

Managing the Burden of Prurigo Nodularis: The Role of Emerging Therapies



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Disclosures

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Relationship	Manufacturer
<i>Investigator</i>	AbbVie, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Demira, Dermavant Sciences, Eli Lilly and Company, Galderma USA, Janssen-Ortho Inc., Leo Pharma Inc, Modernizing Medicine, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Ortho Dermatologics, Pfizer Inc., Sanofi Genzyme, UCB Speaker: AbbVie, Sanofi Genzyme
<i>Consultant</i>	Arcutis Biotherapeutics, ASLAN, Beiersdorf, Inc., EPI Health, Nimbus Therapeutics, Sun Pharmaceutical
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Learning Objectives

- **APPLY** clinical evidence and criteria to identify common symptoms and associated disease cycles that negatively affect quality of life in patients with prurigo nodularis (PN) to support earlier diagnosis
- **IDENTIFY** known factors involved in the pathogenesis of PN
- **UTILIZE** available guidance for the treatment of patients with PN
- **EVALUATE** clinical evidence supporting use of current and investigational agents for the management of PN

Itching to Be Well Again:
Understanding the Disease Burden
of PN and Its Effect on QOL

Prevalence: PN by the Numbers

- Estimated prevalence: ~83,500 or 148/100,000 population

United States Prevalence Stratified by Age (Years)*					
	<15	15–24	25–44	45–64	>65
Number	2,919	16,914	38,076	30,164	79,635
Percentage	1.7	10.1	22.7	18.0	47.5

*Taken from NAMCS ICD-9 codes in 2015.

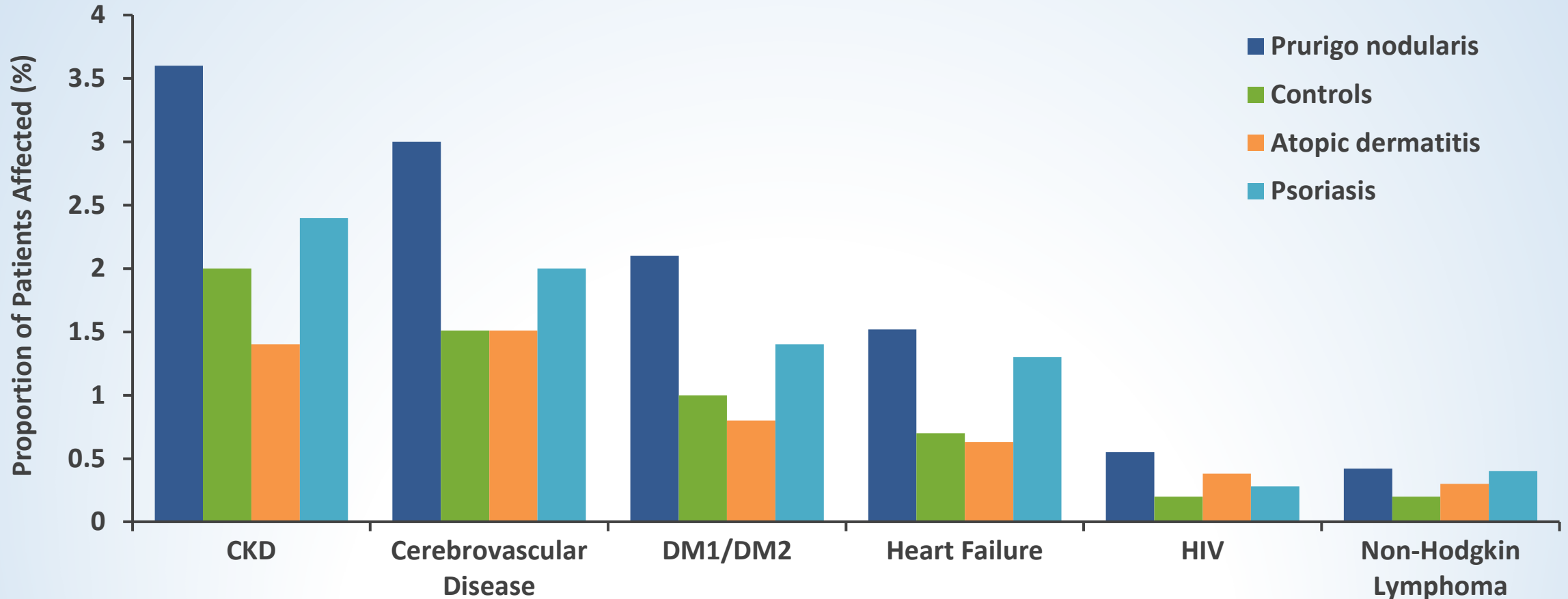
- Prevalence by ethnicity: 3.4 times more common in African Americans
 - African Americans: 49.4%
 - White: 41.8%
 - Asian: 3.4%
- By sex: Women 53%; men 47% per claims database of >24 million enrollees

ICD, International Classification of Diseases; NAMCS, National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey.

Boozalis E, et al. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2018;79:714-719; Huang AH, et al. *J Invest Dermatol*. 2020;140:480-483; Ständer S, et al. *JAAD Int*. 2020;2:28-30.

PN and Common Cutaneous and Systemic Comorbidities

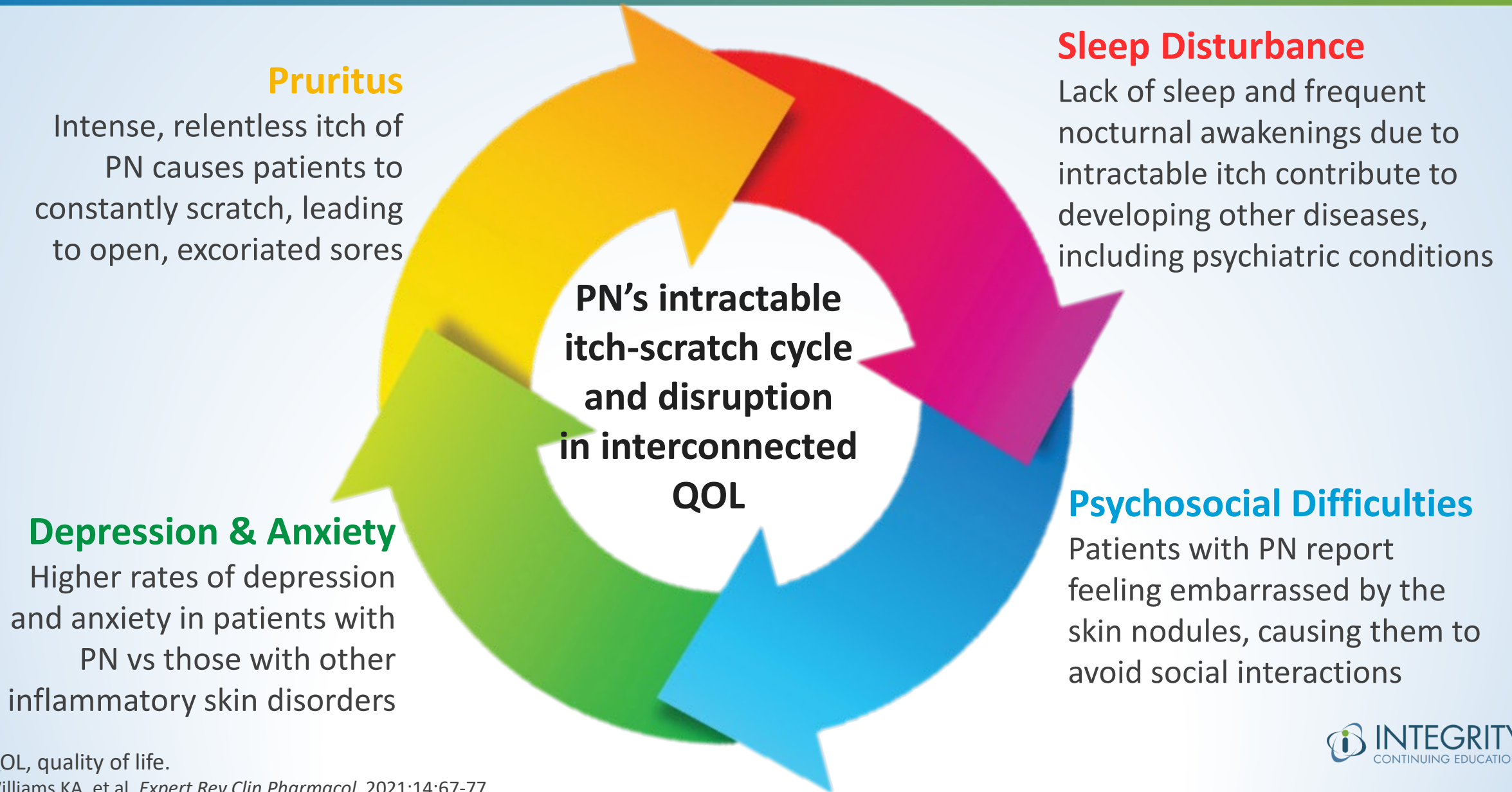
PN may be observed with incidental metabolic, cardiovascular, and other comorbidities



CKD, chronic kidney disease; DM1/DM2, diabetes mellitus type 1 and 2; HIV, human immunodeficiency virus.

Huang AH, et al. *J Invest Dermatol*. 2020;140:480-483.

Itch + Scratch: A Vicious, Reflexive Cycle



QOL, quality of life.

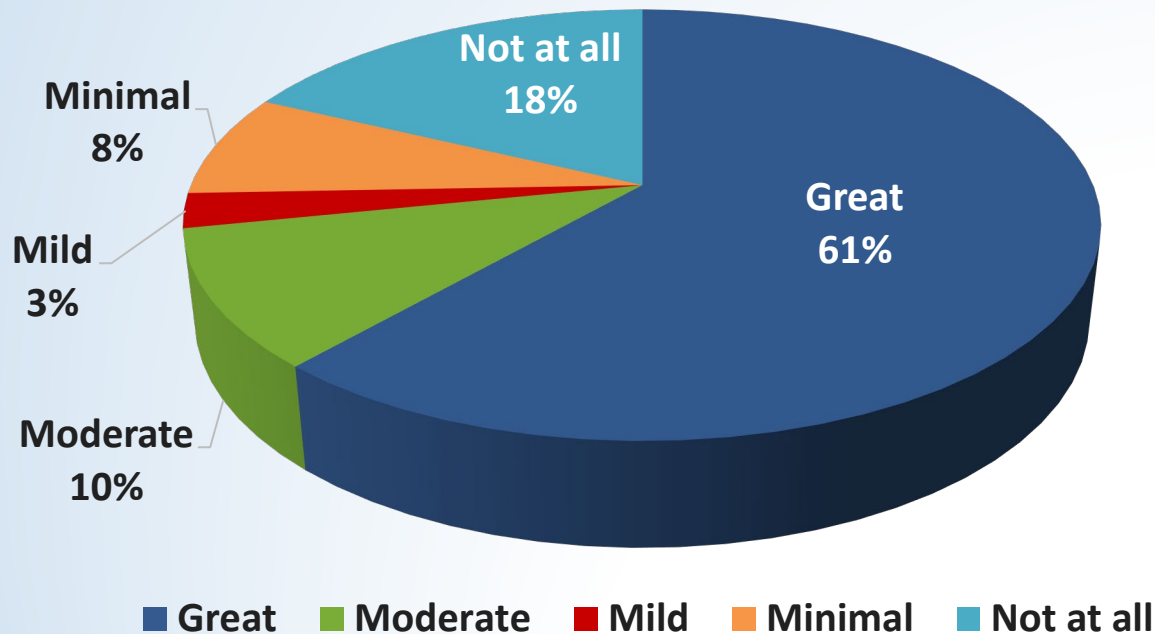
Williams KA, et al. *Expert Rev Clin Pharmacol*. 2021;14:67-77.

Impact of Itch on Sleep Disturbance

Sleep disturbance effect studied in patients with PN vs AD

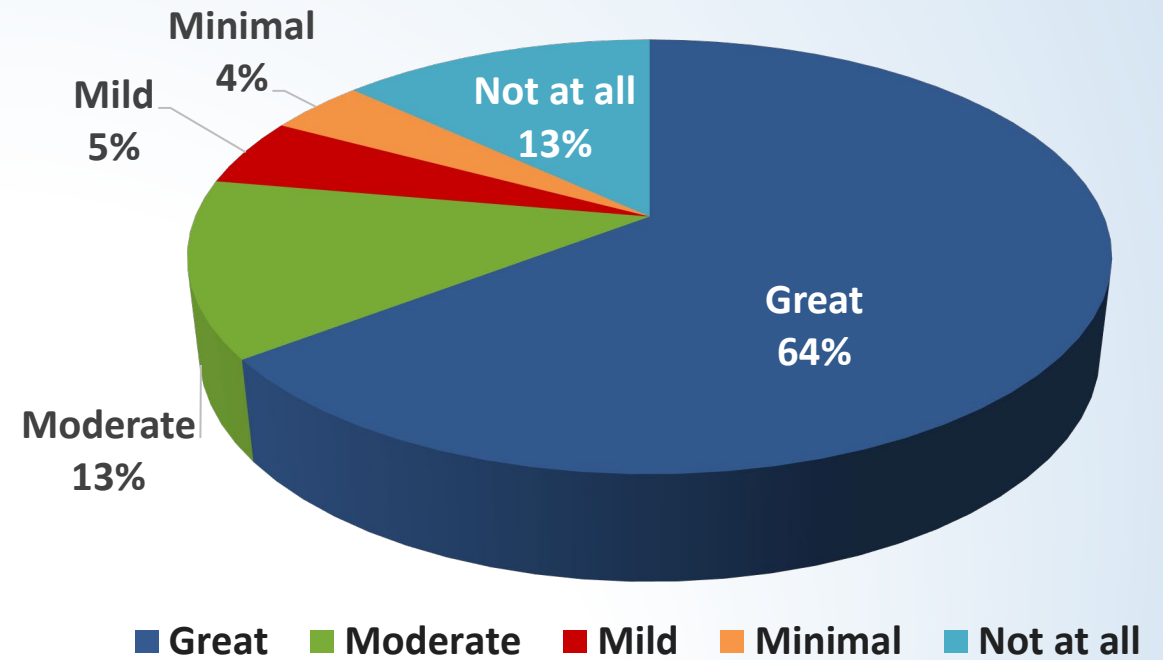
Extent pruritus disturbs sleep (PN)

N=39



Extent pruritus disturbs sleep (AD)

N=81

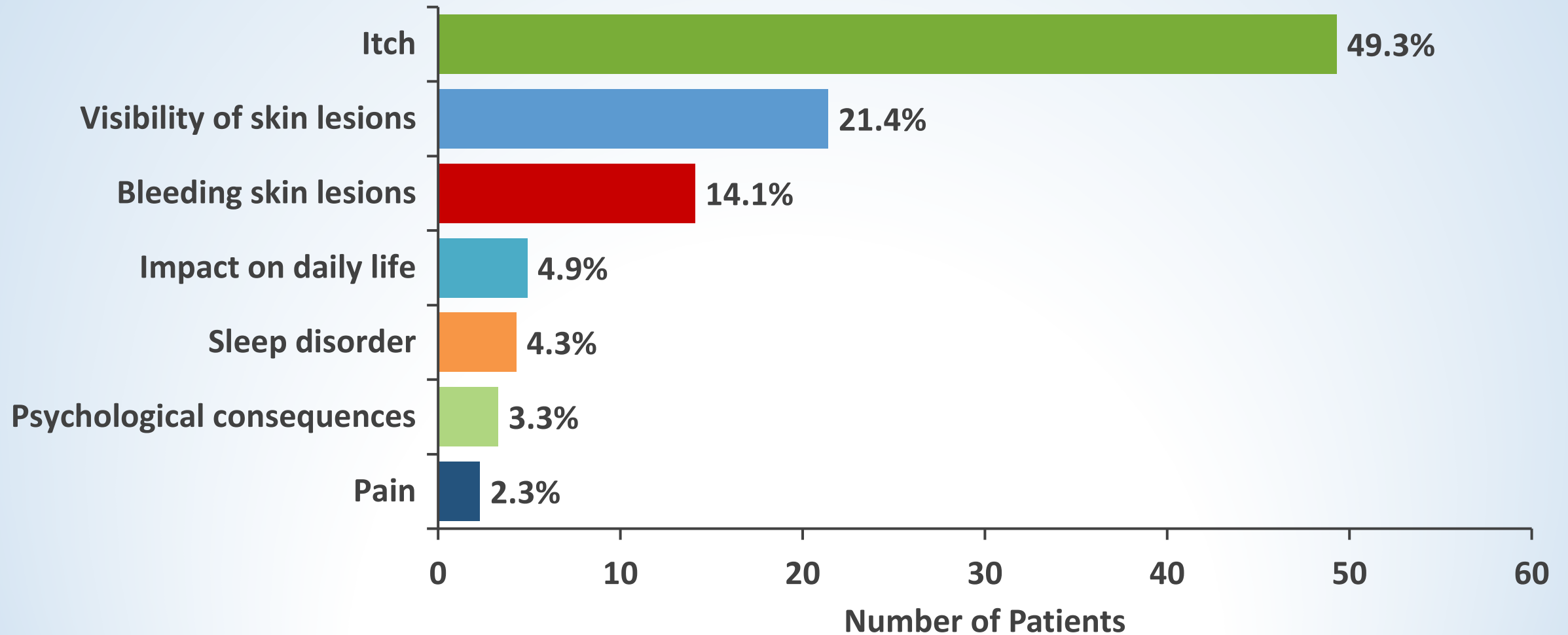


AD, atopic dermatitis.

Gwillim EC, et al. *Acta Derm Venereol.* 2021;1010:adv00424.

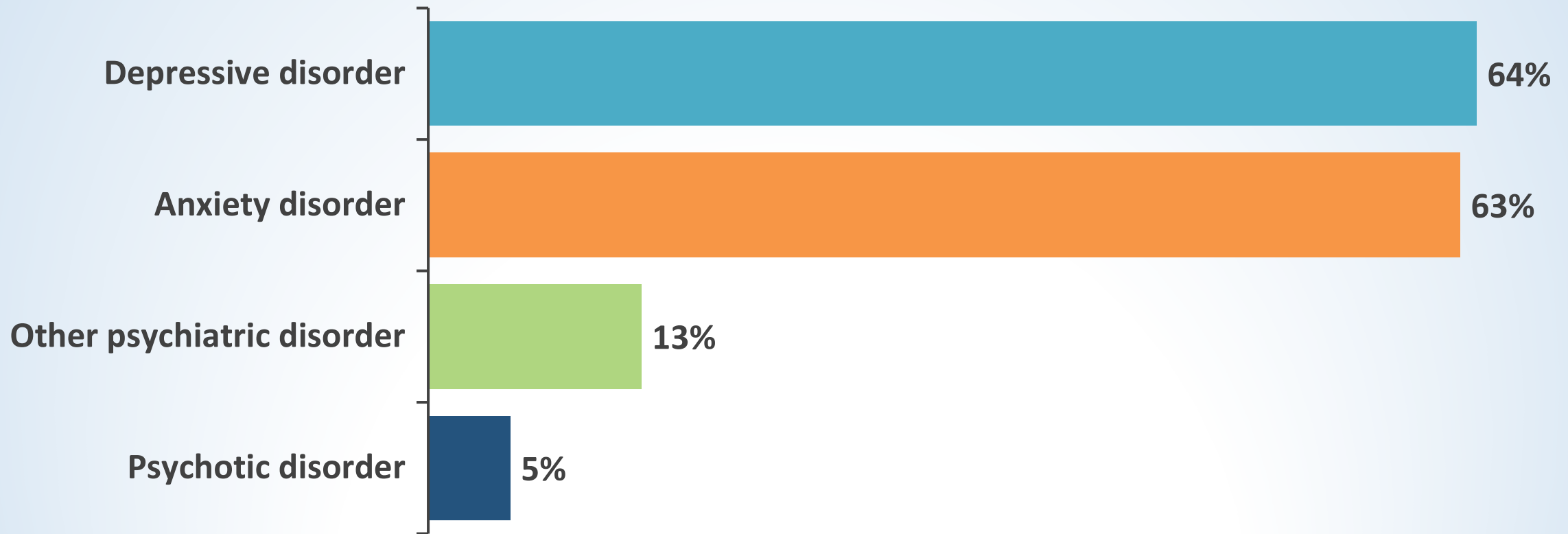
Itch the Most Bothersome Disease Burden

Most bothersome symptom identified by PN patients in 12 European countries (N=509)



PN and Common Psychiatric Comorbidities

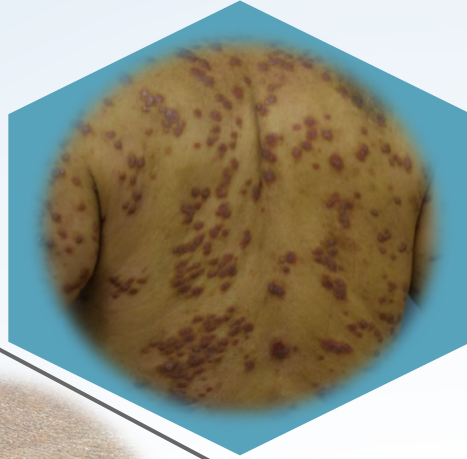
**Most common psychiatric comorbidities identified in PN patients in (N=288)
44% had at least 1 psychiatric comorbidity, most common noted below**



Diagnosis and Distinctives: PN Phenotypes, Differentials, and Diagnostic Criteria

What PN Can Look Like

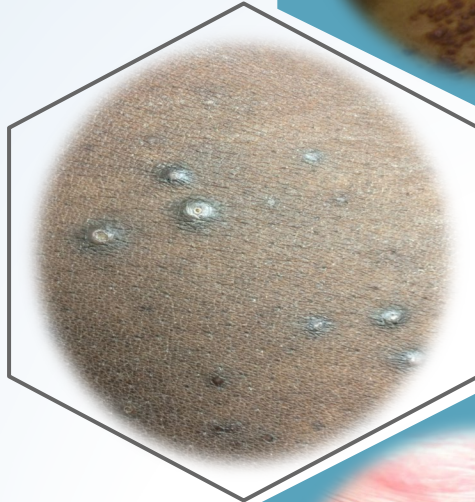
**PN with extensive
body involvement**



**PN in AD in
African Americans**



**Hyperkeratosis on top
of PN lesions: less
intensive scratching**

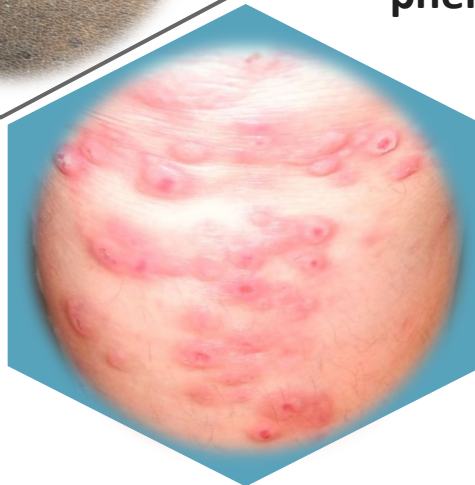


**Prurigo Nodules
of multiple
etiologies may
display different
phenotypes**

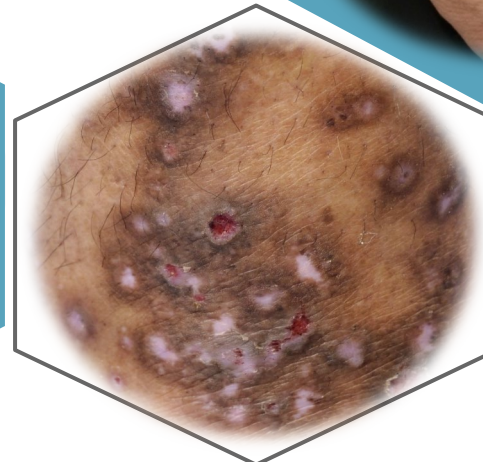
**Excoriations on top
of PN lesions: more
intensive scratching**



**Pink nodules without
hyperpigmentation in
white skin**



**PN on black skin may have
hyperpigmentation
surrounding nodules**



Common Differential Diagnoses

- Many dermatologic conditions can be confused with PN
 - Hypertrophic lichen planus
 - Multiple keratocanthomas
 - Perforating disorders
 - Bullous pemphigoid
 - Insect/arachnid bites
 - Scabies

And many more!!

PN Diagnostic Criteria From EADV

PN a clinical diagnosis of exclusion; No definitive lab tests

Disease State	Criteria	Comment
Core symptoms (major criteria)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chronic pruritus ≥ 6 weeks2. History and/or signs of repeated scratching (eg, excoriations and scars)3. Localized or generalized presence of multiple lesions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All symptoms must be present for a diagnosis of PN• Pruritus must be present and should be the initial sign• Localized: one affected area such as lower leg or lower arm or initial singular lesions do not meet diagnostic criteria
Range of manifestations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nodular type2. Plaque type3. Umbilicated type	Patients must present with ≥ 1 clinical manifestation of chronic PN. It is sufficient to diagnose patients as chronic PN without including subtype

PN Diagnostic Criteria From EADV (*continued*)

Associated Criteria	Comment
1. Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesions distributed on areas of the skin accessible to scratching• Lesions symmetrically distributed• Normal or lichenified skin between lesions• Excoriations and scars may be present• Face and palms rarely affected• Lesions are persistent
2. Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pruritus precedes skin lesions• Pruritus might be accompanied by burning, stinging, pain, and other sensations• Signs of chronicity: continuous high-intensity pruritus; alloeknesis, hyperknesis, spreading of lesions
3. Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impaired QOL• Sleep loss due to pruritus• Absence from work• Obsessive-compulsive behavior

PN Diagnostic Criteria From EADV (*continued*)

Associated Criteria	Comment
4. Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depression• Anxiety• Anger• Disgust• Shame• Helplessness
5. Pathophysiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neuronal sensitization toward itch induced by chronic pruritus and development of chronic itch-scratch cycle• Etiology of chronic pruritus might be dermatologic, systemic, neurologic, psychiatric/psychosomatic, multifactorial, or can be idiopathic• Presence of other specific skin lesions may point to a concomitant skin disease

Difficult Differentials That May Need Skin Biopsy

Most cases of PN can be clearly delineated by phenotype and clinical exam;
these diseases can mimic PN and may require skin biopsy



Left: Blistering disease, pemphigoid nodularis; **Middle:** Hypertrophic lichen planus; **Right:** PN and keratocanthomic squamous cell carcinoma, arrow shows area of biopsy that turned out to be PN.

Diagnostic Workup

Variable	Potential Workup Evaluation/Test
Initial visit (treatment can be initiated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical examination for any signs of any type of skin disease • If PN is determined, assess severity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extent of PN (number and firmness of lesions) – Pruritus intensity (mild, moderate, severe) – Disease burden (QOL, sleep disturbance, anxiety/depression)
Dermatologic tests to consider if PN is uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&E histology staining if underlying dermatosis is suspected • Direct immunofluorescence to exclude autoimmune blistering diseases if patient reported blisters and/or erythemas/blisters were found • PCR for mycobacteria if histology finds granulomatous inflammatory infiltrate
Systemic laboratory tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete blood cell count with differential • Liver function tests • Renal function tests • Thyroid function tests • Diabetes assessment • Screen for HIV and hepatitis B and C
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess for depression, anxiety • Psychiatric evaluation if skin-picking disorder is suspected

Severity Assessment

Severity of Chronic Nodular Prurigo Using Investigator Global Assessment (IGA) Scale

Score	Category	Description
0	Clear	No nodules
1	Almost Clear	Rare, flattened lesions with no more than 5 dome-shaped, palpable nodules (approximately 1–5 nodules)
2	Mild	Few, mostly flattened lesions, with small number of dome-shaped, palpable nodules (approximately 6–19 nodules)
3	Moderate	Many lesions, partially flattened and dome-shaped, palpable nodules (approximately 20–100 nodules)
4	Severe	Abundant lesions, majority are dome-shaped, palpable nodules (more than 100 nodules)

Case Study Introduction

Case Study: Ashley, 39-Year-Old Female*



Patient complaint and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashley presents complaining of itchy nodules on her arms, legs, and back• She thinks it may be a worsening of AD• But also recently completed an eco tour of the Amazon Rainforest and thinks she may have picked up parasites
Medical history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AD diagnosed at 5 years old
Impact on QOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense and persistent itching, burning<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Itching started before bumps appeared and has lasted 7 weeks• Unable to sleep for more than 3 hours at a time because of itch• Feels anxious, avoiding intimacy with her husband because of embarrassment
Current therapies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topical corticosteroid, when needed, for AD flare

*This is a standardized case study; not a real patient.

Case Study: Physical Exam and Lab Findings



Physical exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ~25 dome-shaped, palpable nodules• 2 excoriated papules in reachable extensor areas• Evidence of scarring• HEENT, normal• BMI, normal
Lab findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CBC with differentials• Liver function tests• Thyroid panel• eGFR• HbA1c <div>All within normal limits</div>

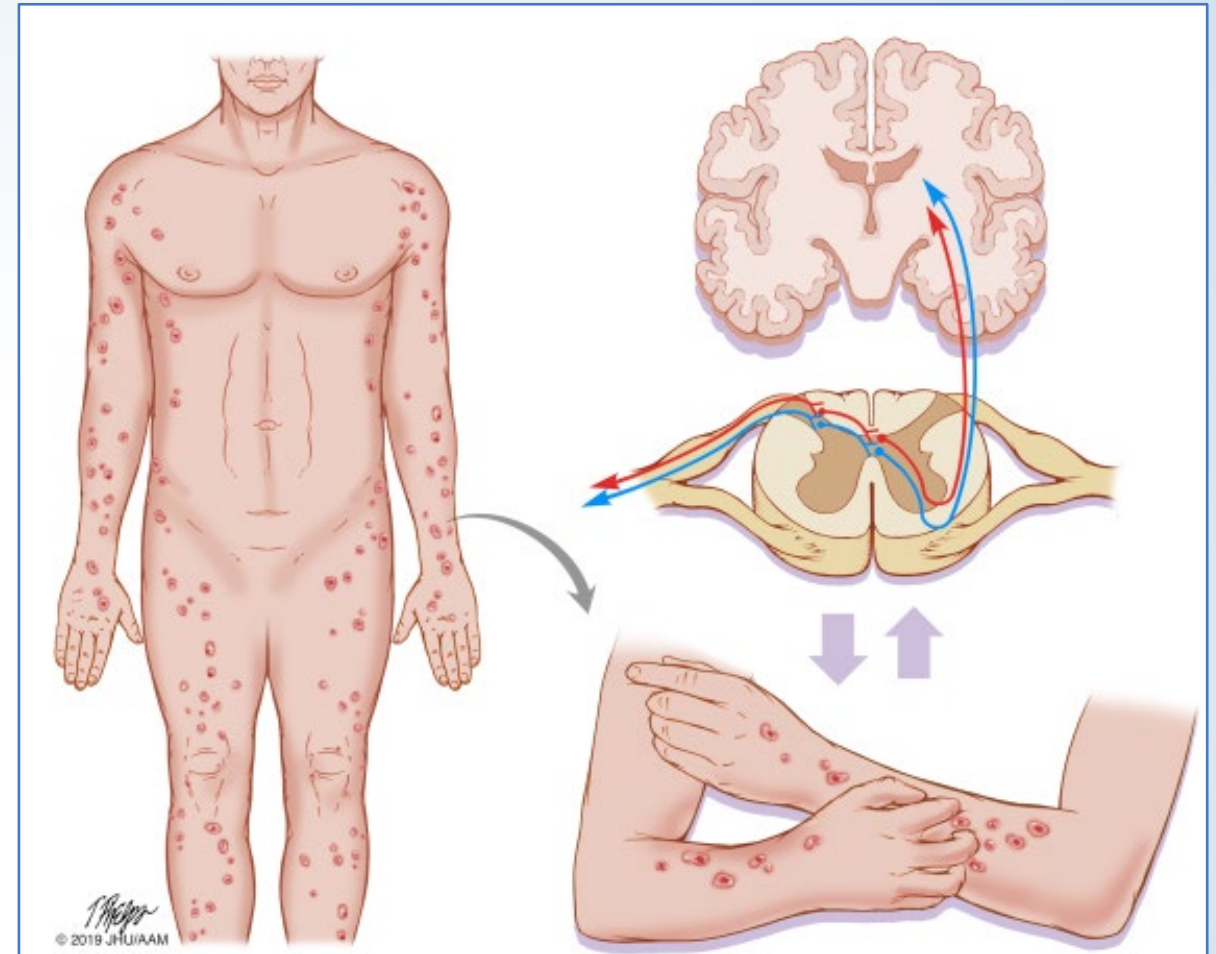
Questions and Discussion

- How do you know this *is not* a worsening of AD?
- Would you do H&E histology staining, PCR, or skin biopsy to determine if she contracted something in the Amazon rainforest?

Pathogenesis: Neural-Immune Dysregulation and Neural Sensitization

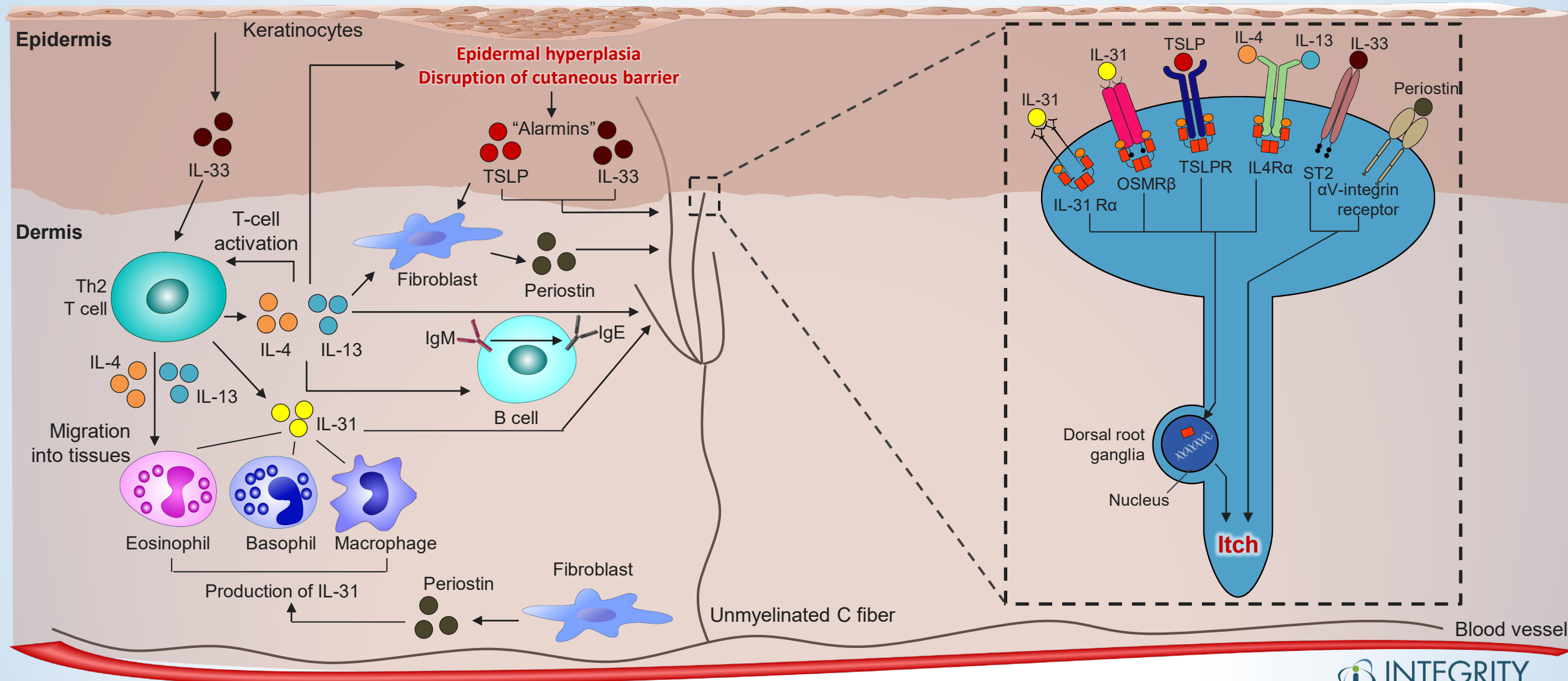
Neural-Immune Dysregulation: Type 2 Immune Response

- PN nodules caused by dysregulation of cross-talk between immune and neural systems, propagating itch-scratch cycle
 - Inflammatory Th2 cytokines increased
 - Mainly: IL-4/IL-13, IL-31
 - Neuropeptides increased
 - Mainly: CGRP; SP
- Hypersensitivity of nerve fibers
 - At peripheral and spinal levels

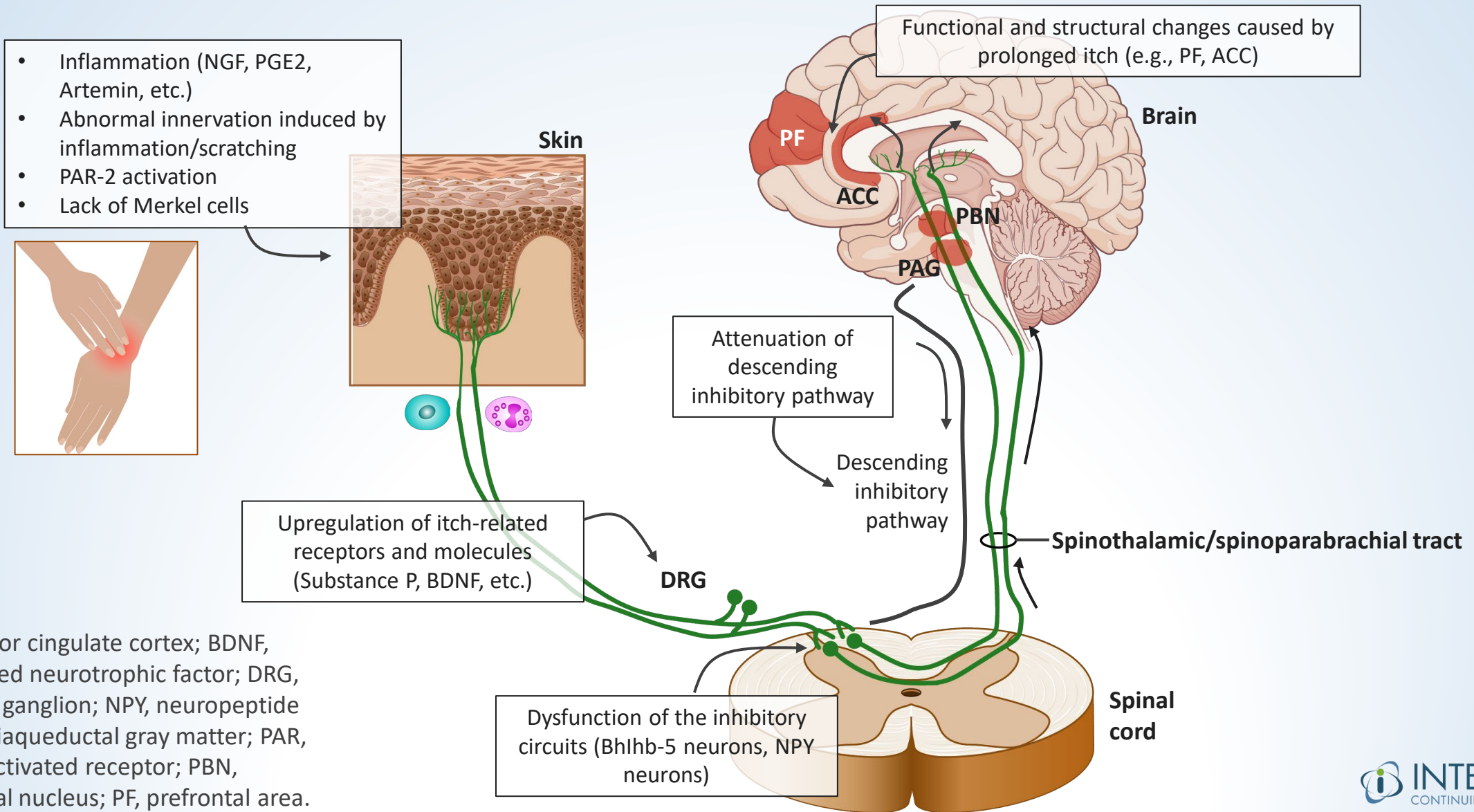


CGRP, calcitonin gene-related peptide; IL, interleukin; SP, substance P; Th2, T-helper 2 cells.

Cells and Cytokine Pathways in Neural-Immune Dysregulation



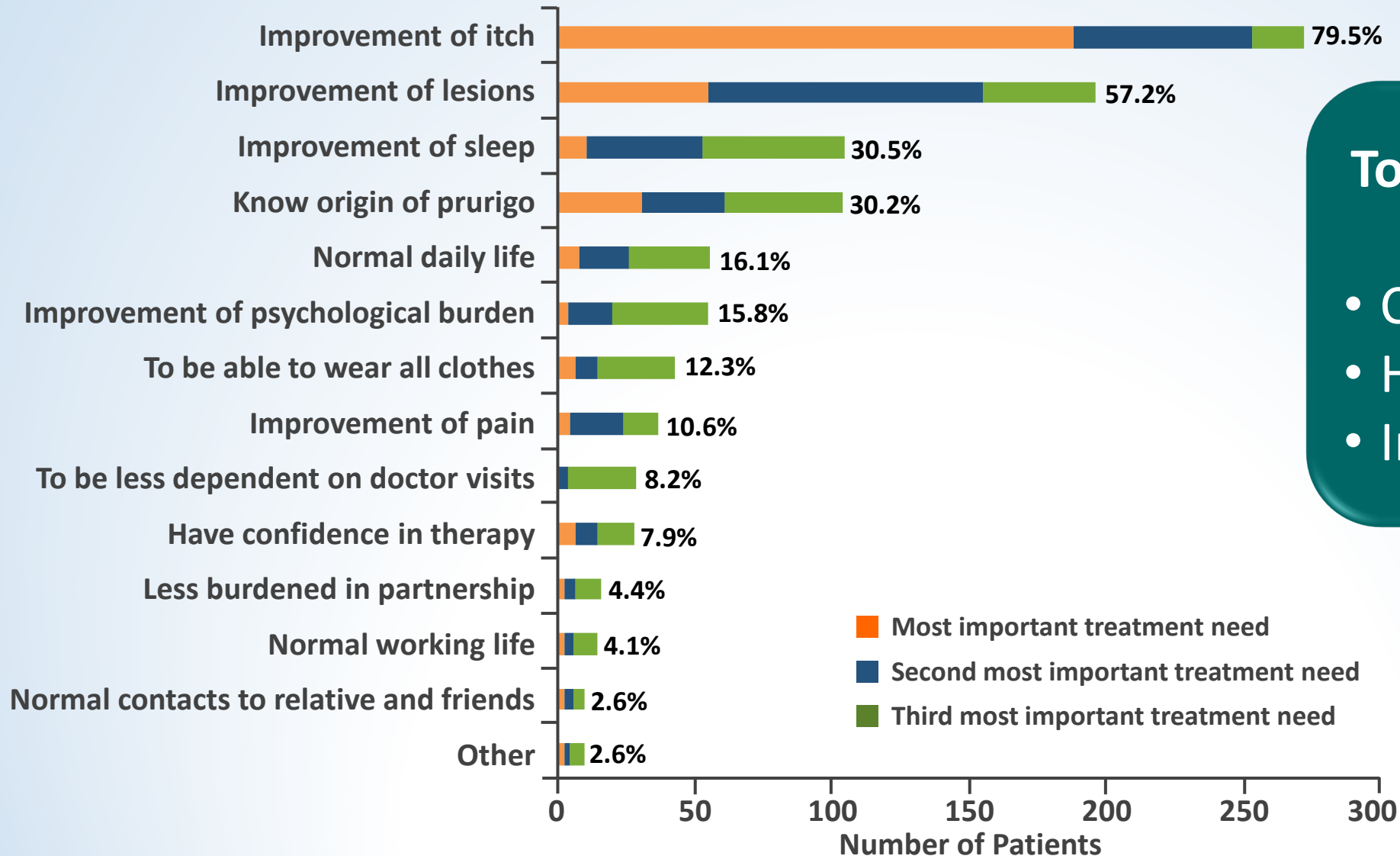
Pathways of Neural Sensitivity



ACC, anterior cingulate cortex; BDNF, brain-derived neurotrophic factor; DRG, dorsal root ganglion; NPY, neuropeptide Y; PAG, periaqueductal gray matter; PAR, protease-activated receptor; PBN, parabrachial nucleus; PF, prefrontal area.

Current and Emerging Treatments


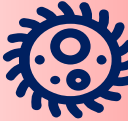
Goals of Therapy From the Patient Perspective



Top 3 Patient Goals

- Control the itch
- Heal skin lesions
- Improve sleep

AAD Guidelines: Treatment Approaches in Therapeutic Ladder

 Neural	Cannabinoids	Tier 4	JAK/STAT inhibitors Mycophenolate mofetil	 Immunologic
	Kappa/Mu opioid receptor antagonists Thalidomide	Tier 3	Azathioprine Dupilumab (anti-IL-4R α) Nemolizumab (anti-IL-31)	
	NK ₁ receptor antagonists High-dose gabapentinoids Antidepressants (SNRI \rightarrow SSRI \rightarrow TCA) Low-dose gabapentinoids	Tier 2	Cyclosporine Methotrexate Narrowband UVB/PUVA phototherapy	
	Topical ketamine/amitriptyline/lidocaine Topical capsaicin	Tier 1	Intralesional corticosteroids (<10 lesions)/cryotherapy Topical calcipotriol Topical calcineurin inhibitors Topical corticosteroids	

AAD, American Academy of Dermatology; JAK, Janus kinase; NK1R, neurokinin 1 receptor; PUVA, psoralen plus ultraviolet light A; SNRI, serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor; SSRI, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor; STAT, signal transducer and activator of transcription; TCA, tricyclic antidepressant; UVB, ultraviolet B-ray.

Elmariah S, et al. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2021;84:747-760.

Suggested Systemic Neural regimen

Systemic Neural		
Gabapentin	300-1200 mg PO TID SR: Start 300 mg PO at night and increase every 2 d by 300 mg for 1-2 wk then increase by 300 mg TID increments every 1-2 wk as tolerated. [†]	3
Pregabalin	75-100 mg PO BID SR: Start 25 mg PO BID for 1-2 wk, then increase by 25-mg BID increments every 1-2 weeks as tolerated. [†]	3
Paroxetine	10 mg to 40 mg PO daily SR: Start 10 mg PO daily for 2-4 wk, then increase by 10-mg increments every 2-4 wk as tolerated. [†]	3
Duloxetine	30 mg to 60 mg PO daily SR: Start 30 mg PO daily at night for 2-4 wk, then increase by 30-mg increments every 2-4 wk as tolerated. [†]	3
Amitriptyline	10 mg to 60 mg PO daily SR: Start 10 mg PO daily at night for 1 wk, then increase by 10 mg increments every 2-4 wk as tolerated. [†]	3
Aprepitant	80 mg PO daily	3
Butorphanol	1 mg to 3 mg intranasal daily SR: Start 1 mg daily at night for 1-2 wk, then increase by 1-mg increments every 2 wk as tolerated. [†]	3
Thalidomide	50 or 100 mg PO daily SR: Start 50 mg PO daily for 4 wk, then increase to 100 mg as tolerated. [†]	3
Naltrexone	50 mg to 150 mg PO daily SR: Start 25 mg PO daily for 3 d, if tolerating, increase to 50 mg daily for 1 wk, then increase by 25- to 50-mg increments every 2-4 wk as tolerated. [†]	3

One FDA-Approved Treatment for PN

- Dupilumab approved by FDA for PN on September 29, 2022
- 1st approved treatment for PN
- Indication from PI: “For the treatment of adult patients PN”
 - Dosing: Initial dose two 300-mg injections; then 300 mg Q2W
- Approved based on findings from phase 3 LIBERTY-PN PRIME and PRIME 2 trials recently released
 - PRIME (NCT04183335) presented at 2022 EADV annual meeting, September 7–10
 - PRIME 2 (NCT04202679) presented at 2022 AAD annual meeting, March 25–29

Full publication of results expected soon

FDA, Food and Drug Administration; PI, prescribing information; Q2W, every other week.

FDA press release. September 29, 2022. www.fda.gov/drugs/news-events-human-drugs/fda-approves-first-treatment-prurigo-nodularis; Yosipovitch G, et al.

AAD 2022 Annual meeting. LBA S026; Yosipovitch G, et al. Presented at 2022 EADV Annual Meeting. Abstract 3583.

Remaining Unmet Needs in PN Treatment

- Several treatments used off-label (eg, topical corticosteroids, UV light therapy, immunosuppressive agents, and neuromodulators), but ***inadequate control is common*** in moderate-to-severe PN
- Current SOC of nonapproved therapies are limited by ***insufficient efficacy***, common AEs, and toxicities
- No treatments have yet been tested in PN that is ***secondary*** to endstage renal disease or neuropathic disease

Systemic Treatments in Phase 2/3 Clinical Trials

Drug Names*	Mechanism of Action	Route	Trial Names [†] / ID # / Phase	No. Pts.	Study Completion
Nalbuphine ER	Opioid κ R agonist/ μ R antagonist	PO	PRISM / NCT03497975 / Ph3	360	Feb 28, 2023
Nemolizumab	IL-31R α inhibits IL-31	SC	NCT04501679 / Ph3 NCT04501666 / Ph3 NCT04204616 / Ph3 NCT05052983 / Ph3	274 270 450 100	May 17, 2022 Sep 1, 2022 Jan 31, 2023 Aug 31, 2023
Vixarelimab	Oncostatin-M R β inhibits IL-31 pathway	SC	NCT03816891 [‡] / Ph2	230	July 30, 2023

*Listed in alphabetical order; [†]If assigned; [‡]Phase 2 trial, all others are phase 3.

ER, extended release; κ R, kappa receptor; PO, by mouth; R α , receptor alpha; R β , receptor beta; SC, subcutaneous; μ R, mu receptor.

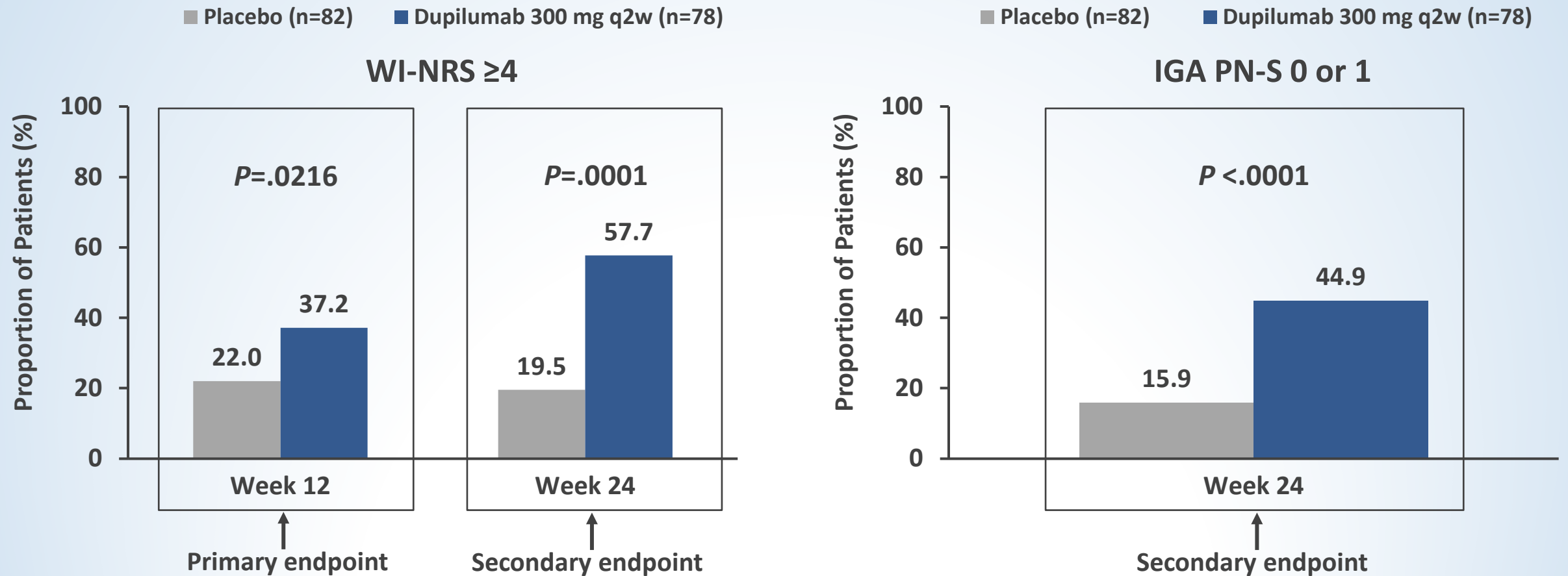
Phase 3 Clinical Trials for Dupilumab

Drug Names	Mechanism of Action	Route	Trial Names Trial ID #	No. Pts.	Study Completion
Dupilumab	IL-4R α inhibits IL-4 and IL-13	SC	LIBERTY-PN PRIME 2* NCT04202679	160	Nov 22, 2021
			LIBERTY-PN PRIME [†] NCT04183335	151	Feb 3, 2022

R α , receptor alpha; SC, subcutaneous.

Dupilumab Efficacy: Phase 3 PRIME 2 Trial

Proportion of patients with ≥ 4 -point improvement in WI-NRS and IGA PN-S 0 or 1



IGA PN-S, Investigator's Global Assessment PN-Stage; WI-NRS, Worst Itch-Numeric Rating Scale.

Dupilumab Safety: PRIME 2 Trial

Percentage of patients with ≥ 1 TEAE from baseline to week 24

Patients, n (%)	Placebo (n=82)	Dupilumab 300 mg Q2W (n=77)
Any TEAE*	42 (51.2)	44 (57.1)
Any death	0	0
TEAEs reported in $\geq 5\%$ of patients in any treatment group		
Headache	5 (6.1)	4 (5.2)
TEAE groups of interest		
Herpes viral infections	0	5 (6.5)
Skin infections	7 (8.5)	4 (5.2)
Conjunctivitis	0	3 (3.9)

*None of the TEAEs were severe and all patients recovered while continuing dupilumab.
TEAE, treatment-emergent adverse event.

Dupilumab Efficacy and Safety: Phase 3 PRIME Trial

Findings	Placebo Q2W (n=76)	Dupilumab 300 mg Q2W (n=75)
Primary endpoint: Itch relief at 24 weeks (≥4-point reduction in WI-NRS)	18%	60% ($P < .0001$)
Secondary endpoint: Lesion healing (clear or almost clear skin) at 24 weeks (IGA PN-S)	18%	48% ($P < .0004$)
TEAEs	63%	71%
Nasopharyngitis	4%	5%
Headache	5%	5%
Treatment discontinued due to TEAEs	4%	0%

Findings From Phase 3 Trial of Nemolizumab

- FDA granted breakthrough therapy designation for PN in 2019
- Preliminary topline findings from phase 3 OLYMPIA 2 trial (NCT04501679) released June 22, 2022
 - 16-week trial with 274 PN patients
- Primary endpoints
 - 56% of patients in nemolizumab cohort achieved ≥ 4 -point reduction in itch as measured by PP-NRS vs 21% in placebo group ($P < .0001$)
 - 38% patients taking nemolizumab reached clearance or almost clearance of skin lesions by IGA score vs 11% taking placebo ($P < .0001$)
- FDA granted breakthrough therapy designation for PN in 2019

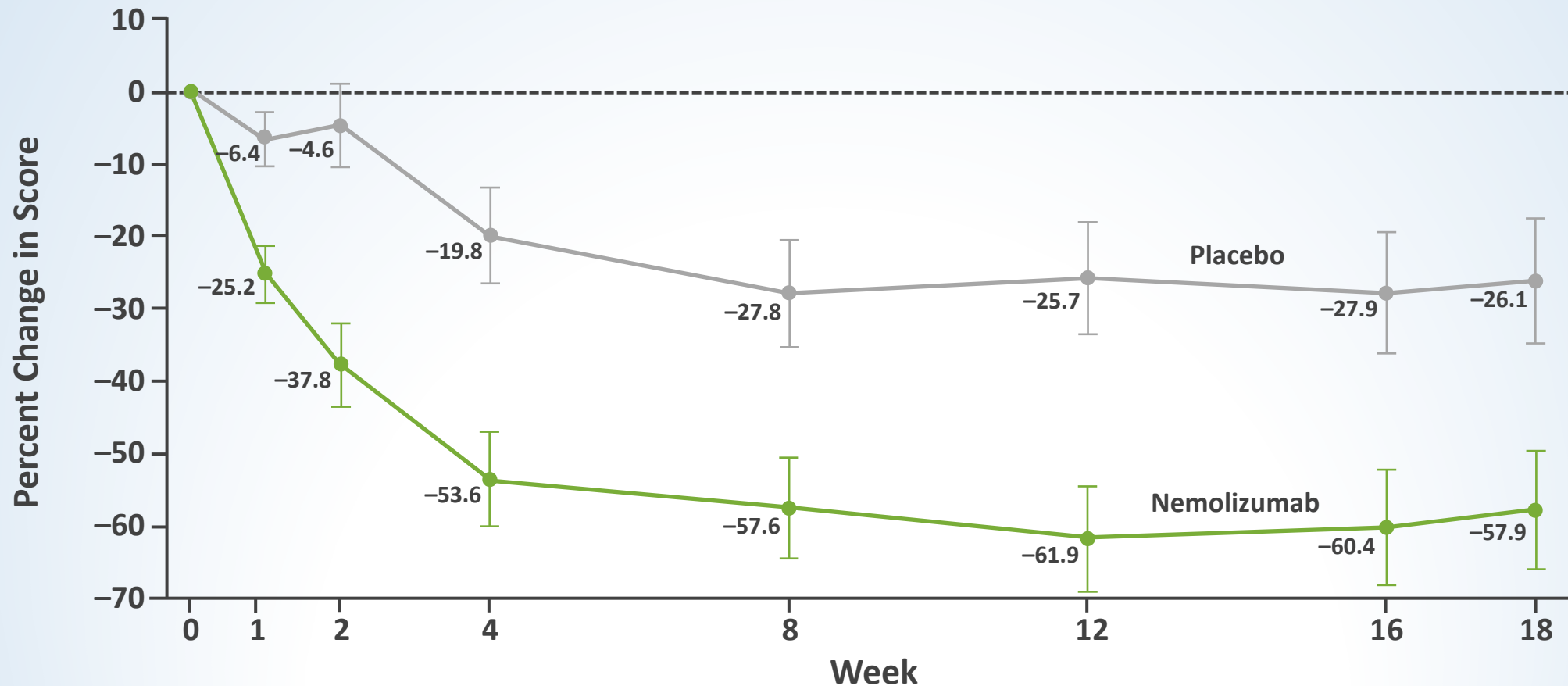
Full publication of results expected soon

PP-NRS, Peak-Pruritus Numerical Rating Scale.

Galderma press release. December 9, 2019. <https://www.galderma.com/news/galderma-investigational-therapy-nemolizumab-granted-fda-breakthrough-therapy-designation>; Galderma press release. June 22, 2022. <https://www.galderma.com/news/galderma-announces-positive-data-phase-iii-trial-demonstrating-efficacy-and-safety-nemolizumab>

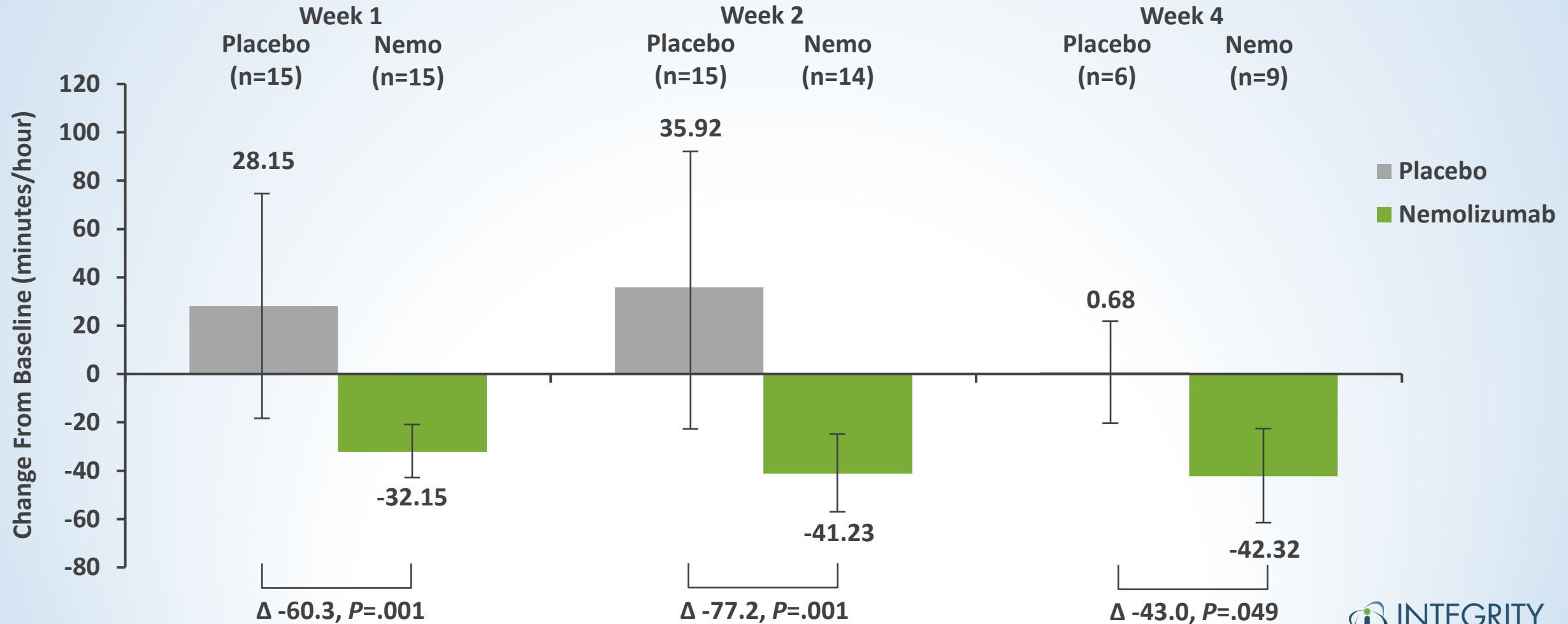
Nemolizumab Efficacy: Improvement in Peak Pruritus Score

Change from baseline in weekly peak pruritus score
Phase 2 trial of patients with moderate-to-severe PN (N=70)



Nemolizumab Efficacy: Improvement in Itch/Sleep Ratio

Change from baseline in scratch duration/sleep duration ratio
Phase 2 trial of patients with moderate-to-severe PN (N=70)



Nemolizumab Safety

Phase 2 trial incidence of adverse events (≥5%), all causes

TEAEs by SOC (>5%), all causes, n (%)	Placebo (n=36)	Nemolizumab 0.5 mg/kg (n=34)
Infections and infestation	12 (33.3)	10 (29.4)
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	12 (33.3)	10 (29.4)
Gastrointestinal disorders	5 (13.9)	7 (20.6)
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders	5 (13.9)	6 (17.6)
General disorders and administration site conditions	4 (11.1)	5 (14.7)
Injury, poisoning and procedural complications	2 (5.6)	4 (11.8)
Renal and urinary disorders	2 (5.6)	2 (5.9)
Nervous system disorders	1 (2.8)	2 (5.9)
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	3 (8.3)	0
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	2 (5.6)	0
Metabolism and nutrition disorders	0	2 (5.9)
Psychiatric disorders	2 (5.6)	0
Vascular disorders	2 (5.6)	0

Case Study Returns

Case Study: Ashley, 39-Year-Old Female*



Patient Complaint and Return Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashley returns 4 weeks later with itching unabated• Patient was placed on high-dose topical corticosteroid at initial visit• Frequent emollients have also been used• Itching responded partially to a short course of oral corticosteroid• Sleep still frequently disrupted through the night because of itching• Now feeling anxious, depressed, and socially isolated
Inflammatory Mediators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partial response to oral corticosteroid shows presumed presence of T2-high inflammatory mediators such as IL-4/IL-13 and IL-31• Blood tests did not show presence of parasites
Definitive Diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nodular PN

*This is a standardized case study; not a real patient.

What Would You Prescribe for Ashley?

Summary

- PN is a rare cutaneous disorder that carries a heavy disease burden
 - Incessant pruritus and sleep disturbance
 - Psychosocial difficulties and depression/anxiety
- Four different phenotypes (most commonly, nodular)
- Pathogenesis involves Th2-high inflammation involving neuroimmune mechanisms
- Emerging therapies target both neural and immunologic pathways
 - Dupilumab (FDA approved)
 - Nemolizumab (4 phase 3 trials)
 - Nalbuphine (1 phase 3 trial)
 - Vixarelimab (1 phase 2 trial)
- Treatment goals: control itch, heal skin lesions, improve sleep

Question & Answer

Thank You!