

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Herramientas para la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH

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TESIS DOCTORAL

Herramientas para la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH

MEMORIA DE TESIS DOCTORAL PRESENTADA POR

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PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR EN MEDICINA POR LA



DIRIGIDA POR

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REALIZADO EN





FACULTAD DE MEDICINA Y CIENCIAS DE LA SALUD. UNIVERSIDAD DE BARCELONA

PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO "MEDICINA E INVESTIGACIÓN TRANSLACIONAL"

BARCELONA, 2022



Facultat de Medicina i Ciències de la Salut - Campus Clínic

Informe director/s /tutor sobre l'autorització del dipòsit de la tesi

Dr./a.Felipe García Alcaide i Patrick Aloy Calaf, com a director/tutor de la tesi doctoral titulada "Herramientas para la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH " i, d'acord amb el que s'estableix a l'article 35 Normativa reguladora del Doctorat a la Universitat de Barcelona, emeto el següent:

INFORME

(Informe detallat i motivat sobre el contingut de la tesi i sobre l'autorització de dipòsit de la tesi que s'ha demanat)

La tesis doctoral llevada a cabo por el doctorando Csaba Feher sobre herramientas para la evaluación de la eficacia de las vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH se ha llevado a cabo cumpliendo todos los objetivos. Este proyecto fruto de una colaboración entre IRB e IDIBAPS dentro del programa PhD4MD ha sido seguido por evaluadores externos de las 2 instituciones durante todo el programa del doctorado pasando con buena nota todas las evaluaciones.

Desde el punto de vista del contenido, el doctorando

1. Ha descrito las dinámicas de rebote viral tras interrupción de tratamiento antirretroviral

2. Ha desarrollado un modelo que permite predecir el control de la replicación viral tras la interrupción del tratamiento

3. Ha descrito marcadores de respuesta novedosos utilizando el transcriptoma

Además ha adquirido todos los conocimientos necesarios para optar al grado de doctor, por lo que apoyo el depósito de la tesis

Barcelona, 01 d'/de Julio de 2022.

Édesanyám emlékének

Agradecimientos

Al Dr. Felipe García, por conseguir "enredarme" en el mundo de la medicina traslacional, de las vacunas terapéuticas y del VIH en general. Gracias por la confianza, por las horas dedicadas a mis clases particulares y por la fe contagiosa en el eventual éxito del proyecto. Gracias por todo el apoyo recibido entre y a pesar de todas las adversidades – fueran epidémicas, laborales o personales.

Al Dr. Patrick Aloy, por acoger a un forastero académico en su equipo, por sacarme de mi zona de confort y animarme a mirar las cosas con una óptica diferente. Gracias por tener las ideas claras y por tantas veces aclarar las mías.

A los miembros del comité de seguimiento de la tesis: al Dr. Josep María Gatell, al Dr. Josep María Canals y al Dr Lluís Ribas, por supervisar el progreso del trabajo y aportar sugerencias e ideas muy valiosas en cada reunión.

A todos los coautores de los artículos de la tesis, especialmente a Arno Andeweg, a Rob Gruters, a Henk Jan van den Ham y a Roque Pastor, por todos los granos de arena (e incluso algunas rocas enteras) que aportaron al trabajo. Un agradecimiento especial a Lorna Leal, por el apoyo constante e incondicional, por la infusión periódica de ánimos y pragmatismo, por escuchar y entender.

A Mireia Arnedo, a Montserrat Plana, a Sonsoles Sánchez, a Olivia Tort y a Tuixent Escribà, por todas las explicaciones teóricas y por la infinita amabilidad y paciencia con la que me dejaron asomarme fugazmente al trabajo emocionante de laboratorio. A Camille Stephan-Otto Attolini, a Ricardo Sanz y a Francisco Díez, por toda su aportación en el análisis de los datos transcriptómicos.

A José "Pepito" Mensa, por enseñarme a contar ciencia, y por la pasión por las infecciones que irradia sobre todos los que le rodean.

A László Tímár, por sus historias maravillosas que despertaron por vez primera mi interés por el universo de las enfermedades infecciosas.

A todo el grupo de Bioinformática Estructural y Biología de Redes (SBNB) en el IRB – especialmente a los compañeros con los que más tiempo coincidí: a Lídia, a Teresa, a Samira, a Richa, a Isabelle, a Miquel, a Oriol, a Francesco, a Martino, a Adrià, a Carles, a Edu, a Sergi y a Víctor – por el cariño y por la ayuda que recibí durante el tiempo que pasé siendo el "bicho raro" en su mundo.

A mis compañeros de residencia y a los chicos de "*Comidas*", en particular a Lito, a Pedro, a Juanma, a Cony, a David, a José, y a Jesús. Seguirán siendo familia para mi por muy poco que nos veamos últimamente...

A mis suegros, por cuidarnos siempre y por estar buscando incansablemente maneras de ayudar. A mis padres y a mis hermanos, por llevarme a ser la persona quien soy y por muchísimo más que no se puede expresar con simples palabras. A mis hijos, Leo, Abel y Marc, por las risas incontables y por enseñarme algo nuevo cada día.

A Elena, por absolutamente todo y más.

Índice

<u>AGR</u>	GRADECIMIENTOS	
ÍNDI	CE	9
<u>ABRI</u>	EVIATURAS	11
<u>ARTÍ</u>	CULOS QUE COMPONEN LA TESIS	15
<u>I. I</u>	NTRODUCCIÓN	17
I.1	Epidemiología, inmunopatogenia, y tratamiento del VIH	19
I.1.A	Epidemiología del VIH	19
I.1.B	INMUNOPATOGENIA DEL VIH	22
I.1.C	TRATAMIENTO ANTIRETROVIRAL Y SUS LIMITACIONES	26
I.2	ESTRATEGIAS DE CURACIÓN DE LA INFECCIÓN POR VIH	29
I.2.a	Erradicación y curación funcional del VIH	29
І.2.в	VACUNAS TERAPÉUTICAS	31
I.3	INTERRUPCIONES PROGRAMADAS DEL TRATAMIENTO ANTIRRETROVIRAL	35
I.3.a	INTERRUPCIÓN DE TRATAMIENTO COMO INTERVENCIÓN	35
I.3.b	INTERRUPCIÓN DE TRATAMIENTO PARA EVALUAR LA EFICACIA DE INMUNOTERAPIAS	36
I.3.c	MEDIDAS DE EFICACIA CLÍNICA	38
I.4	MÉTODOS NOVEDOSOS PARA EVALUAR LA EFICACIA DE VACUNAS TERAPÉUTICAS	41
I.4.A	VACUNOLOGÍA DE SISTEMAS Y VIH	41
I.4.b	APRENDIZAJE AUTOMÁTICO	46
I.5	Resumen	50
<u>II.</u> <u>H</u>	HIPÓTESIS DE LA TESIS	53
<u>III.</u>	OBJETIVOS DE LA TESIS	57
<u>IV.</u>	TRABAJOS PUBLICADOS	61
IV.1	PRIMER TRABAJO: VIROLOGICAL OUTCOME MEASURES DURING ANALYTICAL TREATMEN	Т

INTERRUPTIONS IN CHRONIC HIV-1 INFECTED PATIENTS

63

IV.2	SEGUNDO TRABAJO: A CLASSIFIER TO PREDICT VIRAL CONTROL AFTER ANTIRETROVIRAL	F REATMENT
Inte	INTERRUPTION IN CHRONIC HIV-1-INFECTED PATIENTS	
IV.3	TERCER TRABAJO: Association of Transcriptomic Signatures of Inflammatory	
RESI	PONSE WITH VIRAL CONTROL AFTER DENDRITIC CELL-BASED THERAPEUTIC VACCINATION IN	
HIV-1 INFECTED INDIVIDUALS		103
<u>V.</u>	DISCUSIÓN	119
V.1	MEDIDAS DE EFICACIA VIROLÓGICA EN ESTUDIOS CON ATI	121
V.2	PREDICTORES DE CONTROL VIROLÓGICO DURANTE ATI	125
V.3	PATRONES TRANSCRIPTÓMICOS RELACIONADOS CON EL CONTROL VIROLÓGICO D	
URANTE ATI		130
V.4	RETOS Y FUTURAS DIRECCIONES EN EL ANÁLISIS DE LA EFICACIA DE ESTRATEGIAS DE	
CUR	CURACIÓN DEL VIH	
<u>VI.</u>	CONCLUSIONES	139
BIB	LIOGRAFÍA	143

Abreviaturas

AA	Aprendizaje automático
ABC	Área bajo la curva
ADN	Ácido desoxirribonucleico
ARN	Ácido ribonucleico
CBN	Clasificador bayesiano ingenuo
CCR5	Receptor 5 de quimiocina C-C
CD	Cúmulo de diferenciación
CTL	<i>Cytotoxic T lymphocyte –</i> linfocito T citotóxico
CV	Carga viral
CXCR4	receptor 4 de quimiocina C-X-C
DC	<i>Dendritic cell</i> – célula dendrítica
DE	Diferencialmente expresado
DGCR8	<i>DiGeorge syndrome critical region 8 -</i> región crítica síndrome de DiGeorge 8
ECA	Ensayo clínico aleatorizado
ECG	Electrocardiograma
FDA	<i>Food and Drug Administration</i> – Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos
GALT	Gut-associated lymphoid tissue – tejido linfático asociado con el intestino
GSEA	<i>Gene set enrichment analysis</i> – análisis de enriquecimiento de conjuntos de genes
HR	<i>Hazard ratio</i> – razón de riesgo
HSH	Hombres que tienen sexo con hombres
IFN	Interferón

IL	Interleucina
JAK	Janus kinase – cinasa Jano
MALT	<i>Mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue –</i> tejido linfático asociado a las mucosas
МНС	<i>Major histocompatibility complex</i> – complejo mayor de histocompatibilidad
mRNA	Ácido ribonucleico mensajero
miRNA	Micro ácido ribonucléico
NFkB	<i>Nuclear factor kappa-light-chain-enhancer of activated B cells</i> – factor nuclear potenciador de las cadenas ligeras kappa de las células B activadas
NK	Natural killer (cell) – (célula) asesina natural
OMS	Organización Mundial de la Salud
ONU	Organización de las Naciones Unidas
РВМС	<i>Peripheral blood mononuclear cell –</i> célula mononuclear de sangre periférica
RISK	<i>RNA-induced silencing complex</i> - complejo de silenciamiento inducido por ARN
ROS	Reactive oxygen species – especies de oxígeno reactivo
SIDA	Síndrome de inmunodeficiencia adquirida
SMART	<i>Strategies for Management of Antiretroviral Therapy</i> – estrategias para el manejo de la terapia antirretroviral
STAT	<i>Signal transducer and activator of transcription</i> –transductor de señal y activador de la transcripción
TARVc	Tratamiento antirretroviral combinado
T _{emra}	Linfocitos T efectoras de memoria terminalmente diferenciadas
TNF	<i>Tumor necrosis factor</i> – factor de necrosis tumoral
ТРН	Trasplante de progenitores hematopoyéticos

TtR	<i>Time to rebound</i> – tiempo hasta el rebote viral
UDVP	Usuarios de drogas por vía parenteral
VHB	Virus de la hepatitis B
VIH	Virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana
VIS	Virus de la inmunodeficiencia en simios

Abreviaturas

Artículos que componen la tesis

Tesis en formato de compendio de artículos. La tesis consta de 3 objetivos y 3 artículos:

 Csaba Fehér, Lorna Leal, Montserrat Plana, Nuria Climent, Alberto Crespo Guardo, Esteban Martínez, Pedro Castro, Vicens Díaz-Brito, Beatriz Mothe, Juan Carlos López Bernaldo De Quirós, Josep María Gatell, Patrick Aloy, Felipe García. *Virological Outcome Measures During Analytical Treatment Interruptions in Chronic HIV-1 Infected Patients.* Open Forum Infect Dis. 2019;6(12): ofz485.

doi: 10.1093/ofid/ofz485.

IF: 4.423

- Q2 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)
- 2) Csaba Fehér, Montserrat Plana, Alberto Crespo Guardo, Nuria Climent, Lorna Leal, Ainoa Ugarte, Irene Fernández, María F. Etcheverry, Josep M. Gatell, Sonsoles Sánchez-Palomino, Felipe García, Patrick Aloy A Classifier to Predict Viral Control After Antiretroviral Treatment Interruption in

Chronic HIV-1–Infected Patients

J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr 2020;83:479–485.

doi: 10.1097/QAI.000000000002281.

IF: 3,771

Q3 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)

3) Csaba Fehér, Roque Pastor, Lorna Leal, Montserrat Plana, Mireia Arnedo, Henk Jan van den Ham, Arno Andeweg, Rob Gruters, Francisco Diez Fuertes, José Alcamí, Patrick Aloy, Felipe Garcia

Association of Transcriptomic Signatures of Inflammatory Response with Viral Control after Dendritic Cell-Based Therapeutic Vaccination in HIV-1 Infected Individuals

Vaccines 202l;9(7):799.

doi: 10.3390/vaccines9070799

IF: 4.961

Q2 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)

I. Introducción

Introducción

I.1 Epidemiología, inmunopatogenia y tratamiento del VIH

I.1.a Epidemiología del VIH

El virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana (VIH) fue identificado por primera vez en 1983 [1], dos años después de la detección de un acúmulo de casos de sarcoma de Kaposi y neumonía por *Pneumocystis jirovecii* (ex *carinii*) en la comunidad homosexual de Nueva York, Los Ángeles y San Francisco [2]. Fueron los primeros casos publicados del cuadro que desde 1982 se conoce como Síndrome de Inmunodeficiencia Adquirida (SIDA) [3].

En los más de 35 años transcurridos desde entonces, la enfermedad se ha convertido en una de las más grandes pandemias de nuestra época. En 2018 casi 38 millones de personas vivían con VIH en el mundo, la mayoría de ellas en el continente africano [4]. Este número va creciendo año tras año, aunque el número anual de nuevas infecciones está en descenso desde hace más de 20 años, y la mortalidad anual relacionada con la infección por VIH también lleva 15 años disminuyendo (Figura 1 [5,6]). Este fenómeno es debido al aumento progresivo de la esperanza de vida de las personas infectadas desde el comienzo de la era de tratamiento antirretroviral combinado (TARVc) en 1996.

La Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) define como poblaciones de riesgo para adquirir VIH los hombres que tienen relaciones sexuales con hombres (HSH), los usuarios de drogas por vía parenteral (UDVP), los trabajadores sexuales, y las personas transgénero. Estos colectivos tienen, respectivamente, 22, 22, 21 y 12 veces mayor riesgo de infectarse por el VIH que la población general [6].

Introducción



En España actualmente hay alrededor de 150 000 personas viviendo con VIH, y cada año se detectan unas 3000-4000 nuevas infecciones. En la Unión Europea, España es el tercer país con mayor descenso (por 35%) en el número de nuevas infecciones anuales entre 2010 y 2018 [4]. Por otro lado, de acuerdo con las tendencias internacionales, la esperanza de vida de las personas infectadas ha estado incrementando de forma importante desde los años '90, debido a la eficacia del TARVc (Figura 2 [7]).

En 2014 la ONU estableció el objetivo "90-90-90" para 2020 con el fin de acabar con la pandemia de VIH. Se trata de que el 90% de todas las infecciones por VIH estuvieran diagnosticadas, que el 90% de las personas infectadas diagnosticadas recibieran TARVc, y que el 90% de las personas tratadas tuvieran una carga viral (CV) indetectable [8]. Aunque el cumplimiento mundial de este propósito parece cada vez menos probable, en algunas regiones del mundo – sobre todo en países occidentales - se ha hecho buen progreso en



estas áreas durante los últimos años. Globalmente estas proporciones en 2018 fueron de 79%, 78% y 86% [6], mientras en España ya en 2016 se alcanzaron los porcentajes 86%, 93% y 90%, respectivamente [4].

I.1.b Inmunopatogenia del VIH

La infección por VIH se inicia con la entrada de viriones procedentes de una persona infectada en el organismo de otro individuo. Esto ocurre más comúnmente en el contexto de actividad sexual desprotegida o compartiendo equipamiento (jeringas, agujas, etc.) entre UDVP, siendo mucho menos frecuente hoy en día la infección relacionada con intervenciones médicas (por hemotransfusión o insuficiente esterilización de material médico) y la transmisión materno-fetal.

El VIH es un lentivirus de la familia *Retroviridae*. Un virión está compuesto por dos copias de ácido ribonucleico (ARN) envueltos en tres capas: una cápside de forma cónica, la matriz, y una bicapa lipídica que alberga 72 espículas formadas por las proteínas gp 41 y gp 120, siendo esta última indispensable para la unión del virión con sus células diana.

Estas células diana son los linfocitos T con cúmulo de diferenciación (CD) 4. El VIH es presentado a los linfocitos T CD4+ por las células dendríticas sin ser degradados previamente. El virus se une al receptor CD4 y a un co-receptor (el receptor 5 de quimiocina C-C [CCR5] o el receptor 4 de quimiocina C-X-C [CXCR4]) mediante la proteína de superficie gp120, y su envoltorio se fusiona con la membrana celular del linfocito. Tras la liberación del ARN desde el virión al citoplasma, éste se convierte en ácido desoxirribonucleico (ADN) mediante la acción de la enzima viral transcriptasa inversa. Posteriormente, el ADN viral es transportado al núcleo y se integra en el ADN de la célula

infectada. Cuando el linfocito infectado se activa, el virus utiliza el aparato de transcripción de la propia célula para reproducirse de forma masiva, y este proceso frecuentemente lleva a la muerte de la célula huésped (Figura 3 [9]).

Paralelamente, las células infectadas presentan las proteínas víricas producidas mediante complejos mayores de histocompatibilidad (*major histocompatibility complex*– MHC) de clase I a los linfocitos T CD8+ – también llamados linfocitos T citotóxicos (*cytotoxic T lymphocyte* – CTL). Los CTL destruyen las células infectadas, además de liberar citoquinas – como interferón (IFN) gamma, factor de necrosis tumoral (*tumor necrosis factor*, TNF) alpha, etc – y quimiocinas que interfieren con la entrada del virus en los linfocitos T CD4+ y con la replicación viral. Este papel de los CTL es fundamental en el control inmunológico de la infección aguda por VIH.

Tras ser expuestos al estímulo antigénico, los linfocitos T naíf (CD45RA+RO-) se diferencian a linfocitos T memoria (CD45RA-RO+), que tradicionalmente se clasifican como "central" (localizados principalmente en el tejido linfático) o "efector" (hallados mayoritariamente en tejido no linfático), siendo la célula efectora el estado final de diferenciación linfocitaria antes del agotamiento y la muerte celular. Sin embargo, hay que mencionar que, como cada vez se descubren más y más subpoblaciones linfocitarias con diferentes marcadores y características, recientemente se ha sugerido un nuevo modelo dinámico de clasificación de células T basada en su capacidad de diferenciación y su localización, que se opone a usar categorías discretas de fenotipos y deja de utilizar la expresión "efector" por considerarla ambigua y poco útil[10].

De todos modos, la infección por VIH empuja el balance natural de los distintos tipos de linfocitos hacia células más diferenciadas, con un aumento de aquellos con marcadores de activación (CD38+, HLA-DR), senescencia (CD57+) y agotamiento (CD28-), y también se aumenta la proporción de células T efectoras de memoria terminalmente diferenciadas, que vuelven a expresar CD45RA (linfocitos T_{EMRA}, CD45RA+RO+),



Por otro lado, la respuesta humoral inicial no neutraliza directamente al virus, sino que actúa principalmente promoviendo la activación de células asesinas naturales (células *natural killer* – NK). Más adelante también aparecen anticuerpos neutralizantes que – salvo algunos casos excepcionales – no suelen contribuir de forma significativa al control viral [11].

Durante los primeros días de la infección el virus se extiende por todos los órganos y tejidos del sistema inmunitario del organismo, como los ganglios linfáticos y el tejido linfático asociado a las mucosas (*mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue* – MALT), incluido su parte más extensa, el tejido linfático asociado con el intestino (*gut-associated lymphoid tissue* – GALT). El GALT y otros tejidos donde la penetración de los antirretrovirales es deficiente – como el sistema nervioso central – forman los principales lugares anatómicos del reservorio viral ("santuarios anatómicos"), donde el virus puede permanecer latente durante largos periodos de tiempo, siendo esto una de las principales causas que impiden la eliminación del virus con TARVc.

Las primeras semanas de la infección – conocidas como fase aguda – se caracterizan por un círculo vicioso de replicación viral intensa que, a través de la depleción de linfocitos T en el GALT, daña la barrera intestinal aumentando su permeabilidad, lo que da lugar a una translocación bacteriana desde el intestino al torrente sanguíneo, promoviendo una activación inmunológica que a su vez beneficia la replicación viral [12].

La fase aguda de la infección por el VIH es seguida por una fase crónica de latencia clínica de varios años de duración. Durante este periodo se objetiva una replicación viral permanente y un desgaste paulatino del sistema inmunológico debido a una disminución progresiva del número de linfocitos T CD4+. Cuando el número de linfocitos T CD4+ llega

Introducción

a ser insuficiente para que estas células puedan desarrollar de forma eficaz sus funciones fisiológicas, el cuadro desemboca invariablemente en la fase final de la infección, el SIDA. Esto habitualmente ocurre con un recuento de linfocitos T CD4+ por debajo de 200 células/uL, y se caracteriza por la aparición de enfermedades oportunistas de índole infecciosa y/o neoplásica, las cuales llevan finalmente a la muerte de la persona infectada. El tiempo entre el contagio y la fase de SIDA es normalmente inferior a los 10 años.

I.1.c Tratamiento antiretroviral y sus limitaciones

Actualmente están disponibles casi treinta fármacos anti-retrovirales, y unas veinte combinaciones fijas basadas en estos compuestos (Figura 4). Con el TARVc actual la esperanza de vida de una persona infectada es comparable con la de la población general, ya que con la supresión continua de la CV se evita el descenso progresivo del recuento de linfocitos T CD4+ y la progresión de la enfermedad a SIDA.

Sin embargo, a pesar de este hito alcanzado en pocas décadas después del inicio de la pandemia, desde el punto de vista objetivo el TARVc no es una estrategia óptima para combatir la enfermedad. Los problemas con el TARVc son múltiples y mayoritariamente radican en el hecho de que no es un tratamiento curativo, por lo que las personas que viven con VIH se ven obligadas a seguirlo durante toda su vida. A continuación, enumeraremos los inconvenientes más importantes derivados de este escenario.

Aunque el perfil de seguridad de los nuevos fármacos antirretrovirales es superior a los primeros compuestos, la toxicidad a largo plazo sigue siendo relevante [13], e incluso aún desconocida en muchos casos, ya que incluso 5-10 años de experiencia clínica puede no ser suficiente para asegurar la inocuidad después de varias décadas de un tratamiento crónico



[14]. Por otro lado, el cumplimiento terapéutico a largo plazo también puede ser deficiente en algunos casos, ya sea por motivos psicológicos, efectos adversos, o por dificultades para acceder al tratamiento [15].

Asimismo, el coste económico del TARVc es muy elevado: se sitúa entre 6.000-10.000 euros durante el primer año [16]. Además, el coste total de la enfermedad a lo largo de la vida de una persona que vive con VIH ha ido aumentando constantemente desde el inicio de la era TARVc, y se estima que actualmente supera los 1.600.000 dólares estadounidenses (lo que equivale aproximadamente a 1.350.000 euros)[17]. Por último, la infección por VIH conlleva una inflamación sistémica crónica de causas múltiples (como la translocación bacteriana, las coinfecciones, o la posible viremia residual – revisado en [18]). Este estado inflamatorio crónico persiste incluso en el caso de supresión virológica eficaz [19], y resulta en una incrementada morbi-mortalidad en las personas infectadas por los llamados eventos "no-SIDA": enfermedades cardiovasculares, endocrinológicas, hepáticas, renales, neoplásicas, o neuro-psiquiátricas [20,21]. Actualmente en países desarrollados más de la mitad de las personas viviendo con VIH mueren por estas enfermedades no definitorias de SIDA [22]. Además, según un estudio reciente, en comparación con la población general los pacientes infectados por VIH pueden tener 1,5-2 veces más riesgo de padecer una enfermedad cardiovascular, pudiendo ascender el cociente de riesgo hasta 4 para la insuficiencia cardíaca o el ictus [23].

Los motivos aquí expuestos conllevan que el TARVc no se puede considerar un tratamiento óptimo, por lo que están surgiendo nuevos abordajes terapéuticos con el propósito de ofrecer una terapia curativa para el VIH.

I.2 Estrategias de curación de la infección por VIH

I.2.a Erradicación y curación funcional del VIH

Se han ensayado diferentes estrategias de curación de la infección por VIH con el objetivo de ofrecer una alternativa al TARVc (Tabla 1). Algunos de estos métodos buscan la erradicación completa del virus del organismo huésped ("cura esterilizante"), mientras que otros intentan alcanzar un estado de "cura funcional" en el cual el virus esté controlado (pero no eliminado) sin la necesidad de seguir TARVc.

A pesar del enorme esfuerzo y los múltiples intentos para encontrar una cura esterilizante, hasta ahora solamente se ha documentado la curación de la infección por VIH en dos ocasiones. En ambos casos se alcanzó la erradicación del virus mediante un trasplante de progenitores hematopoyéticos (TPH) alogénico que se realizó por una enfermedad maligna hematológica. Ambos donantes de las células hematopoyéticas fueron portadores homocigotos de una mutación poco frecuente del co-receptor CCR5 del VIH. Esta mutación, llamada Δ 32 por ser una deleción de 32 pares de bases en el gen del CCR5, confiere resistencia al VIH por impedir la entrada de los viriones en las células diana.

La primera persona que se curó así de la infección por VIH fue Timothy Ray Brown, "el paciente de Berlín", quien fue tratado mediante TPH por leucemia mieloide aguda en 2007 [24]. El segundo paciente, "el paciente de Londres", fue sometido a TPH en 2016 para tratar su linfoma de Hodgkin [25]. Los dos pacientes están declarados libres de enfermedad dado que no se ha podido detectar VIH en ninguna de las muestras procedentes de múltiples localizaciones anatómicas desde hace 15 y 6 años, respectivamente.

Introducción

Tabla 1. Estrategias terapéuticas más importantes ensayadas con el propósito de curar la infección por el VIH (TARVc = tratamiento antirretroviral combinado, TPH = trasplante de progenitores hematopoyéticos)

Μέτοdo	EFECTO BUSCADO	Descripción
TARVc precoz	Erradicación	Prevención del establecimiento del reservorio
TPH (donante con mutación Δ32)	Erradicación	Sustitución de las células diana del paciente por otras resistentes a la infección por el VIH
"kick and kill"	Erradicación	Reactivación de las células infectadas latentes que constituyen el reservorio viral, y su eliminación posterior
"block and lock"	Cura funcional	Inhibición de la reactivación de células infectadas latentes, evitando así el rebote viral
Vacunas terapéuticas	Erradicación / Cura funcional	Intensificación de la respuesta inmunitaria del huésped para eliminar / controlar el virus sin TARVc. Alguna vez combinadas con métodos "kick and kill"
Anticuerpos ampliamente neutralizantes	Erradicación / Cura funcional	Bloqueo de la entrada de los viriones en las células dianas y activación de la respuesta inmune innata
Inhibidores de <i>checkpoints</i> inmunológicos	Erradicación / Cura funcional	Potenciación de la respuesta específica frente al VIH mediante la inhibición del agotamiento de los CTL
Terapia génica	Erradicación	Silenciamiento génico del gen CCR5

En otras ocasiones se describieron largos periodos de indetectabilidad de VIH en receptores de TPH, pero finalmente se observó un rebote viral en todos estos casos. Henrich y sus colaboradores publicaron los casos de dos pacientes de Boston que permanecieron con CV indetectable sin TARVc durante 12 y 32 semanas, respectivamente [26]. Estos pacientes eran heterocigotos para la mutación Δ 32, pero los progenitores hematopoyéticos recibidos contenían el gen silvestre de CCR5 [27]. En otro caso, en Essen (Alemania), aunque el donante era homocigoto para la mutación Δ 32, el paciente rebotó

rápidamente después del trasplante por una subpoblación preexistente del virus con tropismo para el co-receptor alternativo, CXCR4 [28].

I.2.b Vacunas terapéuticas

Dado que el TPH es una intervención muy compleja, con alta tasa de complicaciones que pueden llegar a ser mortales, el uso generalizado de este método para combatir el VIH no es viable. Por otro lado, de las estrategias alternativas de cura esterilizante enumeradas en la Tabla 1, ninguna ha podido demostrar su eficacia en la práctica hasta la fecha. En la búsqueda de una cura funcional, sin embargo, ha habido algunos avances en los últimos años, concretamente en el campo de las vacunas terapéuticas.

El concepto de vacunas terapéuticas nació hace más de 30 años [29], y desde entonces se han realizado más de 100 ensayos clínicos con diferentes tipos de vacunas [30]. La tabla 2 (adaptada de [30]) resume los principales tipos de vacunas ensayadas en ensayos clínicos hasta ahora. La mayoría de estas vacunas mostraron cierto grado de inmunogenicidad. Sin embargo, la respuesta inmunológica provocada en general no se tradujo en una mejoría del control viral en pacientes sin TARVc, salvo en unas – pocas – excepciones que detallamos a continuación.

Uno de los resultados más positivos se registró hace quince años con la combinación de una vacuna basada en un vector viral, expresando los genes Env, Gag, Pol y Nef (ALVAC-HIV), una vacuna peptídica que contenía péptidos de Nef, Gag y Pol (Lipo-6T), e interleucina -2 (IL-2) [31]. En dos ensayos clínicos aleatorizados (ECA) se demostró que la intervención provocó una respuesta inmunológica amplia y específica frente al VIH.

Introducción

31

(adaptada de [50])		
TIPO DE VACUNA	Descripción	Ejemplos
Virus entero	inactivado o replicación-deficiente	HIV-1 immunogen, HIVAX
Proteínas / subunidades virales	Purificadas o recombinantes	gp-120, gp-160, tat
Péptidos virales	Un motivo / dominio proteico o una combinación de varios péptidos	HIV-v, C4-V3, VAC3S, F4/AS01B, VACC-4x, Afo-18, HIVACAT-T inmunógeno, HIVconsv,
ADN viral	Secuencias de ADN del VIH solo o en combinación con ADN codificando proteínas humanas (p. ej. IL-12) o de otros virus (p. ej. virus papiloma bovina).	 multiantigen (MAG) DNA vaccine, GTU®-Multi-HIVB, pTHr.HIVA, VRC- HIVDNA009-00-VP, VRC- HIVDNA016-00-VP, EP HIV, Dermavir, PENNVAX-B, APL 400–047 and APL 400–003, pGA2/JS7 DNA
Vacunas basadas en vectores virales	Virus vivos atenuados modificados genéticamente para expresar ciertos genes del VIH (p. ej: Virus de la viruela del canario (ALVAC), virus Vaccinia Ankara Modificada (MVA), virus de la viruela aviar, Adenovirus)	vCP1452, vCP1433, MVA-B, MVA-nef, MVA62B,VRC-HIVADV014-00-VP, ChAd-MVA.HIVconsv
Vacunas basadas en células dendríticas	Células dendríticas (DC) cargadas con algún inmunógeno.	DC+ péptidos, DC+ virus entero inactivado, DC+ mRNA, DC+ cuerpos apoptóticos
ARN viral	Secuencias de RNA viral	TriMix, iHIVARNA-01

Tabla 2. Principales tipos de vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH utilizadas en ensayos clínicos. (adaptada de [30])

En el primer estudio además se objetivó que tras 12 semanas de interrupción programada de TARVc (*analytical treatment interruption*, ATI), el porcentaje de pacientes con éxito virológico (definido como un pico viral a las 4 semanas de ATI por debajo de 50 000 copias/mL y un *set point* entre las 8 y las 12 semanas del ATI por debajo de 10 000 copias/mL) fue de 24% en el grupo de los vacunados frente a un 5% en el grupo control (p= 0,027) [32]. En el segundo ensayo se reportó asimismo una reducción significativa de

tiempo con TARVc en los pacientes vacunados en comparación con el grupo control (42.8% vs 26.5% del tiempo de seguimiento, p=0,005) [33].

Sin embargo, la primera vez que se demostró un descenso significativo y clínicamente relevante del *set point* viral debido a una vacuna terapéutica fue en un ensayo clínico con una vacuna basada en células dendríticas (DC), el DCV2 [34]. En el ensayo DCV2 se incluyeron 36 pacientes infectados crónicos por el VIH-1, que fueron aleatorizados 2:1 para recibir tres dosis de una vacuna compuesta por células dendríticas pulsadas con viriones de VIH-1 autólogos inactivados (DC-HIV-1), o células dendríticas no pulsadas (DC-control). En la mitad de los vacunados se detuvo el TARVc coincidiendo con la administración de la primera dosis de la vacuna, mientras que en la otra mitad y en el grupo control se inició el ATI cuatro semanas más tarde, coincidiendo con la tercera – y última – vacunación. Sin embargo, al no objetivar diferencias significativas en la evolución de la CV ni en las respuestas de células T VIH-específicas entre los vacunados según el inicio del ATI, se decidió analizarlos como un solo grupo terapéutico.

En este ensayo se objetivó un efecto tanto estadísticamente significativo como clínicamente relevante de la vacuna sobre el control de la carga viral: tras 12 y 24 semanas de ATI, la mediana del descenso de la CV respecto al *set point* histórico – es decir, el valor basal de la CV antes de iniciar TARVc – (delta CV) en el grupo DC-HIV-1 fue significativamente mayor que en el grupo DC-control (Figura 5). Además, había significativamente más pacientes con un delta CV por encima de 1 log₁₀ copias/mL en el grupo DC-VIH-1 que en el grupo DC-control tanto a las 12 (55% vs. 9%, p=0,02) como a las 24 semanas de ATI (35% vs. 0%, p=0,03).

Con estos resultados, el ensayo DCV2 es el estudio sobre una vacuna terapéutica frente al VIH más exitoso hasta la fecha. Parte de la presente tesis doctoral se basa en los datos generados durante este ensayo.



Figura 5. Evolución de la mediana del descenso de la CV respecto al *set point* histórico durante la interrupción de TARVc según grupo de tratamiento en el ensayo DCV2. Los números debajo del gráfico representan los pacientes en riesgo. Se observan los valores *p* de la prueba U de Mann-Whitney comparando los dos grupos a las semanas 12, 24, 36 y 48 y el que corresponde a la comparación de las áreas bajo las dos curvas (adaptada de [34])

I.3 Interrupciones programadas del tratamiento antirretroviral

I.3.a Interrupción de tratamiento como intervención

El comienzo temprano de TARVc conlleva beneficios clínicos evidentes [35], por lo que desde hace unos 5 años se recomienda iniciar tratamiento a todas las personas infectadas por VIH-1 independientemente del recuento de los linfocitos T CD4+ [36]. No obstante, a principios del siglo XXI se estudiaron intensamente los potenciales beneficios que podrían tener las interrupciones programadas y controladas de TARVc desde el punto de vista inmunológico. En pacientes con interrupciones previas de tratamiento se observaron respuestas VIH-específicas de células T más intensas que en los pacientes sin interrupciones previas [37,38]. Asimismo, en múltiples estudios se objetivó que el rebote viral podría tener una dinámica más favorable tras una o más interrupciones de tratamiento, manifestándose en una tasa más baja de crecimiento del virus [39–41] o un *set point* viral post-ATI más bajo [41–44].

Por otro lado, otros autores no encontraron ningún beneficio significativo – ni inmunológico ni virológico – de las interrupciones de tratamiento [45,46]. Paralelamente, ganaron cada vez más atención los peligros de detener el TARVc, aunque fuera solo de forma temporal, tales como la disminución del recuento de linfocitos T CD4+ [46,47], la trombocitopenia [48], la aparición de resistencias frente a antirretrovirales [49], el aumento del reservorio viral [50], o el aumento del riesgo de contagiar a contactos sexuales seronegativos [51–54]. En el estudio SMART (*Strategies for Management of Antiretroviral Therapy*, estrategias para el manejo de la terapia antirretroviral) se aleatorizaron más de

5000 pacientes para recibir TARVc continuo o intermitente [55]. En la rama de TARVc intermitente se detenía el tratamiento hasta reducirse el recuento de linfocitos T CD4+ por debajo de 250 células/mL, momento en que se reiniciaba TARVc, y al recuperar su número hasta por encima de 350 células/mL se volvía a retirar el tratamiento. Los autores observaron que tanto la incidencia de enfermedades oportunistas como la mortalidad cruda fue significativamente superior en la rama del tratamiento intermitente. En base a estos datos, actualmente el cumplimiento terapéutico continuo se considera un pilar fundamental del éxito terapéutico.

I.3.b Interrupción de tratamiento para evaluar la eficacia de inmunoterapias

A pesar de que *a priori* no es recomendable interrumpir TARVc, el ATI sigue siendo fundamental en la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas y otras intervenciones inmunológicas. La causa de esta aparente contradicción es la ausencia de marcadores subrogados de eficacia que permitan prescindir de interrumpir el tratamiento [30,56,57], y dada la complejidad de los procesos inmunológicos que guían el control viral es poco probable que dispongamos de correlatos de eficacia simples en el futuro próximo [58].

Afortunadamente, algunos trabajos demostraron que interrupciones cortas de TARVc de unas 12-16 semanas de duración son probablemente seguros. Un subanálisis del estudio SMART no encontró diferencias en los resultados clínicos entre pacientes con hasta 16 semanas de ATI y pacientes en TARVc continuo [59]. Además, datos recientes apuntan a que un ATI de hasta 12 semanas tampoco provoca un aumento del reservorio viral [60] ni un deterioro inmunológico permanentes [61]. Por otro lado, parece que estas 12-16
semanas tras la interrupción del tratamiento son suficientes para que el nuevo *set point* viral se establezca. Un modelo matemático estimó que el rango de tiempo hasta llegar al *set point* primario desde el momento de la infección por VIH es de 3 a 17 semanas [62], y según estudios clínicos la CV llega a un nuevo estado de equilibrio después de un ATI a las 12 semanas en más del 80% de los casos [41,63].

Aun así, para minimizar al máximo los riesgos, algunos autores recomiendan reiniciar TARVc justo después de documentar el rebote viral. Sin embargo, con esta variedad de ATI – conocida como "pausa monitorizada del tratamiento antirretroviral" (*monitored antiretroviral pause*, MAP) – solamente se puede medir el tiempo hasta el rebote, y muchos autores dudan si este fuera un *end-point* adecuado para evaluar intervenciones inmunológicas [30]. De hecho, expertos actualmente recomiendan utilizar MAP solamente para estimar la magnitud del reservorio viral [57], aunque otros opinan que el tiempo hasta el rebote viral tampoco reflejaría adecuadamente este dato [64].

A pesar de su aparente seguridad, el empleo de ATIs en estudios sigue suscitando bastante debate tanto entre investigadores como participantes [65]. Según las recomendaciones actuales efectuadas por un panel de expertos, solo se recomienda exponer a pacientes a un ATI en caso de disponer de datos previos convincentes sobre la eficacia de la intervención estudiada (p. ej. inmunogenicidad, resultados de estudios con animales, etc.) [66].

Al mismo tiempo, este panel de expertos evita dar recomendaciones inequívocas sobre qué parámetro utilizar como *end-point* una vez se realiza un estudio con ATI [66]. La sencilla razón es que faltan datos para poder decantarse por una medida de eficacia en concreto. A continuación, se detallan las medidas de eficacia más frecuentemente usadas en diferentes estudios.

I.3.c Medidas de eficacia clínica

El hecho de que no haya un acuerdo universal sobre la variable a medir durante el ATI para comparar la eficacia de diferentes intervenciones inmunológicas [66] resulta en que cada grupo de investigación utiliza parámetros diferentes [56]. Estos parámetros suelen ser principalmente clínicos, inmunológicos, o virológicos.

Ejemplos de parámetros clínicos pueden ser la aparición de algún evento clínico (síndrome antirretroviral agudo [63], enfermedad definitoria de SIDA [67], etc) o el reinicio de TARVc [68,69]. Actualmente se usan poco estas variables, y prácticamente nunca como *end-point* primario. El parámetro inmunológico por excelencia es el recuento de linfocitos T CD4+ y suele estar entre los *end-points* secundarios de la mayoría de los estudios [56], aunque cambios importantes de esta variable suelen requerir un tiempo más largo, por lo que no es una medida de eficacia óptima desde el punto de vista práctico.

Los parámetros más frecuentemente utilizados en estudios con ATI son virológicos, y son fundamentalmente de dos tipos: cuantitativos o temporales. Los primeros hacen referencia a la magnitud de la CV en algún momento fijo predefinido (a las 4, 10, 12, 16, etc. semanas del ATI), o en un punto dado de la curva del rebote viral (pico, *set point*). Estos parámetros pueden ser expresados en valores absolutos o como la diferencia de la CV en cuestión con respecto a la carga viral basal, o pre-TARVc ("delta"-variables). Las variables temporales se suelen expresar en semanas, y describen el tiempo que transcurre entre la parada del TARVc y la ocurrencia de un evento virológico. Los más frecuentemente utilizados son el tiempo hasta que la CV plasmática vuelve a ser detectable con métodos convencionales (tiempo hasta el rebote, *time to rebound*, TtR), el tiempo hasta llegar a la CV más alta (pico), o el tiempo hasta alcanzar el *set point*. A veces se mide el tiempo hasta llegar la CV a un umbral diferente del límite de detectabilidad, que suele ser un valor absoluto (p. ej. 10000 copias de VIH / mL de plasma), pero también puede ser expresado como una diferencia respecto la CV basal (p. ej. el tiempo hasta que la diferencia de la CV actual con la CV basal sea inferior a 1 log10 copias/mL). Las principales medidas de eficacia virológicas son resumidas en la Figura 6.

Esta variedad tan amplia de posibles medidas de eficacia tiene ciertas desventajas. En primer lugar, esta situación dificulta enormemente la comparación de los resultados de diferentes estudios. Además, aunque – en teoría – la medida usada en un estudio dado se escoge con antelación, la situación actual esconde el riesgo de una selección de *end-points a posteriori*, debido a la tentación de hacer el artículo científico más atractivo poniendo énfasis en las variables estadísticamente más significativas.



tiempo hasta el rebote.

En resumen, hoy en día en la investigación sobre tratamientos inmunológicos del VIH el ATI es un "malo conocido". Con sus múltiples limitaciones y aspectos polémicos sigue siendo una parte imprescindible del diseño de estos estudios. No obstante, recientemente están ganando terreno métodos alternativos basados en tecnologías novedosas – como la biología de sistemas o el aprendizaje automático – que prometen ofrecer herramientas más precisas y más seguras para evaluar la eficacia de estos tratamientos, eventualmente incluso sin paradas innecesarias de TARVc.

I.4 Métodos novedosos para evaluar la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas

I.4.a Vacunología de sistemas y VIH

El objetivo común de las ciencias de sistemas es el estudio de sistemas complejos en su entereza, en vez de investigar solo aspectos individuales asumiendo implícitamente la independencia de su entorno y la ausencia de interacciones con otros factores no conocidos. Desde la segunda mitad del siglo XX este enfoque ha ido extendiéndose en la mayoría de las ciencias – ya sean naturales o sociales, básicas o aplicadas. Alrededor del año 2000 empezó el *boom* de la disciplina de la biología de sistemas – la ciencia de los sistemas biológicos –, que se basa en el análisis computacional de grandes cantidades de datos sobre procesos biológicos en que participan muchos actores con relaciones complejas entre ellos.

Entre las áreas más importantes de la biología de sistemas encontramos las llamadas "ómicas". El término hace referencia al estudio de un conjunto grande de ácido desoxirribonucleico (ADN, genómica), proteínas (proteómica), metabolitos (metabolómica), ácido ribonucleico (ARN, transcriptómica), células (celómica), microbiota (microbiómica), etc. Clasificándola según el campo estudiado podemos hablar – entre otros – de la neurociencia de sistemas, de la biología de sistemas de cáncer, de la inmunología de sistemas, o de la vacunología de sistemas.

Tabla 3. Areas de aplicación de téci	nicas de vacunología de siste	mas (adaptada de [70])				
Objetivo	B ENEFICIOS / UTILIDAD	EJEMPLOS DE LA				
		METODOLOGÍA APLICADA				
Predecir respuesta	Desarrollo clínico, vigilancia	Transcriptómica [71–73]				
	post-comercialización	Celómica [72]				
		Metabolómica [74]				
Entender el modo de acción de la	Reducción del riesgo de	Transcriptómica [71,75,76]				
vacuna	fracasos tardíos					
Identifiar signaturas universales	Mejoría en el desarrollo de	Transcriptómica [74,77]				
relacionadas con vacunas	vacunas en general					
Selección de nuevos moduladores	Reducción del riesgo de	Transcriptómica [78,79]				
inmunológicos y adyuvantes /	fracasos precoces. Mejores					
vehículos de vacunas	vacunas					
Evaluar efectos adversos y	Desarrollo clínico, vigilancia	Transcriptómica [80,81]				
seguridad	post-comercialización	Metabolómica [81]				
		Proteómica [81]				
Entender el modo de acción de la	Interacción huésped –	Transcriptómica [82–84]				
infección	patógeno	Celómica [84]				
		Lipidómica [85]				
Diseño racional de vacunas	Reducción del riesgo de	Proteómica [86]				
	fracasos precoces. Mejores	Genómica [87]				
	vacunas. Facilitar					
	aprobación regulatoria					
Desarrollo de modelos de	Mejoría del desarrollo	Transcriptómica [88]				
animales	precoz. Facilita el paso de la					
	fase pre-clínica a la clínica					

Las técnicas de biología de sistemas pueden facilitar múltiples aspectos del proceso de desarrollo de nuevas vacunas, (Tabla 3) aunque quizás lo más interesante es su utilidad en la predicción de la respuesta a una vacuna, y la metodología más comúnmente usada – para este fin y también en general – es la transcriptómica.

La transcriptómica es la "ómica" del ARN, que estudia principalmente conjuntos de ARN mensajero (mRNA), pero también de ARN ribosómico (rRNA), ARN de transferencia (tRNA) o de micro-ARN (miRNA). El estudio de este último tipo de ARN está ganando popularidad en los últimos años, debido a su importante papel cada vez más reconocido en la regulación de diversos procesos biológicos mediante la modificación posttranscripcional de la expresión génica (resumido en la Figura 7 y ampliamente revisado en infecciones en general y en VIH en particular en [89] y en [90]).

En los últimos años se han publicado varios estudios sobre los cambios transcriptómicos relacionados con vacunación, y su capacidad para predecir la magnitud de la respuesta obtenida [71-73,75,91–98]. Aunque trataran de diferentes enfermedades (gripe, fiebre amarilla, virus de la hepatitis B [VHB], malaria, tularemia, sarampión, VIH), diferentes tipos de vacunas (virus inactivado, virus vivo atenuado, etc.) y diferentes muestras (sangre entera o células mononucleares de sangre periférica [PBMC], etc.), estudios que se centraron en los cambios transcriptómicos después de recibir una vacuna apuntan a procesos similares. La mayoría de ellos sugiere que la vacunación resulta (entre otras cosas) en la sobreexpresión de genes relacionados con la producción, regulación o respuesta a los interferones de tipo I [73,75,91,92,96], un aumento de la inflamación [91,94,96,97], y la activación de genes relacionados con la inmunidad innata [75,92,94–96] - de forma precoz - y específica [95-97] - de forma algo más tardía. Según algunos trabajos, además, la dominancia de la respuesta inmunológica específica se asocia con una mayor eficacia de la vacuna, mientras una respuesta predominantemente inflamatoria se asocia a una respuesta más débil [71,72,95]. Cabe resaltar que los resultados de un estudio realizado en receptores de una vacuna preventiva experimental para el VIH concuerdan con estas observaciones [95].



Figura 7. Biogénesis y mecanismo de acción de los miRNA. 1. Los miRNAs pueden estar codificados como unidades de trascripción independientes (vía canónica) o en intrones (vía no canónica). 2. El pri-miRNA es procesado por la proteína DGCR8 y la enzima DROSHA y se convierte en pre-MRNA en la vía canónica. En la no canónica el pre-miRNA es obtenido directamente mediante *splicing*. 3. El pre-miRNA es exportado del núcleo por la exportina-5. 4. La enzima DICER corta el asa del pre-miRNA y se obtiene el dúplex de miRNA maduro. 5. Una hebra del dúplex de miRNA (la hebra guía) se une a la proteína Argonauta del complejo RISC. La otra hebra (hebra pasajera) habitualmente se degrada. 6. El miRNA monocatenario en el complejo miRNA-RISC se une a secuencias complementarias de la región 3' del mRNA e interfiere con la traducción. (Adaptada de [89])

Sin embargo, establecer paralelismos entre vacunas preventivas y terapéuticas frente el VIH puede no ser válido por varios motivos. La diferencia más evidente entre las dos situaciones es el hecho de que al administrar una vacuna terapéutica no se trata de un primer encuentro del sistema inmunológico con los antígenos del patógeno – como en el caso de las vacunas preventivas. Además, en el caso del VIH las células diana de la enfermedad coinciden con las células que deberían proporcionar la respuesta específica a la vacuna y al virus. También se ha de tener en cuenta que mientras no se disponga de una vacuna terapéutica clínicamente eficaz, es difícil hablar de verdaderos "respondedores", lo que sugiere que lo aprendido en relación con el poder predictivo de patrones transcriptómicos en vacunas preventivas puede no ser aplicable al campo de vacunas terapéuticas.

Aunque la bibliografía sobre transcriptoma en el ámbito del VIH va en aumento [99], los datos obtenidos de trabajos sobre vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH por ahora escasean. El primer estudio que trató esta área fue realizado en los Países Bajos con muestras de PBMC procedentes de participantes de un ensayo no aleatorizado con una vacuna terapéutica basada en DC [100]. Los autores, de Goede y colaboradores, constataron un cambio muy importante en el patrón transcriptómico entre muestras pre- y post-vacunación en un análisis de componentes principales. Se observó asimismo la sobre-regulación de genes asociados con la activación del sistema inmunológico innato y adaptivo. Sorprendentemente, el posterior ATI (y el consecuente rebote viral) causó cambios transcriptómicos mucho más sutiles [100]. Mediante ensayos por inmunoadsorción ligado a enzimas de puntos (ELISPOT) y de proliferación celular también se pudo observar cierta inducción o intensificación de respuestas inmunológicas frente a diferentes componentes de la vacuna. No obstante, todo esto no se acompañó de cambios significativos a nivel virológico [101].

En un segundo estudio disponible en esta área, Thiébaut y colaboradores realizaron un análisis combinado de datos transcriptómicos con datos de ELISPOT, datos de secreción de citocinas, y datos citométricos en receptores de una vacuna terapéutica experimental basada en DC [102]. En este ensayo no controlado se objetivó una correlación inversa entre el pico de la CV post ATI y la magnitud de la respuesta inmunológica a la vacuna, lo que sugiere cierta eficacia virológica de manera indirecta [67]. Los autores objetivaron unos cambios conjuntos de grupos de genes ("módulos") relacionados con inflamación y con la activación de células T posterior a la vacunación [102]. La abundancia del primer grupo de genes se correlacionaba de forma negativa con la respuesta inmunológica VIH-específica y de forma positiva con el pico de la CV post-ATI, mientras los genes del segundo grupo se comportaron de manera opuesta [102]. Los datos sugieren un mejor control viral en la presencia predominante de respuestas inmunológicas específicas y peor control en caso de un predominio inflamatorio, lo que concuerda con lo observado con varias vacunas preventivas.

Aunque los datos publicados por ahora son escasos, éstos implican que las técnicas de biología de sistemas en el campo de las vacunas terapéuticas frente el VIH pueden ser de utilidad. El análisis de estas grandes cantidades de datos no sería posible sin los avances en la metodología aplicada en bioinformática y la creciente capacidad computacional de los ordenadores utilizados. La rápida evolución de la informática en las últimas décadas ha aportado además algunos métodos que pueden ser útiles en el análisis de datos biológicos más allá de las "ómicas". Las técnicas de aprendizaje automático son uno de los ejemplos más importantes desde el punto de vista médico.

I.4.b Aprendizaje automático

El término "aprendizaje automático" (AA) fue creado en 1959 por Arthur Samuel, quien lo definió como "el campo de estudio que otorga a las computadoras la capacidad de aprender sin ser programados de forma explícita" [103]. Nació de la fusión de la estadística y las ciencias de la computación, ya que busca el establecimiento de relaciones entre datos mediante algoritmos computacionales potentes [104]. El concepto se refiere a la capacidad

de un programa computacional de aprender patrones y crear modelos a partir de una gran cantidad de datos, y de poder realizar predicciones fiables a raíz de estos modelos creados. Recientemente se están multiplicando las publicaciones sobre su aplicación en áreas muy diversas de la medicina, como la cardiología [105], la anestesiología [106], la oncología [107], la neurología [108], la psiquiatría [109], la oftalmología [110], la medicina de urgencias [111], la radiología [112], o la medicina de laboratorio [113].

Los dos subtipos más básicos de AA son el AA supervisado y el AA no supervisado. En el primero se pretende obtener desde un grupo de "entrenamiento" algoritmos que ligan los datos de entrada del sistema (p. ej. datos demográficos o clínicos) con los datos de salida (p. ej. diagnósticos o eventos clínicos), con el fin de poder utilizar las relaciones aprendidas para asignar los atributos correctos a datos nuevos [103]. El objetivo más común del AA supervisado es la clasificación, cuando lo que se busca es una manera de asignar nuevos ítems (p. ej. pacientes) de forma correcta a unas categorías preestablecidas (p. ej. enfermo o sano). Por otro lado, en el AA no supervisado es el mismo sistema que crea las categorías entre los ítems de entrada basadas en patrones observados en sus atributos disponibles.

El AA supervisado es especialmente popular en el ámbito de la medicina clínica porque es una herramienta que satisface bien sus necesidades científicas más habituales: clasificar casos según ejes clínicos (enfermo o sano, grave o leve, buen o mal pronóstico, etc). La regresión logística es quizás el algoritmo más comúnmente empleado en la investigación médica. Los modelos predictivos creados mediante regresión logística son sencillos, transparentes, y razonablemente fiables, aunque un número alto de variables puede disminuir su rendimiento [114]. El clasificador bayesiano ingenuo (CBN) es otro clasificador sencillo, que ha ido ganando terreno en los últimos años en la investigación médica (Tabla 4). El CBN también es relativamente sencillo, rápido y de buen rendimiento,

Publicación	Objetivo	Descripción
Lakoumentas et al, 2012 [118]	Pronóstico	Clasificar casos de leucemia linfática crónica según estadio de la enfermedad y prognosis (supervivencia), combinando datos heterogéneos (clínica, laboratorio, citometría)
Li et al. 2012 [119]	Diagnóstico	Modelo para diferenciar entre colitis y cáncer en especímenes de biopsias colónicas analizadas con espectroscopia
Brown et al. 2016 [120]	Diagnóstico	Identificar pacientes con sepsis grave o shock séptico dentro de una hora desde su llegada a urgencias a base de una combinación de parámetros clínicos
Ananda-Rajah et al. 2017 [116]	Diagnóstico	Mejoría de la predicción de infecciones fúngicas invasivas en pacientes onco-hematológicas utilizando datos de múltiples fuentes: clínicos, microbiológicos, radiológicos, etc
Mascharak et al. 2018 [121]	Diagnóstico	Diagnóstico de cáncer orofaríngeo mediante la clasificación de imágenes endoscópicas obtenidas con diferentes técnicas.
Ehsani- Moghaddamet al. 2018 [122]	Diagnóstico	Diagnóstico de una enfermedad rara (mucopolisacaridosis tipo 2) basada en datos demográficos y sintomatología
Celin et al. 2018 [123]	Diagnóstico	Algoritmo que clasifica curvas de electrocardiograma (ECG) como "normal" o "anormal"
Feeny et al. 2019 [117]	Pronóstico	Modelo que predice el éxito de la terapia de resincronización cardíaca combinando datos clínicos con hallazgos de ECG y ecocardiografía
Chen et al. 2019 [124]	Pronóstico	Un predictor de las ocurrencias de eventos cardiovasculares al año en pacientes con miocardiopatía dilatada basado en datos clínicos, de ECG y ecocardiografía
Li et al. 2020 [125]	Diagnóstico	Diagnóstico diferencial entre enfermedades infecciosas comunes basado en signos, síntomas, datos demográficos y de laboratorio

Tabla 4. Ejemplos de la aplicación del clasificador bayesiano ingenuo en la investigación clínica

a pesar de partir de la asunción "ingenua" de que las variables usadas son independientes la una de la otra – una condición cuyo cumplimiento es casi imposible en la vida real. Aún así, se demostró que el CBN funciona mejor que la regresión logística cuando el grupo de entrenamiento es pequeño [115,116] aunque en alguna ocasión resultó superior a la regresión logística incluso con un tamaño muestral bastante grande [117]. Otros algoritmos comunes de AA supervisado son: el método de los k vecinos más cercanos, el de bosques aleatorios (*random forest*), la red neuronal convolucional, o las máquinas de soporte vectorial, cuya discusión sobrepasa los límites de este trabajo (un resumen bien detallado de ellos se puede leer en [114]).

Finalmente hay que mencionar que, a pesar de los avances que se realicen con estos métodos desde el punto de vista científico, la aceptación general del uso extendido de técnicas de AA en la práctica clínica probablemente quedará supeditado a nuestra capacidad de entender – y de explicar adecuadamente a nuestros pacientes – su naturaleza a veces muy compleja, y sus predicciones que pueden ser difíciles de interpretar [126].

I.5 Resumen

Aunque el número de nuevos casos lleva descendiendo desde 1996, la población de personas que viven con el VIH sigue creciendo año tras año, ya que su esperanza de vida se acerca cada vez más a la población general. Esto se debe principalmente a la disminución de casos que progresan a SIDA debido a una oferta cada vez más amplia de TARVc, pero también a un mayor entendimiento de los fenómenos "no SIDA" relacionados con la infección, lo que facilita una atención integral mejorada de los pacientes. Aún así, existe amplio consenso de que la estrategia óptima para acabar con la pandemia sería un tratamiento curativo eficaz y seguro, pero la inmensa mayoría de los innumerables intentos de alcanzar este objetivo han fracasado.

No obstante, existen algunos métodos que – en base de la evidencia disponible – parecen prometedores, de los cuales destacan las vacunas terapéuticas. Por otro lado, el estudio de las vacunas terapéuticas, siendo este un campo relativamente joven, todavía no ha acabado de resolver algunos retos teóricos y metodológicos básicos importantes. Primero, en ausencia de un método curativo de comparación, no existe un consenso amplio sobre qué correlatos de eficacia son los más útiles a la hora de evaluar nuevos tratamientos. Esta situación genera dificultades significativas a la hora de interpretar y comparar estudios con diseños muy dispares. Además, para medir la mayoría de los *end-points* habituales es preciso retirar el tratamiento antirretroviral durante varios meses, lo que levanta cuestiones éticas relacionadas con la seguridad del paciente. Por tanto, definir marcadores subrogados tempranos de eficacia – que podrían permitir prescindir de ATIs prolongadas – debe ser un objetivo de máxima prioridad. Una de las causas más relevantes que dificultan el logro de este objetivo es el entendimiento incompleto de la patogenia del VIH y de la naturaleza de una respuesta inmunológica eficaz. Es evidente que será necesario ampliar el abanico de la metodología de investigación científica para acercarnos a este fin, y es esperable que datos obtenidos con los métodos novedosos de biología de sistemas puedan ser de gran utilidad.

Los tres trabajos incluidos en esta tesis doctoral tratan de abordar algunos de los aspectos más importantes de esta problemática, y proponen ofrecer nuevas herramientas para la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH. En el primero se lleva a cabo un análisis exhaustivo de diferentes medidas de eficacia virológicas en estudios con ATI, con la intención de establecer correlaciones entre ellos y comprobar si existe algún parámetro que pueda "resumir" los demás parámetros de forma fiable, y por tanto pueda ser recomendada como *end-point* primario en futuros estudios sobre vacunas terapéuticas. En el segundo trabajo se intenta construir un modelo predictivo de control virológico durante ATI mediante un método sencillo de aprendizaje automático. En el último trabajo se explora la utilidad del análisis transcriptómico en predecir la respuesta virológica en un ensayo clínico parcialmente exitoso con una vacuna terapéutica basada en células dendríticas.

Introducción

II. Hipótesis de la tesis

- Las correlaciones entre los diferentes *end-points* virológicos en ensayos con ATI podrían ayudar a identificar un parámetro – o un conjunto de parámetros – que sería capaz de resumir los demás parámetros del rebote viral y cuyo uso preferencial podría ser propuesto para futuros estudios.
- El análisis detallado de la dinámica del rebote viral en un conjunto grande de casos de ATI podría identificar factores confusores de parámetros del rebote virológico, además de ofrecer unos datos de referencia para futuros trabajos con ATI sin grupo control.
- 3) Un clasificador sencillo basado en datos fácilmente evaluables podría identificar los respondedores y los no respondedores a una vacuna terapéutica basada en células dendríticas frente el VIH
- 4) El modelo construido en el punto anterior sería válido para predecir respuesta en una cohorte histórica independiente de episodios de ATI.
- 5) Patrones transcriptómicos de mRNA y miRNA precoces post-vacunación en participantes de un ensayo clínico aleatorizado parcialmente exitoso sobre una vacuna terapéutica basada en células dendríticas frente al VIH podrían predecir la respuesta a la vacuna.
- 6) Analizando estos patrones transcriptómicos sería posible identificar procesos biológicos que juegan papeles importantes en el control de la carga viral durante ATI.

III. Objetivos de la tesis

- 1) Definir *end-points* virológicos en ensayos con ATI para identificar un parámetro o un conjunto de parámetros que puedan resumir los demás parámetros del rebote viral.
- 2) Investigar un clasificador sencillo basado en datos fácilmente evaluables para identificar los respondedores y los no respondedores a una vacuna terapéutica basada en células dendríticas frente el VIH
- 3) Evaluar si los patrones transcriptómicos de mRNA y miRNA precoces post-vacunación en participantes de un ensayo clínico aleatorizado parcialmente exitoso sobre una vacuna terapéutica basada en células dendríticas frente el VIH predicen la respuesta a la vacuna.

IV. Trabajos publicados

Trabajos publicados

IV.1 Primer trabajo:

Virological Outcome Measures During Analytical Treatment Interruptions in Chronic HIV-1 Infected Patients

<u>Csaba Fehér</u>, Lorna Leal, Montserrat Plana, Nuria Climent, Alberto Crespo Guardo, Esteban Martínez, Pedro Castro, Vicens Díaz-Brito, Beatriz Mothe, Juan Carlos López Bernaldo De Quirós, Josep María Gatell, Patrick Aloy, Felipe García.

Open Forum Infect Dis. 2019;6(12): ofz485.

doi: 10.1093/ofid/ofz485.

IF: 4.423

Q2 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)

Trabajos publicados



Virological Outcome Measures During Analytical Treatment Interruptions in Chronic HIV-1-Infected Patients

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Background. Analytical treatment interruptions (ATIs) are essential in research on HIV cure. However, the heterogeneity of virological outcome measures used in different trials hinders the interpretation of the efficacy of different strategies.

Methods. We conducted a retrospective analysis of viral load (VL) evolution in 334 ATI episodes in chronic HIV-1-infected patients collected from 11 prospective studies. Quantitative (baseline VL, set point, delta set point, VL, and delta VL at given weeks after ATI, peak VL, delta peak VL, and area under the rebound curve) and temporal parameters (time to rebound [TtR], set point, peak, and certain absolute and relative VL thresholds) were described. Pairwise correlations between parameters were analyzed, and potential confounding factors (sex, age, time of known HIV infection, time on ART, and immunological interventions) were evaluated.

Results. The set point was lower than baseline VL (median delta set point, -0.26; P < .001). This difference was >1 log10 copies/mL in 13.9% of the cases. The median TtR was 2 weeks; no patients had an undetectable VL at week 12. The median time to set point was 8 weeks: by week 12, 97.4% of the patients had reached the set point. TtR and baseline VL were correlated with most temporal and quantitative parameters. The variables independently associated with TtR were baseline VL and the use of immunological interventions.

Conclusions. TtR could be an optimal surrogate marker of response in HIV cure strategies. Our results underline the importance of taking into account baseline VL and other confounding factors in the design and interpretation of these studies. **Keywords.** HIV-1; immune-based therapy; STI; vaccine; viral load.

Analytical treatment interruptions (ATIs) form an inherent part of the design of studies on HIV cure [1]. As currently there are no adequate surrogate markers of treatment efficacy [1, 2], the direct assessment of viral control during ATI is the recommended method to evaluate these novel interventions [2]. The imperative use of ATI in this field has been, however, the subject of debate and criticism in recent years [3]—especially since the publication of the SMART study

[4]—as it raises important ethical and safety issues. There

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have been proposed potential adverse events associated with ATI, encompassing clinical [4–6], virological [7, 8], and epidemiological [9] risks. Although there is recently increasing evidence that short-term treatment interruptions are essentially safe [10], the debate is far from over [11]. To minimize the potential risks of ATI, HIV remission studies are advised to contain only a small number of participants [2], and they frequently dispense with an adequate comparator group [12]. This, in turn, leads to a loss of statistical power and entails the possibility of biased conclusions [13].

In the absence of consensus about a "gold standard" virological outcome measure, different studies use different virological end points (time to rebound, viral set point, etc.), which makes the adequate comparison of their results highly cumbersome, if not impossible [1]. Intensively monitored antiretroviral pause (MAP) [2] involves prompt treatment reintroduction after viral rebound. It is gaining popularity as an alternative of ATI, because the relatively short time the participants have to remain off antiretroviral therapy (ART)

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confers an enhanced safety profile to this strategy. However, the only virological end point that can be recorded in a MAP study is time to rebound (TtR), and—according to the current evidence—TtR might not be extrapolated to predict other important outcome measures, such as the set point [1, 14]. Moreover, increasing evidence suggests that VL rebound is followed by a significant drop in viremia in some patients, and this pattern could not be detected in the MAP strategy [13].

There are only a few available publications [14] that directly address the expected values and the possible correlations between different virological end points measured during ATI. Our aims were to perform a thorough description of the dynamics of viral rebound in a big retrospective cohort of ATI episodes in chronic HIV-1-infected patients, to establish the correlations between different rebound parameters, to propose a "resuming parameter," and to identify possible confounding factors for some of the most important parameters (TtR, set point, peak, and area under the curve [AUC]) that should be taken into consideration in the design and interpretation of future studies on HIV cure.

METHODS

Data on weekly VL evolution during ATI episodes were extracted from 11 prospective studies with similar inclusion criteria. All of these studies were performed and/or coordinated by our group: 10 of them have been previously published [15-24], and 1 is currently underway (ClinicalTrials.gov number NCT02767193). Four were structured treatment interruption studies with no additional intervention [15-17, 21], 4 were therapeutic vaccine studies (NCT02767193, [20, 23, 24]), 2 included an intervention arm with a cytostatic drug [18, 19], and 1 evaluated the effect of a 12-month vaccination schedule on the dynamics of viral rebound [22]. All the studies were approved by institutional ethical review boards and by the Spanish Regulatory Authorities. The present study was also evaluated and approved by the institutional ethical board of the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona (HCB/2018/0740); the procedures followed in the study were in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000.

Cases were excluded if they did not fulfill the following criteria: available VL data, undetectable VL (according to the detectability threshold used in the original study) at the time of treatment interruption, at least 1 detectable follow-up VL determination before ART reinitiation, an ATI of at least 12 weeks or documented viral rebound in cases with ART reinitiation before week 12. Cases with largely incomplete or nonverifiable data were also excluded from the analysis. The VL data available for the analysis corresponded to weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 24, and 48 after treatment interruption, the last VL value considered in each case being the value before either treatment reinitiation or end of follow-up.

The parameters used for the analysis were categorized as quantitative if they were principally related to the magnitude of VL and temporal if they described a time-related variable. The quantitative parameters analyzed were the following: (1) baseline VL, (2) set point, (3) delta set point, (4) VL at a given week after treatment interruption, (5) delta VL, (6) peak VL, (7) delta peak VL, and (8) AUC. For set point and delta set point, sensitivity analyses were also performed (set point "forward" and delta set point "forward"). All temporal parameters were determined in weeks: (1) TtR, (2) time to set point, (3) time until certain absolute VL thresholds (200, 1000, and 10 000 copies/mL), (4) time until relative thresholds (0.5 and 1 log10 copies/mL), and (5) time to peak VL. (For the definitions of the analyzed parameters, see Supplementary Table 1.)

The detectability threshold was defined as 50 copies/mL. A clinically relevant difference between VL values was defined as >0.5 log10 copies/mL. All analyses were carried out on the overall study population and also on the subset of cases without immunological intervention (cytostatic drug or therapeutic vaccine).

All analyses were carried out in R (version 3.4.1; R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) using RStudio (version 1.0.143; RStudio Inc., Boston, MA, USA). Continuous and discrete variables were expressed in median (interquartile range [IQR]) and in absolute number and percentage, respectively. Confidence intervals of proportions were calculated with the Clopper-Pearson method. Comparisons were performed using the Student t, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis, Wilcoxon signed rank, chi-square, and Fisher exact tests according to data type. The associations between virological parameters were determined using Pearson and Spearman correlations. Confounding factors independently associated with TtR were identified by multiple linear regression analysis on variables significantly associated with TtR in the univariate analysis. Survival curves were compared by the log-rank test. Statistical significance was defined as a P value <.05.

RESULTS

Demographics of the Study Population

There were 334 ATI episodes analyzed, belonging to 249 chronic HIV-1-infected patients (from 63 patients, \geq 2 ATI episodes were included in the study). The median age (IQR) was 39.5 (35.0 to 45.7) years, and 26.3% of the episodes were registered in women. The median durations of known HIV infection and ART (IQR) were 6.8 (4.1 to 11.5) and 3.6 (2.1 to 5.6) years, respectively. All patients started ART in the chronic phase of HIV infection. An immunological intervention (cytostatic drug or therapeutic vaccine) accompanied 62 ATI episodes (18.6%). The median length of follow-up before ART reinitiation (IQR) was 12 (10 to 12) weeks.

^{2 •} OFID • Fehér et al

Description of Virological Outcome Measures

The observed values of the analyzed parameters in the overall study population and in the subset of cases without intervention are summarized in Table 1. Figure 1A shows the evolution of viral loads during ATI of all analyzed cases, and the weekly distribution of VL is depicted in Figure 1B.

Quantitative Parameters

The set point was lower than the baseline VL in 68.2% of the cases (95% confidence interval [CI], 60.1%-75.5%). This difference was not clinically relevant in 65.6%, but it was >0.5 log10 copies/mL in 34.4% (95% CI, 26.9%-42.6%) and >1 log10 copies/mL in 13.9% of the cases (95% CI, 8.8%-20.5%). Similar results were obtained in the sensitivity analysis and in the analysis of the subset without immunological interventions (Supplementary Table 2), and these proportions did not vary significantly when we

limited the analysis to the 215 first ATI episodes (data not shown).

The VL was <1000 copies/mL in around 10% of the cases at all time points between week 6 and week 24 (Figure 1C). Delta VL was >0.5 copies/mL in >25% of the cases at any follow-up week (Figure 1D). For more details, see also Supplementary Figure 1, which shows VL values at different weeks of ATI as compared with baseline VL in the intervention-free subset, and Supplementary Table 3, which shows the proportion of cases in whom the VL remained below given thresholds throughout follow-up.

During ATI, 2 different forms of viral load rebound kinetics are expected: A peak VL may precede the set point or coincide with it (Supplementary Figure 2). Peak VL preceded the set point in 37.7% of the cases where the set point could be determined (95% CI, 30.0%–45.8%). The set point (IQR) was significantly lower in cases where it was preceded by a peak, but

Table 1. Observed Values of the Explored End Point Parameters in the Study Population

	Overall Study Population ($n = 334$)		ATIs Without Intervention (n = 272)		_	Overall Study Population (n = 334)		ATIs Without Intervention (n = 272)	
	Median (IQR)	No.	Median (IQR)	No.		Median (IQR)	No.	Median (IQR)	No.
			Qua	ntitative pa	arameters				
Baseline VL, log10 copies/mL	4.43 (4.08 to 4.95)	312	4.43 (4.08 to 4.91)	252	AUC, log10 copies/mL	-0.36 (-0.74 to -0.00)	312	-0.28 (-0.65 to 0.09)	252
Set point, log10 copies/mL	4.33 (3.79 to 4.81)	154	4.37 (3.99 to 4.91)	106	Delta set point, log10 copies/mL	-0.26 (-0.64 to 0.18)	151	-0.20 (-0.58 to 0.25)	105
Set point "forward," log10 copies/mL	4.35 (3.79 to 4.87)	334	4.37 (3.85 to 4.91)	272	Delta set point "forward," log10 copies/mL	-0.22 (-0.66 to 0.27)	312	-0.17 (-0.62 to 0.30)	252
Peak VL, log10 copies/mL	4.65 (4.15 to 5.15)	154	4.72 (4.21 to 5.17)	106	Delta peak VL, log10 copies/mL	0.06 (-0.44 to 0.70)	151	0.17 (-0.34 to 0.85)	105
VL post-ATI, log10 copies/mL					Delta VL, log10 copies/mL				
Week 1	1.57 (1.30 to 2.30)	88	1.57 (1.30 to 2.30)	80	Week 1	-2.44 (-3.01 to -1.87)	88	–2.WW54 (–3.03 to –1.88)	80
Week 2	2.28 (1.57 to 3.33)	167	2.57 (1.57 to 3.66)	112	Week 2	-2.06 (-2.67 to -1.06)	164	-1.73 (-2.51 to -0.81)	111
Week 3	3.55 (2.17 to 4.63)	73	3.69 (2.30 to 4.71)	68	Week 3	-0.86 (-1.73 to -0.06)	73	-0.79 (-1.65 to -0.06)	68
Week 4	4.16 (3.36 to 4.88)	208	4.32 (3.52 to 5.04)	149	Week 4	-0.39 (-1.10 to 0.45)	205	-0.20 (-0.90 to 0.60)	148
Week 5	4.26 (3.13 to 5.04)	36	4.57 (3.73 to 5.06)	31	Week 5	0.31 (-0.51 to 0.77)	36	0.37 (-0.26 to 0.77)	31
Week 6	4.36 (3.79 to 4.78)	88	4.42 (3.89 to 4.94)	65	Week 6	0.03 (-0.81 to 0.50)	88	0.17 (-0.64 to 0.56)	65
Week 8	4.29 (3.66 to 4.76)	160	4.35 (3.72 to 4.86)	103	Week 8	-0.30 (-0.77 to 0.20)	157	-0.22 (-0.74 to 0.23)	102
Week 10	4.32 (3.65 to 4.60)	50	4.32 (3.82 to 4.58)	37	Week 10	-0.09 (-0.64 to 0.28)	50	-0.18 (-0.46 to 0.06)	37
Week 12	4.28 (3.77 to 4.73)	242	4.34 (3.80 to 4.86)	183	Week 12	-0.30 (-0.79 to 0.17)	220	-0.21 (-0.68 to 0.25)	163
Week 24	4.16 (3.75 to 4.64)	83	4.16 (3.72 to 4.86)	44	Week 24	-0.46 (-0.84 to -0.10)	81	-0.42 (-0.79 to -0.04)	43
Week 48	4.22 (3.71 to 4.51)	36	4.04 (3.69 to 4.47)	12	Week 48	-0.52 (-0.86 to -0.16)	36	-0.46 (-0.71 to -0.12)	12
			Ter	mporal para	ameters				
Time to rebound, wk	2 (2 to 4)	170	2 (2 to 3)	122	Time to peak VL, wk	4 (4 to 8)	154	4 (4 to 6)	106
Time to set point, wk	8 (4 to 8)	154	6 (4 to 8)	106	Time to 200-copies/mL threshold, wk	2 (2 to 4)	164	2 (2 to 4)	116
Time to 1000-c opies/mL threshold, wk	4 (2 to 4)	159	3 (2 to 4)	113	Time to 10 000-copies/mL threshold, wk	4 (3 to 4)	134	4 (2.75 to 4)	96
Time to delta 0.5-log10 copies/mL threshold, wk	4 (3 to 4)	130	4 (2.25 to 4)	98	Time to delta 1-log10 copies/ mL threshold, wk	4 (2 to 4)	147	3 (2 to 4)	107

"n" indicates the total number of cases; "No." indicates the number of cases with available information for each category. Abbreviations: ATI, analytical treatment interruption; AUC, area under the curve; IQR, interguartile range; VL, viral load.

Virological Outcome Measures During ATI • OFID • 3



Figure 1. The evolution of viral load (VL) according to time after treatment interruption and its comparison with the baseline VL in the overall study population. The numbers within the boxes and bars represent the number of episodes in each category. A, Spaghetti plot of the evolution of VL in all analytical treatment interruption episodes included in the study. The red line corresponds to the median value. B, The distribution of VL measured at each time point after treatment interruption until week 24. The numbers within the boxes indicate the sample size. The horizontal line marks the median baseline VL values (4.43 log10 copies/mL). Gray coloring of boxes indicates a significant difference in baseline VL (Mann-Whitney *U* test). C, The proportions of cases with VL values within ranges of the thresholds 50, 200, 1000, and 10 000 copies/mL at baseline and throughout the follow-up weeks. D, The proportions of cases with delta-VL values >1, between 0.5 and 1, and <0.5 log10 copies/mL throughout the follow-up weeks.

this difference was not clinically relevant (4.13 [3.60 to 4.49] vs 4.40 [4.00 to 4.91] log10 copies/mL; P = .003). The set point was <200 copies/mL in 2 cases in both groups (2/58 [3.4%] vs 2/96 [2.1%]; P = .673), all 4 episodes belonging to different patients. There was no statistically significant difference in baseline parameters (demographics, baseline VL) or TtR between cases with different peak VL patterns.

The median AUC (IQR) was -0.36 (-0.74 to -0.00) log10 copies/mL, and the absolute AUC was >0.5 log10 copies/mL in 42.0% (95% CI, 36.4%-47.7%) (Supplementary Table 2).

Temporal Parameters

In all the ATI episodes but 1, VL was detectable by week 6. The median TtR (IQR; range) was 2 weeks in both the overall population (2 to 4; 1–8) and the cases without intervention (2 to 3; 1–8 weeks). The proportion of patients with an undetectable VL at week 12 was 0% in both the overall study population (upper

4 • OFID • Fehér et al

95% CI, 1.5%) and the cases without intervention (upper 95% CI, 2.0%).

The median time until reaching the set point (IQR; range) was 8 (4 to 8; 1–24) weeks in the overall population and 6 (4 to 8; 1–24) weeks in the intervention-free subset. By week 12, 97.4% (95% CI, 93.5%–99.3%) of the patients had reached the set point.

Correlations Between Outcome Measures

To find a safe and easy-to-assess "resuming measure" of VL rebound, we analyzed the correlations between different rebound parameters.

Figure 2 resumes the pairwise Spearman correlations between the main explored parameters. An overview of pairwise Spearman and Pearson correlations between all parameters can be observed in Supplementary Figure 3. Baseline VL was significantly correlated to VL at all follow-up weeks, to set point, to peak VL, to the AUC, and also to some of the temporal parameters including TtR (Figure 3A). TtR was positively correlated to all other temporal parameters and showed a significant negative correlation to most of the quantitative parameters, including set point (Figure 3B), peak VL, and AUC (Supplementary Figure 4).

Confounding Factors

We assessed the effect of 5 potential confounding variables sex, age, time of known HIV infection, time on ART, and immunological interventions—on the dynamics of viral rebound.

Baseline VL, set point, and peak VL (IQR) were significantly lower in women (4.26 [3.79 to 4.72] vs 4.60 [4.17 to 5.03] log10 copies/mL; P < .001; 4.03 [3.28 to 4.42] vs 4.41 [4.06 to 4.91] log10 copies/mL; P = .005; and 4.30 [4.01 to 4.74] vs 4.83 [4.20 to 5.30] log10 copies/mL; P = .003; respectively). A higher set point was observed in older patients (Spearman's *rho* = .25; P = .005), and a smaller AUC was found in cases with a longer known duration of HIV infection (Spearman's *rho* = .18; P = .002). Immunological interventions significantly affected the magnitude of most quantitative and temporal parameters, except baseline VL (Supplementary Table 4).

In the univariate analysis age, the known duration of HIV and ART, the use of immunological interventions, and baseline VL were significantly associated with TtR. The variables independently associated with TtR according to the multivariate analysis were baseline VL (beta = -.32; P < .001), duration of ART (beta = .42; P = .002), and interventions (beta = .26; P < .001) (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

In this study, we have described the dynamics of viral rebound in a cohort of patients undergoing ATI, established correlations between the most frequently used virological outcome measures, and identified certain confounders that should be taken into consideration in the evaluation of ATI studies.

Our group previously reported that the set point after 3 ATIs in a cohort of 45 chronic HIV-1-infected patients was significantly lower than the baseline VL [25]. In accordance with this, our present results support the recent finding of Treasure et al. [14] claiming that the new set point is lower than the baseline VL in >60% of ATIs. Moreover, in our study, in one-third of the cases, this difference was >0.5 log10 copies/mL, and in 10% of the episodes, it was >1 log10 copies/mL. However, this finding may correspond only to a temporary decrease in VL, as some studies with longer follow-up reported a slow but steady increase of VL after ATI until becoming virtually identical to baseline VL values [26, 27].

We observed that the set point was lower than the peak VL in more than one-third of the ATI episodes and that the VL descended below 200 copies/mL in 3.4% of these cases—a proportion similar to the 4%–10% of post-treatment controllers reported by other authors in chronic HIV-1-infected patients [28, 29]. Additionally, a peak preceded half of the cases in our cohort with a set point <200 copies/mL (2/4), which is in accordance with previous observations [30] and supports the theory that viral rebound does not exclude the possibility of subsequent control of viral load [13], although in our cohort



Figure 2. Correlation matrix of the most commonly used virological outcome measures observed in the study cohort. Spearman's *rho* coefficients are represented in the upper panel (all *P* values < .005); the corresponding scatter plots with trend lines are shown in the lower panel. Abbreviations: ART, antiretroviral therapy; AUC, area under the curve; TtR, time to rebound; VL, viral load.

Virological Outcome Measures During ATI • OFID • 5



Figure 3. Predictive patterns of early rebound parameters. Numbers in the bars represent the number of episodes in each category. B, Time to rebound according to different strata of baseline viral load. Kruskal-Wallis test *P* < .001. C, Set point according to different strata of time to viral rebound. Kruskal-Wallis test *P* = .002.

the difference in set point was not clinically relevant between cases with and without a preceding peak. Neither TtR nor any

other early assessable parameter predicted the presence of a peak in the rebound curve.

6 • OFID • Fehér et al

Table 2. Univariate and Multivariate Analysis of Possible Confounders of TtR

Offivariate Analys	iis	Multivariate Analysis	Multivariate Analysis		
Comparison TtR	<i>P</i> Value	Standardized (Beta) Coefficient	<i>P</i> Value		
	.854		.702		
2 (2 to 4)		Reference			
2 (1 to 4)		.030			
Spearman's <i>rho</i> = .24	.004	.105	.238		
Spearman's <i>rho</i> = .22	.009	–.151	.250		
Spearman's <i>rho</i> = .32	<.001	.419	.002		
Spearman's $rho =03$.719	-	-		
	<.001		<.001		
2 (2 to 3)		Reference			
2.5 (2 to 4)		.260			
Spearman's $rho =22$.005	319	<.001		
	Comparison TtR 2 (2 to 4) 2 (1 to 4) Spearman's $rho = .24$ Spearman's $rho = .22$ Spearman's $rho = .32$ Spearman's $rho =03$ 2 (2 to 3) 2.5 (2 to 4) Spearman's $rho =22$	Comparison TtR P Value .854 .854 2 (2 to 4) .854 2 (1 to 4) .004 Spearman's $rho = .24$.009 Spearman's $rho = .32$.009 Spearman's $rho = .32$ <.001	Comparison TtR P Value Standardized (Beta) Coefficient .854 .854 2 (2 to 4) Reference 2 (1 to 4) .030 Spearman's $rho = .24$.004 .105 Spearman's $rho = .22$ Spearman's $rho = .32$ <.001		

Previous reports have found a weak or no association between TtR and set point or other commonly utilized virological end points [1, 14, 31]. Based on these results, experts recommend avoiding MAP designs in studies assessing immunological interventions [2]. However, in the current study, we have found significant correlations between the TtR and the majority of other important end points that can only be measured at a later time point, including the set point, the peak VL, and the AUC. Our results indicate that it may be possible to estimate the expected value of these late parameters based on TtR: We demonstrated that clinically significant virus control is mainly to be expected in patients with longer TtR. This observation opens the possibility of improving the safety profile of these studies: Patients with an early viral rebound should be put back on ART without further delay, whereas only participants with longer TtR would be exposed to prolonged ATIs. These data should be used with caution, as TtR has certain limitations. Although our study suggests that TtR is correlated with all the other quantitative and temporary outcomes, with our data it is difficult to determine a TtR cutoff that predicts a very low risk of control of viral load.

The effect of baseline VL on the characteristics of viral rebound dynamics has also been suggested by previous publications. In a study with repeated treatment interruptions, the patients with a baseline VL >50000 copies/mL were significantly more likely to reach VL peaks >50 000 copies/mL during ATIs than the ones with lower baseline VL [32]. Other researchers found that a baseline VL <100 000 copies/mL was significantly associated with the probability of maintaining a VL <5000 copies/mL 24 weeks after treatment interruption [33]. However, in contrast with our findings, other authors have not found an association between baseline VL and TtR [34]. Further studies are needed to confirm our results.

In our cohort, we identified some important confounding factors that may affect viral rebound dynamics. Similar to other reports, gender [35–37], age [38, 39], and previous HIV and

ART duration [37] significantly influenced certain rebound parameters. In a multivariate analysis, the factors independently associated with TtR were baseline VL, previous duration of ART, and immunological interventions.

Our study has a number of limitations. First, it is a retrospective study. Second, the included studies were heterogeneous to some extent. Third, VL data were largely unavailable at certain weeks (eg, weeks 5, 10, and 48). Fourth, some of the analyzed parameters were not possible to determine in an important proportion of the cohort: Set point was only available in 154 cases (46.1%), and delta set point in 151 cases (45.2%). For this reason, we carried out a sensitivity analysis with these data. Fifth, the ART regimens the patients were receiving by the time of treatment interruption were not available for the analysis, although this may be a factor affecting rebound dynamics [40]. Sixth, most patients recruited in the source studies were from Catalonia (a geographical region of Spain), which may affect the generalizability of our results to other populations. Seventh, one-third of the ATI episodes were preceded by previous ATIs that may have influenced the measured parameters and the correlations between them. However, in a subgroup analysis of the 215 first ATI episodes, we did not find any significant differences with respect to the overall study population. Finally, our data could not be adjusted to the magnitude of other unavailable parameters, such as viral reservoir or nadir CD4.

In conclusion, our study provides a detailed description of the dynamics of viral rebound after ART interruption, based on a retrospective cohort of considerable size. We believe that these data may be useful in the evaluation of the outcomes of future ATI studies without a control arm. In addition, we have demonstrated that there are significant correlations between most of the virological end points assessed. If confirmed by independent prospective studies, these observations could be helpful to design the duration of ATIs or the threshold to reintroduce ART in future HIV cure clinical trials. For example, a short TtR could discriminate those patients who should reinitiate ART sooner.

Virological Outcome Measures During ATI • OFID • 7

Additionally, our results underline the importance of taking into account some potential confounding factors in the interpretation of these studies.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary materials are available at *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* online. Consisting of data provided by the authors to benefit the reader, the posted materials are not copyedited and are the sole responsibility of the authors, so questions or comments should be addressed to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

Financial support. This study was supported by the European Commission (grants: FP7-HEALTH-2013 INNOVATION-1 Proposal No. 602570–2, H2020-SC1-2016-RTD Proposal No. 731626), the Spanish Ministry of Economy (Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad [MINECO]; grants: SAF2015-66193-R, FIS PI15/00641, FIS PI15/00480, AC16/00051, RD16/0025/0002), the Fondo Europeo para el Desarrollo Regional (FEDER), the SPANISH AIDS Research Network – Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) – FEDER (Red Española de Investigación en SIDA [RIS]), and the Centres de Recerca de Catalunya (CERCA) Programme/Generalitat de Catalunya. C.F. holds a fellowship from "PhD4MD," a Collaborative Research Training Programme for Medical Doctors financed by the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB) Barcelona and August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBAPS).

Potential conflicts of interest. E.M. has received research grants, honoraria, and consultancy fees from Gilead Sciences, Janssen, MSD, and ViiV Healthcare. B.M. has received consultancy fees from Aelix Therapeutics S.L. J.M.G. has received honoraria for speaking and advisory boards and his institution has received research grants from ViiV, MSD, Janssen, and Gilead. As of May 1, 2018, J.M.G. is a full-time employee of ViiV Healthcare. The rest of the authors do not have conflicts of interest to declare. All authors have submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest. Conflicts that the editors consider relevant to the content of the manuscript have been disclosed.

Author contributions. C.F., L.L., P.A., and F.G. designed the study. C.F., L.L., M.P., N.C., A.C.G., E.M., P.C., V.D.B., B.M., J.C.L.B.Q., and F.G. performed data acquisition. C.F. did data analysis. L.L., J.M.G., P.A., and F.G. contributed to the interpretation of data. C.F., P.A., and F.G. wrote the manuscript, and all other authors revised it for intellectual content. All authors gave their approval of the final version of the manuscript.

Prior presentations. This study was presented in part at the 2017 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), Seattle, Washington, USA, at the 2017 Congress of the Grupo de Estudio del SIDA-SEIMC (GeSIDA), Vigo, Spain, and at the 2018 Meeting on Bioinformatics and Genomics of the Catalan Society of Biology, Barcelona, Spain.

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8 • OFID • Fehér et al

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Virological Outcome Measures During ATI • OFID • 9

Parameter	Definition
Baseline viral load (VL)	The last documented VL before ART initiation.
Set point	The mean value of all available VL determinations after reaching a steady
_	state with a margin of 0.5 log10 copies/mL.
Set point "forward"	The set point, or the last available VL value in the cases where the set point
	could not be determined.
Delta set point	The difference between baseline VL and set point.
Delta set point "forward"	The delta set point, or the difference between baseline VL and the last
	available VL value in the cases where delta set point could not be
	determined.
Delta VL	The difference between baseline VL and set point.
Peak VL	The highest observed VL value before or at the time of reaching the set
	point. (i.e. it could only be determined for cases with available set point
	data)
Delta peak VL	The difference between baseline VL and peak VL
AUC	Area under the viral rebound curve with respect to the baseline VL.
Time to rebound	The time (in weeks) from treatment interruption until VL becomes
	detectable (> 50 copies/mL), given with a 2-week margin (i.e. it could only
	be determined if there was an undetectable VL registered one or two weeks
	before the first detectable VL).
Time to set point	The time (in weeks) from treatment interruption until the first VL value
	after which no further oscillations greater than 0.5 log10 copies/mL were
	observed. (Only for cases with available set point data.)
Time until absolute	The time (in weeks) from treatment interruption until VL reaches certain
thresholds	absolute values (200, 1000 and 10,000 copies/mL), given with a 2-week
	margin (i.e. it could only be determined if there was a VL below the given
	threshold registered one or two weeks before the first VL above the
	corresponding threshold).
l ime until relative	The time (in weeks) from treatment interruption until the difference
thresholds	between the measured VL and the baseline VL falls below a given log10
	value (0.5 and 1 log10 copies/mL), given with a 2-week margin (i.e. it
	could only be determined if there was a VL not fulfilling the above
	definition registered one of two weeks before the first vL that does fulfill $\frac{1}{1+1}$
Time to neel- VI	11) The time (in weaks) from treatment intermention with the nearly VI. (Order
The to peak VL	I ne une (in weeks) from treatment interruption until the peak VL. (Only
	1 IOF cases with available peak VL data.)

Supplementary Table S1. Definitions of the virological end-point parameters analyzed in the study.

Supplementary Table S2. The relation of set point, set point "forward" with baseline VL, and the relation of peak VL and AUC with the baseline VL and the set point in the overall study population and in the subset of cases without immunological intervention. N = the number of cases with available information in each category.

	Overall study	population	ATIs without intervention			
	Value	95% CI	Value	95% CI		
Set point						
Delta set point (log10 copies/mL)	-0.26*	-0.35; -0.17	-0.20*	-0.32; -0.03		
Set point < baseline VL (n/N (%))	103/151 (68.2%)	60.1%; 75.5%	65/105 (61.9%)	51.9%; 71.2%		
Delta set point > 0.5 log copies/mL (n/N (%))	52/151 (34.4%)	26.9%; 42.6%	32/105 (30.5%)	21.9%; 40.2%		
Delta set point > 1 log copies/mL (n/N (%))	21/151 (13.9%)	8.8%; 20.5%	12/105 (11.4%)	6.0%; 19.1%		
Set point "forward"						
Delta set point "forward" (log10 copies/mL)	-0.22*	-0.33; -0.15	-0.17*	-0.28; -0.06		
Set point "forward" < baseline VL (n/N (%))	199/312 (63.8%)	58.2%; 69.1%	151/252 (59.9%)	53.6%; 66.0%		
Delta set point "forward" > 0.5 log copies/mL (n/N (%))	107/312 (34.3%)	29.0%; 39.9%	82/252 (32.5%)	26.8%; 38.7%		
Delta set point "forward" > 1 log copies/mL (n/N (%))	44/312 (14.1%)	10.4%; 18.5%	32/252 (12.7%)	8.9%; 17.5%		
Peak VL						
Delta peak VL (log10 copies/mL)	0.06	-0.08; 0.23	0.17*	-0.02; 0.43		
Peak VL > set point (n/N (%))	58/154 (37.7%)	30.0%; 45.8%	38/106 (35.8%)	26.8%; 45.7%		
Peak VL – set point > 0.5 log10 copies/mL (n/N (%))	48/58 (82.8%)	70.6%; 91.4%	33/38 (86.8%)	71.9%; 95.6%		
Peak VL – set point > 1 log10 copies/mL (n/N (%))	20/58 (34.5%)	22.5%; 48.1%	16/38 (42.1%)	26.3%; 59.2%		
AUC						
$AUC > 0.5 \log 10 \text{ copies/mL } (n/N (\%))$	131/312 (42.0%)	36.4%; 47.7%	91/252 (36.1%)	30.2%; 42.4%		
AUC > 1 log10 copies/mL (n/N (%))	52/312 (16.7%)	12.7%; 21.3%	34/252 (13.5%)	9.5%; 18.3%		

* Comparison of the parameter with the baseline VL: Wilcoxon signed rank test p-value < 0.05

	Ove	rall stud	y population	ATIs without intervention			
	n/N	%	95% CI	n/N	%	95% CI	
VL < 200 copies/mL	4/242	1.7%	0.5%; 4.2%	4/183	2.2%	0.6%; 5.5%	
VL < 400 copies/mL	7/242	2.9%	1.2%; 5.9%	7/183	3.8%	1.6%; 7.7%	
VL < 1000 copies/mL	12/242	5.0%	2.6%; 8.5%	9/183	4.9%	2.3%; 9.1%	
VL < 5000 copies/mL	26/242	10.7%	7.1%; 15.3%	19/183	10.4%	6.4%; 15.7%	
VL < 10000 copies/mL	46/242	19.0%	14.3%; 24.5%	37/183	20.2%	14.7%; 26.8%	
Delta VL > 0.5 log10 copies/mL	48/220	21.8%	16.5%; 27.9%	35/163	21.5%	15.4%; 28.6%	
Delta VL > 1 log10 copies/mL	16/220	7.3%	4.2%; 11.5%	9/163	5.5%	2.6%; 10.2%	

Supplementary Table S3. Proportion of cases in which VL remained below given thresholds throughout the entire follow-up in cases with an at least 12-week-long ATI. N = the number of cases with available information in each category.

	Intervention	No intervention	р
TtR (weeks)	2.5 (2; 4)	2 (2; 3)	<0.001
Time to set point (weeks)	8 (7.5; 8.5)	6 (4; 8)	0.004
Time to peak (weeks)	6 (4; 8)	4 (4; 6)	0.003
Time to 200 copies/mL threshold (weeks)	4 (2; 4)	2 (2; 4)	<0.001
Time to 1000 copies/mL threshold (weeks)	2 (2; 2.25)	3 (2;4)	<0.001
Time to 10000 copies/mL threshold (weeks)	2 (2; 3.5)	4 (2.75; 4)	<0.001
Time to delta 0.5 log10 copies/mL threshold (weeks)	4 (4; 6)	4 (2.25; 4)	<0.001
Time to delta 1 log10 copies/mL threshold (weeks)	4 (4; 6)	3 (2; 4)	<0.001
Baseline VL (log10 copies/mL)	4.48 (4.03; 5.08)	4.43 (4.08; 4.91)	0.526
Set point (log10 copies/mL)	4.14 (3.76; 4.62)	4.37 (3.99; 4.91)	0.041
Delta set point (log10 copies/mL	-0.40 (-0.88; -0.12)	-0.20 (-0.58; 0.25)	0.027
Peak VL (log10 copies/mL	4.56 (3.84; 4.84)	4.72 (4.21; 5.17)	0.017
Delta peak VL (log10 copies/mL)	-0.25 (-0.75; 0.50)	0.17 (-0.34; 0.85)	0.014
AUC	-0.65 (-1.03; -0.28)	-0.28 (-0.65; 0.09)	<0.001

Supplementary Table S4. Univariate analysis of the effect of immunological interventions on the main virological parameters during ATI. Data are given as median (IQR).



Supplementary Figure S1



79

Supplementary Figure S3

(a) Pairwise Spearman correlations between the explored parameters

TtS	***	**	**	**	**	***	*	-	-	**	*	*	-	-	*	**	-	-	*	-	**	-	-	*	**	-	-
0.71	TtP	***	***	***	***	***	***	-	-	***	***	***	-	-	*	*	**	-	***	***	***	-	-	-	*	**	*
0.33	0.68	TtT D05	***	***	***	***	***	-	*	***	***	***	-	-	**	*	***	-	***	***	***	*	-	***	***	***	***
0.30	0.54	0.80	TtT D1	***	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	***	**	**	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
0.30	0.52	0.62	0.73	TtT 200	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	**	*	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	*	-	-	***	**	**
0.30	0.51	0.65	0.81	0.82	TtT 1000	***	***	*	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	*	**	**	***	***	***
0.40	0.67	0.84	0.81	0.70	0.79	TtT 10000	***	-	***	***	***	***	*	*	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	-	-	***	***	**	***
0.20	0.37	0.49	0.62	0.79	0.67	0.59	TIR	**	***	***	***	***	*	*	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	*	-	-	**	**	**
0.03	0.03	0.01	0.09	-0.26	-0.17	-0.10	-0.22	Pre-ART VL	***	**	***	**	*	***	***	***	*	***	***	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.20	-0.14	-0.27	-0.44	-0.61	-0.52	-0.43	-0.79	0.40	VLw1	***	**	*	*	*	*	*	*	***	***	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	**
-0.28	-0.49	-0.64	-0.73	-0.83	-0.85	-0.79	-0.78	0.26	0.59	VLw2	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	-	-	***	**	***
-0.32	-0.61	-0.76	-0.76	-0.71	-0.79	-0.85	-0.58	0.44	0.40	0.84	VLw3	***	***	**	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	-	*	***	**	***
-0.23	-0.59	-0.55	-0.50	-0.59	-0.56	-0.65	-0.50	0.20	0.28	0.57	0.77	VLw4	**	***	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	*	***	***	***	***
-0.20	-0.18	-0.20	-0.35	-0.35	-0.45	-0.31	-0.28	0.24	0.36	0.40	0.58	0.32	VLw6	***	***	***	***	-	-	**	-	***	***	**	***	**	***
-0.11	-0.13	-0.16	-0.33	-0.27	-0.33	-0.25	-0.25	0.34	0.37	0.35	0.52	0.46	0.73	VLw8	***	***	***	-	-	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.25	-0.22	-0.35	-0.49	-0.43	-0.45	-0.53	-0.31	0.39	0.30	0.37	0.65	0.57	0.61	0.71	VLw12	***	***	*	-	*	***	*	*	***	***	*	***
-0.26	-0.19	-0.29	-0.43	-0.48	-0.45	-0.38	-0.33	0.38	0.40	0.46	0.71	0.62	0.80	0.83	0.94	Set point	***	-	*	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
0.03	-0.25	-0.40	-0.54	-0.52	-0.46	-0.50	-0.45	0.22	0.36	0.52	0.78	0.82	0.73	0.76	0.66	0.72	Peak VL	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
0.01	0.07	-0.14	-0.32	-0.24	-0.33	-0.18	-0.38	-0.42	0.52	0.16	-0.09	-0.02	0.04	-0.15	-0.32	-0.15	-0.10	DVLw1	***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	***
-0.24	-0.42	-0.69	-0.80	-0.68	-0.77	-0.73	-0.60	-0.34	0.43	0.76	0.69	0.43	0.21	0.07	0.10	0.20	0.34	0.46	DVLw2	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.25	-0.59	-0.83	-0.79	-0.61	-0.73	-0.75	-0.47	0.10	0.25	0.71	0.91	0.70	0.50	0.28	0.44	0.58	0.73	0.11	0.73	DVLw3	***	**	-	*	***	***	***
-0.26	-0.57	-0.65	-0.61	-0.44	-0.48	-0.57	-0.37	-0.31	0.11	0.40	0.63	0.84	0.20	0.31	0.37	0.44	0.66	0.16	0.59	0.72	DVLw4	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.11	-0.21	-0.30	-0.48	-0.26	-0.29	-0.20	-0.24	-0.41	0.25	0.31	0.39	0.30	0.74	0.48	0.35	0.48	0.64	0.32	0.51	0.48	0.48	DVLw6	***	***	***	***	***
-0.04	-0.09	-0.22	-0.43	-0.08	-0.31	-0.22	-0.14	-0.43	0.07	0.17	0.19	0.22	0.47	0.64	0.24	0.37	0.47	0.28	0.42	0.25	0.44	0.72	DVLw8	***	***	***	***
-0.18	-0.16	-0.42	-0.56	-0.19	-0.32	-0.41	-0.10	-0.47	0.06	0.07	0.35	0.30	0.41	0.38	0.56	0.44	0.37	0.10	0.56	0.43	0.56	0.72	0.70	DVLw12	***	***	***
-0.23	-0.18	-0.43	-0.58	-0.35	-0.46	-0.43	-0.29	-0.44	0.23	0.34	0.56	0.40	0.55	0.44	0.48	0.57	0.46	0.18	0.59	0.62	0.66	0.76	0.86	0.94	D set point	***	***
0.03	-0.23	-0.41	-0.57	-0.33	-0.36	-0.34	-0.33	-0.51	0.20	0.33	0.50	0.55	0.40	0.39	0.24	0.32	0.67	0.25	0.60	0.62	0.79	0.81	0.79	0.69	0.74	U peak VL	***
-0.09	-0.19	-0.39	-0.54	-0.22	-0.40	-0.37	-0.23	-0.34	0.30	0.40	0.47	0.51	0.49	0.48	0.52	0.49	0.54	0.41	0.64	0.60	0.70	0.78	0.74	0.84	0.83	0.78	AUC

(b) Pairwise Pearson correlations between the explored parameters

TtS	***	**	***	*	***	***	*	-	-	**	-	**	-	-	*	*	-	-	**	-	**	-	-	*	*	-	-
0.74	TtP	***	***	***	***	***	**	-	-	***	***	***	*	*	*	-	*	-	***	**	***	*	*	*	-	*	*
0.33	0.67	TtT D05	***	***	***	***	***	-	**	***	***	***	*	-	***	*	***	-	***	***	***	**	*	***	***	***	***
0.52	0.65	0.82	TtT D1	***	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
0.26	0.38	0.61	0.68	TtT 200	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	-	-	**	**	**
0.38	0.53	0.63	0.77	0.85	TtT 1000	***	***	*	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	**	**	**	***	**	***
0.40	0.60	0.84	0.86	0.64	0.74	TtT 10000	***	-	***	***	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	*	**	***	***	***	***
0.19	0.29	0.47	0.57	0.80	0.68	0.56	TtR	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	*	*	-	*	**	**
0.07	0.03	0.01	0.10	-0.28	-0.17	0.00	-0.25	Pre-ART VL	***	*	***	*	**	***	***	***	**	**	***	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.14	-0.15	-0.36	-0.46	-0.53	-0.52	-0.53	-0.60	0.45	VLw1	***	**	*	-	*	*	*	*	***	***	*	-	-	-	÷	-	-	-
-0.27	-0.36	-0.58	-0.63	-0.77	-0.76	-0.67	-0.68	0.22	0.61	VLw2	***	***	**	**	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	*	*	-	***	***	***
-0.28	-0.55	-0.74	-0.78	-0.76	-0.80	-0.84	-0.66	0.48	0.41	0.81	VLw3	***	***	**	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	-	*	***	***	***
-0.26	-0.48	-0.56	-0.56	-0.68	-0.68	-0.69	-0.59	0.19	0.29	0.53	0.78	VLw4	***	***	***	***	***	-	***	***	***	*	**	***	***	***	***
-0.15	-0.26	-0.26	-0.41	-0.47	-0.54	-0.44	-0.43	0.30	0.25	0.39	0.61	0.44	VLw6	***	***	***	***	-	-	**	*	***	**	*	***	**	***
-0.15	-0.21	-0.15	-0.41	-0.31	-0.41	-0.29	-0.34	0.33	0.35	0.31	0.50	0.47	0.76	VLw8	***	***	***	-	-	-	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.23	-0.22	-0.39	-0.51	-0.48	-0.52	-0.55	-0.34	0.38	0.32	0.40	0.67	0.58	0.67	0.73	VLw12	***	***	*	-	*	***	*	***	***	***	***	***
-0.19	-0.12	-0.29	-0.39	-0.56	-0.52	-0.37	-0.41	0.38	0.35	0.46	0.79	0.66	0.79	0.85	0.93	Set	***	-	*	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
0.01	-0.21	-0.44	-0.57	-0.56	-0.53	-0.62	-0.47	0.27	0.33	0.49	0.80	0.78	0.80	0.80	0.72	0.78	Peak VL	-	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.02	0.11	-0.16	-0.34	-0.22	-0.33	-0.26	-0.27	-0.36	0.67	0.26	-0.02	0.06	-0.06	-0.18	-0.31	-0.15	-0.13	DVLw1	***	-	*	-	*	*	-	-	***
-0.27	-0.35	-0.64	-0.69	-0.62	-0.66	-0.65	-0.53	-0.34	0.47	0.84	0.68	0.42	0.17	0.07	0.15	0.22	0.31	0.49	DVLw2	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.20	-0.49	-0.77	-0.77	-0.65	-0.75	-0.70	-0.54	0.04	0.26	0.67	0.89	0.69	0.46	0.24	0.36	0.57	0.64	0.21	0.77	DVLw3	***	***	-	**	***	***	***
-0.30	-0.49	-0.62	-0.64	-0.48	-0.54	-0.63	-0.42	-0.36	0.06	0.38	0.62	0.84	0.29	0.29	0.34	0.46	0.62	0.26	0.60	0.74	DVLw4	***	***	***	***	***	***
-0.17	-0.34	-0.37	-0.53	-0.28	-0.33	-0.31	-0.30	-0.39	0.15	0.29	0.41	0.31	0.76	0.53	0.33	0.43	0.63	0.30	0.47	0.55	0.50	DVLw6	***	***	***	***	***
-0.16	-0.19	-0.25	-0.52	-0.10	-0.32	-0.33	-0.20	-0.49	0.12	0.20	0.15	0.27	0.42	0.67	0.32	0.43	0.49	0.37	0.45	0.31	0.53	0.75	DVLw8	***	***	***	***
-0.24	-0.21	-0.49	-0.62	-0.16	-0.32	-0.51	-0.11	-0.52	0.01	0.18	0.39	0.32	0.35	0.42	0.59	0.48	0.41	0.32	0.55	0.51	0.63	0.69	0.79	DVLw12	***	***	***
-0.23	-0.14	-0.41	-0.53	-0.32	-0.40	-0.39	-0.27	-0.47	0.20	0.36	0.57	0.41	0.51	0.49	0.50	0.64	0.52	0.23	0.56	0.67	0.68	0.77	0.88	0.94	D set	***	***
-0.04	-0.21	-0.49	-0.61	-0.28	-0.33	-0.46	-0.30	-0.51	0.17	0.36	0.53	0.51	0.42	0.45	0.33	0.42	0.69	0.23	0.59	0.69	0.78	0.82	0.85	0.78	0.82	D peak VL	***
-0.16	-0.18	-0.38	-0.49	-0.23	-0.40	-0.39	-0.24	-0.38	0.21	0.40	0.50	0.51	0.47	0.51	0.51	0.56	0.56	0.49	0.64	0.69	0.72	0.75	0.82	0.87	0.90	0.84	AUC
Correl	ation co	efficient	s are re	presente	d in the	lower p	anels (t	nlue= pc	sitive, n	ed= neg	ative), ti	heir stat	tistical s	ignifican	ce is sh	own in t	the uppe	er panel	s (- not e	ignifica	nt, *<0.0	05, **<0	.005, ***	<0.0005	i).		

Abbreviations: TIS= time to set point; TTP= time to peak VL; TiT_D05/1= time until reaching a VL whose difference with the baseline VL is less than 0.5/1 log10 copies/mL; TTZ_200/1000/1000- time until reaching a threshold of 200/1000/10000 copies/mL; TTZ_200/1000/1000 copies/m



Trabajos publicados

IV.2 Segundo trabajo:

A Classifier to Predict Viral Control After Antiretroviral Treatment Interruption in Chronic HIV-1–Infected Patients

<u>Csaba Fehér</u>, Montserrat Plana, Alberto Crespo Guardo, Nuria Climent, Lorna Leal, Ainoa Ugarte, Irene Fernández, María F. Etcheverry, Josep M. Gatell, Sonsoles Sánchez-Palomino, Felipe García, Patrick Aloy.

J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr 2020;83:479–485.

doi: 10.1097/QAI.000000000002281.

IF: 3,771

Q3 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)

Trabajos publicados

A Classifier to Predict Viral Control After Antiretroviral Treatment Interruption in Chronic HIV-1–Infected Patients

Csaba Fehér, MD,^{a.b.c} Montserrat Plana,^c Alberto Crespo Guardo,^c Nuria Climent,^c Lorna Leal,^{b.c} Ainoa Ugarte,^b Irene Fernández,^b María F. Etcheverry,^b Josep M. Gatell,^d Sonsoles Sánchez-Palomino,^c Felipe García,^b and Patrick Aloy^{a.e}

Objectives: To construct a classifier that predicts the probability of viral control after analytical treatment interruptions (ATI) in HIV research trials.

Methods: Participants of a dendritic cell–based therapeutic vaccine trial (DCV2) constituted the derivation cohort. One of the primary endpoints of DCV2 was the drop of viral load (VL) set point after 12 weeks of ATI (delta VL12). We classified cases as "controllers" (delta VL12 > 1 log10 copies/mL, n = 12) or "noncontrollers" (delta VL12 < 0.5 log10 copies/mL, n = 10) and compared 190 variables (clinical data, lymphocyte subsets, inflammatory markers, viral reservoir, ELISPOT, and lymphoproliferative responses) between the 2 groups. Naive Bayes classifiers were built from combinations of significant variables. The best model was subsequently validated on an independent cohort.

Results: Controllers had significantly higher pre–antiretroviral treatment VL [110,250 (IQR 71,968–275,750) vs. 28,600 (IQR 18737–39365) copies/mL, P = 0.003] and significantly lower proportion of some T-lymphocyte subsets than noncontrollers: prevaccination CD4⁺CD45RA+RO+ (1.72% vs. 7.47%, P = 0.036), CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ (7.92% vs. 15.69%, P = 0.017), CD4+CCR5+ (4.25% vs. 7.40%, P = 0.011), and CD8+CCR5+ (14.53% vs. 27.30%, P = 0.021). The classifier based on pre–antiretroviral treatment VL and prevaccine CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ T cells was the best predictive model (overall accuracy: 91%). In an independent validation cohort of 107 ATI episodes, the model correctly identified nonresponders (negative predictive value = 94%), while it failed to identify responders (positive predictive value = 20%).

Conclusions: Our simple classifier could correctly classify those patients with low probability of control of VL after ATI. These data could be helpful for HIV research trial design.

Key Words: viral load, HIV-1, supervised machine learning, T-lymphocyte subsets

(J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr 2020;83:479–485)

INTRODUCTION

Despite the immense efforts invested in the development of a therapeutic vaccine against HIV-1, long-term viral control has not yet been achieved by any of the therapeutic vaccine candidates.¹ Analytical treatment interruptions (ATI) are currently the only available method to reliably evaluate treatment efficacy in immune-based therapies aiming to achieve a functional cure in HIV-1 infection.^{2,3} The potential safety risks notwithstanding, this strategy is considered essential in HIV cure research by researchers and patients alike.^{4,5}

An early surrogate marker of viral control after withdrawing antiretroviral treatment (ART) would be an extremely useful tool in therapeutic vaccine strategies to avoid unnecessary delays in ART reinitiation, thus improving study safety. Various viral and host factors, such as baseline viral reservoir,⁶ certain HLA profiles,⁷ or different T-cell associated cytokines,⁸ have previously been associated with different parameters of post-ATI viral rebound. The practical utility of these proposed biomarkers, however, has not yet been demonstrated.

In this study, we aimed to identify significant, early assessable markers of viral control after ATI. To improve the

J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr • Volume 83, Number 5, April 15, 2020

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Supported by the European Commission (grants: H2020-SC1-2016-RTD Proposal: 731626), the Spanish Ministry of Economy (MINECO) (grants: SAF2015-66193-R, RTI2018-096309-B-I00), the Fondo de Investigación Sanitaria (FIS) PI15/00480, AC16/00051, and PI18/00699, amfAR Grant # 108821-55-RGRL, the Fondo Europeo para el Desarrollo Regional (FEDER), the SPANISH AIDS Research Network RD16/0025/0002– ISCIII—FEDER (RIS), and the CERCA Program/Generalitat de Catalunya SGR 615. F.G. has received the support of José María Segovia de Arana contracts. C.F. holds a fellowship from "PhD4MD," a Collaborative Research Training Program for Medical Doctors financed by IRB Barcelona (Institute for Research Institute).

J.M.G. has received honoraria for speaking and advisory boards and his institution research grant from ViiV, MSD, Janssen, and Gilead. Since May 1, 2018, J.M.G. is a full-time employee of ViiV Healthcare. The remaining authors have no or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Conception and design of the study: C.F., F.G., and P.A. Collection of data: all authors. Statistical analysis: C.F. and P.A. Data interpretation: C.F., M.P., S.S.-P., P.A., and F.G. Manuscript drafting: C.F., P.A., and F.G. Critical revision of the manuscript and approval of the final version: all authors.

Supplemental digital content is available for this article. Direct URL citations appear in the printed text and are provided in the HTML and PDF versions of this article on the journal's Web site (www.jaids.com).

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predictive power of the identified significant parameters, we constructed a naive Bayes classifier based on a combination of these variables. We used data from a dendritic cell–based therapeutic vaccine trial (DCV2)⁹ to select the significant predictors and to build the classifier and a historical cohort of ATI episodes collected from 6 previously published studies as validation cohort.^{10–15}

METHODS

The DCV2 trial was a partially successful therapeutic vaccine trial conducted by our group.9 In this study, 36 patients on successful ART and with CD4+ >450 cells/mL were randomized to a blinded protocol to receive 3 immunizations (separated by 2-week intervals) with peripheral blood monocyte-derived dendritic cells (MD-DC) pulsed with autologous heat-inactivated HIV-1 virions (n = 24) or with nonpulsed MD-DC (n = 12) according to the same schedule. ART was stopped on the day of the last immunization, and patients were followed for 48 weeks afterward. Viral load (VL) rebounded in all patients during this period. One of the primary endpoints of the DCV2 study was the drop of VL set point after 12 weeks of ATI with respect to pre-ART VL (delta VL12), which was significantly greater in vaccines than in control patients [-0.91 (SD 0.11) log10 copies/mL vs. -0.39 (SD 0.18) log10 copies/mL; P = 0.01].⁹ For the purposes of our present analysis, participants were classified as "controllers" (delta VL12 >1 log10 copies/mL) and "noncontrollers" (delta VL12 $< 0.5 \log 10$ copies/mL). To avoid the risk of misclassification in cases with near-cutoff values due to possible laboratory technique inaccuracies,16 we did not include patients with a delta VL from 0.5 to 1 log10 copies/mL in the analysis.

The following data were collected from the original study and from the patients' clinical files: (1) demographics and clinical history, (2) general biochemistry, (3) complete blood count, (4) lymphocyte phenotype subsets, (5) inflammatory markers, (6) reservoir data, (7) ELISPOT data, and (8) lymphoproliferative responses. All data were collected from a prevaccination time point (1-8 weeks before the first vaccine dose) and from a postvaccination time point (1-2)weeks after the second vaccine dose); the differences of these 2 values ("delta" variables) were also calculated. The methods for the determination of the analyzed laboratory readouts were reported elsewhere.¹⁷ For the complete list of the variables included in the analysis, see Table, Supplemental Digital Content 1, http://links.lww.com/QAI/B422, which resumes the comparisons of all analyzed variables between controllers and noncontrollers. This study was evaluated and approved by the institutional ethical board of the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona (HCB/2015/0763).

Optimal cutoff values for the variables significantly associated with viral control were determined by Youden J statistics—a commonly used index to determine the cutoff value that maximizes the discriminatory accuracy of a diagnostic test, and these cutoffs were confirmed by leave-p-out cross-validation (P = 5). Next, naive Bayes classifiers were constructed from all the possible combinations of these significant variables. The optimal model was selected taking

480 | www.jaids.com

into account the following criteria: (1) good discriminative power, (2) no/low correlations between components, (3) components preferably belonging to the same time point (prevaccination, postvaccination, or delta variable), and (4) minimum number of component variables.

External validation of the model was performed on a historical cohort comprising of ATI episodes documented in 6 previously published studies,^{10–15} using the same virological endpoint as described above (delta VL12). In addition, a sensitivity analysis was performed (substituting the missing VL data at week 12 by the last available VL—"last observation carried forward" method), and the performance of the model was also tested for an alternative virological endpoint: delta set point. Delta set point was defined as the difference between pre-ART VL and the mean value of all available VL values after reaching a steady state with a margin of 0.5 log10 copies/mL.

The analysis was performed in R (version 3.4.1, R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) using RStudio (version 1.0.143, RStudio Inc., Boston, MA). Continuous and discrete variables were given in median and interquartile range (IQR) and in absolute numbers and percentage, respectively. To compare variables between controllers and noncontrollers, the Mann–Whitney U test and Fisher exact test were used for appropriate data types. Pairwise correlations between significant variables were evaluated by Spearman correlation coefficients. The naive Bayes classifiers were built using the R package e1071.

RESULTS

Twenty-two participants of the DCV2 trial were classified as controllers (n = 12) or noncontrollers (n = 10), while 13 patients with a delta VL between 0.5 and 1 log10 copies/mL were excluded from the analysis. Five (22.7%) of them were women, and the median age was 40.5 years (IQR 39.25–45.00 years). The demographic and clinical characteristics of the patients are shown in Table 1.

Identification of Significant Variables

From the parameters analyzed (see Table, Supplemental Digital Content 1, http://links.lww.com/QAI/B422), we found that pre-ART VL and some prevaccination and postvaccination lymphocyte subsets were significantly associated with a control of VL after ART discontinuation. We observed a significantly higher pre-ART VL in controllers than in noncontrollers [110,250 (IQR 71,968-275,750) vs. 28,600 (IQR 18,737–39,365) copies/mL, respectively; P = 0.003]. The following T-lymphocyte subsets were significantly less abundant in controllers than in noncontrollers at the prevaccination timepoint: CD4+CD45RA+RO+ [1.72% (IQR 0.61%–3.87%) vs. 7.47% (IQR 5.12%–13.26%), P =0.036]; CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ [7.92% (IQR 3.97%–12.77%) vs. 15.69% (IQR 14.19%–18.78%), P = 0.017]; CD4+CCR5+ [4.25% (IRQ 1.80%-5.76%) vs. 7.40% (IQR 5.94%-10.15%), P = 0.011]; and CD8+CCR5+ [14.53% (IQR 11.65%-21.60%) vs. 27.30% (IOR 17.45%–29.93%), P = 0.043]. In addition, the proportion of a postvaccination T-lymphocyte subset was also

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Study	DCV2 ⁹	Study 1 ¹⁰	Study 2 ¹¹	Study 3 ¹²
Group size [n]	22	43	24	21
Female sex [n (%)]	5 (22.7)	20 (46.5)	3 (12.5)	5 (23.8)
Age [yr, Md (IQR)]	40.5 (39.25-45.0)	38.6 (33.1-45.3)	41.7 (32.3-47.5)	38.8 (33.5-44.2)
HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)]	8.0 (5.5-13.0)	6.1 (3.9–10.0)	5.6 (4.8-8.2)*	5.2 (2.3-7.5)*
Controllers [n (%)]	12 (54.5)	3 (7.0)*	6 (25.0)	6 (28.6)
Intervention [n (%)]	15 (68.2)	0 (0.0)*	12 (50.0)	0 (0.0)*
Pre-ART VL	62,332.0	14,791.1	16,218.1	70,794.6
[copies/mL, Md (IQR)]	(25,061.3–190874.8)	(6542.1–38,018.9)*	(6025.6–34,673.7)*	(15,135.6–134,896.3)
CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)]	33.83 (29.51–39.53)	33.40 (24.64–36.99)	33.53 (28.54-40.83)	39.12 (32.37-41.74)
CD4 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	4.70 (1.11–11.42)	5.59 (4.08–9.33)	7.84 (5.21–9.26)	2.25 (1.52–5.17)
CD4 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	5.69 (4.12-7.71)	10.04 (6.67–18.43)*	6.29 (4.33-8.74)	3.33 (1.57-3.84)*
CD8 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)]	35.87 (32.37-38.72)	32.03 (28.15-42.24)	37.35 (35.15-42.47)	33.30 (29.33-36.85)
CD8 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD8 ⁺ Md (IOR)]	12.90 (7.54–16.23)	9.75 (7.51–15.20)	9.00 (6.83–14.51)	10.95 (5.45–15.62)
()]				
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84)	23.28 (15.50-32.07)	15.85 (11.56–20.82)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)*
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) Study 4 ¹³	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) Study 4 ¹³ 5	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) Study 4 ¹³ 5 2 (40.0)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0)	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7)
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) Study 4 ¹³ 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)*	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)*	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0–40.1)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5)
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)*	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)*	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0–40.1) 5.7 (4.5–7.6)*	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)*
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)*	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0–40.1) 5.7 (4.5–7.6)* 0 (0.0)*	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)*
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)*	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0)	15.85 (11.56–20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0–40.1) 5.7 (4.5–7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)*	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)*
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)* 2 1,877.6	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)*	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)* 21,877.6 (16,218.1-72,443.6)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)*
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3) 52.63 (40.98–52.87)*	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)* 43.76 (31.07–45.29)	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)* 21,877.6 (16,218.1-72,443.6) 39.36 (35.59-50.50)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)* 34.99 (28.42–41.71)
CD4 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CCR5+ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] MIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3) 52.63 (40.98–52.87)* 9.80 (3.13–18.15)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)* 43.76 (31.07–45.29) 4.83 (4.79–7.23)	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)* 21,877.6 (16,218.1-72,443.6) 39.36 (35.59-50.50) 1.69 (0.95-4.18)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)* 34.99 (28.42–41.71) 5.21 (2.18–9.09)
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3) 52.63 (40.98–52.87)* 9.80 (3.13–18.15) 11.71 (9.78–20.58)*	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)* 43.76 (31.07–45.29) 4.83 (4.79–7.23) 14.15 (13.23–17.76)*	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 2 (16,218.1-72,443.6) 39.36 (35.59-50.50) 1.69 (0.95-4.18) 1.73 (1.17-3.97)*	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)* 34.99 (28.42–41.71) 5.21 (2.18–9.09) 6.75 (3.55–12.84)
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD8 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3) 52.63 (40.98–52.87)* 9.80 (3.13–18.15) 11.71 (9.78–20.58)* 30.39 (24.17–33.03)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)* 43.76 (31.07–45.29) 4.83 (4.79–7.23) 14.15 (13.23–17.76)* 36.55 (35.99–40.39)	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 0 (0.0)* 21,877.6 (16,218.1-72,443.6) 39.36 (35.59-50.50) 1.69 (0.95-4.18) 1.73 (1.17-3.97)* 30.68 (28.09-35.71)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)* 34.99 (28.42–41.71) 5.21 (2.18–9.09) 6.75 (3.55–12.84) 34.60 (29.34–40.33)
CD8 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD8 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] Study Group size [n] Female sex [n (%)] Age [yr, Md (IQR)] HIV infection [yr, Md (IQR)] Controllers [n (%)] Intervention [n (%)] Pre-ART VL [copies/mL, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD4 ⁺ CCR5 ⁺ [% of CD4 ⁺ , Md (IQR)] CD8 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD8 ⁺ [% of lymphocytes, Md (IQR)] CD8 ⁺ CD45RA+RO+ [% of CD8 ⁺ Md (IQR)]	21.21 (12.89–27.84) 5 2 (40.0) 33,5 (32.4–36.8)* 5.6 (2.4–6.1)* 2 (40.0) 0 (0.0)* 26,915.3 (23,442.3–27,542.3) 52.63 (40.98–52.87)* 9.80 (3.13–18.15) 11.71 (9.78–20.58)* 30.39 (24.17–33.03) 12.49 (6.05–14.34)	23.28 (15.50–32.07) Study 5 ¹⁴ 5 3 (60.0) 37.6 (31.1–39.5)* 4.6 (2.3–5.4)* 0 (0.0)* 4 (80.0) 1548.8 (1479.1–2290.9)* 43.76 (31.07–45.29) 4.83 (4.79–7.23) 14.15 (13.23–17.76)* 36.55 (35.99–40.39) 8.49 (8.00–10.24)	15.85 (11.56-20.82) Study 6 ¹⁵ 9 2 (22.2) 36.3 (35.0-40.1) 5.7 (4.5-7.6)* 0 (0.0)* 2 (16,218.1-72,443.6) 39.36 (35.59-50.50) 1.69 (0.95-4.18) 1.73 (1.17-3.97)* 30.68 (28.09-35.71) 7.51 (5.50-7.89)	11.32 (5.52–17.78)* Entire Validation Cohort 107 35 (32.7) 38.1 (32.9–44.5) 5.6 (3.9–8.3)* 17 (15.8)* 16 (15.0)* 19,054.6 (6237.8–69,201.4)* 34.99 (28.42–41.71) 5.21 (2.18–9.09) 6.75 (3.55–12.84) 34.60 (29.34–40.33) 9.08 (6.77–15.30)

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significantly lower in controllers than in noncontrollers: CD4+CXCR4+ [12.44% (IQR 8.59%-23.07%) vs. 22.80% (IQR 20.69%–39.30%), P = 0.021]. There were no statistically significant differences between controllers and noncontrollers in any other parameters. The threshold that optimally differentiates between controllers and noncontrollers (ie, that minimizes misclassification rate) was determined for each significant parameter by means of the Youden index. The distributions of the 6 significant parameters with the corresponding optimal cutoff values are shown in Figure 1 (see Figure, Supplemental Digital Content 2, http://links.lww. com/QAI/B422, which shows the results of the crossvalidation of the optimal cutoff values). At the selected cutoff values, the overall accuracies of these 6 variables to differentiate between responders and nonresponders were 0.82 for pre-ART VL, prevaccine CD4+CD45RA+RO+, prevaccine CD8+CD45RA+RO+ T cells, and postvaccine CD4+CXCR4+ T cells and 0.77 for prevaccine CD4+CCR5+ and CD8+CCR5+ T cells.

Building and Selecting the Optimal Classifier

To further improve discriminative capacity, we decided to combine the significant variables in a naive Bayes classifier. A naive Bayes classifier is a simple supervised machine learning algorithm that shows a good predictive performance even with a relatively small training data set. To keep our model simple, we decided to focus exclusively on the 5 prevaccination parameters. Since the components of a naive Bayes classifier should ideally be independent from each other, we established pairwise Spearman correlations between these 5 parameters. Significant correlations were observed between some $\mathrm{CD4^{+}}$ and $\mathrm{CD8^{+}}$ T-lymphocyte subsets [CD4+CD45RA+RO+ vs. CD8+CD45RA+RO+ (rho = 0.822, P < 0.001); CD4+CCR5+ vs. CD8+CCR5+ (rho = (0.670, P = 0.001)] and between pre-ART VL and prevaccination CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte subsets [pre-ART VL vs. $CD4^{+}CD45RA^{+}RO^{+}$ (rho = -0.436, P = 0.049); pre-ART VL vs. CD4+CCR5+ (rho = -0.577, P = 0.007)] (see

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www.jaids.com | 481



FIGURE 1. The distribution of significantly different parameters between the controller and noncontroller groups. The corresponding optimal cutoffs are indicated with a red line. A, Pre-ART VL, (B) prevaccine CD4+CD45RA+RO+ lymphocytes, (C) prevaccine CD4+CCR5+ lymphocytes, (D) prevaccine CD8+CD45RA+RO+ lymphocytes, (E) prevaccine CD4+CCR5+ lymphocytes, and (F) postvaccine CD4+CXCR4+ lymphocytes.

Figure, Supplemental Digital Content 3, http://links.lww. com/QAI/B422, which illustrates the pairwise correlations between the 5 significant prevaccination predictors of viral control).

We built naive Bayes classifiers to predict viral control from all possible combinations of the above 5 parameters. Nine of these models had the highest observed overall accuracy of 0.91 (see Table, Supplemental Digital Content

482 | www.jaids.com

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4, http://links.lww.com/QAI/B422, which summarizes the performance measures of the 31 candidate classifiers); we discarded 3 of these for having the greatest number of components, including highly correlated ones (CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes). After cross-validating the remaining 6 models (see Figure, Supplemental Digital Content 5, http://links.lww.com/QAI/B422, which illustrates the cross-validation of the 6 candidate classifiers), we selected the one based on pre-ART VL and the relative abundance of CD8+CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes as the most robust one with the lowest number of components. This classifier identified controllers with 92% sensitivity and 90% specificity in the DCV2 cohort. Its positive predictive value for viral control was 92%, and its negative predictive value was 90%, vielding an overall accuracy (ie, the proportion of correctly classified cases) of 91%.

Validation of the Classifier

For the external validation of the classifier, we selected 6 previously published studies with similar ATI episodes. Among the participants of 6 previous ATI studies, we identified 148 ATI episodes where the predictive model could be applied (ie, both preinterruption CD8+CD45RA+RO+ T-lymphocyte data and pre-ART VL were available). Among these, data on VL at week 12 of ATI were available in 134 cases, and 107 of them could be categorized as controllers or noncontrollers according to our study definitions. These 107 cases constituted the validation cohort. In 16 (15.0%) of these cases, an immunological intervention accompanied the ATI episode: 12 patients received a similar dendritic cell-based therapeutic vaccine as the patients in the DCV2 trial,¹¹ and 4 patients were treated with mycophenolate mofetil.¹⁴ Table 1 summarizes the basic characteristics of these patients grouped by source study and their comparison with the derivation data set.

Applying the predictive model that we selected earlier, based on pre-ART VL and the relative abundance of CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes, on the validation cohort, we observed a sensitivity of 88% and a negative predictive value of 94%. However, only 1 of every 5 predicted controllers proved to be real controllers (positive predictive value: 20%), which resulted in a low overall accuracy of the model in the validation data set (42%). The performance of the model was similar when we applied it to different subsets of the validation cohort (grouped by source study or by the use of immunological interventions). (Figs. 2A, B).

For the sensitivity analysis, we substituted the missing week 12 VL data for the last available VL value (last observation carried forward method), thus having an endpoint value for all 148 cases included. From these, 120 patients qualified as controllers or noncontrollers. The set point could be estimated for 57 cases, and this number increased to 113 applying the LOFC method. As can be observed in Figure 2B, C, the performance of the model remained fundamentally unchanged in the sensitivity and set point analyses as well.

Unlike the DCV2 study, the validation data set suffers from a great degree of data imbalance, since the proportion of controllers is rather low (17/107, 15.9%). To examine the



FIGURE 2. Sensitivity, specificity, positive and negative predictive values, and overall accuracy of the predictive model in different subgroups of the validation data set and using alternative virological outcome definitions. Shape size is indicative of group size; shape color indicates the proportion of responders within each group according to the gradient legend. A, Model performance in individual studies of the validation cohort, (B) model performance at week 12 and at the set point, with or without the use of immunological intervention, and (C) model performance in the sensitivity analysis at week 12 and at the set point, with or without the use of immunological intervention.

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www.jaids.com | 483

expected performance of our model in case of higher controller prevalence, we performed an additional test. We calculated the distributions of the performance measures of 1000 subsamples of 47 cases of the validation cohort, comprising the 17 controllers and randomly selected samples of 30 noncontrollers. We observed that apart from the expectable increase of positive predictive value (Md = 43%) and overall accuracy (Md = 53%), the median negative predictive value remained good (83%) (see Figure, Supplemental Digital Content 6, http://links.lww.com/QAI/B422, which shows the distribution of the expected performance measures in subcohorts of the validation data set with a 36% controller prevalence).

DISCUSSION

In this study, we constructed a naive Bayes classifier based on easily available baseline characteristics (pre-ART VL and the relative abundance of CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes) to predict viral control after treatment interruption. Although the model poorly classified patients with high probability of response (it had a low positive predictive value in the validation data set), it could reliably identify individuals with a low probability of viral control, irrespective of the immunological intervention we may apply (19 of every 20 patients identified as noncontrollers were correctly classified). The utility of this information could be great in therapeutic vaccine trials, since the classifier could be used as exclusion criteria, thus avoiding the recruitment (and ATI) of patients with low probability of response.

Pre-ART VL has previously been related to different virological and immunological outcome measures in some studies. It has been reported to be directly correlated to post-ATI VL set point,^{18,19} an observation that seems to contradict our results. However, it has to be taken into account that our definition of response is not an absolute number as the one used in these studies^{18,19} but a delta value. Although the final objective of any immunotherapy strategy is to achieve an undetectable level of VL after ATI, no clinical trial has been able to achieve this objective so far. Therefore, we need to find the best surrogate markers of response based on studies with partial response, as it is the DCV2 clinical trial. Our model is based on the results of this trial and, therefore, selects the patients with low probability of presenting a greater than 1 log10 copies/mL drop of VL with respect to the pre-ART value, not the ones with a certain probability of controlling the VL below a determined threshold. Other authors have found in a large cohort of treatment-naive patients that a higher pre-ART VL was associated with higher probability of CD4 recovery after ART initiation.²⁰ Considering these data together with our results, one can speculate that the margin of improvement may be easier to achieve in patients with poorer baseline situation.

The other component of our classifier was the prevaccine proportion of CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes. The role of CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes has not been completely elucidated as yet. They have originally been described as recently recruited lymphocytes that are in the process of changing from CD45RA+RO- (naive cells) to CD45RA-RO+ (memory cells).²¹ However, it seems that memory and effector T cells cannot reliably be classified on the basis of a particular differentiation phenotype but would be better defined on the basis of their activation status and functional characterization.²²

Effector memory T cells, which re-express the CD45RA antigen, are usually referred to as T_{EMRA} , but their relevance is not yet fully understood. In CD4⁺ T cells, it was described that resting memory cells may start re-expressing the CD45RA antigen in the absence of antigenic stimuli, without losing CD45RO positivity.²³ In another study, the re-expression of CD45RA in CD4⁺CD45RA-RO+ cells was observed as a consequence of gp120 stimulation, and it was shown to induce apoptosis in these activated cells.²⁴ In addition, a report on malnourished children suggests that an elevated percentage of CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes may be indicative of an impaired T-cell function.²⁵

Although probably the subset of CD8⁺CD45RA+RO+ T cells mentioned in our study should most probably be considered CD8⁺ T_{EMRA}, the limited surface markers used to define this cell population in our study—as well as the lack of analysis of its functional properties—does not allow us to determine their real relevance in the control of HIV replication. Moreover, even if the presence of HIV-specific CD8 + T cells with an T_{EMRA} phenotype has been previously described to be associated with HIV control in early infection,²⁶ the scenario seems to be more complex in chronic HIV-infected patients.²⁷

In summary, a higher proportion of CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes in noncontrollers in our study may suggest a greater percentage of activated and/or impaired lymphocytes in these patients. This is further supported by the fact that CCR5+ T lymphocytes were also significantly more abundant in noncontrollers than in controllers. Further research shall clear the precise nature of this T-cell population.

Our study has certain limitations. First, the derivation cohort is retrospective and has a relatively low size. Secondly, although the constructed classifier could be validated externally, the validation cohort was also retrospective. Thirdly, there is no widely used standardized method for the determination of the abundance of CD45RA+RO+ T lymphocytes, which may in theory limit the application of our model in other centers. However, we believe that their association with viral control could be relevant and should be further explored in prospective trials specifically designed to evaluate this relation. Finally, as it has been mentioned above, our model only predicts the likelihood of no response as defined as a drop of VL >1 log10 copies/mL; it should be further explored if the model could also be useful for making predictions about the probability of attaining other common efficacy endpoints.

In conclusion, the naive Bayes classifier we constructed based on easily obtainable baseline parameters could be a useful tool to improve patient recruitment criteria in future HIV cure studies. At the same time, our results call the attention on the possible role of certain lymphocyte subsets as markers of the quality of host anti-HIV immune response, although these data should be experimentally verified in the future.

484 | www.jaids.com

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Supplemental Digital Content-1: The 190 variables used in the analysis. Discrete variables are given as n (%), continuous variables are given as Md (IQR). They were compared between responders and non-responders by Fisher's exact test and Mann-Whitney U test, respectively.

		Variable	Responders (N=12)	Non-responders (N=10)	p- value
1	Der	Female sex	3 (25.0)	2 (20.9)	1.000
2	nogi	Age (years)	40.5 (40.0; 46.5)	41.5 (39.0; 44.8)	0.573
3	aphi.	Tobacco smoking	8 (66.7)	3 (37.5)	0.362
4	cs ai	Alcoholism	2 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0.495
5	nd cli	Pre-ART viral load (copies/mL)	110250.0 (71968.3; 275750.0)	28600.0 (18737.0; 39365.0)	0.003
6	nica	HIV duration (years)	8.0 (5.0; 8.3)	13.0 (7.5;14.5)	0.144
7	l hist	Homosexual risk group	6 (50.0)	7 (70.9)	0.415
8	ory	PI based ART	6 (50.0)	5 (50.0)	1.000
9		Vaccinated	10 (83.3)	5 (50.0)	0.172
10		HCV+	1 (8.3)	3 (30.0)	0.293
11		PPD+	2 (25.0)	1 (25.0)	1.000
12		Hypertension	2 (16.7)	2 (20.0)	1.000
13		Hypercholesterolemia	1 (8 3)	1 (10.0)	1 000
14		Hypertriglyceridemia	3 (25 0)	4 (40 0)	0.652
15		Diabetes mellitus	0 (0 0)	1 (10.0)	0.455
16		Depression	5 (41.7)	1 (10.0)	0.162
17		Henetohiliary disorder	0 (0 0)	2 (20.0)	0.102
1 /	P		0(0.0)	2 (20.0)	0.195
18	re-v;	Glucose (mg/dL)	96.5 (91.3; 110.5)	92.5 (82.3; 99.8)	0.355
20	acci	Clamarular filtration rate $(mL/min/1.72 m^2)$	60 (60; 60)	60 (60: 60)	0.791
20	ne g	Total cholecterol (mg/dL)	101.0 (180.0: 231.0)	168 5 (150 5: 107 0)	0.140
21	ener	L DL cholesterol (mg/dL)	122.0 (105.5: 135.8)	94 5 (77 3: 123 3)	0.140
22	al bi	HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)	<u>41.0 (38.0: 47.0)</u>	<u>A4 5 (A0 3: 47 8)</u>	0.0792
23	loch	Triglyceride (mg/dL)	132.0 (103.5: 178.3)	94.5 (71.0; 280.0)	0.772
25	emis	Aspartate transaminase (U/L)	22.0 (20.5: 26.0)	26 5 (22 8: 31 0)	0.098
26	stry	Alanine transaminase (U/L)	25 5 (22 5: 29 0)	29 5 (23 0: 32 0)	0 407
27		Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)	32.5 (25.8: 61.8)	38.0 (22.0: 42.3)	1.000
28		Total bilirubin (mg/dL)	0.80 (0.30; 1.75)	0.60 (0.43; 2.73)	0.741
29		Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)	0.25 (0.10; 0.50)	0.20 (0.13; 0.48)	0.892
30		Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)	190.5 (168.3; 219.8)	200.0 (174.8; 213.3)	0.821
31		Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)	334.0 (309.0; 356.5)	334.0 (307.5; 377.5)	0.817
32		Protein (g/L)	74.5 (71.8; 78.3)	73.0 (72.0; 76.5)	0.574
33	Pre	Hemoglobin (g/L)	147.0 (137.8; 159.3)	148.0 (144.3; 154.3)	0.792
34)-vac	Hematocrit (%)	44.5 (41.8; 47.3)	44.5 (43.0; 45.0)	0.842
35	cine	Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	242.0 (224.8; 274.3)	216.0 (175.0; 262.0)	0.156
36	C01	Leukocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	7.15 (6.04; 9.66)	6.95 (6.63; 8.19)	0.792
37	nple	Neutrophils (10 ⁹ /L)	4.35 (3.38; 6.33)	4.15 (3.23; 4.88)	0.488
38	te b	Lymphocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	2.05 (1.75; 2.53)	2.35 (2.03; 2.75)	0.222
39	lood	Monocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	0.40 (0.30; 0.53)	0.40 (0.40; 0.50)	0.633
40	cou	Eosinophils (10 ⁹ /L)	0.10 (0.10; 0.30)	0.20 (0.10; 0.20)	1.000
41	Int	Basophils (10 ⁹ /L)	0.00 (0.00; 0.00)	0.00 (0.00; 0.00)	0.947

42	Pre	CD4+ (% of lymphocytes)	34.47 (31.87; 39.37)	32.30 (28.84; 39.53)	0.628
43	-vac	CD4+ CD38+ (% of CD4+ cells)	45.75 (37.48; 55.48)	55.44 (45.44; 67.93)	0.346
44	cine	CD4+ CD38+ HLADR+ (% of CD4+ cells)	2.36 (1.84; 2.76)	2.54 (2.40; 3.75)	0.235
45	lym	CD4+ CD28+ (% of CD4+ cells)	98.84 (94.88; 99.60)	97.56 (92.49; 98.55)	0.228
46	ipho	CD4+ CD28- CD57+ (% of CD4+ cells)	0.86 (0.19; 3.67)	1.94 (0.83; 6.15)	0.198
47	cyte	CD4+ CD45RA+RO+ (% of CD4+ cells)	1.72 (0.61; 3.87)	7.47 (5.12; 13.26)	0.036
48	phe	CD4+ CD45RA+RO- (% of CD4+ cells)	27.29 (23.22; 40.55)	28.22 (19.17; 45.78)	1.000
49	noty	CD4+ CD45RA-RO+ (% of CD4+ cells)	58.01 (40.93; 70.35)	57.71 (45.46; 72.00)	0.872
50	'pe s	CD4+ CD45RA+62L+ (% of CD4+ cells)	33.75 (21.72; 38.49)	40.04 (21.81; 52.04)	0.674
51	ubse	CD4+ CXCR4+ (% of CD4+ cells)	21.47 (15.21; 36.55)	33.83 (26.93; 44.22)	0.123
52	ets	CD4+ CCR5+ (% of CD4+ cells)	4.25 (1.80; 5.76)	7.40 (5.94; 10.15)	0.011
53		CD8+ (% of lymphocytes)	35.29 (30.16; 38.83)	37.54 (35.19; 38.23)	0.248
54		CD8+ CD38+ (% of CD8+ cells)	39.10 (34.30; 47.35)	44.68 (39.22; 55.03)	0.314
55		CD8+ CD38+ HLADR+ (% of CD8+ cells)	12.37 (9.94; 15.39)	14.23 (9.30; 18.60)	0.674
56		CD8+ CD28+ (% of CD8+ cells)	60.04 (47.99; 73.08)	55.43 (48.56;69.25)	0.539
57		CD8+ CD28- CD57+ (% of CD8+ cells)	28.73 (18.73; 37.02)	33.04 (26.91; 42.09)	0.283
58		CD8+ CD45RA+RO+ (% of CD8+ cells)	7.92 (3.97; 12.77)	15.69 (14.19; 18.78)	0.017
59		CD8+ CD45RA+RO- (% of CD8+ cells)	38.71 (34.07; 46.85)	48.75 (39.27; 49.76)	0.346
60		CD8+ CD45RA-RO+ (% of CD8+ cells)	51.74 (34.45; 56.78)	34.72 (30.68; 47.20)	0.314
61		CD8+ CD45RA+62L+ (% of CD8+ cells)	27.86 (22.51; 33.17)	34.13 (27.36; 39.10)	0.346
62		CD8+ CXCR4+ (% of CD8+ cells)	12.76 (8.30; 25.57)	17.51 (11.52; 33.47)	0.283
63		CD8+ CCR5+ (% of CD8+ cells)	14.53 (11.65; 21.60)	27.30 (17.45; 29.93)	0.043
64	Pre- mar	D-dimer (ng/mL)	263.0 (182.8; 365.5)	217.5 (139.5; 262.3)	0.314
65	-vaco kers	High-sensitivity C-reactive protein (mg/dL)	0.180 (0.128; 0.805)	0.145 (0.075; 0.313)	0.509
66	cine	Tumor necrosis factor alpha (pg/mL)	5.0 (4.8; 6.0)	4.5 (4.0; 5.8)	0.236
67	infl	Interleukin 6 (pg/mL)	4.5 (1.0; 9.5)	1.0 (1.0; 1.0)	0.056
68	amn	Soluble CD14 (ng/mL)	2377.4 (2231.8; 2624.3)	2362.4 (2109.4; 2402.4)	0.362
69	nator	CD163 (ng/mL)	761.8 (553.3; 1043.3)	751.4 (599.3; 1691.4)	0.370
70	Y	Endotoxin core IgM antibody (EndoCab) (MU/mL)	39.4 (33.2; 67.4)	30.1 (22.4; 53.3)	0.412
71		Lipopolysaccharide-binding protein (ng/mL)	15767.8 (12851.4; 21756.4)	13148.5 (12460.2; 14658.4)	0.201
72	Pre-vao reservo	Total HIV-1 DNA (copies/ 10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	756.5 (486.0; 2326.1)	600.9 (317.5; 1812.4)	0.809
73	bir j	Integrated HIV-1 DNA (copies/ 10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	107.1 (509.5; 347.0)	111.9 (99.4; 382.0)	0.705
74	Pre-	ELISPOT Gag – p24 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	640.0 (527.0; 703.0)	482.0 (207.0; 774.3)	0.953
75	vaccin	ELISPOT Gag – p17 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	253.5 (121.8; 938.5)	662.0 (234.3; 946.5)	0.605
76	e ELIS	ELISPOT Gag – small proteins (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	623.0 (368.5; 878.5)	120.0 (108.5; 131.5)	0.056
77	SPOT	ELISPOT Nef (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	303.0 (73.0; 588.5)	356.5 (145.5; 572.8)	0.615
78		ELISPOT Env – gp41 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	183.0 (119.3; 565.5)	501.5 (268.5; 762.3)	0.282
79		ELISPOT total response (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	1647.0 (848.5; 2443.5)	1225.0 (1021.8; 2543.5)	0.904
80		ELISPOT breadth (number)	8.0 (4.5; 9.0)	4.5 (3.0; 6.0)	0.229
81 81	Pre-vaccir lymphopro	gp160 stimulus (counts/minutes)	2707.5 (1262.8; 5467.0)	1966.0 (1397.0; 2266.5)	0.539
82	ıe ɔliferative	p24 stimulus (counts/minutes)	2846.0 (1748.3; 6754.8)	1924.5 (1079.8; 2740.8)	0.069

83	Pos	Glucose (mg/dL)	96.0 (89.3; 100.3)	90.0 (84.8; 98.5)	0.597
84	st-va	Creatinine (mg/dL)	0.99 (0.87; 1.09)	1.00 (0.89; 1.09)	0.792
85	ccin	Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m ²)	60 (60; 60)	60 (60; 60)	0.411
86	e gei	Total cholesterol (mg/dL)	192.5 (176.5; 210.3)	159.0 (141.0; 191.8)	0.138
87	neral	LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)	118.0 (110.0; 145.0)	96.0 (80.0; 114.5)	0.102
88	l bio	HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)	41.5 (37.5; 55.3)	42.5 (39.0; 43.8)	0.910
89	cher	Triglyceride (mg/dL)	111.5 (93.8; 160.5)	167.0 (78.5; 229.3)	0.821
90	nistr	Aspartate transaminase (U/L)	27.0 (20.0; 32.3)	28.0 (24.5; 30.8)	0.574
91	У	Alanine transaminase (U/L)	29.0 (22.0; 45.8)	29.0 (22.8; 32.8)	0.621
92		Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)	31.5 (19.8; 48.0)	38.0 (18.3; 54.8)	0.843
93		Total bilirubin (mg/dL)	0.50 (0.40; 0.60)	0.70 (0.43; 1.7)	0.464
94		Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)	0.20 (0.10; 0.20)	0.20 (0.10; 0.38)	0.531
95		Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)	186.0 (159.0; 217.3)	208.5 (163.5; 240.5)	0.448
96		Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)	331.0 (314.8; 360.3)	369.0 (301.8; 423.8)	0.628
97		Protein (g/L)	73.0 (71.8; 77.5)	74.5 (73.3; 77.3)	0.551
98	Pos	Hemoglobin (g/L)	143.0 (135.3; 154.0)	139.5 (130.8; 149.8)	0.644
99	st-va	Hematocrit (%)	43.5 (41.3; 46.3)	42.0 (40.3; 43.8)	0.320
100	ccin	Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	279.0 (248.0; 307.8)	239.0 (204.3; 285.5)	0.276
101	e co	Leukocytes $(10^9/L)$	6.88 (6.55; 9.78)	6.50 (6.24; 7.36)	0.409
102	mple	Neutrophils (10 ⁹ /L)	4.25 (3.33; 6.25)	3.25 (3.05; 4.10)	0.198
103	ete b	Lymphocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	2.15 (1.85; 2.50)	2.45 (2.23; 2.75)	0.145
104	lood	Monocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	0.40 (0.30; 0.53)	0.45 (0.33; 0.50)	0.687
105	l cou	Eosinophils (10 ⁹ /L)	0.15 (0.10; 0.20)	0.10 (0.10; 0.20)	0.863
106	nt	Basophils (10 ⁹ /L)	0.00 (0.00; 0.00)	0.00 (0.00; 0.10)	0.093
107	Pos	CD4+ (% of lymphocytes)	28.97 (23.04; 38.41)	30.57 (26.03; 40.31)	0.628
108	st-va	CD4+ CD38+ (% of CD4+ cells)	49.66 (37.38; 57.47)	63.83 (39.40;68.59)	0.381
109	ccin	CD4+ CD38+ HLADR+ (% of CD4+ cells)	2.49 (1.97; 3.44)	2.90 (2.41; 3.95)	0.539
110	e lyr	CD4+ CD28+ (% of CD4+ cells)	99.08 (93.54; 99.44)	98.33 (94.67; 99.27)	0.346
111	nphe	CD4+ CD28- CD57+ (% of CD4+ cells)	0.74 (0.32; 4.66)	1.09 (0.44; 4.13)	0.539
112	ocyti	CD4+ CD45RA+RO+ (% of CD4+ cells)	5.48 (2.24; 22.33)	3.26 (1.38; 3.94)	0.539
113	e phe	CD4+ CD45RA+RO- (% of CD4+ cells)	26.23 (18.60; 30.46)	39.75 (15.95; 47.16)	0.391
114	enot	CD4+ CD45RA-RO+ (% of CD4+ cells)	66.79 (41.02; 73.25)	51.17 (44.93; 69.43)	0.974
115	ype :	CD4+ CD45RA+62L+ (% of CD4+ cells)	27.81 (23.30; 40.10)	42.27 (19.96; 47.36)	0.771
116	subs	CD4+ CXCR4+ (% of CD4+ cells)	12.44 (8.59; 23.07)	22.80 (20.69; 39.30)	0.021
117	ets	CD4+ CCR5+ (% of CD4+ cells)	6.21 (4.09; 9.00)	6.96 (4.86; 11.40)	0.456
118		CD8+ (% of lymphocytes)	35.21 (25.18; 39.74)	36.80 (33.61; 47.79)	0.346
119		CD8+ CD38+ (% of CD8+ cells)	40.18 (34.34; 53.50)	49.17 (30.43; 66.15)	0.674
120		CD8+ CD38+ HLADR+ (% of CD8+ cells)	8.06 (6.71; 10.44)	14.17 (9.22; 14.70)	0.159
121		CD8+ CD28+ (% of CD8+ cells)	53.60 (43.76; 73.64)	49.16 (38.47; 64.23)	0.254
122		CD8+ CD28- CD57+ (% of CD8+ cells)	36.18 (17.86; 41.31)	32.75 (24.56; 48.45)	0.381
123		CD8+ CD45RA+RO+ (% of CD8+ cells)	11.41 (9.52; 16.80)	9.02 (7.67; 13.36)	0.497
124		CD8+ CD45RA+RO- (% of CD8+ cells)	38.43 (32.46; 53.02)	49.48 (37.25; 52.41)	0.497
125		CD8+ CD45RA-RO+ (% of CD8+ cells)	48.51 (33.88; 54.45)	37.98 (34.27; 46.23)	0.456
126		CD8+ CD45RA+62L+ (% of CD8+ cells)	28.79 (20.36; 32.44)	31.99 (23.06; 35.05)	0.674
127		CD8+ CXCR4+ (% of CD8+ cells)	5.23 (2.41; 12.34)	11.19 (7.18; 16.91)	0.159
128		CD8+ CCR5+ (% of CD8+ cells)	21.36 (15.50; 24.09)	31.08 (21.14; 36.37)	0.059

129	Pos	D-dimer (ng/mL)	276.5 (226.3; 306.5)	202.5 (180.3; 340.0)	0.923
130	t-va kers	High-sensitivity C-reactive protein (mg/dL)	0.155 (0.075; 0.365)	0.215 (0.135; 0.438)	0.322
131	ccin	Tumor necrosis factor alpha (pg/mL)	5.0 (5.0; 5.3)	5.0 (4.0; 6.0)	0.807
132	e inf	Interleukin 6 (pg/mL)	1.0 (1.0; 6.0)	1.0 (1.0; 12.3)	0.905
133	lamı	Soluble CD14 (ng/mL)	2251.8 (2104.1; 2376.6)	2444.4 (2177.4; 2490.4)	0.412
134	natc	CD163 (ng/mL)	905.7 (657.8; 1035.0)	797.6 (742.5; 1527.4)	0.456
135	лу	Endotoxin core IgM antibody (EndoCab) (MU/mL)	39.2 (27.6; 62.7)	26.9 (21.3; 59.5)	0.503
136		Lipopolysaccharide-binding protein (ng/mL)	17266.8 (11771.3; 21559.2)	16499.6 (11981.6; 24455.5)	0.656
137	Post- vaccii	Total HIV-1 DNA (copies/ 10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	905.7 (771.7; 2369.5)	833.5 (361.2; 1650.6)	0.705
138 E		Integrated HIV-1 DNA (copies/ 10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	120.0 (42.9; 332.0)	107.4 (70.8; 307.7)	0.918
139	Pos	ELISPOT Gag – p24 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	627.0 (216.5; 855.0)	327.0 (237.0; 570.0)	0.639
140	t-va	ELISPOT Gag – p17 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	203.5 (69.5; 817.5)	257.0 (88.0; 788.5)	0.943
141	ccine H	ELISPOT Gag – small proteins (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	358.5 (234.5; 730.0)	91.5 (72.3; 110.8)	0.143
142	ELIS	ELISPOT Nef (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	201.5 (88.0; 577.0)	313.0 (287.0; 340.0)	0.340
143	PO	ELISPOT Env – gp41 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	460.0 (233.0; 530.0)	326.5 (158.50; 424.8)	0.792
144	Г	ELISPOT total response (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	703.5 (195.0; 2682.8)	733.5 (424.5; 2562.8)	0.965
145		ELISPOT breadth (number)	6.0 (1.5; 9.0)	4.0 (2.5; 5.3)	0.342
146	Post-vacci ymphopre	gp160 stimulus (counts/minutes)	1102.5 (904.5; 1936.8)	1771.0 (1288.8; 2463.5)	0.381
47	ne liferative	p24 stimulus (counts/minutes)	1876.0 (1101.5; 2109.3)	2362.0 (1972.3; 3220.3)	0.069
148	Д ,,	Glucose (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8)	0.575
148 149	"Delta	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10)	0.575 0.668
148 149 150	"Delta" ger	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m ²)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0)	0.575 0.668 0.411
148 149 150 151	"Delta" general	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m ²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692
148 149 150 151 152	"Delta" general bio	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m ²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391
148 149 150 151 152 153	"Delta" general biocher	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL) HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519
148 149 150 151 152 153	"Delta" general biochemisti	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL) HDL cholesterol (mg/dL) Triglyceride (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8) 5.0 (-27.0; 55.3)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869
148 149 150 151 152 153 154	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL) HDL cholesterol (mg/dL) Triglyceride (mg/dL) Aspartate transaminase (U/L)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8) 5.0 (-27.0; 55.3) -1.5 (-5.0; 8.0)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL) HDL cholesterol (mg/dL) Triglyceride (mg/dL) Aspartate transaminase (U/L) Alanine transaminase (U/L)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8) 6.0 (-0.3; 16.8)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8) 5.0 (-27.0; 55.3) -1.5 (-5.0; 8.0) -2.0 (-3.8; 4.0)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL) Creatinine (mg/dL) Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²) Total cholesterol (mg/dL) LDL cholesterol (mg/dL) HDL cholesterol (mg/dL) Triglyceride (mg/dL) Aspartate transaminase (U/L) Alanine transaminase (U/L) Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8) 6.0 (-0.3; 16.8) -6.0 (-8.5; 1.8)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8) 5.0 (-27.0; 55.3) -1.5 (-5.0; 8.0) -2.0 (-3.8; 4.0) 1.0 (-5.0; 16.3)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8) 6.0 (-0.3; 16.8) -6.0 (-8.5; 1.8) -0.05 (-0.83; 0.13)	-2.0 (-9.0; 7.8) 0.04 (0.00; 0.10) 0 (0; 0) -4.5 (-7.8; 10.8) 8.5 (-12.5; 17.3) -1.0 (-6.0; 1.8) 5.0 (-27.0; 55.3) -1.5 (-5.0; 8.0) -2.0 (-3.8; 4.0) 1.0 (-5.0; 16.3) 0.00 (-0.63; 0.00)	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8) 6.0 (-0.3; 16.8) -6.0 (-8.5; 1.8) -0.05 (-0.83; 0.13) -0.05 (-0.30; 0.00)	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)	-5.0 (-16.3; 8.0) -0.01 (-0.06; 0.09) 0 (0; 0) -5.5 (-14.8; 12.3) -4.0 (-12.0; 5.0) -0.5 (-2.8; 2.3) 5.0 (-20.0; 24.3) 3.5 (0.5; 6.8) 6.0 (-0.3; 16.8) -6.0 (-8.5; 1.8) -0.05 (-0.30; 0.00) -8.0 (-17.8; 8.8) -12.5 (-28.3; 23.8)	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161	"Delta" general biochemistry	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Protein (g/L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162	"Delta" general biochemistry "De	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Protein (g/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; \ -1.0) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta"	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hematocrit (%)	$\begin{array}{r c} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\\hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\\hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\\hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\\hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\\hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\\hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\\hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\\hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\\hline -6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\\hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\\hline -0.05 \ (-0.83; \ 0.13) \\\hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\\hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\\hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\\hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \\\hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; \ -1.0) \\\hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; \ 1.0) \\\hline\end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta" con	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Protein (g/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hematocrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; \ -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; \ 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; \ 37.3) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta"	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hematocrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Leukocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.83; 0.13) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; 37.3) \\ \hline -0.28 \ (-0.67; 1.77) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.62; \ 1.35) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314 1.000
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta" complete bl	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Protein (g/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hemostrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Neutrophils (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; \ -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; \ 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; \ 37.3) \\ \hline -0.28 \ (-0.67; \ 1.77) \\ \hline -0.30 \ (-0.78; \ 2.05) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.62; \ 1.35) \\ \hline -0.15 \ (-0.63; \ 0.75) \\ \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314 1.000 0.947
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta" complete blood	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hematocrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Leukocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Lymphocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{r} -5.0 \ (-16.3; 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; 37.3) \\ \hline -0.28 \ (-0.78; 2.05) \\ \hline 0.05 \ (-0.18; 0.25) \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.62; \ 1.35) \\ \hline -0.15 \ (-0.63; \ 0.75) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.20; \ 0.28) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314 1.000 0.947 0.766
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta" complete blood cou	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hemoglobin (g/L)Hemotrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Lymphocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Monocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Monocytes (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{c} -5.0 \ (-16.3; 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.83; 0.13) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.30; 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; 37.3) \\ \hline -0.28 \ (-0.78; 2.05) \\ \hline 0.05 \ (-0.18; 0.25) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.10; 0.10) \\ \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.62; \ 1.35) \\ \hline -0.15 \ (-0.63; \ 0.75) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.20; \ 0.28) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.10; \ 0.18) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314 1.000 0.947 0.766 0.921
148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170	"Delta" general biochemistry "Delta" complete blood count	Glucose (mg/dL)Creatinine (mg/dL)Glomerular filtration rate (mL/min/1.73 m²)Total cholesterol (mg/dL)LDL cholesterol (mg/dL)HDL cholesterol (mg/dL)Triglyceride (mg/dL)Aspartate transaminase (U/L)Alanine transaminase (U/L)Gamma glutamyltransferase (U/L)Total bilirubin (mg/dL)Conjugated bilirubin (mg/dL)Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)Lactate dehydrogenase (U/L)Protein (g/L)Hematocrit (%)Thrombocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Leukocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Lymphocytes (10 ⁹ /L)Eosinophils (10 ⁹ /L)Eosinophils (10 ⁹ /L)	$\begin{array}{c} -5.0 \ (-16.3; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -0.01 \ (-0.06; \ 0.09) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -5.5 \ (-14.8; \ 12.3) \\ \hline -4.0 \ (-12.0; \ 5.0) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-2.8; \ 2.3) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-20.0; \ 24.3) \\ \hline 3.5 \ (0.5; \ 6.8) \\ \hline 6.0 \ (-0.3; \ 16.8) \\ \hline -6.0 \ (-8.5; \ 1.8) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.3; \ 0.13) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.3; \ 0.13) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.3; \ 0.00) \\ \hline -8.0 \ (-17.8; \ 8.8) \\ \hline -12.5 \ (-28.3; \ 23.8) \\ \hline -0.5 \ (-3.3; \ 0.3) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.5; \ -1.0) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-2.8; \ 1.0) \\ \hline 31.0 \ (4.3; \ 37.3) \\ \hline -0.28 \ (-0.78; \ 2.05) \\ \hline 0.05 \ (-0.18; \ 0.25) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.10; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.10; \ 0.03) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} -2.0 \ (-9.0; \ 7.8) \\ \hline 0.04 \ (0.00; \ 0.10) \\ \hline 0 \ (0; \ 0) \\ \hline -4.5 \ (-7.8; \ 10.8) \\ \hline 8.5 \ (-12.5; \ 17.3) \\ \hline -1.0 \ (-6.0; \ 1.8) \\ \hline 5.0 \ (-27.0; \ 55.3) \\ \hline -1.5 \ (-5.0; \ 8.0) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ 4.0) \\ \hline 1.0 \ (-5.0; \ 16.3) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.63; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.18; \ 0.00) \\ \hline 6.5 \ (-6.5; \ 23.5) \\ \hline 35.5 \ (-15.3; \ 72.3) \\ \hline 2.0 \ (-2.8; \ 2.8) \\ \hline -8.5 \ (-14.0; \ -4.5) \\ \hline -2.0 \ (-3.8; \ -1.3) \\ \hline 15.5 \ (-4.0; \ 29.0) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.62; \ 1.35) \\ \hline -0.15 \ (-0.63; \ 0.75) \\ \hline 0.10 \ (-0.20; \ 0.28) \\ \hline -0.05 \ (-0.10; \ 0.18) \\ \hline 0.00 \ (-0.08; \ 0.00) \end{array}$	0.575 0.668 0.411 0.692 0.391 0.519 0.869 0.247 0.098 0.234 1.000 0.758 0.156 0.159 0.257 0.305 0.208 0.314 1.000 0.947 0.766 0.921 0.728

172	Ũ,,	D-dimer (ng/mL)	-47.0 (-88.5; 94.0)	34.0 (-18.5; 62.5)	0.356
173	elta'	High-sensitivity C-reactive protein (mg/dL)	-0.025 (-0.185; 0.060)	0.045 (-0.048; 0.265)	0.322
174	, infl	Tumor necrosis factor alpha (pg/mL)	0.0 (-1.0; 0.3)	0.0 (-0.8; 0.8)	0.631
175	lami	Interleukin 6 (pg/mL)	0.0 (-4.3; 0.0)	0.0 (0.0; 0.0)	0.079
176	nato	Soluble CD14 (ng/mL)	7.0 (-624.5; 101.5)	114.0 (-190.0; 311.0)	0.261
177	iy n	CD163 (ng/mL)	50.0 (-52.7; 155.1)	46.2 (24.5;148.1)	0.882
178	nark	Endotoxin core IgM antibody (EndoCab) (MU/mL)	-0.9 (-7.7; 1.2)	-0.9 (-3.1; 0.6)	0.370
179	ers	Lipopolysaccharide-binding protein (ng/mL)	311.1 (-1851.6; 2417.5)	1542.5 (942.2; 11007.9)	0.201
180	"Delta reserv	Total HIV-1 DNA (copies/10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	117.8 (-28.7; 337.3)	78.1 (-78.8; 621.1)	0.973
181	a" oir	Integrated HIV-1 DNA (copies/ 10 ⁶ CD4+ cells)	1.7 (-35.1; 46.1)	-24.3 (-97.3; 4.9)	0.223
182	Ď	ELISPOT Gag – p24 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	-167.0 (-387.0; 7.0)	-157.0 (-187.0; 130.0)	0.639
183	elta'	ELISPOT Gag – p17 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	-304.5 (-351.8; -128.3)	33.0 (33.0; 33.0)	0.286
184	, ELISP	ELISPOT Gag – small proteins (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	-180.0 (-284.5; -32.3)	17.0 (-320.0; 200.0)	0.420
185	OT	ELISPOT Nef (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	90.0 (-70.0; 197.0)	-108.0 (-267.0; 153.0)	0.792
186		ELISPOT Env – gp41 (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	-70.0 (-73.0; -41.5)	-112.0 (-406.8; -49.0)	0.872
187		ELISPOT total response (SFC/10 ⁶ PBMC)	-411.5 (-911.8; -235.5)	-455.0 (-851.5; 322.0)	0.573
188		ELISPOT breadth (number)	-1.0 (-3.0; 0.0)	-0.5 (-2.3; 0.5)	0.589
189	"Delta" lymphopro	gp160 stimulus (counts/minutes)	-443.5 (-1553.5; 761.5)	-230.5 (-854.0; 494.0)	0.821
190	liferative	p24 stimulus (counts/minutes)	-238.0 (-1793.5; 643.5)	772.0 (474.5; 1255.8)	0.123

SFC=spot forming cells, PBMC= peripheral blood mononuclear cells, "Delta" values = The difference between pre- and post-vaccine values



(a) Pre-ART VL

Acc

Supplemental Digital Content-3. Pairwise Spearman correlations between the 5 significant pre-vaccination predictors of viral control.



Combination	Se	Sp	PPV	NPV	Acc
Pre-ART VL	0.5455	-	1.0000	0.0000	0.5455
CD4+CD45RA+RO+	0.5455	-	1.0000	0.0000	0.5455
CD8+CD45RA+RO+	0.5455	-	1.0000	0.0000	0.5455
CD4+CCR5+	0.5455	-	1.0000	0.0000	0.5455
CD8+CCR5+	0.5455	-	1.0000	0.0000	0.5455
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+	0.8571	1.0000	1.0000	0.8000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD8+CD45RA+RO+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CCR5+	0.8462	0.8889	0.9167	0.8000	0.8636
Pre-ART VL, CD8+CCR5+	0.9091	0.8182	0.8333	0.9000	0.8636
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+	0.9000	0.7500	0.7500	0.9000	0.8182
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	0.8462	0.8889	0.9167	0.8000	0.8636
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9000	0.7500	0.7500	0.9000	0.8182
CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	0.9091	0.8182	0.8333	0.9000	0.8636
CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	0.7857	0.8750	0.9167	0.7000	0.8182
CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.7692	0.7778	0.8333	0.7000	0.7727
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+	1.0000	0.7143	0.6667	1.0000	0.8182
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.8333	0.8000	0.8333	0.8000	0.8182
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	0.9000	0.7500	0.7500	0.9000	0.8182
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	1.0000	0.7143	0.6667	1.0000	0.8182
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9000	0.7500	0.7500	0.9000	0.8182
CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9091	0.8182	0.8333	0.9000	0.8636
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+	1.0000	0.8333	0.8333	1.0000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9167	0.9000	0.9167	0.9000	0.9091
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.8462	0.8889	0.9167	0.8000	0.8636
Pre-ART VL, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.8462	0.8889	0.9167	0.8000	0.8636
CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	0.9091	0.8182	0.8333	0.9000	0.8636
Pre-ART VL, CD4+CD45RA+RO+, CD8+CD45RA+RO+, CD4+CCR5+, CD8+CCR5+	1.0000	0.8333	0.8333	1.0000	0.9091

Se= sensitivity, Sp= specificity, PPV= positive predictive value, NPV= negative predictive value, VL= viral load





Trabajos publicados

Se

PPV

Sp

NPV

Acc

Supplemental Digital Content-6. The distribution of performance measures in 1000 sub-samples of 47 cases of the validation cohort with a 36% controller prevalence, comprising of the 17 controllers and randomly selected samples of 30 non-controllers. Md= median value.



Trabajos publicados

IV.3 Tercer trabajo:

Association of Transcriptomic Signatures of Inflammatory Response with Viral Control after Dendritic Cell-Based Therapeutic Vaccination in HIV-1 Infected Individuals

<u>Csaba Fehér</u>, Roque Pastor, Lorna Leal, Montserrat Plana, Mireia Arnedo, Henk Jan van den Ham, Arno Andeweg, Rob Gruters, Francisco Diez Fuertes, José Alcamí, Patrick Aloy, Felipe García.

Vaccines 2021;9(7):799. doi: 10.3390/vaccines9070799 IF: 4.961 Q2 (Enfermedades Infecciosas)

Trabajos publicados



Article

Association of Transcriptomic Signatures of Inflammatory Response with Viral Control after Dendritic Cell-Based Therapeutic Vaccination in HIV-1 Infected Individuals

Csaba Fehér ^{1,2,*}, Roque Pastor-Ibáñez ³, Lorna Leal ^{2,3}, Montserrat Plana ³, Mireia Arnedo ³, Henk-Jan van den Ham ⁴, Arno C. Andeweg ⁴, Rob A. Gruters ⁴, Francisco Díez-Fuertes ^{2,5}, José Alcamí ^{2,5}, Patrick Aloy ^{1,6} and Felipe García ^{2,3}

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Abstract: Systems vaccinology has seldomly been used in therapeutic HIV-1 vaccine research. Our aim was to identify early gene 'signatures' that predicted virus load control after analytical therapy interruption (ATI) in participants of a dendritic cell-based HIV-1 vaccine trial (DCV2). mRNA and miRNA were extracted from frozen post-vaccination PBMC samples; gene expression was determined by microarray method. In gene set enrichment analysis, responders showed an up-regulation of 14 gene sets (TNF-alpha/NFkB pathway, inflammatory response, the complement system, II6 and II2 JAK-STAT signaling, among others) and a down-regulation of 7 gene sets (such as E2F targets or interferon alpha response). The expression of genes regulated by three (miR-223-3p, miR-1183 and miR-8063) of the 9 differentially expressed miRNAs was significantly down-regulated in responders. The deregulation of certain gene sets related to inflammatory processes seems fundamental for viral control, and certain miRNAs may be important in fine-tuning these processes.

Keywords: dendritic cell-based therapeutic HIV-1 vaccine; differential gene expression; mRNA; miRNA; gene set enrichment analysis

1. Introduction

Therapeutic vaccines are among the most promising HIV cure strategies. They aim to boost the immune system of infected individuals to control viral replication without the need for long-term antiretroviral treatment (ART). Although, this goal has not been fully achieved by any of the numerous tested vaccine candidates as yet [1], there have been some partially successful studies published [2].

An important part of the history of most known vaccines is that of trial-and-error, and the development of therapeutic vaccines against HIV-1 is no exception either. Recently, however, novel methods that can complement or even substitute this empirical strategy are gaining popularity. The use of omics technologies in this field gave place to the birth of "systems vaccinology", an approach that gives good grounds for expecting a significant improvement in the identification of surrogate markers of response and in the vaccine development pipeline [3,4].



Citation: Fehér, C.; Pastor-Ibáñez, R.; Leal, L.; Plana, M.; Arnedo, M.; van den Ham, H.-J.; Andeweg, A.C.; Gruters, R.A.; Díez-Fuertes, F.; Alcamí, J.; et al. Association of Transcriptomic Signatures of Inflammatory Response with Viral Control after Dendritic Cell-Based Therapeutic Vaccination in HIV-1 Infected Individuals. *Vaccines* 2021, *9*, 799. https://doi.org/10.3390/ vaccines9070799

Academic Editors: Wilfried Posch and Doris Wilflingseder

Received: 29 May 2021 Accepted: 14 July 2021 Published: 19 July 2021

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Vaccines 2021, 9, 799. https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines9070799

https://www.mdpi.com/journal/vaccines

2 of 11

Systems vaccinology has proven to be useful in multiple infectious diseases, such as influenza [5], yellow fever [6], hepatitis B [7], or ebola [8]. In one report, a dendritic cell-based (DC) HIV-1 vaccine caused a significant transcriptomic shift in peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) in HIV-1 infected vaccinees as compared to pre-vaccination state or healthy controls [9]. Another study demonstrated the upregulation of certain genes related to direct cell recognition in NK cells of healthy individuals that had received a modified vaccinia Ankara (MVA) vectored therapeutic HIV-1 vaccine [10]. Recently, changes in gene expression of HIV-1 infected patients who received a DC therapeutic vaccine were shown to be correlated with the post-vaccine peak viral load (VL) [11].

Certain microRNAs (miRNA) have been associated with HIV infection [12,13], and disease progression [12,14–18], and some miRNAs were found to be upregulated in HIV-exposed seronegative individuals [19]. However, to the best of our knowledge, there are no published data as yet on miRNA expression in therapeutic HIV-1 vaccine recipients, nor has any miRNA been associated so far with viral control in patients after the withdrawal of ART. Our aim in this study was to analyze mRNA and miRNA expression profiles in participants of a partially successful DC therapeutic HIV-1 vaccine study (DCV2) [2]. We were looking for early gene 'signatures' that could be associated with virological response.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Subjects and Samples

The present study was performed on data and samples belonging to participants of the DCV2 trial [2]. Thirty-six patients partook in this study, all of them receiving ART, with CD4+ T lymphocyte count > 450 cells/mL and undetectable VL at the beginning of the study. They were randomized 2:1 to receive 3 doses of a vaccine based on peripheral blood monocyte-derived dendritic cells (MD-DC) pulsed with heat-inactivated autologous HIV-1 virions (DC-HIV-1 group) or unpulsed MD-DC (DC-control group) at weeks 0, 2, and 4. In the DC-HIV-1 group, antiretroviral treatment was stopped at week 0 in 12 patients (ATIw0-DC-HIV-1 group) and at week 4 in the other 12 patients (ATIw4-DC-HIV-1 group). These two different schedules were selected to assess whether ART could have any influence on the response to immunizations. Because a significant difference in plasma VL changes or HIV-specific T cell responses between these two schedules were not observed, immunized patients were analyzed in the original study as a single group [2]. One patient in the DC-control group was excluded from the analysis because of consent withdrawal before receiving any immunization.

Participants were followed for 48 weeks after treatment interruption. Patients with a \geq 1 log10 copies/mL drop of VL at week 12 of ATI were defined as "responders", and patients with a <1 log copies/mL drop of VL were defined as "non-responders". When VL was not available at week 12 of ATI, the last observation was carried forward for the missing VL (LOCF method).

PBMC were collected from study participants one week before each vaccine dose (that is, on weeks-1, 2, and 3). Monocytes were isolated from these samples and were incubated with GM-CSF, cAMP and IL-4 for 5 days at 37 °C to induce the transformation of cells into MD-DC. These MD-DC were used for fabricating the vaccines. The remaining monocyte-depleted PBMC were frozen at -80 °C. For the present study, samples from week 3—that is, one week before the last vaccine dose—were used.

2.2. mRNA Extraction, Quality Control, and Microarray Experiments

Total RNA was isolated from TRIzol[®] homogenates of frozen monocyte-depleted PBMC using the RNeasy[®] kit (Qiagen©, Hilden, Germany), according to the manufacturer's instruction, as previously described [9]. Briefly, 250 uL of absolute ethanol was added to the aqueous phase after TRIzol[®] separation and applied to RNeasy spin columns for purification. RNA concentrations and OD 260:280 nm ratios were measured with the NanoDrop[®] ND-1000 UV-vis spectrophotometer (NanoDropTechnologies, Wilmington, NC, USA). RNA integrity and purity were assessed with an RNA 6000 Nano

assay on the Agilent 2100 bio analyzer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA). An RNA integrity number > 8.0 was considered acceptable for RNA quality. Total RNA was used as input for the messageAmp labeling kit, and the resulting cRNA was hybridised onto Affymetrix Human Genome U133 Plus 2.0 microarray chips (Affimetrix, Santa Clara, CA, USA) [9].

2.3. miRNA Extraction, Quality Control, and Microarray Experiments

miRNA was isolated from frozen monocyte-depleted PBMC using the mirVanaTM miRNA Isolation Kit (InvitrogenTM, Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA). The quality control was performed in the 4200 TapeStation system (Agilent, Santa Clara, CA, USA). Samples with high quality were selected for downstream applications (RIN > 7) and conserved at -80 °C. To obtain the miRNA expression profile, we used the Affymetrix GeneChip miRNA 2.0, corresponding to HsMir v1s520779F custom array containing 1738 mature microRNAs and 2333 other small RNAs.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Raw gene expression data was submitted to Robust Multichip Average (RMA) normalization. Data was adjusted by quality metrics [20], batch, scan batch, and sex. Differential gene expression was analyzed with the Bioconductor [21] package "limma" [22] for R (version 3.4.1, R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria). Statistical significance was defined as a *p*-value adjusted for multiple comparisons < 0.05. Adjustment for multiple comparisons was performed by the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure.

Gene set enrichment analysis was performed with the software GSEA v3.0 of the Broad Institute, using the molecular signature database MSigDB (v6.0) hallmark gene set (hgs) collection. Pre-ranking of the gene list was performed according to the t-statistics of the differential expression (DE) analysis. Significant differences were defined by a family-wise error rate (FWER) < 0.05.

In the comparison of miRNA expression, significant DE was defined first identically as in the mRNA analysis (*p*-value adjusted by means of the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure for multiple comparisons < 0.05). A less strict significance criteria was also defined as an unadjusted *p*-value < 0.05 and a log absolute fold change > 0.5. The genes regulated by significantly differentially expressed miRNAs were identified using the "multiMIR" [23] R package of Bioconductor employing three databases with validated miRNA-target interactions: miRecords, miRTarBase and TarBase.

To contrast the results of mRNA and miRNA data, we performed a GSEA on the pre-ranked gene list used for the original GSEA, using the genes regulated by the DE miRNAs as gene sets.

3. Results

3.1. Patients and Samples

Thirty-six chronic HIV-1 infected patients were initially recruited to the DCV2 study. Twenty-four of them received three doses of a vaccine based on peripheral blood monocyte-derived dendritic cells (MD-DC) pulsed with heat-inactivated autologous HIV-1 virions (DC-HIV-1 group), 11 of them received three doses of unpulsed MD-DC (DC-control group), and one patient withdrew consent before receiving any immunization. The main virological end-point was the change in VL at week 12 of ATI with respect to the pre-ART set point (delta set point). Patients with a delta set point $\geq 1 \log 10 \text{ copies/mL}$ were defined as "responders", and those with a delta set point < 1 log copies/mL were defined as "non-responders". In this study we analyzed mRNA and miRNA expression profiles of monocyte-depleted peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) collected after the second vaccine dose. Figure 1 resumes the protocol of the DCV2 trial and indicates the time of sample collection for the present study.



Figure 1. Protocol outline of the DCV2 trial and the time of extraction of the samples for the present study. Patients in the DC-HIV-1 groups received three doses of dendritic cells pulsed with heat-inactivated autologous HIV-1 virions at weeks 0, 2 and 4, and patients in the DC-control group received unpulsed dendritic cells. Half of the patients in the DC-HIV-1 group stopped antiretroviral treatment at receiving the first vaccine dose (ATIw0-DC-HIV-1) while the other half (ATIw4-DC-HIV-1) and the DC-control arm continued treatment until the last vaccination. Samples for the present study were collected at week 3.

Of the 35 patients that completed the study, 15 were classified as responders and 20 as non-responders. Of the 15 responders, 12 belonged to the DC-HIV-1 group and 3 to the DC-control group, and of the 20 non-responders, 12 belonged to the DC-HIV-1 group and 8 to the DC-control group. All samples for mRNA analysis showed a good quality. One of the miRNA samples belonging to a subject in the DC-HIV-1 group had to be excluded from the analysis after the quality control and normalization steps. The rest of the miRNA samples showed a good quality.

3.2. mRNA Analysis

mRNA expression was determined for 22,486 genes. We performed a principal component analysis (PCA) of gene expression of the 35 samples, and did not observe clustering of samples according to basic demographic variables or treatment group (Figure 2a).

We observed no significantly differentially expressed genes (adjusted *p*-value < 0.05) in pairwise comparisons of the treatment groups. The gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) performed on the treatment groups did not reveal any significantly up- or down-regulated gene sets in vaccinated DC-HIV-1 groups with respect to the control group (data not shown).

Next, we carried out the comparison of responders and non-responders irrespective of the treatment they received. No DE genes were found between these two groups either (Figure 2b). In the GSEA, however, we identified various Broad hallmark gene sets (hgs) with significant differences between responders and non-responders. Gene sets corresponding to TNF-alpha signaling via the NFkB pathway, inflammatory response, coagulation, the complement system, II6 and II2 JAK-STAT signaling, or reactive oxygen-species pathways were up-regulated, while gene sets corresponding to E2F targets, oxidative phosphorylation, or interferon alpha response were down-regulated in responders (Figure 2c).


Figure 2. Differential expression analysis of mRNA between responders and non-responders in the DCV2 trial. (a) Principal component analysis of gene expression. Colors represent different treatment groups. No clear clustering can be observed according to the main principal components. (b) Volcano plot of the comparison of mRNA expression between responders and non-responders. The horizontal line corresponds to an unadjusted *p*-value of 0.05. Differential expression did not achieve statistical significance defined by an adjusted *p*-value > 0.05 in any case. (c) GSEA analysis of non-responders vs. responders, using the molecular signature database MSigDB (v6.0) hallmark gene set collection of the Broad Institute. At a significance level defined by a family-wise error rate (FWER) < 0.05, 14 gene sets were up-regulated (red) and 7 were down-regulated (green) in responders as compared to non-responders. Color intensity corresponds to the magnitude of the normalized enrichment score (=actual enrichment score divided by the mean of the enrichment scores against all permutations of the dataset).

3.3. miRNA Analysis

In the miRNA expression analysis, no DE miRNAs were observed between responders and non-responders using adjusted p-value < 0.05 as significance threshold. Using less strict significance criteria (unadjusted p-value < 0.05 and a log absolute fold change > 0.5),

nine DE miRNAs were identified between the two groups (Figure 3a). Eight of them (miR-32-3p, miR-185-3p, miR-223-3p, miR-500b-3p, miR-550a-3p, miR-1183, miR-1184, and miR-4455) were overexpressed and one (miR-8063) was underexpressed in responders with respect to non-responders (Figure 3b–j).



Figure 3. Differential expression analysis of miRNA between responders and non-responders in the DCV2 trial. (**a**) Volcano plot of the comparison of miRNA expression between responders and non-responders. Significant differential expression was defined by an unadjusted *p*-value < 0.05 and a log absolute fold change > 0.5. The nine miRNAs fulfilling these conditions are labeled and marked in red. (**b**–**j**) Expression of the 9 most significantly differentially expressed miRNAs marked in panel *a*. Box plots and individual gene expression values (red dots) are plotted for non-responders (NR) and responders (R) in each case. Unadjusted *p*-values are given in each plot.

With MultiMIR we identified 899 unique genes that are regulated by one or more of these miRNAs. Table S1 shows the list of validated mRNAs regulated by each of these miRNAs.

3.4. Combined mRNA—miRNA Analysis

Next, we performed a GSEA on the mRNA data with gene sets defined by the genes regulated by the 9 DE miRNAs. We observed that the expression of genes regulated by miR-223-3p, miR-1183 and miR-8063 was significantly down-regulated in responders as compared with non-responders (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Significant enrichment plots in the GSEA performed with gene sets including genes regulated by the significantly differentially expressed miRNAs. (a) The gene set defined by genes regulated by miR-223-3p was significantly down-regulated in responders (p = 0.014). (b) The gene set defined by genes regulated by miR-1183 was significantly down-regulated in responders (p = 0.030). (c) The gene set defined by genes regulated by miR-8063 was significantly down-regulated in responders (p = 0.024).

We explored the overlap between the genes regulated by the nine DE miRNAs and the 50 hgs used in the first GSEA analysis. We identified 31 overlapping hgs, and we observed that the miRNA, whose regulated genes showed most overlap with hgs, was miR-223-3p (23 gene sets). Ten out of these 23 hgs (43.5%) were also significantly de-regulated in the GSEA performed with these gene sets—eight of them up- and two of them down-regulated. In addition, three of the four hgs that overlapped with genes regulated by miR-8063 were up-regulated in the GSEA (Table S2).

4. Discussion

The transcriptomic regulation of biological processes taking place during HIV infection has been investigated for some time, but there are still many unknown and controversial elements of this rather complex issue. Infection by HIV-1 evokes an immune response from the host that is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from other viral infections, given that HIV-1 targets the very immune cells that would normally be the main actors of infection control. The consequence is a dynamic rhapsody of pro- and anti-inflammatory processes that are rather difficult to disentangle, and the addition of ART, ATI, or immunological interventions to the equation does not make things simpler.

A previous report showed that immune and inflammatory pathways were downregulated in PBMC after starting ART in HIV-1 infected patients, as well as gene sets related to cell cycle, apoptosis, mitogenic signaling, or the regulation of the response to hypoxia. [24] Similar results were observed in another study on PBMC where JAK-STAT signaling, oxidative phosphorylation, and apoptosis were observed to be down-regulated after ART initiation [25]. In the case of ATI, however, increased expression of genes related to immune and inflammatory responses was observed in PBMC in yet another study, especially in those patients with a greater decrease in CD4+ lymphocyte count after ATI [26].

Therapeutic HIV-1 vaccines also seem to activate inflammatory pathways, even in the absence of a clear clinical benefit, and these changes may even exceed in magnitude those evoked by the virus itself. De Goede et al. showed that a DC therapeutic vaccine caused a major transcriptomic shift in vaccinees by week 5 after starting vaccinations, which was not further modified after ATI-and the consequent viral rebound. [9] Moreover, they showed that most of this shift was due to the activation of inflammatory and immune response pathways that remained basically unchanged after ATI [9]. Another recent report showed that inflammatory pathways were down-regulated during the first few weeks of a vaccination schedule with a similar DC therapeutic vaccine, followed by a significant up-regulation by 12 weeks after vaccination (but before ATI). [11] In this last study, it was also observed that the expression of these inflammatory modules correlated with post-ATI peak VL, suggesting a relation between greater inflammatory response and poorer post-ATI viral control. [11] On the contrary, we observed that the up-regulation of inflammatory and immune gene sets in participants of a DC therapeutic vaccine trial was associated with a better viral control at week 12 of ATI, independently of the study group. Additionally, we did not find significant differences in transcriptomic profiles between the vaccinated and control groups. This latter finding-since our analysis was the first one comparing transcriptomics of two groups of patients receiving vaccination with MD-DC (with or without inactivated HIV-1 virions)-needs to be confirmed in future studies.

It is accepted that miRNAs regulate protein synthesis on a post-transcriptional level. Traditionally, they are considered to exert a negative effect by repressing translation of their target mRNAs, but there is evidence of miRNA-driven activation of the translation process as well. [27] We observed that three of the nine DE miRNAs in our study regulate the translation of genes that participate in biological processes already significantly deregulated on the transcriptional level. The miRNA-driven post-transcriptional regulation may enhance the effect of the transcriptional regulation in some cases, or counteract it in others. This double mechanism of gene expression regulation indicates the importance of the biological processes affected by these groups of genes.

miR-223-3p was the DE miRNA, whose regulated genes were most DE between responders and non-responders on a transcriptional level. In addition, the genes whose translation is regulated by this miRNA participate in various processes that were found to be significantly deregulated in the GSEA of the mRNA data. miR-223 is a much-studied miRNA that is involved in many biological processes, such as hematopoiesis, blood cell differentiation and activation, and the fine-tuning of the inflammatory response [28]. Its levels are significantly altered in various diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis, hematologic and solid organ cancer, chronic liver disease, or infections [29]. However, the exact roles miR-223 plays in each of these scenarios are sometimes unclear. It is fundamentally considered an attenuator of inflammation in general, but depending on the cell type and the situation it may interfere with numerous pathways in different ways. For this reason, differential expression results largely depend on study design.

miR-223 seems to be able to directly target HIV-1 and inhibit the expression of its genes in resting CD4+ cells [30]. Apart from this, different studies reported plasma miR-223 expression in HIV-1 infected individuals to be higher [12], lower [13], or not significantly different [18] when compared to healthy subjects. In PBMC, miR-223 was observed to be under-expressed in the presence of HIV-1 infection [19], while in another study it was over-expressed in HIV-1 infected patients as compared to uninfected controls [17]. Moreover, in the first of these two studies, the amount of miR-223 was found to be overexpressed in HIV-1 infected plasma, which underlines the importance of the type of tissue analyzed [19].

Our results suggest that for a better viral control after ATI, an increased but controlled inflammatory response is fundamental. Genes participating in multiple pro-inflammatory processes were up-regulated in responders, at the same time as miRNAs regulating immunological processes were over-expressed in these patients. In turn, these miRNAs

regulated the translation of certain groups of genes already deregulated at the transcriptional level, thus modulating the implicated inflammatory pathways.

Our study has some limitations. First, mRNA and miRNA extraction and sequencing were not performed in the same institution, which may have added an extra variability to our data. Second, the PBMC samples used were monocyte-depleted, which may have affected the viability of the cells and the observed expression levels after in vitro culture prior to freezing. Third, due to unavailability of MD-DC samples used for vaccine fabrication, we could not analyze their cytokine and interferon expression profiles, which could have contributed to a better understanding of our findings. Fourth, we only analyzed one time point after two doses of vaccine and could not explore temporal changes in expression patterns. Fifth, by the time of sample collection, ART had already been stopped in half of the patients in the DC-HIV-1 group, and gene expression may have been influenced in this group by the immune response to the incipient viral rebound due to treatment withdrawal. In any case, we observed that the up-regulation of inflammatory and immune gene sets at this time-point was associated with a better viral control after ATI.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, we observed that the up-regulation of gene sets related to the inflammatory response was associated with better viral control in participants of a partially successful DC therapeutic vaccine trial. miR-223, among other miRNAs, seems to play an important role in optimizing this immune response.

Supplementary Materials: The following are available online at https://www.mdpi.com/article/10 .3390/vaccines9070799/s1. Table S1: Genes regulated by the nine significantly DE miRNAs. Table S2: The overlap between the genes regulated by the 9 DE miRNAs and the significant gene sets obtained in the GSEA performed with the Broad hallmark gene sets.

Author Contributions: Conception of the study: L.L., M.A., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.G.; design of the study: C.F., R.P.-l., M.A., P.A., F.G.; data acquisition: R.P.-l., L.L., M.P., M.A., F.G.; data analysis: C.F., R.P.-l., M.A., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; L.L., M.P., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; data interpretation: C.F., R.P.-l., L.L., H.-J.v.d.H., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F.; J.A., P.A., F.G.; critical revision of the manuscript: R.P.-l., L.L., M.P., A.C.A., R.A.G., F.D.-F., J.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This study was supported by the European Commission (grants: H2020-SC1-2016-RTD Proposal: 731626), the Spanish Ministry of Economy (MINECO) (grants: SAF2015-66193-R, RTI2018-096309-B-I00), the Fondo de Investigación Sanitaria (FIS) PI15/00480, AC16/00051, and PI18/00699, amfAR Grant # 108821-55-RGRL, the Fondo Europeo para el Desarrollo Regional (FEDER), the SPANISH AIDS Research Network RD16/0025/0002–ISCIII–FEDER (RIS), and the CERCA Program/Generalitat de Catalunya SGR 615. F.G. has received the support of José María Segovia de Arana contracts. C.F. held a fellowship from "PhD4MD," a Collaborative Research Training Programme for Medical Doctors financed by IRB Barcelona (Institute for Research in Biomedicine) and IDIBAPS (August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute) during the study.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona (HCB/2015/0763; date of approval: 18 September 2015).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the DCV2 study. Renewed patient consent for the present analysis was waived as it was not required by Spanish law if the original study was approved before 2007.

Data Availability Statement: mRNA and miRNA expression data are available at www.ebi.ac.uk/ arrayexpress/experiments/E-MTAB-10414/ and at www.ebi.ac.uk/arrayexpress/experiments/E-MTAB-10421/, respectively.

Acknowledgments: Parts of this study were presented at the 22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018), Amsterdam, the Netherlands, at the 22nd National Congress of the Sociedad Española de Enfermedades Infecciosas y Microbiología Clínica (SEIMC 2018), and at the 10th National Congress of the Grupo de Estudio del SIDA-SEIMC (GeSIDA 2018), Madrid, Spain. The authors would like to

thank Camille Stephan-Otto Attolini at the Bioinformatics-Biostatistics Unit of the IRBBarcelona for her valuable input at the analysis of mRNA data. Part of the bioinformatic analysis of the miRNA expression data was performed at the Statistics and Bioinformatics Unit of the Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHIR).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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miRNA Number of **Regulated** genes validated regulated genes miR_32_3p RL6IP6, ATAD5, AZF1, BAAT, BBS10, BTBD3, C5ORF24, C7ORF60, CAPZA2, CARKD, CC2D2A, CCDC71L, 118 CELF1, CHORDC1, CIDEC, COL23A1, CREBL2, CYB5R4, DYNC1LI1, E2F3, EFCAB14, EID1, FAM169A, FAT3, FBLN2, FGFR10P, FOXC1, FZD6, GPBP1L1, GPC6, GPSM2, HBP1, HDDC2, HMGN1, HNRNPA3, HNRNPR, HOXA10, HOXD11, IL7R, INIP, KIAA1614, KIAA1958, KIF3A, KIF5B, LAPTM4B, LINC00346, LYN, MAP3K12, MED10, MED12L, MKL2, MON1B, MRPL36, MYADM, N4BP1, NAMPT, NCALD, NCOA7, NHS, PAXBP1, PCDHB16, PEG10, PHC3, PHKA1, PPARGC1A, PPIF, PPIL2, PPP1R15B, PPP6R3, PPWD1, PROSC, PTP4A1, RANGAP1, RBPJ, RDH11, RFX7, RNF125, RORA, RSL24D1, SBNO1, SETBP1, SF3A1, SGMS1, SIGLEC9, SMTN, SNX24, SNX4, SPAST, SRSF10, SUMO2, TCF7L2, TM4SF1, TMEM192, TMEM2, TMEM30A, TMEM67, TMF1, TRPC5, TSR1, TVP23C, TWF1, UBE2S, UHMK1, USMG5, USP37, VLDLR, VPS33A, VPS4A, WDR37, WNK1, WTIP, YWHAE, YWHAH, ZDHHC20, ZNF292, ZNF410, ZNF567, ZNF573 miR 185 3p 67 ABCC5, ADCY9, ADRBK2, AKAP2, ANKRD13B, ARHGAP40, ASB6, BARHL1, CACNA1C, CERS1, CNBP, CNOT3, DDX39B, FAM151B, FARSA, FOLR1, GK5, HIST1H1B, HMGA1, HSP90AB1, HSPA14, IDS, ITPRIPL1, MAPK1, MKNK2, MTHFSD, NF2, PALM2-AKAP2, PEX26, PIAS4, PIM3, POLR3G, POMGNT1, PPP1R11, PPP2CA, PSMB6, PTDSS2, RAB5B, RGS6, SCAF4, SCN2B, SEMA3F, SERF1A, SERF1B, SFT2D2, SLC10A3, SLC27A1, SOX4, STAC, SYNGR2, TET3, TEX261, TFPI, THRA, TIMM8A, TMEM109, TMEM63C, TRIP10, TXNRD3NB, U2SURP, UNK, USP37, VAV3, VPS37C, WBSCR16, ZBTB7A, ZNF689 ABCB1, ARL8B, ARTN, ATM, BAG2, C9orf40, CACNG8, CAPRIN1, CARM1, CCL3, CDC27, CDK2, CDS1, CFTR, miR 223 3p 85 CHMP2B, CHUK, CXCL2, CYB5A, E2F1, ECT2, EPB41L3, F3, FABP7, FAM60A, FBXW7, FOXO1, FOXO3, GPATCH8, HEXIM1, HSP90B1, IGF1R, IL6, IL6ST, IRS1, ITGB1, LATS2, LIF, LMO2, MDM2, MEF2C, MKNK2, MSMO1, MTRF1L, NAMPT, NFIA, NFIX, NMNAT2, NOVA2, NSUN3, PARP1, PAX4, PAX6, PDZD8, PHF19, POLR3G, PRDM1, PTBP2, RANGAP1, RHOB, RIF1, RRAS2, SCARB1, SECISBP2L, SEPT2, SESN3, SLC2A4, SLC7A5, SMARCD1, SNX24, SP1, SP3, SPPL2A, STAT5A, STMN1, TAL1, TMEM64, TMEM67, TOX, TP53, TRPV2, TWF1, WASL, ZBTB18, ZNF365, ZNF460 171 ABCA6, ABL2, ACOT9, ADCY2, ADM, AGRN, AK1, ALG14, AMMECR1L, ANO6, AP3B2, APOB, ARHGAP27, miR_500b_3p ARL17B, ARMC12, ARRDC2, ASCC1, BARD1, BTLA, C16orf45, C17orf104, C3orf18, C8A, CCDC134, CCDC142, CCDC80, CCR6, CDCA4, CDK6, CERS4, CHDH, CHMP3, CLIC5, CLMN, COX19, CXorf38, CYTH2, DDX19B, DYNLL2, EFTUD2, ERC1, ESF1, FADS6, FAM213A, FAM229B, FBXL2, FGF1, FLG2, FXN, GEMIN6, GOSR1, GREM2, HDGF, HEBP2, HIF1AN, HLA-E, HNRNPK, ICOSLG, IDS, IGSF9B, IL1RL2, ISCA2, ITPA, ITPKC, JPH2, KAT7, KBTBD6, KCTD15, KDELC2, KDELR1, KIAA0930, KIAA1549, KIAA1551, KIAA1919, LEAP2, MASTL, MED18, METTL2B, MIDN, MOGAT1, MRPL45, MRPL52, MSANTD4, MTMR10, MUC20, MVB12B, MYLK3, N4BP2L2, NIPAL1, NLN, NOVA2, NPEPPS, NUDT3, OPRD1, OPTN, PAICS, PCSK2, PCSK9, PGBD4, PGBD5, PHC3, PIGG, PLEKHA3, POLM, POLQ, POLR3A, POM121L7, PRIM1, PTCH1, PTPLAD2, PXMP4, PYCRL, PYGO1, QPRT, RANGAP1, RBM27, RBM43, REL, RHBDL2, RHOH, RNF103-CHMP3, RNF115, RRAD, RTTN, SAMD8, SAR1A, SENP3, SF3A3, SGOL1, SLC16A10, SLC1A5, SLC26A2, SLC2A6, SLC31A1, SLC35B4, SMOC1, STAR, STAT3, STRN3, TARS, TDRD1, TIGD6, TLDC1 TMEM119, TMEM120B, TMEM55A, TMEM74B, TMOD2, TNFRSF13C, TNFSF8, TNRC6B, TRIM58, UBE2G2, UNC119B, WDR81, WRN, WT1, ZBTB7A, ZBTB8A, ZC3H12C, ZDHHC8, ZFP14, ZFPM1, ZNF439, ZNF460, ZNF491, ZNF554, ZNF74, ZNF786, ZNF845, ZYG11B miR_550a_3p 40 ABCF2, ACTR1A, C2orf72, CMIP, CNIH, CXCL10, DNAJA3, EFHB, EID2, FEM1B, GTF2E1, HPS4, HSP90AA1, KCNE4, KDELR2, MDM2, MTAP, OR7D2, PKIA, POLR2F, POLR3K, PXMP4, RBM8A, SC5D, SLC11A2, SLC35F6, SYNCRIP, TM4SF19, TMEM50B, TRAF1, TUBD1, TXLNG, URM1, YOD1, YWHAE, YY2, ZC3H12C, ZNF525, ZNF621, ZNF703 ALG13, AMACR, ARF6, ARPP19, ATP6V0A2, ATXN7L1, BICD2, C11ORF58, C19orf35, C21orf91, CEP135, miR_1183 77 CHML, CREB1, CRLF3, CSNK2A1, DCAF7, DEK, DONSON, ELL2, ERBB2IP, FAM53C, FEM1C, FLVCR1, GATA6, GPATCH8, GRAP2, GRHL1, HECTD1, HHLA1, HMGB1, HSPA4L, IL20RB, IPMK, IST1, KIAA0232, KLHDC10, LAMTOR1, LRCH3, MAP3K9, MAPK14, MEOX2, MOB1B, N4BP2, NFATC2, NPTN, NUP188, OSMR, PDPK1, PEX3, PIAS1, PLEKHA1, PLEKHF2, POLR3F, PRAMEF1, PSME4, RACGAP1, RBBP4, RLN1, RWDD2A, SEP15, SERPINA4, SGIP1, SHCBP1, STAT1, STRBP, SYNM, TMED7, TMEM164, TNFSF15, TNKS, TYRP1, UBL3, ZC3H12C, ZC3H6, ZHX3, ZNF35, ZNF608

Table 1. Genes regulated by the nine significantly DE miRNAs.

miR_1184	86	ARL5C, ATG12, BDP1, CAPN1, CEP89, CREBRF, CRK, CRKL, CSNK2A1, DCC, DICER1, DNASE1L3, DRAXIN,
		EHD3, EIF1AX, ENPP2, ERN1, FAM98A, FBXL20, FEM1A, G3BP1, GCC1, GGA2, GLUL, GPCPD1, GSTO2,
		HIST1H2BK, HMGA1, HOXA13, IBA57, IDH3A, IL6R, JPH2, KDELR1, KIAA1549, LAX1, LSM14A, LY6G6E,
		MIS18A, MIS18BP1, MPDU1, MRS2, MTA1, NLRC5, NOA1, NPY4R, NR6A1, NUMB, OTOF, PANK3, PDPR,
		PHF12, PICALM, PIKFYVE, PLIN5, PLXND1, POLDIP2, RAB1A, RNF11, SESN2, SETD1B, SF1, SLC25A45,
		SLC30A3, SLC6A4, SMARCE1, SNX9, SRSF9, STX16, SYNRG, TECPR1, TMED10, TMEM109, TMEM132C,
		TMEM170A, TNFAIP1, UBE2G1, UBE2H, VGLL4, VPS8, XPO5, ZBTB24, ZDHHC6, ZMIZ2, ZNF442, ZNF483
miR_4455	133	ACP1, ADRBK2, ADRM1, AGPAT5, ANO8, APOL6, ARSK, BDH1, BUB1, C16ORF72, C19orf52, CACUL1,
		CAMK2N1, CAMK4, CASZ1, CBX1, CD40LG, CDH12, CDK15, CDKN1A, CDON, CLEC2D, CNTF, COX6B1, CPM,
		CUX2, CYP7B1, DBT, DHODH, DIABLO, DMD, DNAJC6, DOCK1, EDA2R, EEA1, EEF2, EN2, FAM117B,
		FAM69C, FAM83C, FAXC, FGF14, GLI2, GPBP1L1, GXYLT2, IL2RB, JAKMIP2, KANSL1L, KATNAL1, KCNQ3,
		KCNQ5, KIAA1549L, KIF1C, LEPREL1, LHFP, LIPC, LPP, LRRC10, MAN1A2, MAPK10, MARCH3, MARCH4,
		MED28, MOCS3, MPEG1, MTHFD1, MTRNR2L11, NACC2, NCAN, NCOA3, NMNAT2, NR2E1, NUP93, ONE-
		CUT3, PARP2, PAX5, PGBD4, PLAC8, PLEKHA1, PORCN, PPP1R16B, PRIM1, PRKCB, PRRT2, PTCHD1,
		PYGO1, RAB3C, RAP2B, ROCK2, SAMD9L, SBK1, SEPT6, SESN2, SETD1B, SETD5, SF3B3, SH3TC2, SIM1,
		SLC16A13, SLC35F6, SLC43A3, SLCO4C1, SPPL3, SPRY4, SYT2, TBX4, TCTE1, TGOLN2, TMED4, TMPRSS6,
		TNR, TNS4, TRAF3, TTLL7, TXNL4B, TYRO3, UBE2Q1, UBN2, UGT2B4, VAMP4, VANGL1, WNT4, XKR6,
		YOD1, ZBED3, ZC3H4, ZDHHC20, ZEB1, ZNF131, ZNF382, ZNF529, ZNF556, ZNF878
miR 8063	181	AAK1, ACTB, ACVR1C, ADCYAP1R1, AGO3, ALAD, ALKBH5, AMOTL2, AP5M1, ARHGAP12, ARL5B, ASH2L,
_		ATG9A, ATP6V1C1, AVPR1A, BCL2L11, BDP1, BRPF3, BTF3L4, BTG3, C12orf29, C12orf5, C16orf52,
C16orf72, C17orf105, C19orf44, C1GALT1, CALCR,		C16orf72, C17orf105, C19orf44, C1GALT1, CALCR, CAPN7, CCDC108, CCDC71L, CCND2, CCNL2,
		CDC42BPA, CENPH, CENPL, CEP85L, CLSPN, CMTM6, CPT1B, CRNKL1, CTDSPL, CXCL5, CYBRD1, DCTN4,
		DCTN6, DEPDC1, DEPTOR, DIP2A, DNAJC10, DNAJC21, DST, E2F2, EDIL3, EDN3, EHD4, EIF1AX, ELAVL1,
		ELAVL2, EMC3, EPHA2, ERBB3, EXOC5, EXOC8, FAM103A1, FAM129A, FAM216B, FAR2, FBXO28, FEM1B,
		FKBP15, FRK, FSIP2, FUT11, GABRB2, GALM, GATA6, GATAD1, GLRX2, GNG12, GPR151, GRAMD3, HAS2,
		HEPHL1, HIST1H2BD, HIST1H3E, HNRNPC, HNRNPDL, IFNB1, IL5, IRF2BP2, JAG1, JAZF1, KDSR, KIAA0101,
		KIAA1614, KIT, L3MBTL2, LIMD1, LMNB2, LRRC4, LSM3, MAP3K2, MAPT, MMS22L, MOCS2, MON1B,
		MRPS10, MUT, MVK, MYLK, NAA38, NECAB1, NHLRC2, NOX5, NUDT21, ODF4, OTUD7B, PAFAH1B2,
		PAIP1, PAK2, PAK3, PDE1A, PEG10, PITX3, POLR1A, POU5F1B, PPIL2, PRDM5, PRDX3, PRKAA1, PTPDC1,
		QRSL1, RCAN1, RNF165, RPS4Y1, SCOC, SEC22C, SEPT2, SETD5, SGCD, SLC19A3, SLC35E2, SLC38A9,
		SMU1, SPATA13, SPOP, SPRED1, SPRED3, STRBP, SZRD1, TAB2, TACC1, TCF7L2, TENM4, TES, TESPA1,
		TGFBR1, TIGD2, TMED7, TMEM119, TMEM59, TMEM67, TNFSF15, TRAFD1, TRAPPC4, TSPAN12, TTC39C,
		TWISTNB, U2AF2, USP48, VIM, WAPAL, WNK1, XKR4, YIPF6, ZDHHC21, ZDHHC23, ZNF426, ZNF573,
		ZNF770

Table 2. The overlap between the genes regulated by the 9 DE miRNAs and the significant gene sets obtained in the GSEA performed with the Broad hallmark gene sets.

miRNA	Number of regulated genes [n]	Number of Broad hallmark gene sets with significant (FDR q-value < 0.05) gene overlap [n (%)]	Number of overlapping Broad hallmark gene sets that are significantly up- or down-regu- lated in the mRNA analysis [n(%)]	Overlapping Broad hallmark gene sets up- or down-regulated in the mRNA analysis
miR_32_3p	118	2 (4.0%)	2 (100.0%)	Hypoxia, Myc targets v1
miR_185_3p	67	1 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR_223_3p	85	23 (46.0%)	10 (43.5%)	TNFA signaling via NFkB, KRAS signal- ing up, G2M checkpoint, Hypoxia, II2-STAT5 signaling, Inflammatory re- sponse, Apoptosis, Mitotic spindle, Epithelial mesenchymal transition, II6-JAK-STAT3 signaling
miR_500b_3p	171	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR_550a_3p	40	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR_1183	77	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR_1184	86	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR 4455	133	2 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
miR_8063	181	4 (8.0%)	3 (75.0%)	Apoptosis, Cholesterol homeostasis, Epithelial mesenchymal transition
All 9 miRNAs	899	31 (62.0%)	12 (38.7%)	G2M checkpoint, II2-STAT5 signaling, TNFA signaling via NFkB, Inflamma- tory response, Myc targets v1, Mi- totic spindle, Hypoxia, E2F targets, KRAS signaling up, Apoptosis, II6- JAK-STAT3 signaling, Cholesterol ho- meostasis

V. Discusión

Discusión

V.1 Medidas de eficacia virológica en estudios con ATI

En el primer trabajo de esta tesis se describió una cohorte grande de ATIs en participantes de once estudios prospectivos realizados durante las últimas dos décadas. Se establecieron correlaciones entre los *end-points* virológicos más habituales, se identificó el TtR como una variable capaz de "resumir" la mayoría de los demás parámetros del rebote viral, y se exploró el efecto de algunas variables de confusión que pueden influir en la dinámica del rebote.

Uno de los resultados más importantes de este trabajo es la demostración de que un control viral clínicamente relevante es esperable principalmente en pacientes con un TtR prolongado. Además, según nuestro análisis, este parámetro mostró fuertes correlaciones con la mayoría de los demás *end-points* virológicos habitualmente utilizados.

Como hemos detallado en la Introducción, la MAP no se considera útil en estudios de curación más allá de para estimar el reservorio viral. Por otro lado, los estudios con ATI completo siguen estando sujetos a polémica por su cuestionable seguridad. Aunque las interrupciones de tratamiento inferiores a 3-4 meses no parecen aumentar de forma persistente el reservorio viral [60,61], ni la incidencia de eventos definitorios de SIDA a corto plazo [59], los efectos de ATI a largo plazo son mayormente desconocidos. Los asuntos que quizás más preocupan tanto a investigadores como a participantes son el riesgo de aumento de procesos inflamatorios crónicos debido a un posible aumento del reservorio y la posibilidad de una respuesta disminuida a futuras intervenciones curativas [64]. Recientemente nuestro grupo ha explorado el pronóstico a largo plazo de parte de la

Discusión

cohorte descrito en el primer trabajo de esta tesis, y se encontró un riesgo significativamente más elevado de eventos no definitorios de SIDA varios años después del reinicio del TARVc en comparación con una cohorte de control sin ATI previo, definida mediante pareamiento por puntaje de propensión [127].

Basado en las observaciones del primer trabajo de esta tesis, se podría plantear estudios con un diseño híbrido "MAP/ATI", evaluando el TtR como *end-point* intermedio y reiniciar TARVc sin demora en los participantes con un rebote temprano. Aquellos participantes con un TtR más prolongada se podrían mantener sin TARVc por un tiempo más prolongado para valorar parámetros más tardíos, como son el pico de la CV o el *set point*. De esa manera se aumentaría la seguridad de estos ensayos, a la vez que se optimizaría su rentabilidad tanto desde el punto de vista científico como económico.

El segundo mensaje más importante de este primer trabajo es referente a la importancia de la CV pre-ART a la hora de evaluar parámetros de rebote viral durante ATIs. Existen varios datos en la literatura sobre la relación de este parámetro basal y ciertos aspectos de la dinámica del rebote viral, como el pico [128], el *set point* [129–131], el riesgo del rebote [132], o la magnitud de la CV al rebote [133]. Otros autores encontraron que receptores de una vacuna terapéutica con CV pre-ART más alta reiniciaron ART antes que aquellos con CV pre-ART más bajas [134].

En un estudio metodológico de estadística realizado sobre un subgrupo de la cohorte del primer trabajo de esta tesis también se llegó a la conclusión de que la magnitud de la CV pre-ART se asocia al tiempo del rebote. En este estudio se objetivó una razón de riesgo (hazard ratio – HR) ajustada de 1,83 del riesgo instantáneo de rebote viral durante ATI para cada log10 copias / mL de aumento de la CV pre-ART [135]. El primer trabajo de esta tesis apoya estos datos al demostrar que la CV pre-ART se correlaciona con la inmensa mayoría de los *end-points* habituales del rebote.

A pesar de la experiencia acumulada – y con algunas excepciones [131] – la CV pre-ART actualmente no se tiene en cuenta de forma rutinaria en los ensayos con ATI. Creemos que nuestros datos aportan más evidencia a favor de incorporar consideraciones sobre la CV pre-ART a la hora de diseñar y evaluar estos estudios.

Finalmente, el tercer aspecto más relevante de este trabajo es que ofrece una cohorte lo suficientemente grande y detalladamente descrita para poder ser utilizada de referencia en futuros trabajos sin grupo control. Aunque teóricamente los resultados de un estudio aleatorizado y controlado son por definición más fiables que los obtenidos de ensayos de rama única [136], en las recomendaciones actuales sobre estudios con ATI pesan mucho las consideraciones de seguridad previamente discutidas, y sugieren no emplear grupos controles en ensayos con fines exploratorios [66]. Creemos que nuestros datos pueden ser de especial utilidad en este escenario.

Una de las limitaciones más importantes de este trabajo ha sido la heterogeneidad de los estudios incluidos, lo que conllevó una cantidad no menospreciable de datos perdidos. Los efectos estadísticos de este hecho fueron mitigados hasta cierta medida mediante análisis de sensibilidad. Por otro lado, los datos no se pudieron ajustar por otros factores importantes, como el TARVc pre-ATI de los participantes, el nadir de los linfocitos CD4+ o el reservorio.

En conclusión, la mayoría de los parámetros del rebote viral se correlacionan entre ellos de manera significativa, de los cuales destaca el TtR como un parámetro precoz y seguro

Discusión

que puede ser útil para predecir el valor esperable de parámetros más tardíos. También señalamos la CV pre-TARV como uno de los factores de confusión más importantes a tener en cuenta ya en la fase de diseño de estudios con ATI. Además, ofrecemos una cohorte de tamaño considerable de ATIs como referencia para futuros estudios sin rama control.

V.2 Predictores de control virológico durante ATI

Como hemos visto previamente, según las recomendaciones actuales la necesidad de usar o no usar ATI en un estudio se debe someter a un estricto escrutinio. Adicionalmente, ha habido un esfuerzo considerable por parte de la comunidad científica para incrementar la seguridad de las ATIs en caso de que éstas sean imprescindibles. Por ejemplo, se ha demostrado que las ATIs en los estudios realizados al largo de las últimas dos décadas han sido progresivamente más breves y monitorizadas de una forma cada vez más estricta [137]. Aún así, lo ideal sería poder definir unos marcadores subrogados de respuesta – por muy compleja que sea esta tarea [58] – para disminuir al máximo los posibles riesgos asociados a la retirada del TARVc. Especialmente en el momento actual, cuando la pandemia por SARS-CoV2 añade otra variable desconocida a la hora de estimar la seguridad de ATIs durante los próximos años [138]. Desafortunadamente, a pesar de los múltiples intentos de identificar algún marcador precoz útil, por ahora no se ha encontrado ningún predictor de respuesta precoz que permitiera prescindir de las ATIs [138].

En el segundo trabajo de esta tesis se empleó una metodología sencilla de aprendizaje automático para crear un modelo que podría predecir el control virológico esperable durante una ATI antes de parar el tratamiento. Se construyó un CBN utilizando los datos del ensayo DCV2, que clasificó los participantes de este ensayo en ser o no controladores virológicos (definidos como tener una delta CV > 1 log10 copias/mL a las 12 semanas de ATI) a base de datos pre-interrupción con una exactitud del 91%. El modelo tuvo un valor predictivo negativo de 94% en una cohorte independiente de validación, demostrando su utilidad a la hora de identificar por adelantado aquellos pacientes con una baja probabilidad de alcanzar el mencionado criterio de control virológico.

Los dos componentes del clasificador fueron la CV pre-TARVc y una subpoblación de linfocitos T CD8+, la de las células T CD8+CD45RA+RO+. El clasificador identificó aquellos casos con una CV pre-TARVc más baja y una proporción de linfocitos T CD8+CD45RA+RO+ más alta de tener poca probabilidad de alcanzar el umbral de control viral establecido en el ensayo DCV2 (es decir, de tener una delta CV mayor de 1 log10 copias/mL a las 12 semanas de ATI).

El hecho de que una CV pre-TARVc alta sea un atributo favorable en este escenario parece estar en contradicción con lo discutido en el apartado previo. No obstante, probablemente se trata más bien de una consecuencia de la falta de consenso en cómo definir el control virológico. En el DCV2 la medida de eficacia primaria fue la caída de CV respecto a valores pre-TARVc a las 12 semanas de la parada del tratamiento, y en el segundo trabajo de esta tesis decidimos respetar esta elección de *end-point*. Hay que tener en cuenta, sin embargo, que el hecho de reducir el *set point* viral por un logaritmo de copias/mL no es equivalente a reducirlo por debajo de un umbral preestablecido. De hecho, en el primer trabajo de esta tesis también observamos que el delta CV a las 12 semanas de la ATI (expresada en números negativos) se correlacionaba de forma negativa con la magnitud de la CV pre-ART (rho de Spearman de -0,47, p < 0,0005), a pesar de que el valor absoluto de CV a las 12 semanas se correlacionaba de forma directa con la CV pre-ART (rho de Spearman 0,39, p < 0,0005). Se podría especular que, por las características de los *end-points* "delta", con estos parámetros sería más fácil alcanzar objetivos clínicamente relevantes en una población con una situación virológica basal menos favorable. Otras variables que mostraron una diferencia estadísticamente significativa entre controladores y no controladores a parte de la CV pre-TARVc fueron algunas subpoblaciones de linfocitos T – dato que no es del todo sorprendente teniendo en cuenta el rol central de estas células en la patogenia del VIH. Tres de estas subpoblaciones son definidas por receptores de quimiocinas (CCR5 y CXCR4), y las otras dos por expresar a la vez dos isoformas (RA y RO) de la proteína CD45. El hecho de que en aquellos pacientes con peor control virológico se objetiva una mayor proporción de células que expresan CCR5, concuerda con lo descrito en la literatura [139,140]. El papel de los linfocitos T CD45RA+RO+, sin embargo, es considerablemente menos conocido.

Por un lado, en ausencia de una caracterización más precisa de los linfocitos T CD45RA+RO+, no podemos establecer con certeza absoluta si se trata de células en un estado transicional de diferenciación entre el estado naíf (CD45RA+RO-) y de memoria (CD45RA-RO+), de células T efectoras de memoria terminalmente diferenciadas (T_{EMRA}) – que vuelven a expresar la isoforma RA de la proteína CD45 – o quizás de una mezcla entre ambas. Por otro lado, aún asumiendo que la mayoría de estas células son T_{EMRA} , la literatura ofrece datos contradictorios respecto a su función y relevancia.

Los linfocitos T CD8+ con fenotipo T_{EMRA} han sido más estudiados que los T_{EMRA} CD4+. Northfield y colaboradores demostraron en una cohorte de 10 pacientes con infección aguda de VIH que una cantidad elevada de T_{EMRA} CD8+ específicos al VIH-1 se asociaba a un mejor control virológico y se correlacionaba con la magnitud del *set point* viral [141]. De modo similar, en un estudio más reciente, Meravigilia y colaboradores reportaron una proporción alta de T_{EMRA} CD8+ tanto en controladores de la CV sin tratamiento como en pacientes con buen control bajo TARVc [142]. En la misma línea, Amu y colaboradores reportaron una correlación negativa entre niveles de T_{EMRA} CD8+ y el tamaño del reservorio viral tanto en pacientes tratados en fase aguda como en los tratados en fase crónica [143].

Otros autores, sin embargo, encontraron que los T_{EMRA} CD8+ se asociaban a un peor control virológico. En un estudio de Díaz y colaboradores realizado con una muestra de pacientes pediátricos con transmisión vertical del VIH se objetivó que la proporción de T_{EMRA} CD8+ fue significativamente mayor en aquellos niños que habían presentado alguna carga viral detectable durante los últimos 6 meses, en comparación con aquellos que no. Asimismo, constataron que en controles sanos esta proporción fue todavía más baja [144]. Bordoni y colaboradores compararon 34 pacientes tratados con recuento de CD4+ por encima de 400 células/mL y CV indetectable (grupo "CD4 alto") con 32 infectados sin tratamiento o con fracaso de tratamiento, que tenían < 200 células/mL de CD4+ y CV detectable (grupo "CD4 bajo"). Encontraron que los pacientes del grupo "CD4 alto" tenían niveles de T_{EMRA} CD8+ activados – aunque no de totales – significativamente inferiores al grupo "CD4 bajo". Igual que en el anterior estudio, la proporción de estas células en controles sanos fue más baja que en cualquiera de los dos grupos de infectados [145]. Finalmente, un estudio reciente de Gálvez y colaboradores describió una cohorte pequeña de pacientes tratados con reservorio viral excepcionalmente bajo, denominándolos "LoViReT" (del inglés Low Viral Reservoir Treated Individuals, personas tratadas con bajo reservorio viral). Los pacientes LoViReT tenían niveles significativamente más bajos de T_{EMRA} CD8+ que los controles – tanto antes de iniciar TARVc como a los 18 meses de tratamiento [146].

Los datos publicados sobre T_{EMRA} CD4+ son más escasos, probablemente en relación con el hecho de que estas células representan una población mucho más heterogénea que los T_{EMRA} CD8+, y que además muestran una importante variabilidad interindividual [147]. Sin embargo, en algunos de los trabajos previamente descritos parecen comportarse de forma similar a los T_{EMRA} CD8+. En el estudio de Bordoni y colaboradores, los niveles de T_{EMRA} CD4+ totales se incrementaron de forma significativa entre controles sanos, el grupo "CD4 alto" y el grupo "CD4 bajo" [145], mientras que el grupo de Gálvez y colaboradores encontró que la media de la cantidad relativa de T_{EMRA} CD4+ era menor en pacientes LoViReT tanto antes como después de iniciar TARVc, aunque estas diferencias no llegaron a alcanzar significancia estadística [146].

Nuestro trabajo parece apoyar aquellos datos a favor de la asociación entre bajos niveles de células T_{EMRA} y el buen control virológico, pero a la espera de una confirmación experimental en estudios prospectivos, las conclusiones al respecto han de ser tomadas con cautela.

Las limitaciones de este segundo trabajo son principalmente tres: La primera de ellas es el tamaño relativamente bajo de la cohorte de derivación. La segunda es la determinación no estandarizada de las subpoblaciones linfocitarias, y la ya mencionada caracterización incompleta de estas células. Por último, a destacar que el modelo fue creado para el *endpoint* virológico de delta CV a las 12 semanas de ATI, y aunque haya sido validado para esta medida de eficacia en una cohorte independiente, su potencial utilidad en relación con otros *end-points* (TtR, *set point*) no ha podido ser comprobada.

En conclusión, nuestro trabajo demuestra que es posible crear un CBN sencillo basado en datos pre-ATI fácilmente obtenibles, que identifique de manera fiable los participantes no controladores de CV después de interrumpir TARVc. Cabe destacar que el modelo pudo ser validado en una cohorte independiente. Además, este trabajo ha señalado unas subpoblaciones de linfocitos T cuyo rol en el control virológico precisaría ser investigado de forma experimental.

V.3 Patrones transcriptómicos relacionados con el control virológico durante ATI

Uno de los motivos principales por lo que las técnicas de biología de sistemas están ganando cada vez más terreno en el campo de las vacunas es la promesa de ofrecer evidencia científica robusta de antemano sobre la eficacia de una nueva vacuna: una perspectiva muy alentadora después de que los primeros doscientos años de la historia de la vacunación fuera en su mayor parte basada en ensayo y error.

Se han realizado diferentes intentos de identificar predictores de respuesta basados en datos clínico-inmunológicos de baja complejidad en vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH (como aquellos revisados detalladamente en [138], o los reportados en el segundo trabajo de esta tesis), pero hay varios motivos para pensar que empleando métodos de vacunología de sistemas se podría optimizar la búsqueda por correlatos de eficacia. Primero, con elevada probabilidad se podría medir un patrón ómico potencialmente predictivo muy poco tiempo después de la inmunización. Además, a partir de signaturas ómicas multidimensionales presumiblemente se construirían modelos más precisos comparado con aquellos que resultan de análisis multivariados convencionales. Adicionalmente, la vacunología de sistemas puede revelar datos sobre los mecanismos de protección, que puede dar lugar a nuevas hipótesis, acelerando así el proceso de desarrollo de la vacuna [148].

En el tercer trabajo de esta tesis se realizó un análisis de la expresión de mRNA y de miRNA sobre muestras de PBMC de los participantes del ensayo DCV2, recogidas tras administrar la vacuna experimental, con el fin de identificar signaturas génicas precoces relacionadas con la respuesta virológica. Comparando los respondedores (delta VL a las 12 semanas de ATI > 1 log10 copias/mL) con los no respondedores (delta VL a las 12 semanas de ATI < 1 log10 copias/mL) no se encontraron mRNA diferencialmente expresados (DE). Sin embargo, al realizar un análisis de enriquecimiento de conjuntos de genes (gene set enrichment analysis, GSEA), utilizando la colección de conjuntos de genes "hallmark" del Instituto Broad [149], se hallaron unos grupos de genes significativamente enriquecidos en uno de los dos grupos. Concretamente, se observó en respondedores la sobrerregulación de 14 grupos de genes, como por ejemplo el conjunto de genes relacionado con la señalización del TNF alfa a través del factor nuclear potenciador de las cadenas ligeras kappa de las células B activadas (nuclear factor kappa-light-chain-enhancer of activated B cells, NFkB), la respuesta inflamatoria, la coagulación, el sistema de complemento, la señalización de interleucina (IL) 6 - cinasa Jano (JAK, Janus kinase) transductor de señal y activador de la transcripción (STAT, signal transducer and activator of transcription) 3, la señalización IL-2-STAT5, la apoptosis o la vía metabólica de especies de oxígeno reactivo (ROS, reactive oxygen species). Por otro lado, se objetivaron 7 conjuntos de genes (relacionados con la respuesta al interferón alfa, la fosforilación oxidativa, y varios aspectos del ciclo celular) que fueron infrarregulados en respondedores. Adicionalmente, se identificaron 9 miRNAs DE, algunos de los cuales regulan de forma post-transcripcional la expresión de genes que también fueron desregulados a nivel transcriptómico. El grupo de los genes regulados por uno de ellos, miR-223-3p, se solapa de forma significativa con 10 de los 21 conjuntos de genes enriquecidos en el GSEA.

Nuestros datos concuerdan de forma parcial con lo descrito en la literatura. El hecho de no poder identificar genes DE entre respondedores y no respondedores puede resultar inesperado, pero no sin precedentes. En el estudio de Thiébaut y colaboradores sobre cambios transcriptómicos relacionados con una vacuna terapéutica basada en DC – descrito en el apartado I.4.a – no se pudo identificar genes individuales DE entre puntos de tiempo de antes y después de la vacunación [102]. En otro trabajo sobre muestras obtenidas antes, durante y después de ATI tampoco se encontraron genes DE tras realizar una corrección por comparaciones múltiples [61].

Examinando los conjuntos de genes sobrerregulados en respondedores en nuestro trabajo, vemos que mayoritariamente participan en procesos inmunológicos. Algunos de ellos participan principalmente en la inmunidad innata (respuesta inflamatoria, complemento, coagulación, IL-6[150]) otros predominantemente en la adaptativa (vías de señalización KRAS [151] o IL-2 [150]), y otros en ambas (vías de señalización TNF alpha – NfkB [152] y ROS [153–155], homeostasis de colesterol [156], o apoptosis). Entre los conjuntos de genes infrarregulados en respondedores encontramos la respuesta a interferón alpha y la fosforilación oxidativa: el primero es un actor fundamental en la respuesta inmunitaria innata [157] que además se asocia a un peor pronóstico en la infección por VIH crónica [158], mientras que la disminución de la segunda se puede observar en linfocitos T activados [159]. Los resultados muestran de forma global una activación inmunitaria en respondedores a través de la movilización de genes relacionados con procesos tanto inflamatorios como específicos, con predominio de estos últimos.

Es conocido que la infección por VIH resulta en un estado de inflamación crónica,[19] aunque la intensidad de esta inflamación disminuye al iniciar TARVc, acompañado de una infra-regulación de genes relacionados con procesos inflamatorios. [160,161] Por otro lado, según el estudio de de Goede y colaboradores – descrito en el apartado I.4.a – la administración de una vacuna terapéutica basada en DC puede dar lugar a la activación de genes que participan en procesos inflamatorios y en la respuesta inmunitaria.

Otros autores describieron que la calidad de la respuesta inmunitaria y la magnitud de la expresión génica se relacionan con el control virológico sin TARVc. Hocini y sus colaboradores reportaron que pacientes infectados con VIH-1 que se mantenían con CV < 400 copias/mL sin TARVc mostraban una infrarregulación de genes asociados a inflamación y sobrerregulación de genes relacionados con la activación de células T [162]. Vahey y colaboradores describieron que la sobrerregulación de conjuntos de genes relacionados con procesos inflamatorios 24 semanas después de interrumpir TARVc se asocia a un peor control virológico e inmunológico [163]. En su ya mencionado estudio, Thiébaut y colaboradores demostraron de forma minuciosa que la movilización post-vacunación-pre-ATI de grupos de genes con perfil predominantemente inflamatorio se asociaba a un peor control virológico – definido según la magnitud del pico de la CV durante la ATI – mientras que los genes relacionados con la activación y diferenciación de células T se comportaban de forma inversa. Nuestros resultados apoyan estos hallazgos y subrayan la importancia de una respuesta predominantemente específica frente a la inflamación para un mejor control virológico.

El control post-transcripcional de la expresión génica ejercido por miRNAs se conoce desde hace casi 20 años [164]. Desde entonces se han descrito miles de miRNAs que se conoce que regulan la expresión de más del 60% de todos los genes codificadores de proteínas [89]. Aunque el efecto regulador se debe fundamentalmente a una interferencia inhibitoria con la traducción de los mRNAs diana, también se ha descrito que pueden ejercer una función activadora [165].

El hecho de que varios de los miRNAs DE en nuestro trabajo regulan los mismos procesos inmunológicos que se observaron en el GSEA realizado sobre los mRNA subrayan la importancia de dichos procesos en el control virológico.

Discusión

De los miRNA DE cabe destacar el miR-223-3p, como uno de los tres miRNAs que regulan unos conjuntos de genes que fueron significativamente infrarregulados en respondedores. Además, los genes regulados por miR-223-3p se solapan de forma significativa con 10 conjuntos de genes *"hallmark"* enriquecidos en el GSEA. Este miRNA es un *"conocido desconocido"*, siendo uno de los miRNAs más estudiados, que participa en la regulación de múltiples procesos biológicos (como la hematopoyesis o la respuesta inflamatoria, entre otros) pero todavía con muchas incógnitas respecto a su papel exacto en los diferentes escenarios [166,167]. El caso de la infección por VIH tampoco es diferente, ya que los estudios disponibles en la literatura describen su expresión siendo mayor [168,169], menor [170], igual [171], o tejido-dependiente [172] en pacientes seropositivos en comparación con controles sanos. De todas maneras, nuestros resultados muestran que miR-223-3p tiene también un papel regulador importante en la respuesta inmunológica y en el control virológico tras la retirada de TARVc en pacientes infectados por VIH-1.

Nuestro tercer trabajo tiene algunas limitaciones; las más importantes son los siguientes: La extracción y secuenciación de mRNA y miRNA fue realizada en instituciones diferentes, hecho que pudo comprometer la homogeneidad de la calidad de los datos obtenidos, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta la discutida reproducibilidad de experimentos con microarray de miRNA [173]. Otra limitación es el hecho de haber analizado muestras obtenidas en un único momento, puesto que no permitió analizar cambios temporales en los perfiles transcriptómicos. Por tercero, aunque en el ensayo DCV2 se observó significativamente más respondedores entre los vacunados que entre los pacientes control [27], no pudimos identificar diferencias en expresión génica entre los grupos de tratamiento. Por lo tanto, a pesar de la sobrerrepresentación de los vacunados entre los respondedores, no es posible atribuir las diferencias observadas claramente al efecto de la vacuna. Por último, a la hora de la recogida de las muestras, algunos pacientes vacunados ya habían interrumpido el TARVc, lo que probablemente pudo haber influido en la expresión de algunos genes.

En resumen, en el tercer trabajo no pudimos identificar patrones de expresión génica claramente relacionados con el control virológico durante ATI utilizando datos del ensayo DCV2. Observamos, sin embargo, que un mejor control de la CV está relacionado con la sobrerregulación de procesos inmunitarios – preferentemente específicos – antes de la parada del TARVc. Además, señalamos miR-223-3p como uno de los miRNAs con un papel clave en la regulación de la respuesta inmunitaria en este escenario.

V.4 Retos y futuras direcciones en el análisis de la eficacia de estrategias de curación del VIH

Hoy por hoy una cura esterilizante farmacológica del VIH se considera una meta muy lejana por la presencia del reservorio celular, los santuarios anatómicos donde los fármacos antirretrovirales no son capaces de penetrar de forma eficiente, y posiblemente una viremia residual que puede persistir a pesar de un TARVc eficaz [174]. Es por ello que la mayor parte del esfuerzo científico se concentra en perseguir una cura funcional, siendo las vacunas terapéuticas las intervenciones que más resultados prometedores han aportado en los últimos años.

No obstante, el camino hacia una vacuna terapéutica eficaz también posee relevantes obstáculos [30]. Por un lado, existen dificultades teóricas y técnicas relacionadas con las posibles estrategias terapéuticas a seguir. Por otro lado, el campo padece también un problema metodológico grave, que consiste en la falta de medidas de eficacia fidedignas para poder determinar y comparar de forma fiable el efecto de las intervenciones investigadas [148]. Idealmente se podrían utilizar correlatos inmunológicos como marcadores subrogados predictores de la respuesta – como es la práctica habitual en muchas vacunas preventivas –, pero dichos correlatos solamente podrían ser identificados de forma retrospectiva a base de un tratamiento eficaz, o si en algún caso se hubiera curado la infección y se hubiera desarrollado inmunidad. Como sabemos, ninguno de estos dos supuestos se cumple en el caso de VIH por el momento [175].

Además, el hecho de que una vacuna genere anticuerpos o provoque que un número más alto de PBMC produzca IFN tras estimulación con diferentes secuencias de VIH, no necesariamente significa una respuesta inmune eficaz, por lo que muchas de las vacunas que se muestran "inmunógenas" en ensayos de fase I y IIa pueden fracasar en etapas más tardías de la investigación [176].

Por los motivos antes expuestos, una ATI sigue siendo la única manera de comprobar si una intervención funciona o no, ya que la evolución clínica, inmunológica y virológica después de interrumpir el tratamiento antirretroviral reflejan de forma clara si se controla o no la enfermedad sin TARVc. La medición de la CV plasmática durante ATI destaca entre los datos medibles, por ser el rebote viral el primer fenómeno observable durante el ATI. Sobre la importancia relativa de los diferentes parámetros del rebote, empero, no existe un consenso absoluto, por lo que cada grupo de investigación tiende a escoger sus *end-points* virológicos según sus preferencias.

Aun así, en el futuro próximo los estudios sobre intervenciones inmunológicas con fines curativos muy probablemente seguirán contando con ATIs, y la seguridad seguirá siendo un tema cada vez más relevante – especialmente durante y después de la pandemia por el virus SARS-CoV2 [177]. Por tanto, poder preseleccionar los participantes con mayor probabilidad de responder a una cierta intervención, o reiniciar TARVc de forma precoz si la probabilidad estimada de respuesta es baja pueden convertirse en prioridades.

Por otro lado, el empleo de técnicas de biología de sistemas seguirá ganando terreno en la investigación sobre vacunas terapéuticas frente al VIH-1. Su uso no solo comporta un aumento cuantitativo de datos analizables, sino también un avance a nivel cualitativo, ya que puede a la vez ofrecer nuevos marcadores de eficacia y revelar información novedosa sobre el mecanismo de acción de la vacuna en cuestión [148]. Este campo evoluciona a un ritmo vertiginoso, ampliando nuestros conocimientos de forma constante tanto a nivel

teórico como metodológico. Por ejemplo, el papel probablemente crucial de la microbiota intestinal tanto en la patogénesis del VIH como en la respuesta a una vacuna terapéutica, que estamos sólo empezando a descifrar [178]. Asimismo, técnicas como la secuenciación de células individuales, o el análisis integral de datos provenientes de diferentes experimentos ómicos (datos multi-ómicos) se están convirtiendo en métodos rutinarios [179].

En los trabajos de esta tesis se han abordado algunos de los problemas más importantes de la evaluación de la eficacia de vacunas terapéuticas. En el primer trabajo conseguimos por primera vez demostrar que las principales medidas de eficacia virológicas se correlacionan entre ellas, e hicimos propuestas para mejorar el perfil de seguridad de futuros estudios con ATI en base del TtR. En el segundo trabajo demostramos que utilizando técnicas sencillas de aprendizaje automático es posible construir un modelo que puede aumentar la seguridad y también la rentabilidad de estos estudios optimizando el proceso de reclutamiento de participantes. Finalmente, en el tercer trabajo nos aventuramos en el campo de la vacunología de sistemas, que con toda seguridad será una herramienta determinante en los próximos años en el desarrollo de vacunas terapéuticas eficaces frente al VIH-1.

VI. Conclusiones

Conclusiones

- Existen correlaciones significativas entre las medidas de eficacia virológica más comúnmente utilizadas en ensayos con interrupciones programadas de tratamiento antirretroviral, y el tiempo desde la interrupción hasta el rebote viral es un parámetro óptimo para resumir los demás parámetros más tardíos, por lo que su uso preferente es recomendable en futuros estudios.
- 2) La carga viral antes de iniciar el tratamiento antirretroviral es un factor que se asocia de forma significativa con la dinámica del rebote viral durante una interrupción del tratamiento, por lo que su valor debe tenerse en cuenta en el diseño y/o evaluación de futuros estudios.
- Es posible identificar personas con baja probabilidad de control viral durante un estudio con interrupción de tratamiento, mediante un modelo construido con una metodología sencilla de aprendizaje automático – un clasificador bayesiano ingenuo – basado en datos pre-interrupción fácilmente accesibles.
- 4) La abundancia relativa de linfocitos T CD45RA+RO+ puede ser un factor importante en el control inmunológico de la carga viral después de interrumpir el tratamiento antirretroviral. Esta relación debería ser comprobada de forma experimental.
- 5) Una sobrerregulación de genes relacionados con la respuesta inmunitaria predominantemente específica se asocia a un mejor control de la carga viral después de interrumpir el tratamiento.

6) La respuesta inmunitaria necesaria para controlar la carga viral después de la interrupción del tratamiento antirretroviral es regulada por microARNs, de los cuales miR-223-3p probablemente tiene un rol central.

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