

1 **Low Incidence of Corticosteroid-Associated Adverse Events with Long-term Exposure to**
2 **Low-dose Prednisone Given with Abiraterone Acetate to Metastatic Castration-resistant**
3 **Prostate Cancer Patients**

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27 **ABSTRACT**

28 **Background:** Abiraterone acetate (hereafter abiraterone) is the prodrug of abiraterone, which
29 inhibits CYP17A1 and testosterone synthesis and prolongs survival of patients with metastatic
30 castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC). Abiraterone plus prednisone is approved for the
31 treatment of patients with mCRPC.

32 **Objective:** To investigate whether long-term use of low-dose prednisone with/without
33 abiraterone leads to corticosteroid-associated adverse events (AEs) in mCRPC patients.

34 **Design, Setting, and Participants:** 2267 patients in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 were
35 included. We used an inclusive Standardized MedDRA Queries–oriented approach to identify
36 112 preferred terms for known corticosteroid-associated AEs, and assessed the incidence of
37 corticosteroid-associated AEs during 3-month exposure intervals and across all prednisone
38 exposure.

39 **Intervention:** All 2267 patients received 5 mg prednisone twice daily. 1333/2267 received
40 abiraterone (1 g) plus prednisone.

41 **Results and Limitations:** The incidence of corticosteroid-associated AEs for any-grade and
42 grade ≥ 3 corticosteroid-associated AEs with any prednisone exposure was 25%, 26%, and 23%
43 and 5%, 5%, and 4% for all patients, abiraterone plus prednisone, and prednisone alone,
44 respectively. The most common any-grade corticosteroid-associated AEs were hyperglycemia
45 (7.4%, 7.8%, and 6.9% for all patients, abiraterone plus prednisone, and prednisone alone,
46 respectively) and weight increase (4.3%, 3.9%, and 4.8%, respectively). When assessed by
47 duration of exposure (3-month intervals up to ≥ 30 months), no discernable trend was observed in
48 corticosteroid-associated AEs, including hyperglycemia and weight increase. The investigator-

49 reported study discontinuation rate due to corticosteroid-associated AEs was 11/2267 (0.5%),
50 and one patient had a corticosteroid-associated AE resulting in death.

51 **Conclusions:** Low-dose prednisone given with or without abiraterone is associated with an
52 overall low incidence of corticosteroid-associated AEs. The frequency of corticosteroid-
53 associated AEs remained low with increased duration of exposure to prednisone.

54 **Patient Summary:** We assessed AEs in mCRPC patients treated long-term with a low dose of a
55 corticosteroid. We found that long-term treatment with this low-dose corticosteroid is safe and
56 tolerable.

57

58 **1. Introduction**

59 Abiraterone acetate (hereafter abiraterone) is the prodrug of abiraterone, which selectively blocks
60 cytochrome P450 C17 (CYP17). CYP17 is required for androgen biosynthesis, which occurs in
61 testicular, adrenal, and prostatic tumor tissue [1-3]. Abiraterone plus prednisone is approved for
62 the treatment of patients with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) based on a
63 demonstrated survival benefit and a favorable tolerability profile in both the pre- and
64 postchemotherapy settings [4-8]. In the final analysis of the phase 3 COU-AA-301 trial of
65 postchemotherapy patients with mCRPC, abiraterone plus prednisone significantly prolonged
66 median overall survival (OS) by 4.6 months (26% risk reduction of death vs placebo plus
67 prednisone [hereafter prednisone alone]).[4,5] Compared with prednisone alone, abiraterone plus
68 prednisone significantly prolonged OS by 4.4 months (19% risk reduction of death vs prednisone
69 alone) in the final analysis of the phase 3 COU-AA-302 trial of prechemotherapy patients with
70 mCRPC [6-8].

71
72 Corticosteroids may be used by patients with cancer, including those with mCRPC, to manage
73 cancer-related pain and weight loss, and the side-effects of chemotherapy [9,10]. Long-term use
74 of moderate-/high-dose corticosteroids (eg, ≥ 20 mg/d prednisone) has an established adverse
75 event (AE) profile [11,12]. A list of common corticosteroid-associated AEs can be found in the
76 Methods section. There are some concerns about whether similar frequency and severity of side-
77 effects would be seen with long-term coadministration of low-dose prednisone with abiraterone.
78 To address this question, we used the COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 data sets to investigate
79 whether long-term use of low-dose prednisone with or without abiraterone in patients with
80 mCRPC leads to corticosteroid-associated AEs.

81

82 **2. Patients and methods**

83 The design, eligibility criteria, and efficacy results for COU-AA-301 (NCT00638690) and COU-
84 AA-302 (NCT00887198) have been described previously [4-8]. Briefly, COU-AA-301 and
85 COU-AA-302 were phase 3 trials of patients randomized 2:1 and 1:1, respectively, to abiraterone
86 (1 g) plus prednisone or prednisolone (5 mg BID) (hereafter prednisone) or prednisone alone in
87 the post-docetaxel and chemotherapy-naïve mCRPC settings, respectively [4-8]. A total of 1195
88 patients were enrolled in COU-AA-301 (abiraterone plus prednisone, $n = 797$; prednisone alone,
89 $n = 398$). [4,5] A total of 1088 patients were enrolled in COU-AA-302 (abiraterone plus
90 prednisone, $n = 546$; prednisone alone, $n = 542$) [6-8]. A combined total of 2267 patients in
91 COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 were included in the safety population and received 5 mg BID
92 prednisone. Of these, 1333 patients received abiraterone plus prednisone.

93

94 We used an inclusive Standardized MedDRA Queries–oriented approach to identify 116
95 preferred terms for known corticosteroid-associated AEs based on the prednisone label to
96 interrogate the COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 databases. Irrelevant preferred terms were
97 excluded, and upcoding strategies were employed to convert and match with legacy MedDRA
98 versions (version 17 used for these analyses). Corticosteroid-associated AEs of interest were as
99 follows:

- 100 - **Endocrine disorders:** adrenal insufficiency, Cushing’s syndrome, Cushingoid state,
101 pituitary-dependent Cushing’s syndrome
- 102 - **Eye disorders:** cataract, cataract cortical, cataract subcapsular

- 103 - **Gastrointestinal disorders:** chronic gastrointestinal bleeding, duodenal perforation,
104 duodenal ulcer, duodenal ulcer hemorrhage, duodenal ulcer perforation, duodenal ulcer
105 perforation (obstructive), duodenal ulcer (obstructive), duodenitis (hemorrhagic), erosive
106 duodenitis, erosive esophagitis, feces discolored, gastric hemorrhage, gastric perforation,
107 gastric ulcer, gastric ulcer hemorrhage, gastric ulcer hemorrhage (obstructive), gastric
108 ulcer perforation, gastric ulcer perforation (obstructive), gastritis (erosive), gastritis
109 (hemorrhagic), gastroduodenal hemorrhage, gastroduodenal ulcer, gastroduodenitis
110 (hemorrhagic), gastrointestinal erosion, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, gastrointestinal
111 perforation, gastrointestinal ulcer, gastrointestinal ulcer hemorrhage, gastrointestinal
112 ulcer perforation, hematemesis, hematochezia, hemorrhagic erosive gastritis, jejunal
113 ulcer, jejunal ulcer perforation, melena, esophageal hemorrhage, esophageal perforation,
114 esophageal ulcer, esophageal ulcer hemorrhage, esophageal ulcer perforation, esophageal
115 varices hemorrhage, esophagitis (hemorrhagic), esophagitis (ulcerative), peptic ulcer,
116 peptic ulcer hemorrhage, peptic ulcer perforation, peptic ulcer perforation (obstructive),
117 peptic ulcer (obstructive), proctitis (hemorrhagic), upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage
118 - **General disorders and administration site conditions:** impaired healing, perforated
119 ulcer
120 - **Infections and infestations:** peptic ulcer helicobacter
121 - **Injury, poisoning, and procedural complications:** acetabulum fracture, atypical femur
122 fracture, cervical vertebral fracture, femoral neck fracture, forearm fracture, hip fracture,
123 lumbar vertebral fracture, rib fracture, spinal compression fracture, thoracic vertebral
124 fracture, wrist fracture

- 125 - **Investigations:** blood glucose abnormal, blood glucose fluctuation, blood glucose
126 increased, body mass index increased, bone density decreased, gastric occult blood
127 positive, glucose tolerance decreased, glucose tolerance test abnormal, glucose urine
128 present, glycosylated hemoglobin increased, occult blood positive, weight increase
- 129 - **Metabolism and nutrition disorders:** abnormal weight gain, central obesity, diabetes
130 mellitus, diabetes mellitus inadequate control, glucose tolerance impaired,
131 hyperglycemia, impaired fasting glucose, insulin-requiring type 2 diabetes mellitus,
132 metabolic syndrome
- 133 - **Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders:** bone formation decreased, bone loss,
134 myopathy, myopathy toxic, osteopenia, osteoporosis, osteoporotic fracture, resorption
135 bone increased, spinal deformity
- 136 - **Renal and urinary disorders:** glycosuria
- 137 - **Skin and subcutaneous disorders:** ecchymosis, hemorrhage (subcutaneous),
138 hemorrhage (subepidermal), purpura, skin atrophy, skin fragility, skin hemorrhage, skin
139 striae
- 140 - **Surgical and medical procedures:** cataract operation, duodenal ulcer repair,
141 gastrointestinal ulcer management, perforated peptic ulcer oversewing

142

143 The incidence of corticosteroid-associated AEs during 3-month exposure intervals and across the
144 entire exposure to prednisone was assessed as number of patients with an AE divided by number
145 of patients at risk. Data are represented as all patients (any prednisone), abiraterone plus
146 prednisone, and prednisone alone.

147

148

149 **3. Results**

150 Patient demographics were similar in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302. Patients enrolled in
151 COU-AA-302 were asymptomatic/mildly symptomatic and had no visceral metastases, and
152 therefore had a lower disease burden than patients in COU-AA-301, who had more advanced
153 disease (Table 1).

154

155 A total of 2267 patients in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 received prednisone 5 mg BID for a
156 median of 8.3 months (range, 0.1–34.9 months), which represents 2006 patient-years of
157 exposure, defined as the sum of the number of years that each patient in a study population has
158 been treated with prednisone.

159

160 **3.1. Safety**

161 The safety populations in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 included all randomized patients
162 who received any study medication ($N = 2267$). The overall incidence of corticosteroid-
163 associated AEs observed in patients in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 is shown in Table 2.

164

165 The overall incidence of any-grade corticosteroid-associated AEs for any prednisone exposure
166 was 24.6%, 25.5%, and 23.3% for all patients, abiraterone plus prednisone, and prednisone
167 alone, respectively (Fig. 1A). The two most common any-grade corticosteroid-associated AEs
168 were hyperglycemia (7.4%, 7.8%, and 6.9% for all patients, abiraterone plus prednisone, and
169 prednisone alone, respectively) and weight increase (4.3%, 3.9%, and 4.8%, respectively). Other

170 any-grade AEs occurring in $\geq 1\%$ of patients were ecchymosis, rib fracture, Cushingoid state,
171 cataract, diabetes mellitus, and skin atrophy (Table 2).

172
173 The incidence of grade ≥ 3 corticosteroid-associated AEs for any prednisone exposure was 4.5%,
174 5.1%, and 3.7% for all patients, abiraterone plus prednisone, and prednisone alone, respectively
175 (Fig. 1B). The two most common grade ≥ 3 corticosteroid-associated AEs were hyperglycemia
176 and cataract. Other grade ≥ 3 AEs occurring in $\geq 0.1\%$ of patients are listed in Table 2.

177
178 When assessed by duration of exposure in 3-month intervals for a median of 8.3 months (range,
179 0.1–34.9 months), any-grade corticosteroid-associated AEs fluctuated between 0% and 12%, but
180 no discernable trend was observed (Fig. 2A). Grade ≥ 3 corticosteroid-associated AEs fluctuated
181 between 1% and 2% when assessed by duration of exposure (Fig. 2B). We assessed the
182 incidence of any-grade hyperglycemia and any-grade weight increase, the two most common
183 corticosteroid-associated AEs, by duration of exposure in 3-month intervals up to ≥ 30 months.
184 No discernible trend was observed in overall hyperglycemia (Fig. 3) and weight increase (Fig.
185 4).

186
187 Only grade 1 and grade 2 weight increase were observed in this combined patient population,
188 and most cases (76 of 97; 78%) were grade 1. There were no incidences of grade ≥ 3 weight
189 increase. Grade 1 weight increase was defined as a 5 to $<10\%$ increase from baseline, and grade
190 2 weight increase was defined as a 10 to $<20\%$ increase from baseline, according to the Common
191 Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events (version 4.0). As weight gain is a common concern for
192 patients receiving corticosteroids, we evaluated change in weight over time, which shows that

193 abiraterone plus prednisone had a minimal impact (Fig. 5). Furthermore, of the 33 patients with
194 Cushingoid state (all grade 1 or 2), which frequently presents with central adiposity among other
195 phenotypic characteristics, only four had increased weight.

196
197 The investigator-reported study discontinuation rate due to corticosteroid-associated AEs was
198 0.6% (8/1333) for abiraterone plus prednisone and 0.3% (3/934) for prednisone alone. The
199 discontinuations in the abiraterone plus prednisone group were attributed to hip fracture (1),
200 spinal fracture (2), spinal compression fracture (1), gastrointestinal hemorrhage (2), melena (1),
201 and adrenal insufficiency (1). In the prednisone alone group, skin hemorrhage (1), diabetes
202 mellitus (1), and upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage (1) were cited by the investigator as reasons
203 for discontinuation. One patient in COU-AA-301 had a corticosteroid-associated AE that
204 resulted in death; sponsor assessment of the cause of death was upper gastrointestinal
205 hemorrhage.

206

207 **4. Discussion**

208 This analysis, which specifically assessed known corticosteroid-associated AEs based on the
209 prednisone label, demonstrates that low-dose prednisone (5 mg BID) given with or without
210 abiraterone to men with mCRPC is associated with an overall low incidence of corticosteroid-
211 associated AEs. The frequency of corticosteroid-associated AEs remained low, even with
212 increased duration of exposure to low-dose prednisone. Furthermore, the low rate of
213 discontinuation due to corticosteroid-associated AEs confirms the manageability of these AEs in
214 the few cases where they do arise. Addition of abiraterone to prednisone did not appear to
215 increase the incidence of corticosteroid-associated AEs, addressing concerns about the long-term

216 coadministration of this combination.

217

218 There are a few limitations to our study. First, the lack of a placebo-only comparator arm makes
219 it impossible to assess the baseline frequency of these AEs in this population without steroid
220 exposure. This limitation further precludes us from determining whether grade ≥ 3 AEs in high-risk
221 patients arise from an underlying condition or from low-dose prednisone use. Nevertheless, the
222 absence of an increase in corticosteroid-associated AE frequency over time, after ≥ 30 months of
223 exposure to prednisone, provides strong evidence in support of our conclusions. Second, there
224 were low numbers of evaluable patients at later time points, with $< 50\%$ of patients remaining by
225 12 months and $\sim 10\%$ remaining by 24 months. Finally, this was a retrospective analysis, and
226 therefore patient physiological status, comorbidities, and other baseline factors that may impact
227 the interpretation of these findings were not prespecified. The ongoing phase 3 Latitude trial
228 (NCT01715285) is evaluating the coadministration of abiraterone plus androgen deprivation
229 therapy plus 5 mg prednisone in patients with hormone-naïve de novo metastatic prostate cancer,
230 which will allow for the prospective assessment of daily low-dose prednisone.

231

232 **5. Conclusions**

233 Taken together, the results reported herein support those of previous studies that demonstrated
234 that that long-term treatment with abiraterone plus low-dose prednisone is well tolerated. These
235 results further show that the incidence of corticosteroid-associated AEs in patients with mCRPC
236 after long-term administration of low-dose prednisone is low and manageable.

237

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243

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278

279 **Figure legends**

280 **Fig. 1 – Overall incidence of corticosteroid-associated any-grade (A) and grade ≥ 3 (B)**
281 **adverse events.** AA = abiraterone acetate; P = prednisone.

282 **Fig. 2 - Incidence of new onset corticosteroid-associated any-grade (A) and grade ≥ 3 (B)**
283 **adverse events by exposure.** AA = abiraterone acetate; P = prednisone.

284 **Fig. 3 – Incidence of any-grade hyperglycemia by exposure.** AA = abiraterone acetate; P =
285 prednisone.

286 **Fig. 4 – Incidence of grade 1 and grade 2 weight increase by exposure.** AA = abiraterone
287 acetate; P = prednisone.

288 **Fig. 5 – Weight change from baseline in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302 by exposure.** AA
289 = abiraterone acetate; P = prednisone.

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291

292

293 **Table 1 – Baseline characteristics of patients in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302**

Baseline characteristics	COU-AA-301 N = 1195	COU-AA-302 N = 1088
Age, years		
Median (range)	69 (39–95)	70 (44–95)
Gleason score at initial diagnosis, n (%)	n = 1047	n = 996
≤7	502 (48)	479 (48)
≥8	545 (52)	517 (52)
Extent of disease, n (%)	n = 1190	n = 1086
Bone	1066 (90)	884 (81)
Bone only	474 (40)	541 (50)
Soft tissue or node	709 (60)	538 (50)
Other	60 (5)	11 (1)
Time from initial diagnosis to first dose, years		
Median (range)	6.02 (0.17–25.01)	5.3 (0–28)
Weight (kg)	82.6 (39.2–203.3)	
Median (range)		87.5 (45.3–168.3)
PSA (ng/ml)		
Median (range)	131.4 (0.4–10114)	39.51 (0–6606.4)
Hemoglobin (g/dl)		
Median (range)	11.8 (7.2–16.5)	13.1 (7–16.6)
LDH (IU/l)		
Median (range)	227 (84–5125)	185 (60–871)
ALP (IU/l)		
Median (range)	134 (20–4896)	91 (21–3056)

294 PSA = prostate-specific antigen; LDH = lactate dehydrogenase; ALP = alkaline phosphatase.

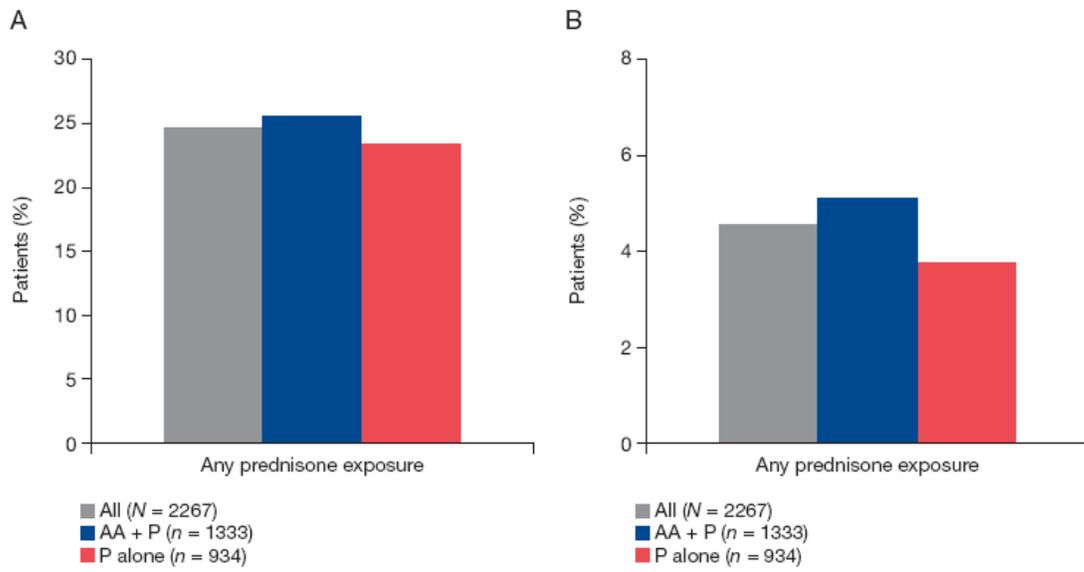
295 **Table 2 – All corticosteroid-associated adverse events in COU-AA-301 and COU-AA-302**

<i>N</i> = 2267		
	Any-grade	Grade ≥ 3
Patients with an AE, n (%)	558 (24.6)	103 (4.54)
Hyperglycemia	168 (7.4)	48 (2.0)
Weight increase	97 (4.3)	0
Ecchymosis	66 (2.9)	0
Rib fracture	53 (2.3)	2 (0.1)
Cushingoid state	33 (1.5)	0
Cataract	30 (1.3)	10 (0.4)
Diabetes mellitus	26 (1.1)	8 (0.4)
Skin atrophy	23 (1.0)	0
Hematochezia	20 (0.9)	2 (0.1)
Purpura	19 (0.8)	1 (<0.1)
Osteoporosis	20 (0.9)	2 (0.1)
Myopathy	18 (0.8)	2 (0.1)
Spinal compression fracture	14 (0.6)	3 (0.1)
Gastrointestinal hemorrhage	10 (0.4)	7 (0.3)
Osteopenia	10 (0.4)	0
Melena	9 (0.4)	3 (0.1)
Adrenal insufficiency	8 (0.4)	3 (0.1)
Wrist fracture	8 (0.4)	1 (<0.1)

Hip fracture	5 (0.2)	3 (0.1)
Cataract operation	4 (0.2)	2 (0.1)
Hematemesis	4 (0.2)	1 (<0.1)
Lumbar vertebral fracture	4 (0.2)	1 (<0.1)
Spinal fracture	4 (0.2)	2 (0.1)
Diabetes mellitus (inadequate control)	4 (0.2)	0
Skin fragility	4 (0.2)	0
Feces discolored	4 (0.2)	0
Cervical vertebral fracture	3 (0.1)	2 (0.1)
Gastric ulcer	3 (0.1)	1 (<0.1)
Osteoporotic fracture	3 (0.1)	1 (<0.1)
Thoracic vertebral fracture	3 (0.1)	0
Impaired healing	3 (0.1)	0
Upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage	2 (0.1)	2 (0.1)
Glucose tolerance impaired	2 (0.1)	1 (<0.1)
Skin hemorrhage	2 (0.1)	0
Cushing's syndrome	2 (0.1)	0
Femoral neck fracture	1 (<0.1)	1 (<0.1)
Central obesity	1 (<0.1)	0
Hemorrhage subcutaneous	1 (<0.1)	0
Skin striae	1 (<0.1)	0
Blood glucose fluctuation	1 (<0.1)	0
Occult blood positive	1 (<0.1)	0

Duodenal ulcer	1 (<0.1)	0
Gastric hemorrhage	1 (<0.1)	0
Gastritis erosive	1 (<0.1)	0
Gastritis hemorrhagic	1 (<0.1)	0
Peptic ulcer	1 (<0.1)	0
Bone loss	1 (<0.1)	0
Pituitary-dependent Cushing's syndrome	1 (<0.1)	0
Glycosuria	1 (<0.1)	0

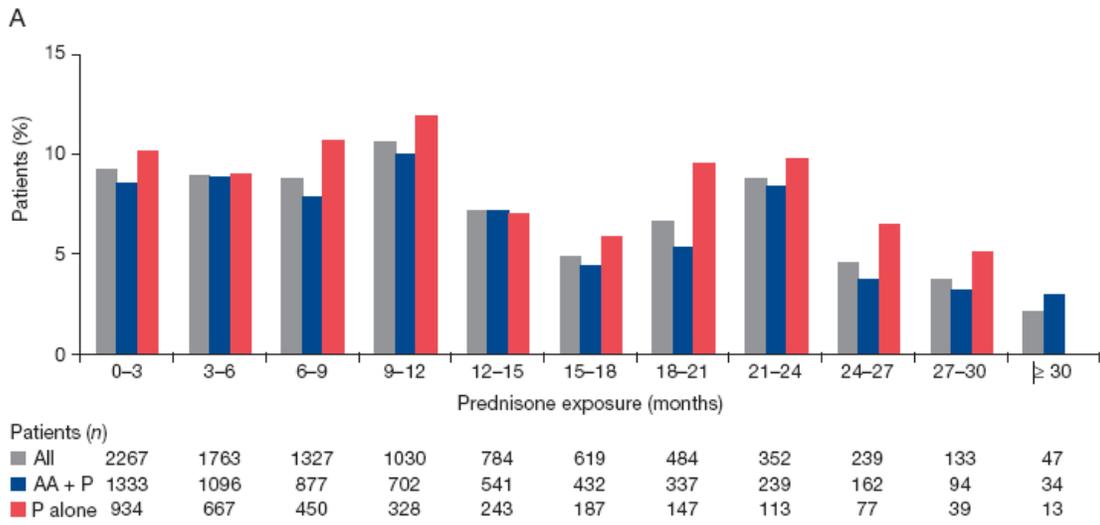
297 **Fig. 1**



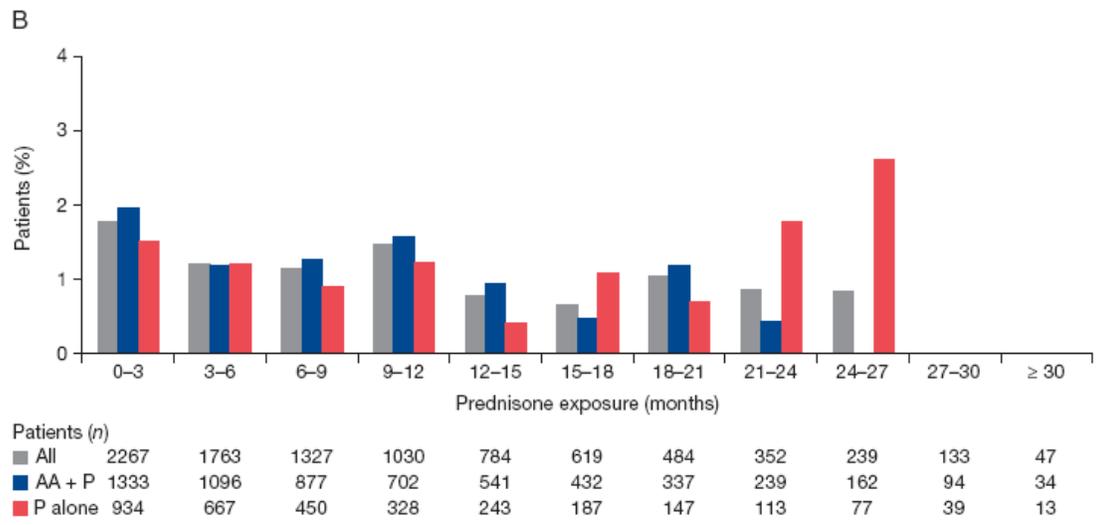
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300 **Fig. 2**



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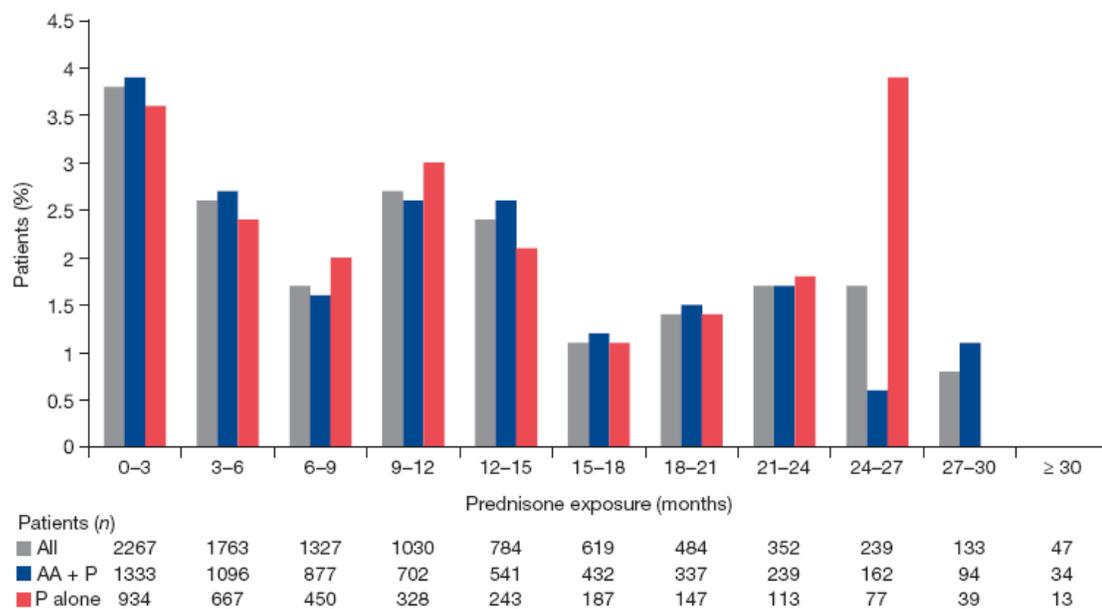


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304 **Fig. 3**

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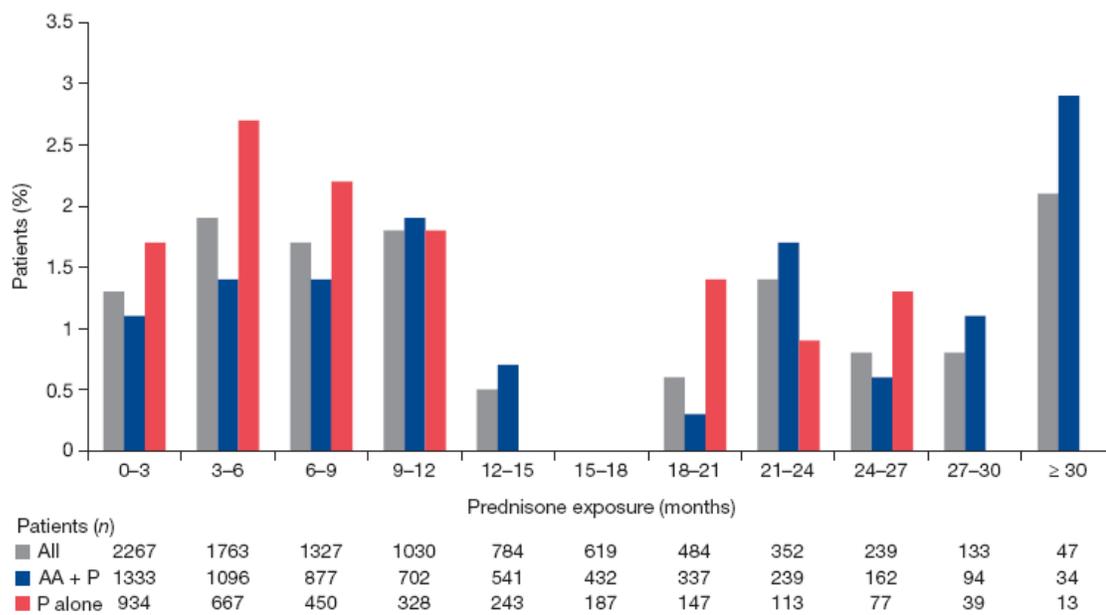
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309 **Fig. 4**

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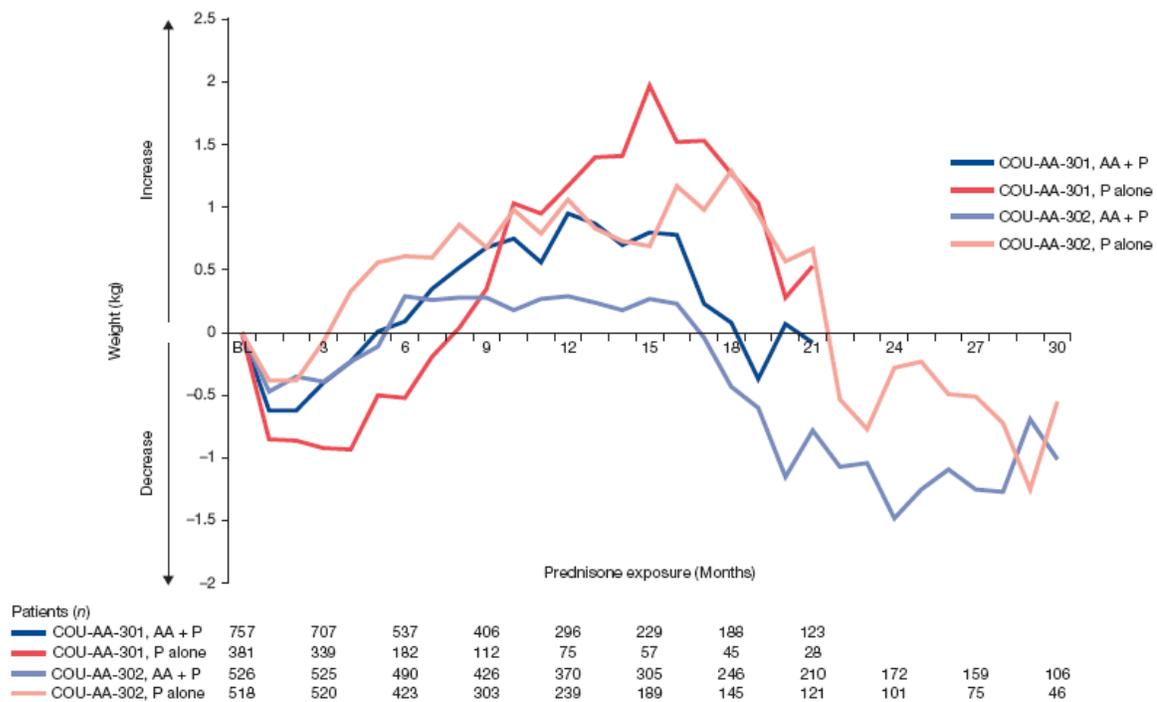


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314 **Fig. 5**

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