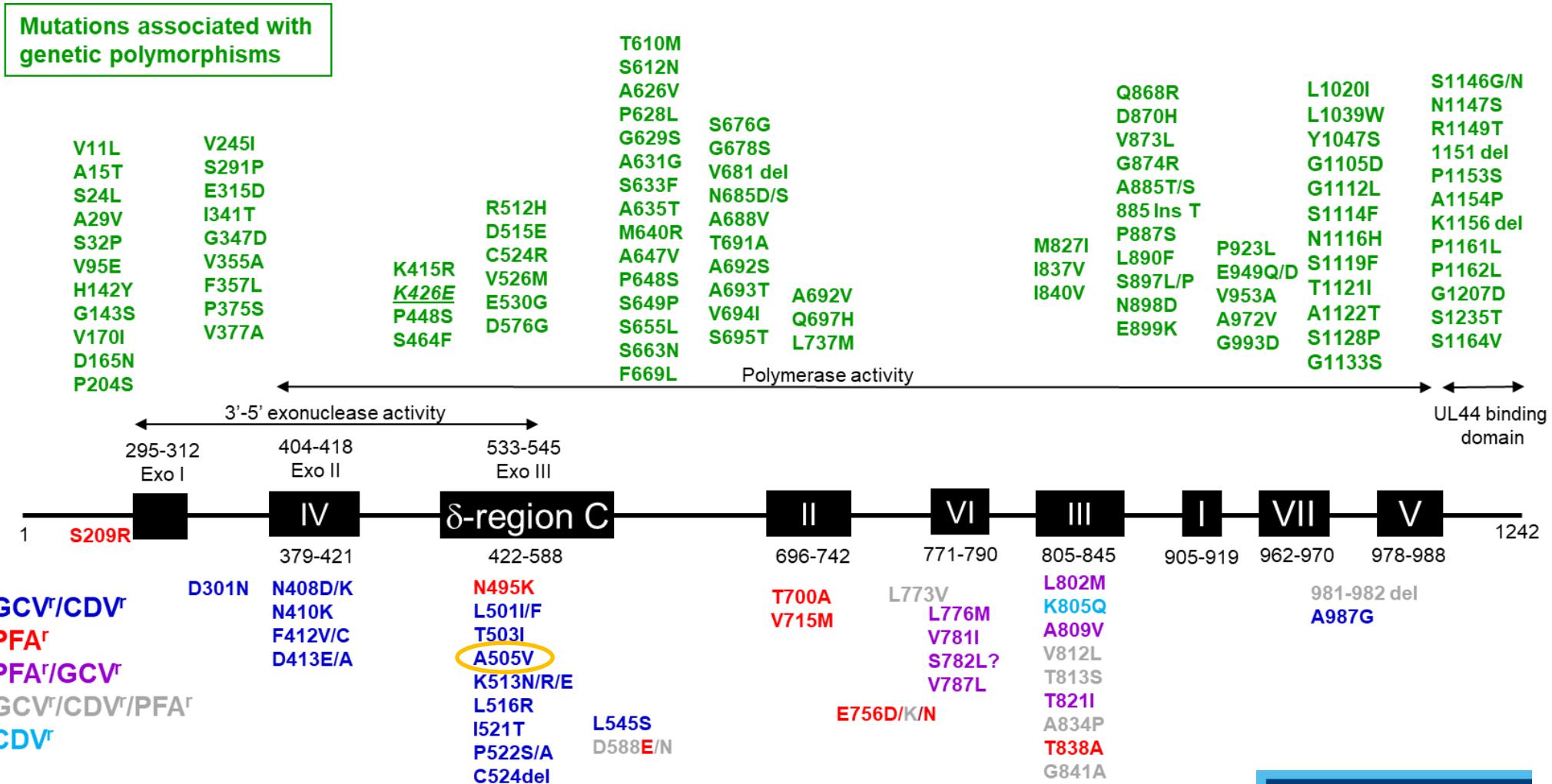
Emergence of HCMV strains with a similar profile in ≠ transplant recipients

Patients (UZ Leuven)	RegaVir ID	Date (blood sample)	UL97 genotyping (protein kinase)	UL54 genotyping (DNA pol)
Bowel & pancreas transplantation on 19/03/2017	RV-1366	18.12.2017	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)

Received by RegaVir 20.12.2017

A505V: GCV-R / CDV-R

HCMV UL54 DNA polymerase mutations



Emergence of HCMV strains with a similar profile in ≠ patients

Patients (UZ Leuven)	RegaVir ID	Date (blood sample)	UL97 genotyping (protein kinase)	UL54 genotyping (DNA pol)
Bowel & pancreas transplantation	RV-1366	18.12.2017	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
Kidney transplantation	RV-1378	12.01.2018	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)

Received by RegaVir 20.12.2017

Received by RegaVir 12.01.2018

A505V: GCV-R / CDV-R

Same day of transplantation: 19/03/2017

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Emergence of HCMV strains with a similar profile in ≠ patients

Patients (UZ Leuven)	RegaVir ID	Date (blood sample)	UL97 genotyping (protein kinase)	UL54 genotyping (DNA pol)
Bowel & pancreas transplantation	RV-1366	18.12.2017	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
Kidney transplantation	RV-1378	12.01.2018	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
Lung transplantation	RV-1389	17.01.2018	L595S* (GCV-R)	A505G* (GCV-R / CDV-R?)

Received by RegaVir 20.12.2017

Received by RegaVir 12.01.2018

Received by RegaVir 30.01.2018

* Heterogeneous population

A505V: GCV-R / CDV-R

Same day of transplantation: 19/03/2017

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Emergence of HCMV strains with a similar profile in ≠ patients

Patients (UZ Leuven)	RegaVir ID	Date (blood sample)	UL97 genotyping (protein kinase)	UL54 genotyping (DNA pol)
Bowel & pancreas transplantation on 19/03/2017	RV-1366	18.12.2017	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
	RV-1395	02.02.2018	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?) V781I (GCV-R / PFA-R)* E951Q (GCV-R / PFA-R)* V715M (PFA-R)*
Kidney transplantation on 19/03/2017 (D+/R-) Previous lung transplantation on 21/12/2004 (D-/R-)	RV-1378	12.01.2018	Wild-type	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
Lung transplantation on 19/03/2017	RV-1389	17.01.2018	L595S* (GCV-R)	A505G* (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
	RV-1445	17.04.2018	T409M (MBV-R)	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)
	RV-1473	29.05.2018	T409M (MBV-R)	A505G (GCV-R / CDV-R?)

* Heterogeneous population

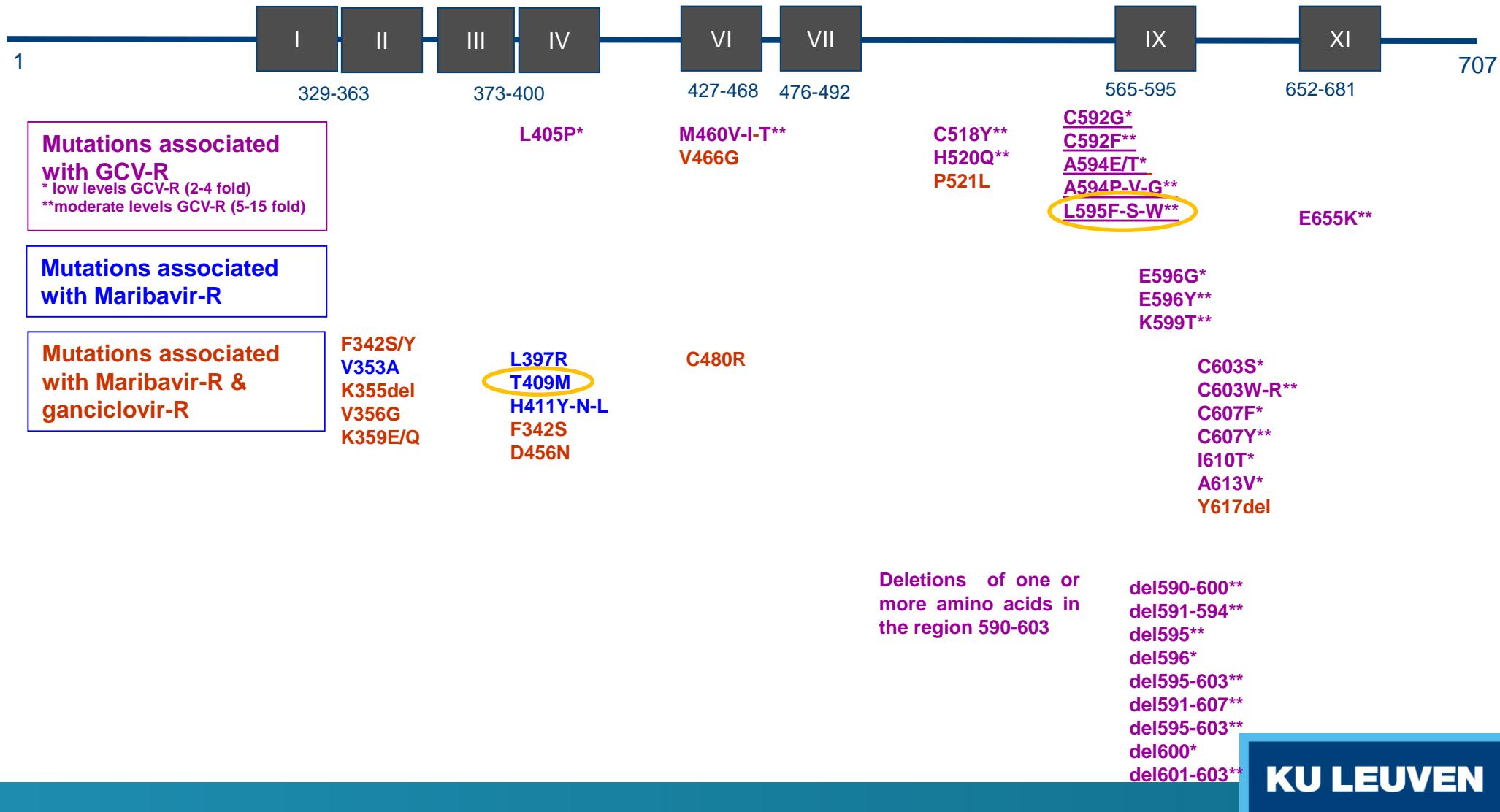
A505V: GCV-R / CDV-R

➤ Heterogeneity

➤ Novel mutation → recombinant virus

➤ Maribavir-R mutations

HCMV UL97 protein kinase (pUL97) mutations



HCMV Pol A505V and A505G mutants – recombinant viruses

Strain	Drug	Genotype	Mean EC ₅₀ (μM)	St Dev EC ₅₀	EC ₅₀ ratio	Published EC ₅₀ ratios
Control strains						
4198	CDV	Pol WT	0.27	0.06		
4376	CDV	Pol del 981-982	0.97	0.20	3.6	3.2, 3.7, 3.8
4198	GCV	Pol WT	1.26	0.22		
4376	GCV	Pol del 981-982	8.49	2.02	6.7	6.2, 7, 7.3
4198	PFA	Pol WT	38.33	6.22		
4376	PFA	Pol del 981-982	106.28	22.05	2.8	2.7, 3.1, 3.1
Newly constructed mutant strains						
4511	CDV	Pol A505V	0.67	0.1	2.5	2
4513	CDV	Pol A505G	0.37	0.07	1.4	
4511	GCV	Pol A505V	2.44	0.42	1.9	1.8
4513	GCV	Pol A505G	1.67	0.22	1.3	
4511	PFA	Pol A505V	35.77	6.05	0.9	1.1
4513	PFA	Pol A505G	45	6.51	1.2	

Data provided by Sunwen Chou

Conclusions

- **Usefulness of rapid HHV genotyping → adjustment of antiviral therapy.**
- **Heterogeneity and evolution of herpesvirus populations.**
- **Emergence of resistance to new anti-HCMV drugs.**
- **Appearance of novel mutations – utility of constructing recombinant viruses.**
- **Importance of providing the test request form.**

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Thank you for your
attention

Any questions?