

# A study to test whether adding nivolumab to TACE/TAE treatment is effective and safe in patients with intermediate-stage liver cancer

<b>Submission date</b> 10/01/2019	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 16/01/2019	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 08/04/2024	<b>Condition category</b> Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/find-a-clinical-trial/a-trial-of-nivolumab-and-chemoembolisation-for-cancer-of-the-liver-tace-3>

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Brenda Hall

### Contact details

Liverpool Clinical Trials Centre  
The University of Liverpool  
Block C, Waterhouse Building  
1-5 Brownlow Street  
Liverpool  
United Kingdom  
L69 3GL  
+44 (0)151 795 1555  
tace3@liverpool.ac.uk

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Charlotte Rawcliffe

### Contact details

LCTC Head of Trials Management  
Liverpool Clinical Trials Centre  
The University of Liverpool  
Block C, Waterhouse Building  
1-5 Brownlow Street  
Liverpool  
United Kingdom  
L69 3GL  
+44 (0)151 794 8167  
c.rawcliffe@liverpool.ac.uk

## **Additional identifiers**

### **Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)**

2018-000004-42

### **ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)**

NCT04268888

### **Protocol serial number**

C0993

## **Study information**

### **Scientific Title**

A two-arm multi-stage (TAMS) seamless phase II/III randomised trial of nivolumab in combination with TACE/TAE for patients with intermediate stage HCC

### **Acronym**

TACE-3

### **Study objectives**

Current study hypothesis as of 15/07/2020:

The primary purpose of Phase II component of the study is to evaluate efficacy of nivolumab in combination with TACE/TAE in patients with intermediate stage HCC and to recommend continuation into Phase III component if a positive efficacy signal is observed using TACE/TAE progression (TTTP) at 3 months as primary outcome measure.

The primary purpose of the Phase III component of the study is to evaluate the difference in overall survival between nivolumab in combination with TACE/TAE in patients with intermediate stage HCC.

The null hypothesis is that the addition of Nivolumab to TACE/TAE has no effect on overall survival.

Previous study hypothesis:

The primary purpose of Phase II component of the study is to evaluate efficacy of nivolumab in combination with TACE in patients with intermediate stage HCC and to recommend continuation into Phase III component if a positive efficacy signal is observed using TACE progression (TTTP) at 3 months as primary outcome measure.

The primary purpose of the Phase III component of the study is to evaluate the difference in overall survival between nivolumab in combination with TACE in patients with intermediate stage HCC.

The null hypothesis is that the addition of Nivolumab to TACE has no effect on overall survival.

### **Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

### **Ethics approval(s)**

Approved 16/01/2019, RES Committee North West – GM South (Health Research Authority, 3rd Floor, Barlow House, 4 Minshull St., Manchester, M1 3DZ, Tel: +44 (0)207 104 8235, nrescommittee.northwest-gmsouth@nhs.net), ref: 18/NW/0699

### **Study design**

Interventional multi-centre two-arm open-label seamless phase II/III study

### **Primary study design**

Interventional

### **Study type(s)**

Treatment

### **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Intermediate stage hepatocellular carcinoma

### **Interventions**

Current interventions as of 15/07/2020:

Patients are randomised 1:1 between two treatment arms:

1. TACE/TAE treatment (standard treatment)
2. Nivolumab (480mg IV - 4 weekly) and TACE/TAE treatment (experimental arm)

Patients will undergo screening assessments to determine whether they are eligible for inclusion in the study, which may include a liver biopsy. They will also complete some questionnaires.

The length of treatment is partly determined by how well patients respond to treatment. Based on assessment data, the doctor may recommend repeat TACE/TAE treatment, with each treatment taking around 1-2 hours to complete with an overnight stay in hospital.

Patients who also receive nivolumab treatment will attend for regular 4 weekly treatment visits until the doctor decides no further nivolumab treatment is necessary or when the maximum treatment period is reached (24 months).

After treatment has ended, patients are followed-up every 4 weeks for a minimum of 24 months if possible (maximum is end of study).

Patients will have CT ±MRI scans throughout the study (prior to treatment, 4 weeks after the first TACE/TAE and then 12 weekly). If disease progression occurs, a confirmatory CT ±MRI scan will be performed.

In addition to routine blood samples, patients will be asked to provide blood samples throughout the study for future liver cancer research.

Most patients will be identified by the Investigator/Co-Investigator responsible for their care. Some may be identified by colleagues who know about the trial but are not directly involved in the study. In such instances the patients' doctors will refer them to the study doctor.

Patients may also be identified at multi-disciplinary team meetings at their hospital. These meetings are held to discuss the patients' care, and are attended by the clinical care team (consultants, radiologists, research nurses, etc.). Identification is based upon the inclusion/exclusion criteria.

If the patient appears eligible the study doctor will inform the patient of the study and the trial will be discussed during the patient consultation. All patients will be given adequate time to ask questions about the trial before being asked to participate. If the patient agrees to take part the informed consent process will begin.

Patients shall be randomised evenly across the two treatment arms of the study. In phase II of the study, 100 patients will be recruited.

A stop/go decision in the phase II component of the study is based on observing some evidence of effectiveness between the treatment arms with respect to 3-month TACE/TAE progression. This will occur after 100 patients have had a 20 week scan for TACE/TAE progression, which will occur approximately 18 months following the start of recruitment.

Aside from the stop/go decision, there are no formal stopping rules for efficacy/futility built into the study.

Should the study continue to phase III, 422 patients will be randomised evenly across the two treatment arms. This makes a total of 522 patients being recruited over a 48 month period for phase II and III combined, with a minimum 24 months of follow-up for each patient if possible.

Patient recruitment is planned to take place from 16 contributing centres who (based on estimations from the TACE 2 study) will conservatively be able to recruit at an average rate of 0.75 patients/site/month. Sites will be opened to recruitment at a rate of 2 sites per month. These projections include a 5% shortfall margin (attrition rate).

A Trial Management Group (comprising the Chief Investigator, other lead investigators [clinical and non-clinical] and members of the Liverpool Clinical Trials Centre) will manage the day to day running of the study and will meet throughout the study.

The Independent Safety and Data Monitoring Committee (ISDMC) (consisting of an independent chairperson, independent statistician and an independent oncologist who are experts in the field of oncology and liver cancer) are responsible for reviewing and assessing recruitment, interim monitoring of safety and effectiveness, trial conduct and external data and will provide a recommendation to the Trial Steering Committee concerning the continuation of the study.

The Trial Steering Committee (consisting of an independent chairperson, independent statistician and independent experts in the field of liver cancer in addition to other non-independent members of the TMG) provides overall supervision and advice for the study. The ultimate decision for the continuation of the trial lies with the TSC.

The patient information sheet and consent forms have been reviewed by members of the University of Liverpool, Liverpool Clinical Trials Centre, Patient and Public Involvement group, which consists of lay members of the public. The forms have subsequently been re-designed to include suggestions made by the PPI group, with the overall goal being to improve the effectiveness of the forms in communicating the requirements and expectations of the study to patients.

The Trial Steering Committee also includes lay member representation.

Previous interventions:

Patients are randomised 1:1 between two treatment arms:

1. TACE treatment (standard treatment - DC Beads loaded with doxorubicin)
2. Nivolumab (480mg IV - 4 weekly) and TACE treatment (experimental arm)

Patients will undergo screening assessments to determine whether they are eligible for inclusion in the study, which may include a liver biopsy. They will also complete some questionnaires.

The length of treatment is partly determined by how well patients respond to treatment. Based on assessment data, the doctor may recommend repeat TACE treatment, with each treatment taking around 1-2 hours to complete with an overnight stay in hospital.

Patients who also receive nivolumab treatment will attend for regular 4 weekly treatment visits until the doctor decides no further nivolumab treatment is necessary or when the maximum treatment period is reached (24 months).

After treatment has ended, patients are followed-up every 4 weeks for a minimum of 24 months if possible (maximum is end of study).

Patients will have CT/MRI scans throughout the study (prior to treatment, 8 weeks after they have entered the study and then 12 weekly). If disease progression occurs, a confirmatory CT /MRI scan will be performed.

In addition to routine blood samples, patients will be asked to provide blood samples throughout the study for future liver cancer research.

Most patients will be identified by the Investigator/Co-Investigator responsible for their care. Some may be identified by colleagues who know about the trial but are not directly involved in the study. In such instances the patients' doctors will refer them to the study doctor.

Patients may also be identified at multi-disciplinary team meetings at their hospital. These meetings are held to discuss the patients' care, and are attended by the clinical care team (consultants, radiologists, research nurses, etc.). Identification is based upon the inclusion /exclusion criteria.

If the patient appears eligible the study doctor will inform the patient of the study and the trial will be discussed during the patient consultation. All patients will be given adequate time to ask questions about the trial before being asked to participate. If the patient agrees to take part the informed consent process will begin.

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A stop/go decision in the phase II component of the study is based on observing some evidence of effectiveness between the treatment arms with respect to 3-month TACE progression. This will occur after 100 patients have had a 20 week scan for TACE progression, which will occur approximately 18 months following the start of recruitment.

Aside from the stop/go decision, there are no formal stopping rules for efficacy/futility built into the study.

Should the study continue to phase III, 422 patients will be randomised evenly across the two treatment arms. This makes a total of 522 patients being recruited over a 48 month period for phase II and III combined, with a minimum 24 months of follow-up for each patient if possible.

Patient recruitment is planned to take place from 16 contributing centres who (based on estimations from the TACE 2 study) will conservatively be able to recruit at an average rate of 0.75 patients/site/month. Sites will be opened to recruitment at a rate of 2 sites per month. These projections include a 5% shortfall margin (attrition rate).

A Trial Management Group (comprising the Chief Investigator, other lead investigators [clinical and non-clinical] and members of the LCTU Trials Unit) will manage the day to day running of the study and will meet throughout the study.

The Independent Safety and Data Monitoring Committee (ISDMC) (consisting of an independent chairperson, independent statistician and an independent oncologist who are experts in the field of oncology and liver cancer) are responsible for reviewing and assessing recruitment, interim monitoring of safety and effectiveness, trial conduct and external data and will provide a recommendation to the Trial Steering Committee concerning the continuation of the study.

The Trial Steering Committee (consisting of an independent chairperson, independent statistician and independent experts in the field of liver cancer in addition to other non-independent members of the TMG) provides overall supervision and advice for the study. The ultimate decision for the continuation of the trial lies with the TSC.

The patient information sheet and consent forms have been reviewed by members of the University of Liverpool, CR-UK Liverpool Cancer Trials Unit Patient and Public Involvement group, which consists of lay members of the public. The forms have subsequently been re-designed to include suggestions made by the PPI group, with the overall goal being to improve the effectiveness of the forms in communicating the requirements and expectations of the study to patients.

The Trial Steering Committee also includes lay member representation.

### **Intervention Type**

Drug

### **Phase**

Phase II

### **Drug/device/biological/vaccine name(s)**

Nivolumab

### **Primary outcome(s)**

Current primary outcome measures as of 15/07/2020:

Phase II:

3 month TACE/TAE Progression (TTTP) (binary), assessed using CT ±MRI scan at 3 months

Phase III:

Overall survival, assessed using hospital records from randomisation to death

Previous primary outcome measures:

Phase II:

3 month TACE Progression (TTTP) (binary), assessed using CT/MRI scan at 3 months

Phase III:

Overall survival, assessed using hospital records from randomisation to death

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

Current secondary outcome measures as of 15/07/2020:

Phase II:

1. Number of Grade 3+ AEs and SAEs, assessed by asking patient at baseline, each treatment visit, and 4 weekly during follow-up
2. Progression Free Survival (PFS), assessed using CT ±MRI scan from randomisation to progression or death
3. Time to progression (TTP), assessed using CT ±MRI scan from randomisation to progression
4. Response rate by RECIST 1.1, assessed using CT ±MRI scan at 4 weeks post the first TACE/TAE and then 12 weekly

Phase III:

1. Time to TACE/TAE Progression (TTTP), assessed using CT ±MRI scan at 8 weeks post randomisation and confirmatory scan 4 weeks after progression
2. Number of Grade 3+ AEs and SAEs, assessed by asking patient at baseline, each treatment visit, 4 weekly during follow-up
3. Progression Free Survival (PFS), assessed using CT ±MRI scan, hospital records, from randomisation to progression or death
4. Time to progression (TTP), assessed using CT ±MRI scan from randomisation to progression
5. Objective response rate (ORR) by RECIST 1.1, assessed using CT ±MRI scan at 8 weeks post randomisation and then 12 weekly
6. Quality of life, assessed using EORTC QLQ\_C30, EORTC QLQ-HCC18 and EQ5D questionnaires at baseline, pre-first TACE/TAE treatment and then 12 weekly until end of treatment

Previous secondary outcome measures:

Phase II:

1. Number of Grade 3+ AEs and SAEs, assessed by asking patient at baseline, each treatment visit, and 4 weekly during follow-up
2. Progression Free Survival (PFS), assessed using CT/MRI scan from randomisation to progression or death
3. Time to progression (TTP), assessed using CT/MRI scan from randomisation to progression
4. Response rate by RECIST 1.1, assessed using CT/MRI scan at 8 weeks post randomisation and then 12 weekly

Phase III:

1. Time to TACE Progression (TTTP), assessed using CT/MRI scan at 8 weeks post randomisation and confirmatory scan 4 weeks after progression
2. Number of Grade 3+ AEs and SAEs, assessed by asking patient at baseline, each treatment

visit, 4 weekly during follow-up

3. Progression Free Survival (PFS), assessed using CT/MRI scan, hospital records, from randomisation to progression or death

4. Time to progression (TTP), assessed using CT/MRI scan from randomisation to progression

5. Objective response rate (ORR) by RECIST 1.1, assessed using CT/MRI scan at 8 weeks post randomisation and then 12 weekly

6. Quality of life, assessed using EORTC QLQ\_C30, EORTC QLQ-HCC18 and EQ5D questionnaires at baseline, pre-first TACE treatment and then 12 weekly until end of treatment

### **Completion date**

30/09/2025

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

Current inclusion criteria as of 15/07/2020:

1. Histological diagnosis\* of HCC and at least one uni-dimensional lesion measurable according to RECIST 1.1 criteria by CT-scan ± MRI

2. Not a candidate for surgical resection or liver transplantation\*\*

3. Aged ≥16 years and estimated life expectancy >3 months

4. ECOG performance status 0-1

5. Adequate haematological function:

5.1. Hb ≥9g/L

5.2. Absolute neutrophil count ≥1.0x10<sup>9</sup>/L

5.3. Platelet count ≥60x10<sup>9</sup>/L

6. Bilirubin ≤50 µmol/L, AST, ALT and ALP ≤5 x ULN

7. Adequate renal function; Creatinine µmol/L ≤ 1.5 x ULN

8. INR ≤1.6

9. Child-Pugh A (score ≤6) (Appendix D)

10. HAP score A, B or C (Appendix E)

11. No contra-indications to T-cell checkpoint inhibitor therapy (use of immunosuppressive drugs including steroids at dose equivalent to prednisolone >10mg/day unless used as replacement therapy; organ transplantation; subjects with an active, known or suspected autoimmune disease. Subjects with type I diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism only requiring hormone replacement, skin disorders (such as vitiligo, psoriasis, or alopecia) not requiring systemic treatment, lichen planus or other conditions not expected to recur in the absence of an external trigger are permitted to enrol).

12. Women of child-bearing potential should have a negative pregnancy test prior to study entry. Both men and women must be using an adequate contraception method, which must be continued for 5 months after completion of treatment for women and 7 months for men

13. Written informed consent

\*All patients are required to under a MANDATORY biopsy prior to entry onto the study

\*\*Criteria which establish 'intermediate' HCC

Previous inclusion criteria:

1. Histological diagnosis\* of HCC and at least one uni-dimensional lesion measurable according to RECIST 1.1 criteria by CT-scan or MRI

2. Not a candidate for surgical resection or liver transplantation\*\*

3. Aged ≥16 years and estimated life expectancy >3 months

4. ECOG performance status 0-1



**5. Adequate haematological function:**

5.1. Hb  $\geq 9\text{g/L}$

5.2. Absolute neutrophil count  $\geq 1.0 \times 10^9/\text{L}$

5.3. Platelet count  $\geq 60 \times 10^9/\text{L}$

6. Bilirubin  $\leq 50 \mu\text{mol/L}$ , AST, ALT and ALP  $\leq 5 \times \text{ULN}$

7. Adequate renal function; Creatinine  $\leq 1.5 \text{ULN}$  (Using Cockcroft-Gault Formula)

8. INR  $\leq 1.7$

9. Child-Pugh A (score  $\leq 6$ ) (Appendix D)

10. HAP score A, B or C (Appendix E)

11. No contra-indications to T-cell checkpoint inhibitor therapy (use of immunosuppressive drugs including steroids at dose equivalent to prednisolone  $>10\text{mg/day}$  unless used as replacement therapy; organ transplantation; subjects with an active, known or suspected autoimmune disease. Subjects with type I diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism only requiring hormone replacement, skin disorders (such as vitiligo, psoriasis, or alopecia) not requiring systemic treatment, lichen planus or other conditions not expected to recur in the absence of an external trigger are permitted to enrol).

12. Women of child-bearing potential should have a negative pregnancy test prior to study entry. Both men and women must be using an adequate contraception method, which must be continued for 5 months after completion of treatment for women and 7 months for men

13. Written informed consent

\*All patients are required to under a MANDATORY biopsy prior to entry onto the study

\*\*Criteria which establish 'intermediate' HCC

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Lower age limit**

16 years

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

1. Extrahepatic metastasis\*

2. Prior embolisation, systemic or radiation therapy for HCC\*

3. Any contraindications for hepatic embolisation procedures including portosystemic shunt, hepatofugal blood flow, known severe atheromatosis

4. Investigational therapy or major surgery within 4 weeks of trial entry

5. History of variceal bleeding within the past 4 weeks

6. Child-Pugh cirrhosis B or C (score  $\geq 7$ )

7. HAP score D

8. Hepatic encephalopathy

9. Ascites refractory to diuretic therapy

10. Documented occlusion of the hepatic artery or main portal vein

11. Hypersensitivity to intravenous contrast agents
12. Active clinically serious infection > Grade 2 NCI-CTC
13. Pregnant or lactating women
14. Known history of HIV infection
15. HBV chronic infection with HBV DNA  $\geq 500\text{IU/mL}$  or without antiviral therapy; HBV patients with cirrhosis should be treated.
16. History of serious autoimmune disease.
17. History of second malignancy except those treated with curative intent more than three years previously without relapse and non-melanotic skin cancer or cervical carcinoma in situ
18. Evidence of severe or uncontrolled systemic disease, or laboratory finding that in the view of the Investigator makes it undesirable for the patient to participate in the trial
19. Psychiatric or other disorder likely to impact on informed consent
20. Patient is unable and/or unwilling to comply with treatment and study instructions

\*Criteria which establish 'intermediate' HCC

**Date of first enrolment**

01/02/2019

**Date of final enrolment**

01/06/2023

## **Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Scotland

France

**Study participating centre**

**THE CLATTERBRIDGE CANCER CENTRE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

CLATTERBRIDGE ROAD

BEBINGTON WIRRAL

United Kingdom

CH63 4JY

**Study participating centre**

**ROYAL LIVERPOOL AND BROADGREEN UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

PRESCOT STREET

LIVERPOOL

United Kingdom

L7 8XP

**Study participating centre**

**AINTREE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

LOWER LANE

LIVERPOOL

United Kingdom

L9 7AL

**Study participating centre**

**KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

DENMARK HILL

LONDON

United Kingdom

SE5 9RS

**Study participating centre**

**UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS BIRMINGHAM NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

TRUST HQ, PO BOX 9551

QUEEN ELIZABETH MEDICAL CENTRE

EDGBASTON

BIRMINGHAM

United Kingdom

B15 2TH

**Study participating centre**

**NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS TRUST**

TRUST HEADQUARTERS

QUEENS MEDICAL CENTRE

DERBY ROAD

NOTTINGHAM

United Kingdom

NG7 2UH

**Study participating centre**

**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOUTHAMPTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

MAILPOINT 18

SOUTHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

TREMONA ROAD

SOUTHAMPTON

United Kingdom

SO16 6YD

**Study participating centre**

**UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS BRISTOL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
MARLBOROUGH STREET  
BRISTOL  
United Kingdom  
BS1 3NU

**Study participating centre**

**THE CHRISTIE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
550 WILMSLOW ROAD  
WITHINGTON  
MANCHESTER  
United Kingdom  
M20 4BX

**Study participating centre**

**THE ROYAL MARSDEN NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
FULHAM ROAD  
LONDON  
United Kingdom  
SW3 6JJ

**Study participating centre**

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
ADDENBROOKES HOSPITAL  
HILLS ROAD  
CAMBRIDGE  
United Kingdom  
CB2 0QQ

**Study participating centre**

**ROYAL SURREY COUNTY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
EGERTON ROAD  
GUILDFORD  
SURREY  
United Kingdom  
GU2 7XX

**Study participating centre**

**NHS Lothian**  
Waverley Gate  
2-4 Waterloo Place  
Edinburgh  
United Kingdom  
EH1 3EG

**Study participating centre**  
**NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde**  
J B Russell House  
Gartnavel Royal Hospital  
1055 Great Western Road  
Glasgow  
United Kingdom  
G12 0XH

**Study participating centre**  
**HEART OF ENGLAND NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
BORDESLEY GREEN EAST  
BIRMINGHAM  
United Kingdom  
B9 5ST

**Study participating centre**  
**THE ROYAL BOURNEMOUTH AND CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
CASTLE LANE EAST  
BOURNEMOUTH  
United Kingdom  
BH7 7DW

**Study participating centre**  
**OXFORD UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
JOHN RADCLIFFE HOSPITAL  
HEADLEY WAY  
HEADINGTON  
OXFORD  
United Kingdom  
OX3 9DU

**Study participating centre**

**ROYAL FREE LONDON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL  
POND STREET  
LONDON  
United Kingdom  
NW3 2QG

**Study participating centre**  
**MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
COBBETT HOUSE  
OXFORD ROAD  
MANCHESTER  
United Kingdom  
M13 9WL

**Study participating centre**  
**THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**  
FREEMAN HOSPITAL  
FREEMAN ROAD  
HIGH HEATON  
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE  
United Kingdom  
NE7 7DN

**Study participating centre**  
**Gustave Roussy**  
114 Rue Edouard Vaillant  
Villejuif  
France  
94800 Villejuif

**Study participating centre**  
**CHU, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Montpellier**  
191 avenue du Doyen Gaston Giraud  
Montpellier  
France  
34295 Montpellier cedex 5

**Study participating centre**  
**CHU, 2 Rue de la Milétrie**  
CHU, 2 Rue de la Milétrie

Poitiers  
France  
86021 Poitiers

**Study participating centre**

**Hôpital Beaujon**  
100 Boulevard du Général Leclerc  
Clichy  
France  
92110 Clichy

**Study participating centre**

**University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust**  
Derriford Hospital  
Derriford Road  
Derriford  
Plymouth  
United Kingdom  
PL6 8DH

**Study participating centre**

**Centre Eugene Marquis**  
Rue de la Bataille Flandres Dunkerque  
Rennes  
France  
35042

## **Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/05gcq4j10>

## **Funder(s)**

**Funder type**

Industry

**Funder Name**

Bristol-Myers Squibb

**Alternative Name(s)**

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, Bristol Myers Squibb, Bristol-Myers Company, BMS

**Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

For-profit companies (industry)

**Location**

United States of America

## Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a non-publicly available repository. The database name is MACRO. The study will collect patient data from participating study centres about patients who have consented to the study. The trialists will collect anonymised patient CRF study data and unblinded consent forms to demonstrate the patient has consented to the study (consent details will never be released). This data will be held at the University of Liverpool for 15 years where it will be analysed by members of the Trial Management Group for the purposes of informing the study oversight committees during the study in addition to producing study publications.

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Stored in non-publicly available repository

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">HRA research summary</a>			26/07/2023	No	No
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes