

# Comparative safety and benefit-risk profile of biologics and oral treatment for moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis: A network meta-analysis of clinical trial data

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**Background:** The comparative safety and benefit-risk profiles of moderate-to-severe psoriasis treatment have not been well studied.

**Objective:** To compare the short-term (12-16 weeks) and long-term (48-56 weeks) safety and benefit-risk profiles of moderate-to-severe psoriasis treatments.

**Methods:** A systematic literature review of phase II-IV randomized controlled trials of moderate-to-severe psoriasis treatments was conducted (cutoff: July 1, 2020). Any adverse events (AEs), any serious AEs, and AEs leading to treatment discontinuation were compared using Bayesian network meta-analyses (NMAs).

**Results:** Fifty-two and 7, respectively, randomized controlled trials were included in the short- and long-term NMAs, respectively. In the short-term NMA, the rates of any AEs were the lowest for tildrakizumab (posterior median: 46.0%), certolizumab (46.2%), and etanercept (49.1%). The rates of any serious AE were the lowest for certolizumab (0.8%), risankizumab (1.2%), and etanercept (1.6%). The rates of AEs leading to treatment discontinuation were the lowest for risankizumab (0.5%), tildrakizumab (1.0%), and guselkumab (1.5%). In the long-term NMA, risankizumab had the lowest rates of all 3 outcomes (67.5%, 4.4%, and 1.0%, respectively) and the most favorable benefit-risk profile.

**Limitations:** The results may not be generalizable to real-world populations.

**Conclusions:** Anti-interleukin 23 agents were associated with low rates of safety events. Risankizumab had the most favorable benefit-risk profile in the long term. (J Am Acad Dermatol <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2021.02.057>.)

**Key words:** network meta-analysis; outcomes; psoriasis; safety; treatment.

## INTRODUCTION

Biologic therapies are frequently used as first-line agents to treat moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis.<sup>1</sup> A number of biologics have been approved by the

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and European Medicines Agency (EMA) for the treatment of psoriasis, including tumor necrosis factor (TNF)-inhibitors (adalimumab, etanercept,

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IRB approval status: This was a network meta-analysis of previously published data; therefore, no institutional board review was required.

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infliximab, and certolizumab), anti-interleukin (IL) 12/23 monoclonal antibodies (ustekinumab), anti-IL-17A agents (secukinumab, ixekizumab, and brodalumab), and anti-IL-23 agents (risankizumab, tildrakizumab, and guselkumab).<sup>2-6</sup>

Although biologic agents are generally safe and well tolerated, like any other medications, they are associated with adverse effects that may be related to their mechanism of action, dosing, or other factors. Several registries, including Psoriasis Longitudinal Assessment and Registry, British Association of Dermatologists Biologic Interventions Register, and PsoBest, have been collecting safety data for all biologic agents used for psoriasis treatment over extended periods of follow up.<sup>7-10</sup> Increased rates of infection have been reported in patients receiving TNF inhibitors, with upper respiratory tract infections, pharyngitis, sinusitis, and rhinitis as the most commonly reported infections.<sup>11</sup> Cases of tuberculosis have also been reported during clinical trials of TNF inhibitors.<sup>11,12</sup> Long-term safety studies of anti-IL-12/23 agents have reported upper respiratory tract infections, nasopharyngitis, headache, and arthralgia as the most common adverse events (AEs).<sup>13-15</sup> IL-17-deficient patients with psoriasis are also at an increased risk of *Candida* infection while undergoing treatment with anti-IL-17 agents,<sup>16</sup> and anti-IL-17 medications may exacerbate or even induce inflammatory bowel disease.<sup>17</sup>

Evidence of both the efficacy and safety of the existing psoriasis treatments is important for therapeutic decision making. The comparative efficacy of psoriasis treatments has been well studied.<sup>18-22</sup> However, few studies have evaluated the comparative safety or benefit-risk profiles of these treatments. In this study, network meta-analyses (NMA) were conducted to assess the comparative safety profiles of FDA- or EMA-approved biologic and oral treatments for patients with moderate-to-severe psoriasis who are eligible for systemic therapy or phototherapy. The comparative safety data were used in conjunction with published comparative efficacy data to characterize the benefit-risk profile of each treatment.

## METHODS

### Data source

**Trial identification.** A systematic literature review was conducted according to the Preferred

Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines on December 4, 2017, and updated on September 17, 2018, December 4, 2019, and July 1, 2020, to identify the clinical trials of treatments for moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis. The EMBASE, MEDLINE, and Cochrane libraries were searched, and additional searches were conducted for reference lists of included studies, conference proceedings, previous health technology assessment submissions, and clinical trial registries. The systematic literature review was registered with the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO #146674).

conducted for reference lists of included studies, conference proceedings, previous health technology assessment submissions, and clinical trial registries. The systematic literature review was registered with the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO #146674).

**Inclusion criteria.** Trials eligible for inclusion in the NMAs were required to meet the following criteria: a phase II, III, or IV randomized controlled clinical trial of

adults with moderate-to-severe psoriasis who were eligible for systemic therapies and phototherapy; included FDA or EMA-approved treatments and dosages for moderate-to-severe psoriasis (a full list of the treatments and dosing schedules is provided in Supplemental Methods, available via Mendeley at <https://doi.org/10.17632/hp35wm5kft.1>); and reported at least one safety outcome of interest (any AE, any serious AE [SAE], or AEs leading to treatment discontinuation) in the primary response period (12-16 weeks from baseline [short term]) and/or at the end of the maintenance period (48-56 weeks from baseline [long term]).

**Exclusion criteria.** For the long-term NMA, the trials were excluded if any of the following criteria was met: patients were crossed over from 1 treatment to another before weeks 48-56; patients received a different dosage from the originally randomized dose during the postinduction period; or patients were rerandomized based on certain efficacy criteria, such as the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) 75, during the postinduction period.

### Outcomes

The outcomes of interest in this study included the proportions of patients with any AE, any SAE, and AEs leading to treatment discontinuation in the primary response period (weeks 12-16) and at the end of the maintenance period (weeks 48-56). Additionally, the benefit-risk profiles were assessed using the comparative safety data in

## CAPSULE SUMMARY

- This network meta-analysis of moderate-to-severe psoriasis treatments found that anti-interleukin 23 agents were associated with low safety event rates and that risankizumab had the most favorable long-term benefit-risk profile.
- The comparative safety data for psoriasis treatments can enable informed treatment decision making in conjunction with established treatment guidelines.

*Abbreviations used:*

AE:	adverse event
CrI:	credible interval
FDA:	Food and Drug Administration
EMA:	European Medicines Agency
IL:	interleukin
NMA:	network meta-analysis
PASI:	Psoriasis Area and Severity Index
SAE:	serious adverse event
SUCRA:	surface under the cumulative ranking curve
TNF:	tumor necrosis factor
Q2W:	every 2 weeks
Q12W:	every 12 weeks

conjunction with comparative PASI 90 data reported previously.<sup>18</sup>

### Statistical methods

For each safety outcome, NMA was conducted using a Bayesian logistic regression model. Random-effects models were used for short-term safety outcomes to account for potential cross-trial heterogeneities in treatment effects. Fixed-effects models were used for long-term safety outcomes because of the sparsity of networks. Markov Chain Monte Carlo was used to estimate the posterior probability distribution, with 5000 adaptive iterations, 50,000 burn-in iterations, a thinning factor of 10, and 50,000 posterior iterations, using 3 parallel chains.<sup>23-25</sup> Vague priors were used such that the posterior distribution was driven primarily by the observed likelihood. Posterior medians and the associated 95% credible intervals (CrIs) of the rates of each safety outcome were estimated for each treatment. Additionally, pairwise comparisons between treatments were summarized using posterior median odds ratios and associated 95% CrIs; comparisons were considered statistically significant if 95% CrI for the pairwise odds ratio did not include 1. Because the estimated rates were correlated, a comparison of the event rates for 2 treatments could still be statistically significant even when 95% CrIs of the estimated rates overlapped. The ranking probabilities of each safety outcome were obtained using the surface under the cumulative ranking curve (SUCRA) score.<sup>26</sup> A higher SUCRA score indicated a higher probability of a treatment being in the top ranks (ie, a lower probability of having safety events).

A benefit-risk assessment was conducted by graphically cross-tabulating the estimated safety rates obtained from the current NMA with the estimated PASI 90 rates obtained from a published psoriasis meta-analysis for both short-term and long-term efficacy.<sup>18</sup> Treatments plotted in the lower

right hand have the combination of high efficacy and safety.

All the analyses were performed using statistical software R (R Development Core Team) and Just Another Gibbs Sampler (JAGS) (Martyn Plummer).

### RESULTS

The systematic literature review helped identify 52 trials that met the inclusion/exclusion criteria for NMAs (the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses diagram is shown in Supplemental Fig 1). The evidence networks for the short-term safety outcomes (n = 52 trials; 16 treatments) and long-term safety outcomes (n = 7 trials; 6 treatments) are presented in Fig 1, A and B, respectively.<sup>27-73</sup> A list of the clinical trials included and details of the data extraction performed are summarized in Supplemental Table I.

#### Short-term NMA of any AE

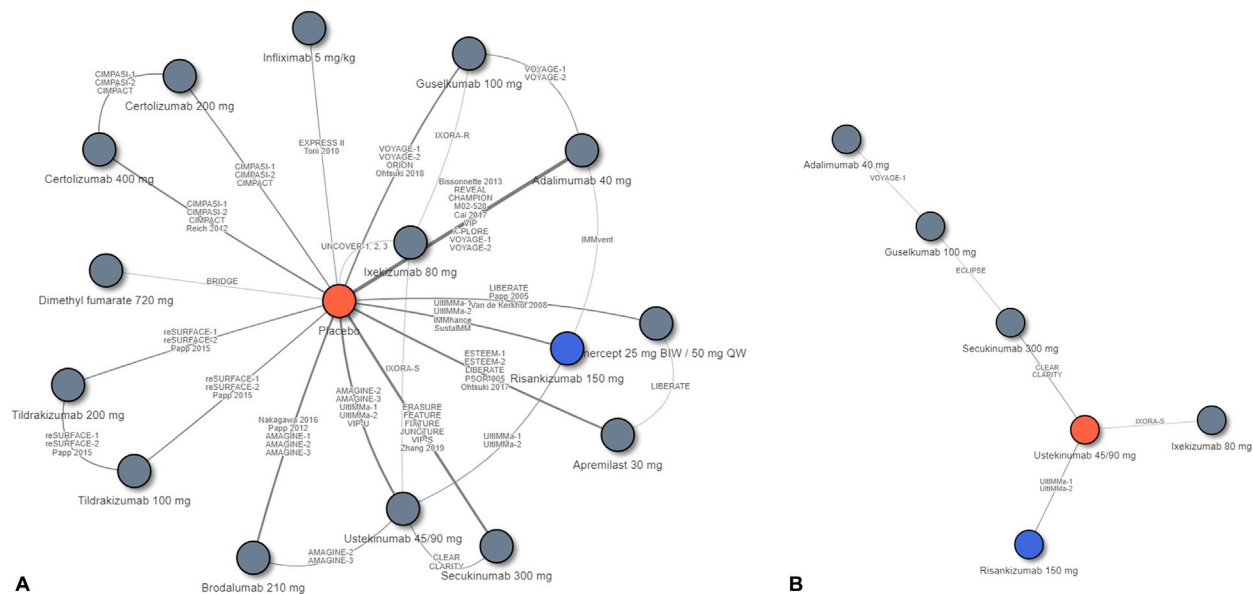
A total of 47 trials that reported the rates of any AE were included in the network. The treatments associated with the lowest rates were tildrakizumab (46.0% [95% CrI: 39.2%, 52.9%] for 200 mg every 12 weeks (Q12W) and 46.3% [39.5%, 53.2%] for 100 mg Q12W); certolizumab (46.2% [37.0%, 55.5%] for 200 mg every 2 weeks (Q2W) and 52.2% [43.3%, 61.1%] for 400 mg Q2W); etanercept (49.1% [35.5%, 62.9%]); risankizumab (52.4% [47.3%, 57.4%]); and guselkumab (55.8% [50.9%, 60.3%]) (Table I).

Tildrakizumab (100 mg Q12W and 200 mg Q12W), certolizumab (200 mg Q2W), and risankizumab were all associated with statistically significantly lower odds of experiencing any AE compared to dimethyl fumarate, infliximab, apremilast, ixekizumab, secukinumab, and brodalumab. Etanercept was associated with statistically significantly lower odds of experiencing any AEs compared with dimethyl fumarate, infliximab, and apremilast (Supplemental Table II).

#### Short-term NMA of any SAE

A total of 51 trials that reported the percentages of patients experiencing any SAE were included in the network. The treatments associated with the lowest rates were certolizumab (200 mg Q2W; 0.8% [95% CrI: 0.2%, 3.0%]), risankizumab (1.2% [0.6%, 2.4%]), etanercept (1.6% [0.3%, 7.5%]), and dimethyl fumarate (1.8% [0.5%, 7.0%]) (Table I).

Certolizumab (200 mg Q2W) was associated with statistically significantly lower odds of SAEs compared with certolizumab (400 mg Q2W). No other statistically significant differences were found (Supplemental Table III).



**Fig 1.** Evidence network for NMA of short- and long-term safety outcomes. **A**, Short-term NMAs. The reference citations for this NMA are as follows: Bissonnette 2013,<sup>27</sup> REVEAL,<sup>28</sup> CHAMPION,<sup>29</sup> M02-528,<sup>12</sup> Cai 2017,<sup>30</sup> VIP,<sup>31</sup> ESTEEM-1,<sup>32</sup> ESTEEM-2,<sup>33</sup> LIBERATE,<sup>34</sup> PSOR-005,<sup>35</sup> Ohtsuki 2017,<sup>36</sup> Nakagawa 2016,<sup>37</sup> Papp 2012,<sup>38</sup> AMAGINE-1,<sup>39</sup> AMAGINE-2,<sup>40</sup> AMAGINE-3,<sup>40</sup> CIMPASI-1,<sup>41</sup> CIMPACT,<sup>42</sup> Reich 2012,<sup>43</sup> BRIDGE,<sup>44</sup> Papp 2005,<sup>45</sup> Van de Kerkhof 2008,<sup>46</sup> X-PLORE,<sup>47</sup> VOYAGE-1,<sup>48</sup> VOYAGE-2,<sup>49</sup> ORION,<sup>50</sup> Ohtsuki 2018,<sup>51</sup> EXPRESS II,<sup>11</sup> Torii 2010,<sup>52</sup> UNCOVER-1, -2, -3,<sup>53</sup> IXORA-R,<sup>54</sup> IXORA-S,<sup>55</sup> UltIMMa-1,<sup>56</sup> UltIMMa-2,<sup>56</sup> IMMvent,<sup>57</sup> IMMhance,<sup>58</sup> SustalMM,<sup>59</sup> ERASURE,<sup>60</sup> FEATURE,<sup>61</sup> FIXTURE,<sup>60</sup> JUNCTURE,<sup>62</sup> CLEAR,<sup>63</sup> CLARITY,<sup>64</sup> VIP-S,<sup>65</sup> Zhang 2019,<sup>66</sup> reSURFACE-1,<sup>67</sup> reSURFACE-2,<sup>67</sup> Papp 2015,<sup>68</sup> and VIP-U.<sup>69</sup> **B**, Long-term NMAs. The reference citations for this NMA are as follows: VOYAGE-1,<sup>48</sup> ECLIPSE,<sup>70</sup> IXORA-S,<sup>71</sup> CLEAR,<sup>72</sup> CLARITY,<sup>73</sup> UltIMMa-1,\* and UltIMMa-2.\* NMA, network meta-analysis. \* Data on file (AbbVie, 2018).

### Short-term NMA of AEs leading to treatment discontinuation

A total of 45 trials that reported the rates of AEs leading to treatment discontinuation were included in the network. The estimated rates were the lowest for risankizumab (0.5% [95% CrI: 0.2%, 1.3%]), tildrakizumab at 100 mg Q12W (1.0% [0.2%, 4.4%]), guselkumab (1.5% [0.7%, 3.1%]), ustekinumab (1.6% [0.7%, 3.4%]), etanercept (1.7% [0.6%, 4.8%]), and adalimumab (1.7% [0.8%, 3.6%]) (Table I).

Risankizumab was associated with statistically significantly lower odds of AEs, leading to treatment discontinuation, compared with ustekinumab, adalimumab, secukinumab, placebo, brodalumab, apremilast, ixekizumab, certolizumab, and dimethyl fumarate (Supplemental Table IV).

The SUCRA scores for all 3 short-term safety outcomes showed a ranking consistent with that of the estimated rates (Supplemental Table V).

### Long-term NMAs of any AE, any SAE, and AEs leading to treatment discontinuation

A total of 7 trials were included in the networks for any AE, any SAE, and AEs leading to treatment

discontinuation in the long term. Risankizumab was associated with the lowest rates of any AE (67.5% [95% CrI: 57.8%, 75.6%]), any SAE (4.4% [2.4%, 8.1%]), and AEs leading to treatment discontinuation (1.0% [0.2%, 4.1%]) (Table I). Guselkumab was associated with the second lowest rates of any AE (72.2% [95% CrI: 63.7%, 79.5%]) and the third lowest rates of AEs leading to treatment discontinuation (2.5% [0.8%, 7.2%]).

Risankizumab was associated with significantly lower odds of any AE compared with ustekinumab and secukinumab. No other significant differences were found in the pairwise comparisons (Supplemental Tables VI to VIII).

The SUCRA scores showed a ranking consistent with the rates (Supplemental Table IX).

### Benefit-risk assessment

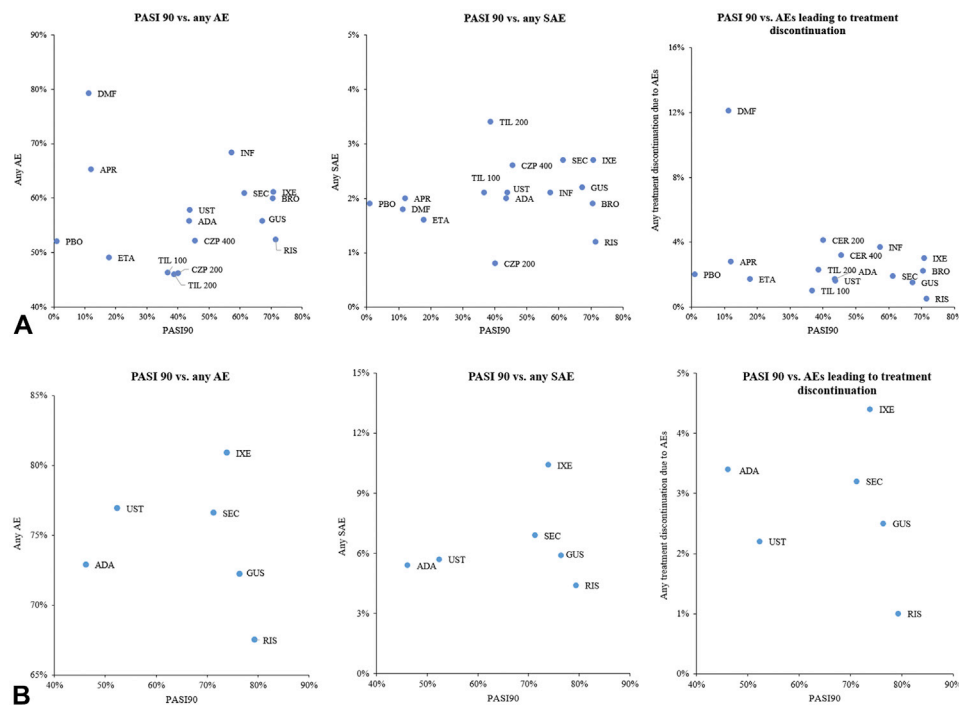
The cross-tabulation of the estimated safety event rates and estimated PASI 90 rates obtained from a published efficacy meta-analysis for both the short and long terms are presented in Fig 2.<sup>18</sup>

In a comparison of any AE versus PASI 90 in the short term, risankizumab and guselkumab

**Table I.** Short- and long-term rates of any AE, any SAE, and AE leading to treatment discontinuation

Treatment	Short-term			Long-term		
	Any AE, posterior median (95% CrI)	Any SAE, posterior median (95% CrI)	AEs leading to treatment discontinuation, posterior median (95% CrI)	Any AE, posterior median (95% CrI)	Any SAE, posterior median (95% CrI)	AEs leading to treatment discontinuation, posterior median (95% CrI)
Certolizumab at 400 mg at weeks 0, 2, and 4, then 200 mg Q2W	46.2% (37.0%, 55.5%)	0.8% (0.2%, 3.0%)	4.1% (0.7%, 24.9%)	-	-	-
Risankizumab at 150 mg at weeks 0 and 4, then Q12W	52.4% (47.3%, 57.4%)	1.2% (0.6%, 2.4%)	0.5% (0.2%, 1.3%)	67.5% (57.8%, 75.6%)	4.4% (2.4%, 8.1%)	1.0% (0.2%, 4.1%)
Etanercept at 25 mg BIW or 50 mg QW	49.1% (35.5%, 62.9%)	1.6% (0.3%, 7.5%)	1.7% (0.6%, 4.8%)	-	-	-
Dimethyl fumarate uptitrated to a maximum daily dose of 720 mg	79.2% (69.7%, 86.1%)	1.8% (0.5%, 7.0%)	12.1% (4.8%, 30.2%)	-	-	-
Placebo	52.0% (50.7%, 53.3%)	1.9% (1.6%, 2.3%)	2.0% (1.6%, 2.4%)	-	-	-
Brodalumab at 210 mg at weeks 0, 1, and 2, then Q2W	59.9% (55.5%, 64.2%)	1.9% (0.9%, 4.1%)	2.2% (1.0%, 5.1%)	-	-	-
Apremilast at 30 mg BID after initial titration schedule	65.3% (60.2%, 70.2%)	2.0% (0.9%, 4.5%)	2.8% (1.5%, 5.2%)	-	-	-
Adalimumab at 80 mg at week 0, then 40 mg Q2W	55.8% (51.8%, 59.7%)	2.0% (1.1%, 3.7%)	1.7% (0.8%, 3.6%)	72.9% (61.4%, 82.0%)	5.4% (2.1%, 13.5%)	3.4% (0.8%, 12.7%)
Tildrakizumab at 100 mg at weeks 0, and 4, then Q12W	46.3% (39.5%, 53.2%)	2.1% (0.7%, 7.4%)	1.0% (0.2%, 4.4%)	-	-	-
Ustekinumab at 45 mg for ≤100 kg, 90 mg for >100 kg at weeks 0, and 4, then Q12W	57.8% (53.7%, 61.9%)	2.1% (1.1%, 3.9%)	1.6% (0.7%, 3.4%)	76.9% (74.5%, 79.2%)	5.7% (4.5%, 7.1%)	2.2% (1.5%, 3.2%)
Infliximab at 5 mg/kg at weeks 0, 2, and 6, then Q8W	68.3% (59.6%, 76.0%)	2.1% (0.6%, 7.1%)	3.7% (1.3%, 10.8%)	-	-	-
Guselkumab at 100 mg at weeks 0 and 4, then Q8W	55.8% (50.9%, 60.3%)	2.2% (1.1%, 4.6%)	1.5% (0.7%, 3.1%)	72.2% (63.7%, 79.5%)	5.9% (3.1%, 10.9%)	2.5% (0.8%, 7.2%)
Certolizumab at 400 mg Q2W	52.2% (43.3%, 61.1%)	2.6% (1.0%, 7.3%)	3.2% (0.7%, 15.0%)	-	-	-
Ixekizumab at 160 mg at week 0, then 80 mg Q2W	61.1% (56.1%, 65.6%)	2.7% (1.3%, 6.3%)	3.0% (1.4%, 6.5%)	80.9% (68.7%, 89.3%)	10.4% (3.8%, 27.0%)	4.4% (0.7%, 29.0%)
Secukinumab at 300 mg at weeks 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, then Q4W	60.9% (56.8%, 65.0%)	2.7% (1.4%, 5.2%)	1.9% (0.9%, 4.0%)	76.6% (71.8%, 80.9%)	6.9% (4.4%, 10.6%)	3.2% (1.7%, 6.1%)
Tildrakizumab at 200 mg at weeks 0 and 4, then Q12W	46.0% (39.2%, 52.9%)	3.4% (1.2%, 11.0%)	2.3% (0.7%, 8.8%)	-	-	-

AE, Adverse event; BID, twice a day; BIW, twice a week; CrI, credible interval; QW, once every week; Q2W, once every 2 weeks; Q4W, once every 4 weeks; Q8W, once every 8 weeks; Q12W, once every 12 weeks; SAE, serious adverse event.



**Fig 2.** Benefit-risk assessment of safety rates and short- and long-term PASI 90 rates. **A**, Short-term PASI 90 versus safety outcomes. **B**, Long-term PASI 90 versus safety outcomes. Note that the scale of the Y-axes differs across safety outcomes. ADA, Adalimumab; APR, apremilast; BRO, brodalumab; CZP, certolizumab; DMF, dimethyl fumarate; ETA, etanercept; GUS, guselkumab; INF, infliximab; IXE, ixekizumab; PASI 90, Psoriasis Area and Severity Index 90; PBO, placebo; RIS, risankizumab; SEC, secukinumab; TIL, tildrakizumab; UST, ustekinumab.

(anti-IL-23 agents) had similarly low rates of any AE and similarly high rates of PASI 90. In comparison, certolizumab at 200 mg (anti-TNF agent), tildrakizumab at 100 mg (anti-IL-23 agent), and etanercept (anti-TNF agent) had higher safety but lower efficacy. Anti-IL-17 agents (brodalumab, secukinumab, and ixekizumab) had higher efficacy but lower safety relative to risankizumab and guselkumab.

In a comparison of any SAE versus PASI 90 in the short term, risankizumab had high efficacy and safety profiles. In comparison, certolizumab at 200 mg an (anti-TNF agent) had higher safety but lower efficacy. Brodalumab, secukinumab, and ixekizumab (anti-IL-17 agents) had higher efficacy but lower safety relative to risankizumab.

In a comparison of AEs leading to treatment discontinuation versus PASI 90 in the short term, risankizumab and guselkumab were associated with the most favorable benefit-risk profiles. In comparison, tildrakizumab at 100 mg (anti-IL-23 agent) had higher safety but lower efficacy. Brodalumab, secukinumab, and ixekizumab (anti-IL-17 agents) had higher efficacy but lower safety relative to risankizumab.

For the long-term outcomes, risankizumab consistently had the highest efficacy and safety across all

the safety outcomes, followed by guselkumab. In comparison, secukinumab and ixekizumab (anti-IL-17 agents) had lower safety and higher efficacy, whereas adalimumab (anti-TNF agent) and ustekinumab (anti-IL-12/23 agent) had lower efficacy and safety than the anti-IL-23 agents.

## DISCUSSION

The advent of immunomodulatory agents has brought about a paradigm shift in the treatment of psoriasis.<sup>74,75</sup> Long-term observational data have indicated a consistent and reassuring safety profile.<sup>76</sup> However, the management of AEs remains an important consideration for treatment-related decision making. A physician and patient preference study reported that “overall safety” and “low potential for AEs” in real-world use were the highest rated attributes for treatments of moderate and severe psoriasis.<sup>77</sup>

This study suggested that the anti-IL-23 agents (eg, guselkumab, risankizumab, and tildrakizumab) were associated with low rates of safety events in the short term, among which risankizumab and guselkumab also had favorable efficacy profiles. In the long term, risankizumab was associated with the most favorable benefit-risk profile compared with

the anti-IL-17 agents (ixekizumab and secukinumab), adalimumab, and ustekinumab.

A few prior studies have assessed the comparative safety profiles of treatments for psoriasis using NMA. An NMA by Lv et al<sup>78</sup> showed that anti-IL-17 agents caused significantly more all-cause AEs relative to a placebo. This was consistent with the findings of our NMA that showed that secukinumab, brodalumab, and ixekizumab had relatively high rates of any AE among the assessed treatments. In the short term, anti-IL-23 agents (guselkumab, risankizumab, and tildrakizumab) generally had lower rates of any AE compared with anti-IL-17 agents (brodalumab, secukinumab, and ixekizumab). This finding may be explained by the different mechanisms of action of anti-IL-17 versus anti-IL-23. IL-17 plays a role in host defense against bacterial, fungal, viral, and parasitic infections. In comparison, IL-23 is mainly involved in host protection against bacterial and parasitic infections.<sup>79</sup> A Cochrane library review suggested that no significant differences existed between any of the interventions (conventional agents, small molecules, and biologics) and placebo for any SAE, which is similar to the results of the present study.<sup>22</sup> An NMA conducted by the British Association of Dermatologists suggested that risankizumab had the best safety profile (measured based on drug withdrawal because of AEs) and the most favorable benefit-risk profile compared with other biologics in the short term, which aligns with the conclusion of the present study.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, little evidence for the comparisons of long-term safety outcomes in the literature.

The present study conducted a comprehensive assessment of the short- and long-term safety profiles among all therapies approved by FDA or EMA to date. NMA provides valuable evidence regarding the comparative safety profiles of competing treatments (that were not directly compared in randomized controlled trials) to enable informed decision making in conjunction with the established treatment guidelines. This study also integrated comparative safety with Armstrong et al.'s evaluation of comparative effectiveness using PASI 90<sup>18</sup> to assess the benefit-risk profile of licensed therapies for moderate-to-severe psoriasis.

The results of this study are subject to several limitations. First, because of the use of randomized controlled trial data, the results of NMAs may not be generalizable to the real-world patient population. Second, heterogeneity in the patient populations and in how the studies were conducted might have influenced the magnitude of the results. Third, the safety outcomes were evaluated in the primary response period according to the trial design, which

varied across treatments and ranged from 12 to 16 weeks, and at the end of the maintenance period, which varied between 48 and 56 weeks. The majority of the trials reassigned the patients from placebo arms to active treatment arms after the primary response period, which led to a relative dearth of long-term safety data among patients using a treatment continuously. Fourth, comparisons of specific AEs, such as infections and malignancies, were not feasible using NMA and were, therefore, not included in the present study. Fifth, because of the limited data reported, the AE rates were used without further adjustment for the duration of treatment exposure. Sixth, different trials might have applied different methodologies for the collection, assessment, and analysis of AE, SAE, and AEs leading to treatment continuation,<sup>80</sup> which might have limited the comparability of the safety event rates across the studies. This limitation may have contributed to the differences in the safety event rates within the same drug class. Lastly, the NMAs were not adjusted for psoriasis-related comorbidities, such as psoriatic arthritis and metabolic syndromes.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides an evidence-based and clinically relevant synthesis of the comparative safety and benefit-risk profiles of FDA- or EMA-approved therapies for moderate-to-severe psoriasis in the short and long terms. In the short term, anti-IL-23 agents (eg, guselkumab, risankizumab, and tildrakizumab) generally had the lowest rates of safety events, whereas risankizumab demonstrated the lowest rates of safety events in the long term. Risankizumab was also associated with the most favorable benefit-risk profile in the long term.

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## Conflicts of interest

Dr Shear is a paid consultant for AbbVie, Amgen, Lilly, Leo, Bausch Health, Sun Pharma, Janssen, Galderma, Otsuka, UCB, Celgene, Sanofi Genzyme, Novartis, and Pfizer. Drs Joshi, Soliman, and Sinval are employees of AbbVie and may own AbbVie stock or stock options. Drs Betts, Wang, and Zhao are employees of Analysis Group, Inc, which received payment from AbbVie Inc for participation in this research. Dr Gisondi has served as a speaker or an advisory board member for AbbVie, Almirall, Amgen,

BMS, Celgene, Eli-Lilly, Janssen, Leo-pharma, Merck, MSD, Novartis, Pfizer, Sanofi, Sandoz, and UCB Pharma. Dr Armstrong has served as a research investigator or consultant to Leo, AbbVie, UCB, Janssen, Lilly, Novartis, Ortho Dermatologics, Sun, Dermavant, BMS, Sanofi, Regeneron, Dermira, and Modmed.

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