

# SGLT2 Inhibitors: Worry Less, Prescribe More

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LINDA FRIED, MD, MPH

# Disclosures

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Novonordisk: DSMB (semaglutide)

# Outline

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Background

Cardiovascular Outcomes

Renal Outcomes

Safety

Practice Points

*The* NEW ENGLAND  
JOURNAL *of* MEDICINE

ESTABLISHED IN 1812

JUNE 14, 2007

VOL. 356 NO. 24

Effect of Rosiglitazone on the Risk of Myocardial Infarction  
and Death from Cardiovascular Causes

Steven E. Nissen, M.D., and Kathy Wolski, M.P.H.

# Approval of New Diabetic Medications

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In 2008, FDA published guidance for sponsors of new therapies for diabetes

Reduction in HbA1c is accepted by FDA for approval for new diabetic medications

Sponsors need to prove that the medication does not result in an unacceptable increase in cardiovascular risk

- Focus on ischemic events: cardiovascular mortality, myocardial infarction, stroke (MACE)
- Does not focus on heart failure

The cardiovascular studies can occur post-marketing approval

The unexpected result was that SGLT2 inhibitors had benefit (rather than no harm). The medications also had renal benefit

# SGLT2 Inhibitors

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The majority of glucose (> 90%) is absorbed in the early proximal tubule by SGLT2, with a small proportion absorbed in the later proximal tubule by SGLT1

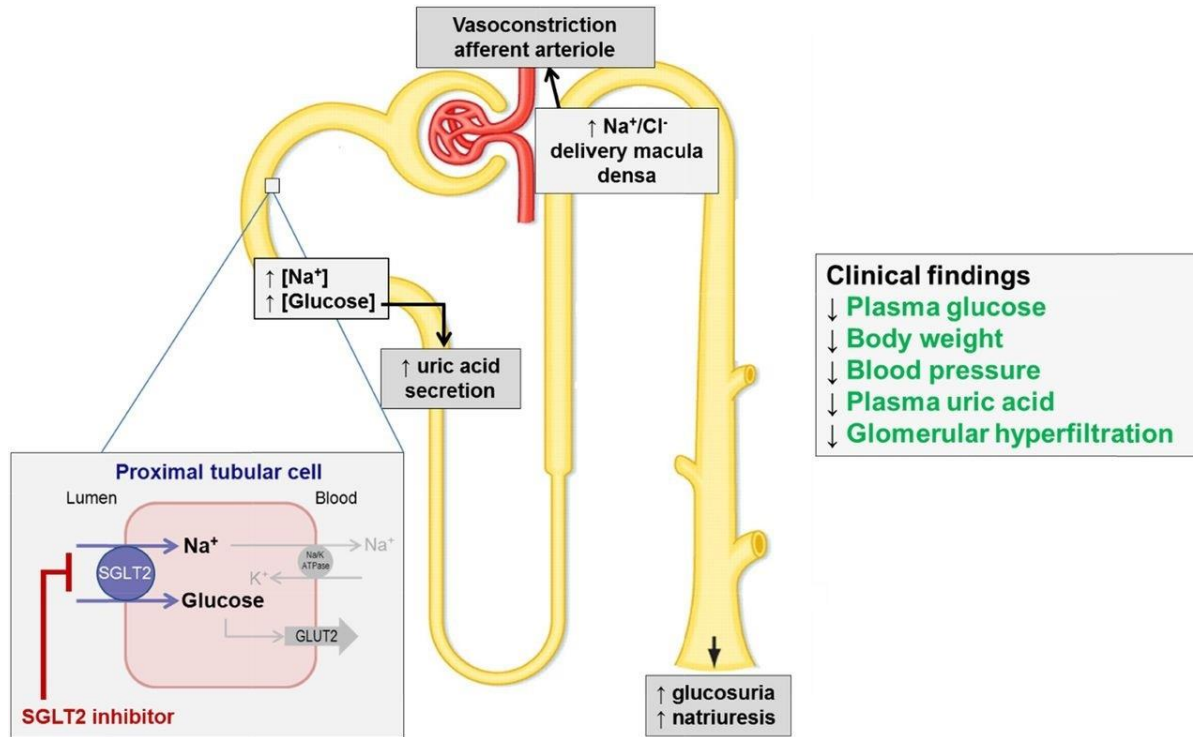
In diabetes with hyperglycemia, SGLT2 is up-regulated

- Increases  $T_m$  glucose in patients with diabetes

Blockade leads to glucosuria and natiuresis

- There is decrease in plasma volume with decline in BP

# Kidney Effects SGLT2 inhibitors



# Metabolic effects new diabetic medications

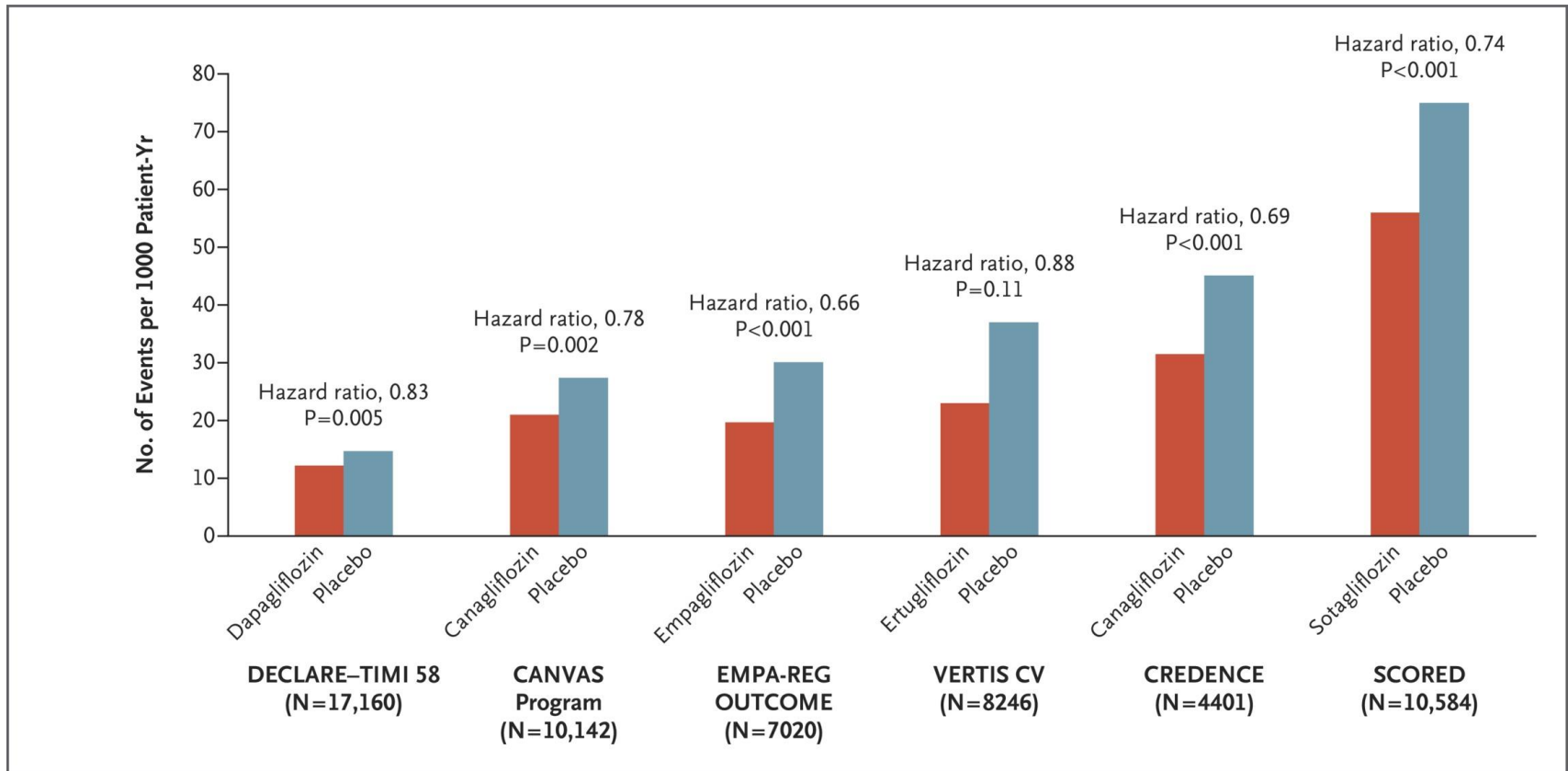
	DPP4	GLP1RA	SGLT2
HbA1c	0.8-1.0%	0.8-1.9% reduction	0.3-0.9% reduction, less effective with lower eGFR
Weight	Minimal effect	2.5-5 kg weight loss	1-3kg loss
Hypoglycemia (monotherapy)	Does not increase risk	Does not increase risk	Does not increase risk
Blood Pressure	Minimal effect	Small reduction	Decreased



# Cardiovascular Outcomes in the Initial SGLT2i Studies

	EMPA-REG	CANVAS	DECLARE
Medication	Empagliflozin	Canagliflozin	Dapagliflozin
N	7020	10,142	17,160
% with CVD	99	65	41
% with eGFR < 60	26	21	7
% UACR > 300	11	8	7
MACE	0.86 (0.74, 0.99)	0.86 (0.75, 0.97)	0.93 (0.84, 1.03)
CHF	0.65 (0.50, 0.85)	0.67 (0.52, 0.87)	0.73 (0.61, 0.88)
CV Mortality	0.62 (0.49, 0.77)	0.87 (0.72, 1.06)	0.98 (0.82, 1.17)
All Cause Mortality	0.68 (0.57, 0.82)	0.87 (0.74, 1.01)	0.93 (0.82, 1.04)

# Cardiovascular Death or Admission for Heart Failure: SGLT2 Studies



# CHF

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The benefit in CHF is broad

- With or without diabetes
  - DAPA-HF, EMPEROR-Reduced and EMPEROR-Preserved
- Low EF
  - DAPA-HF, EMPEROR-Reduced
- Preserved EF
  - EMPEROR-Preserved
- Low GFR
  - EMPEROR-Reduced enrolled individuals as low as eGFR of 20 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> and showed benefit across eGFR groups

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# SGLT2 and Kidney Outcomes

# EMPA-REG

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Randomized trial of empagliflozin 10m vs. 25mg vs placebo

Established cardiovascular disease

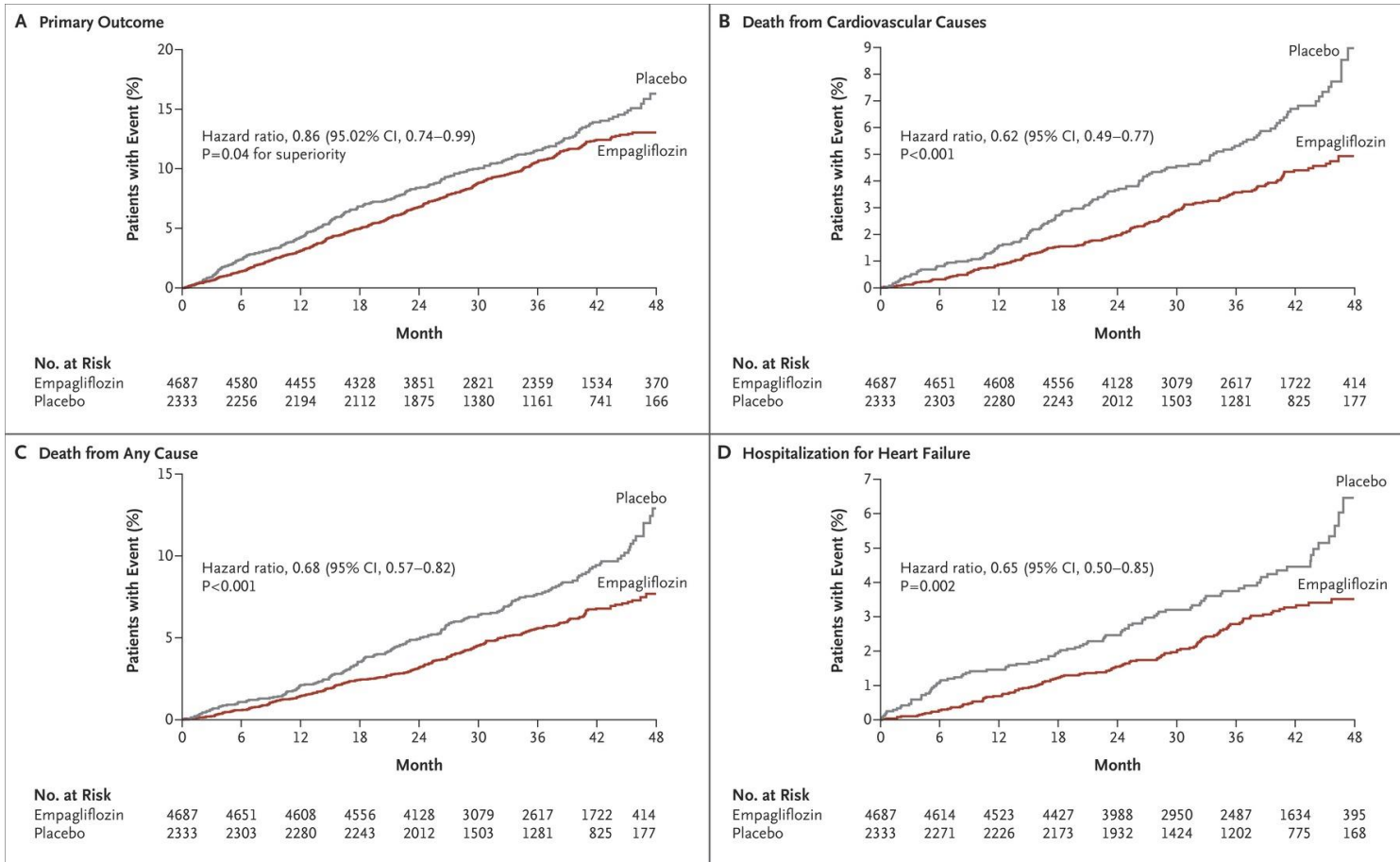
eGFR  $\geq$  30 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

HbA1c 7-10%

Results were similar for 10mg and 25mg groups

While designed as a cardiovascular study with participants having relatively low renal progression risk, the results suggested renal benefit

# EMPA-REG CV Outcomes

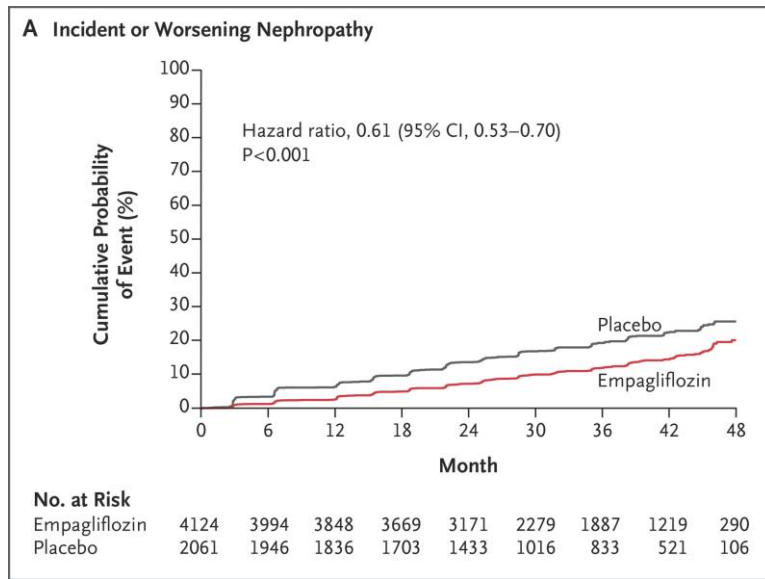


# Subgroup Analysis EMPA-REG

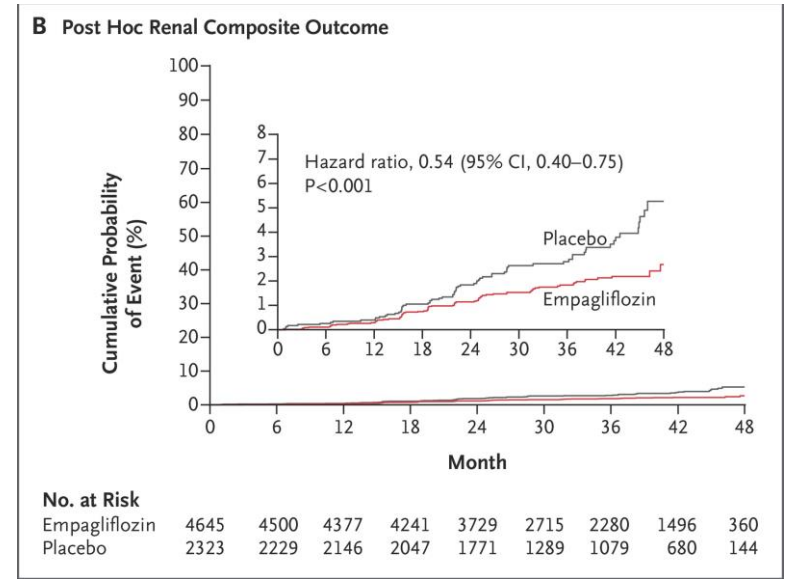
Subgroup	Empagliflozin no. in subgroup	Placebo no. in subgroup	Primary Outcome		Death from Cardiovascular Causes	
			Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value for Interaction	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value for Interaction
All patients	4687	2333				
Age				0.01		0.21
<65 yr	2596	1297				
≥65 yr	2091	1036				
Sex				0.81		0.32
Male	3336	1680				
Female	1351	653				
Race				0.09		0.43
White	3403	1678				
Asian	1006	511				
Black	237	120				
Glycated hemoglobin				0.01		0.51
<8.5%	3212	1607				
≥8.5%	1475	726				
Body-mass index				0.06		0.05
<30	2279	1120				
≥30	2408	1213				
Blood pressure control				0.65		0.44
SBP ≥140 mm Hg or DBP ≥90 mm Hg	1780	934				
SBP <140 mm Hg and DBP <90 mm Hg	2907	1399				
Estimated glomerular filtration rate				0.20		0.15
≥90 ml/min/1.73 m <sup>2</sup>	1050	488				
60 to <90 ml/min/1.73 m <sup>2</sup>	2425	1238				
<60 ml/min/1.73 m <sup>2</sup>	1212	607				
Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio				0.40		0.22
<30 mg/g	2789	1382				
≥30 to 300 mg/g	1338	675				
>300 mg/g	509	260				

# Kidney Outcomes in EMPA-REG

Macroalbuminuria, doubling serum Cr  
RRT, renal death



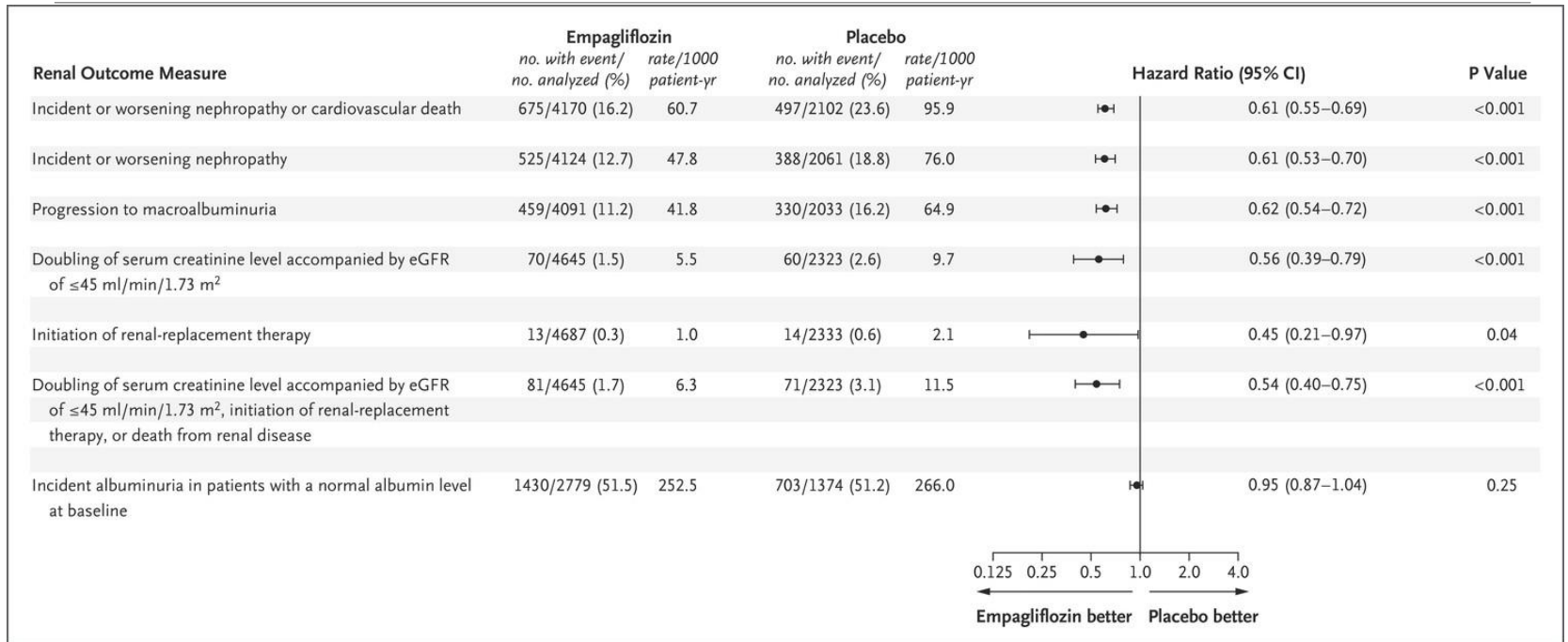
Doubling serum Cr, RRT, renal death



Wanner C et al. NEJM 2016;375:323-334

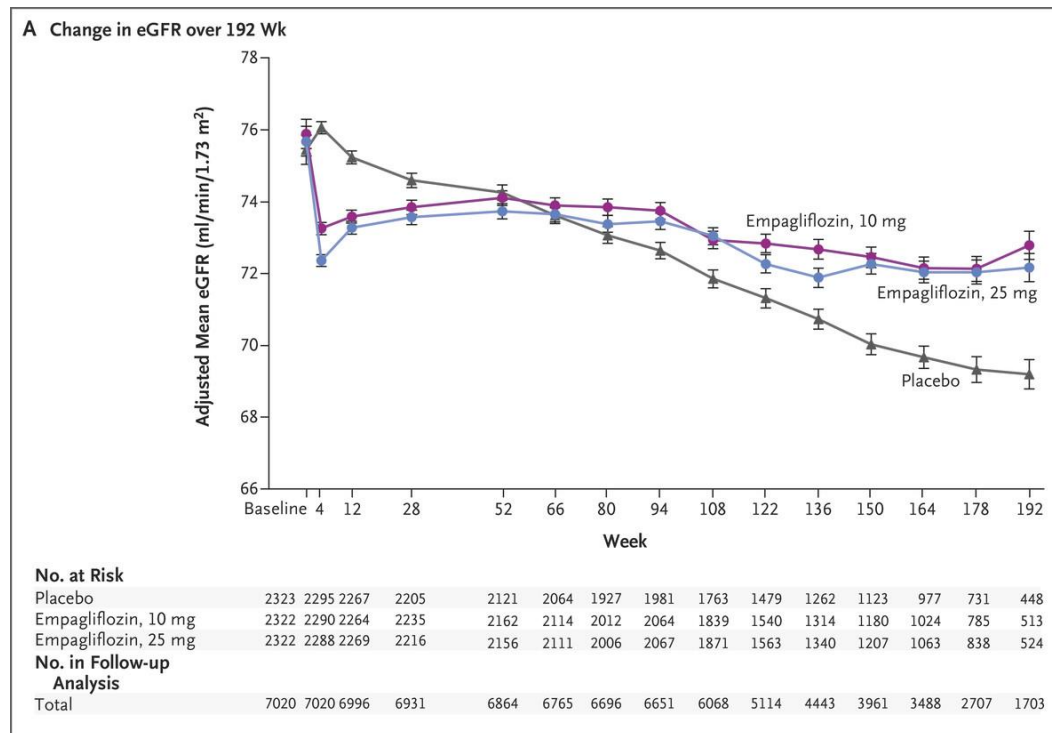


# Renal Outcomes EMPA-REG



Wanner C et al. NEJM 2016;375:323-334

# GFR Over Time EMPA-REG: Initial drop then stabilization



Wanner C et al. NEJM 2016;375:323-334

# Renal Progression in SGLT2i Studies before CREDENCE

sustat	EMPA-REG	CANVAS	DECLARE
Medication	Empagliflozin	Canagliflozin	Dapagliflozin
N	7020	10,142	17,160
Mean eGFR	74	77	85
% with eGFR < 60	26	21	7
% UACR > 300	11	8	7
Decreased progression, RRT or renal death*	0.54 (0.40, 0.75)	0.60 (0.47, 0.77)	0.54 (0.43, 0.67)
ESRD	27 events total HR 0.45 (0.21, 0.97)	Not reported	28 events total HR 0.41 (0.20, 0.82)

\*Definition of progression: EMPA-REG: doubling serum creatinine; CANVAS: sustained 40% reduction in eGFR; DECLARE: sustained 40% reduction to less than 60 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

# CREDESCENCE Study

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Age  $\geq$  30

HbA1c 6.5-12.0

eGFR 30 to  $<$  90 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

UACR  $>$  300-5000

Stable dose of ACEI or ARB at maximal labeled dose or maximally tolerated

Randomized to canagliflozin 100mg or placebo

Medication continued until initiation of dialysis, kidney transplantation, DKA, pregnancy or receipt of a disallowed therapy (combined ACEI or ARB, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist, other SGLT2 inhibitor)

# Methods: Outcomes

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Primary: composite of

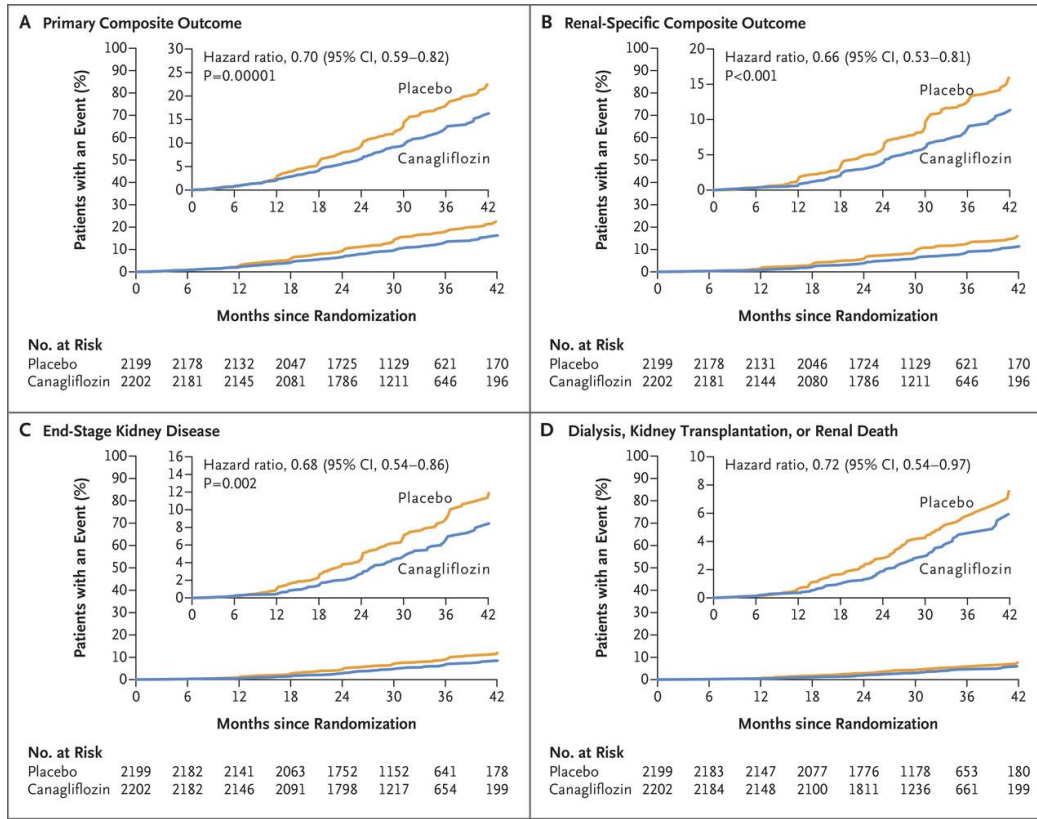
- ESRD (dialysis for at least 30 days, kidney transplantation, sustained eGFR  $<15$  ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>)
- Doubling of serum creatinine
- Renal or cardiac death

One of the secondary outcomes was composite of ESRD, doubling of serum creatinine or renal death

# Participant Characteristics in CREDENCE

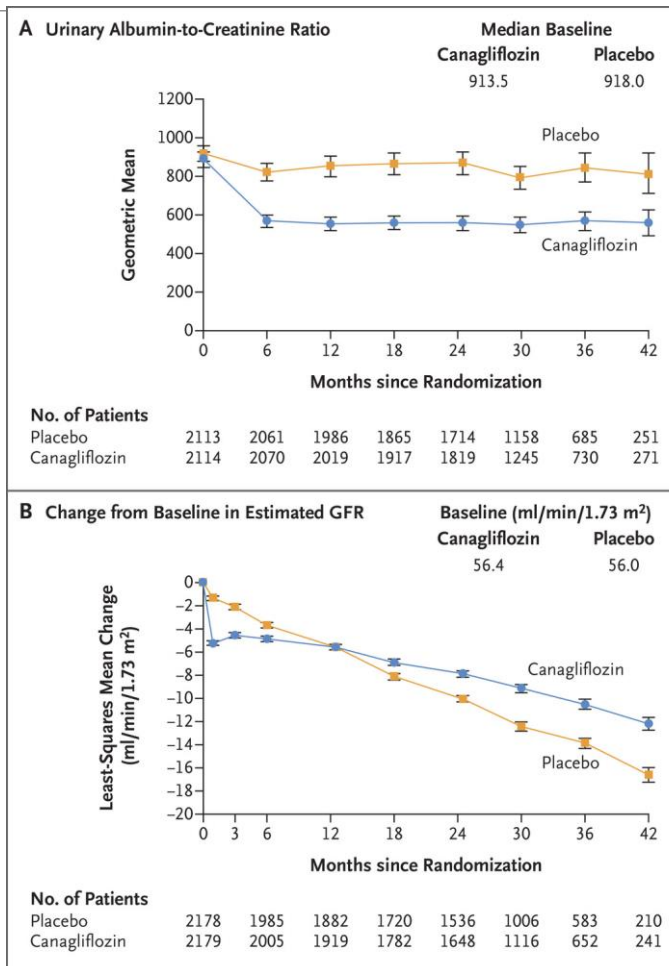
	Canagliflozin (n=2202)	Placebo (n=2199)
Age	62.9 ± 9.2	63.2 ± 9.2
Female (%)	34.6	33.3
Race (%)		
White	67.5	65.7
Black	5.1	5.1
Asian	19.3	20.6
Other	8.1	8.7
CHF (%)	14.9	14.7
Duration of Diabetes	15.5 ± 8.7	16.0 ± 8.6
HbA1c	8.3 ± 1.3	8.3 ± 1.3
eGFR	56.3 ± 18.2	56.0 ± 18.3
Median UACR (IQR)	923 (459, 1794)	931 (473, 1868)

# Primary and Renal Outcomes in Credence



Note that difference In HbA1c between The two groups only averaged 0.25% during the study

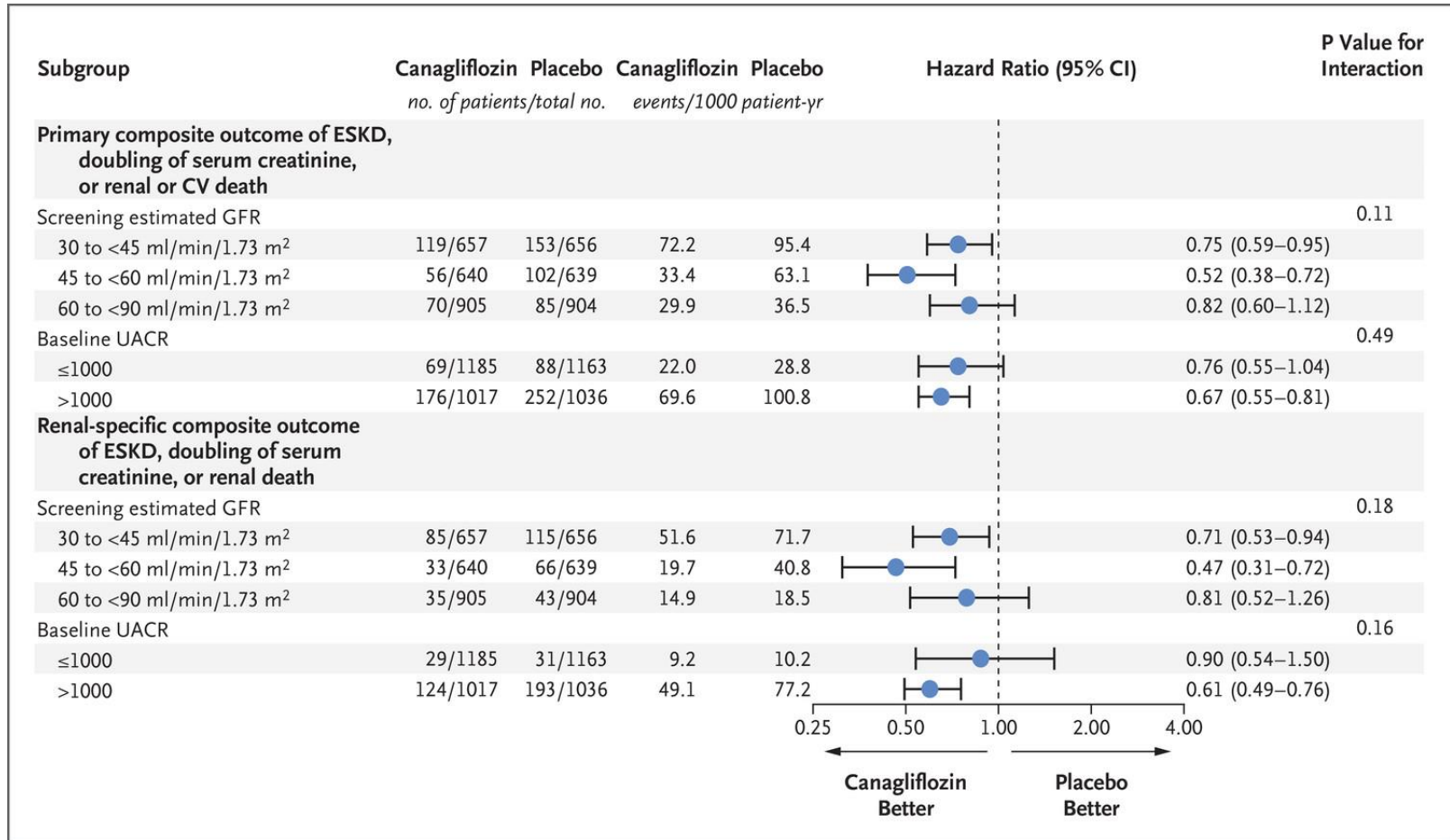
# Effects of Canagliflozin on UACR and eGFR in CREDENCE



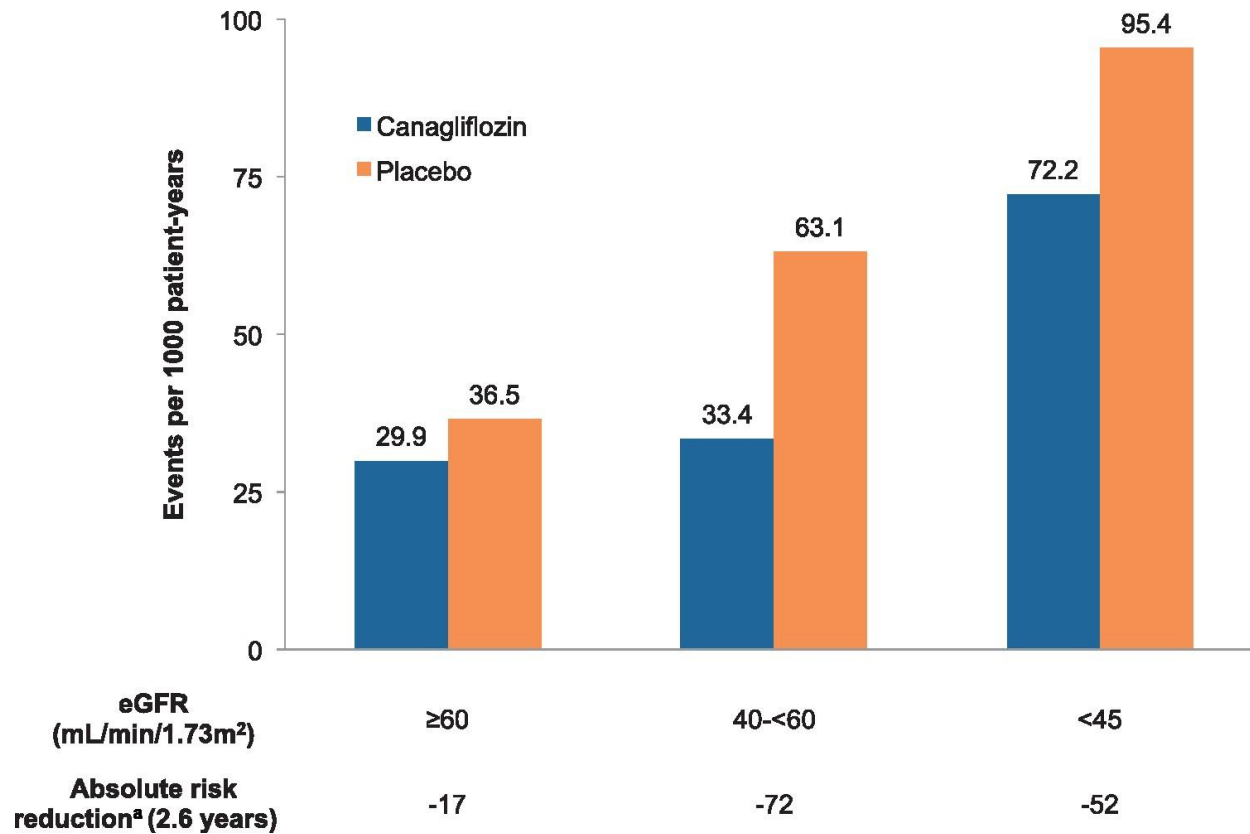
V Perkovic et al. NEJM  
 2019;380:2295-306



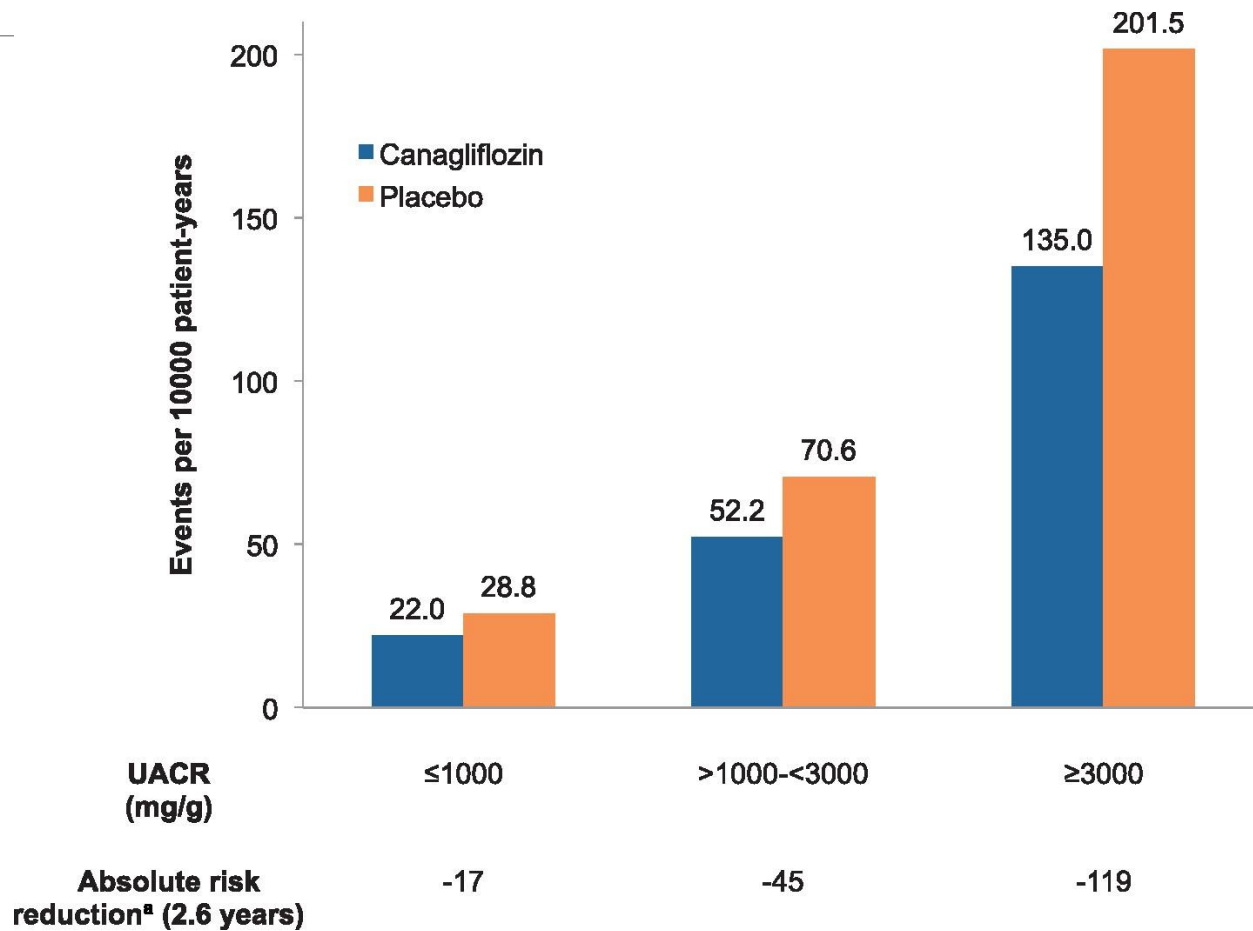
# Results by baseline kidney function in CREDENCE



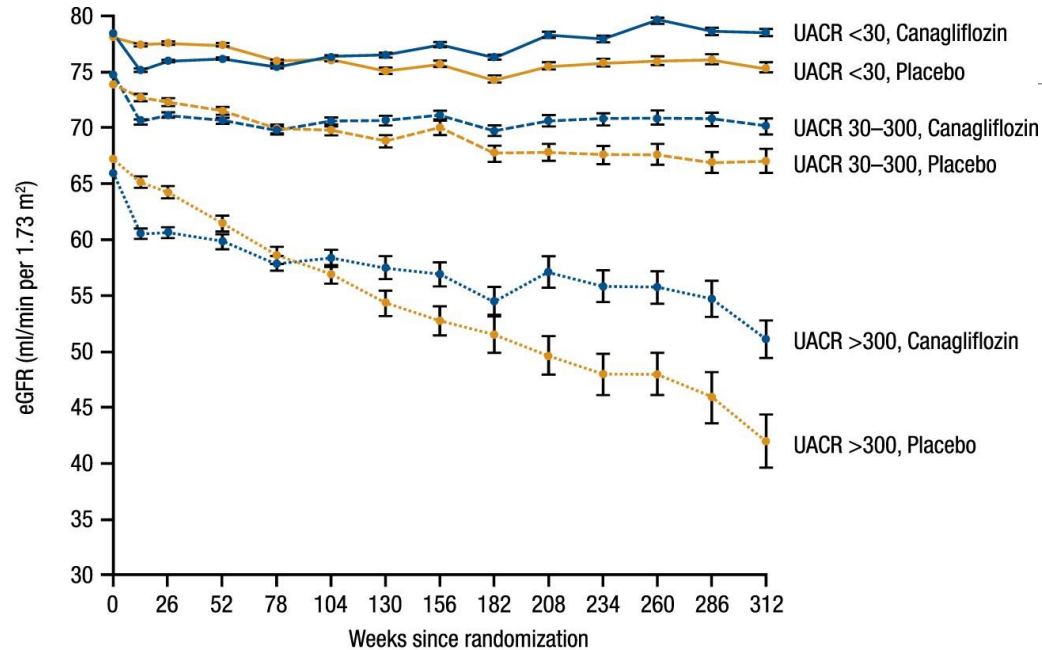
# Estimated number of primary events (doubling of serum creatinine, ESKD or cardiovascular or kidney-related death in CREDESCENCE



# Estimated number of primary events (doubling of serum creatinine, ESKD or cardiovascular or kidney-related death in CREDESCENCE



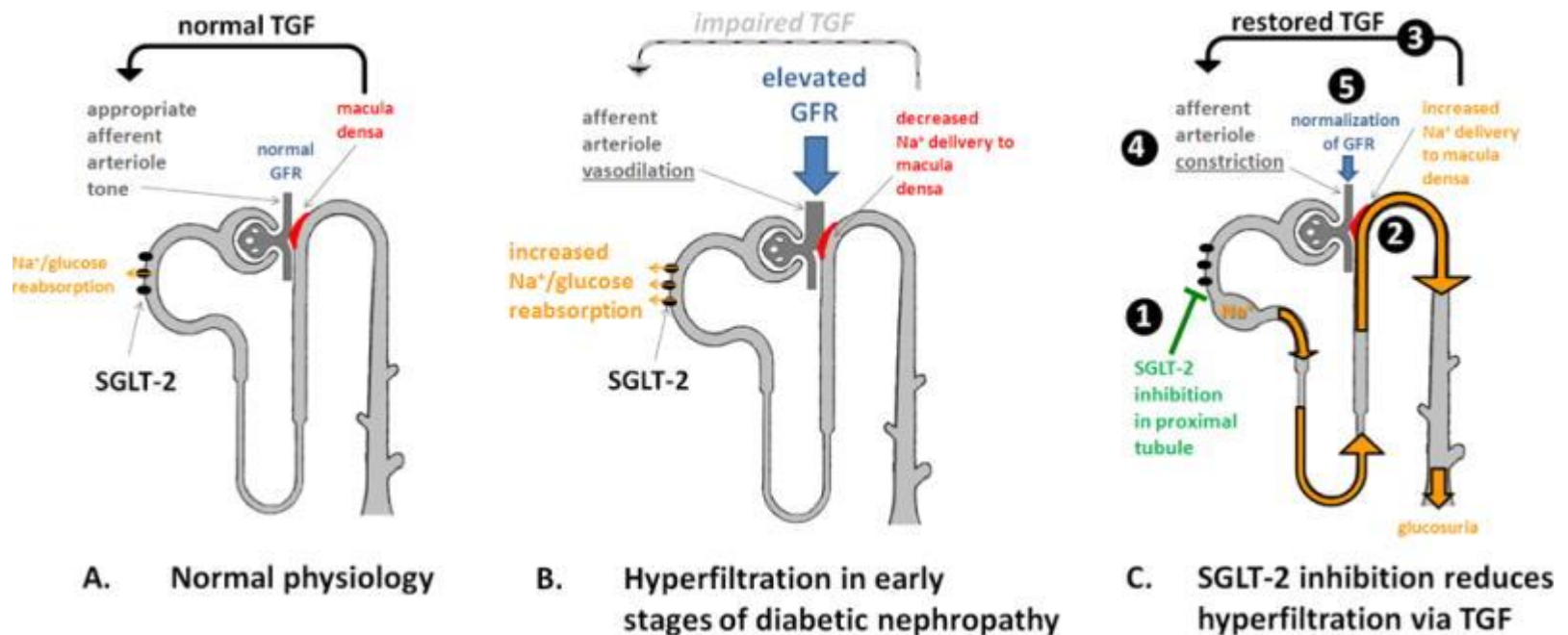
# Effect of canagliflozin on eGFR over time by baseline UACR in the Canagliflozin Cardiovascular Assessment Program (CANVAS)



Participants, n

UACR <30	Canagliflozin	3960	3739	3613	3390	3206	2126	1622	1433	1498	1327	1408	1264	1231
	Placebo	2947	2788	2677	2473	2263	1239	742	636	646	564	587	523	504
UACR 30-300	Canagliflozin	1300	1232	1181	1098	1030	645	499	435	454	387	407	358	349
	Placebo	933	876	837	759	680	352	225	193	200	178	183	170	159
UACR >300	Canagliflozin	398	373	368	331	287	157	97	82	77	72	68	64	63
	Placebo	344	325	306	263	227	110	58	49	48	40	34	30	26

# TGF Hypothesis of Benefit



Lytvyn Y et al. Curr Opin Nephrol Hypertens. 2016 May; 25(3): 232–239.

# Dapa-CKD

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eGFR 25-75

UACR 200-5000

On maximally tolerated ACEI or ARB

Either diabetic or nondiabetic, though 2/3 with diabetes

Primary endpoint

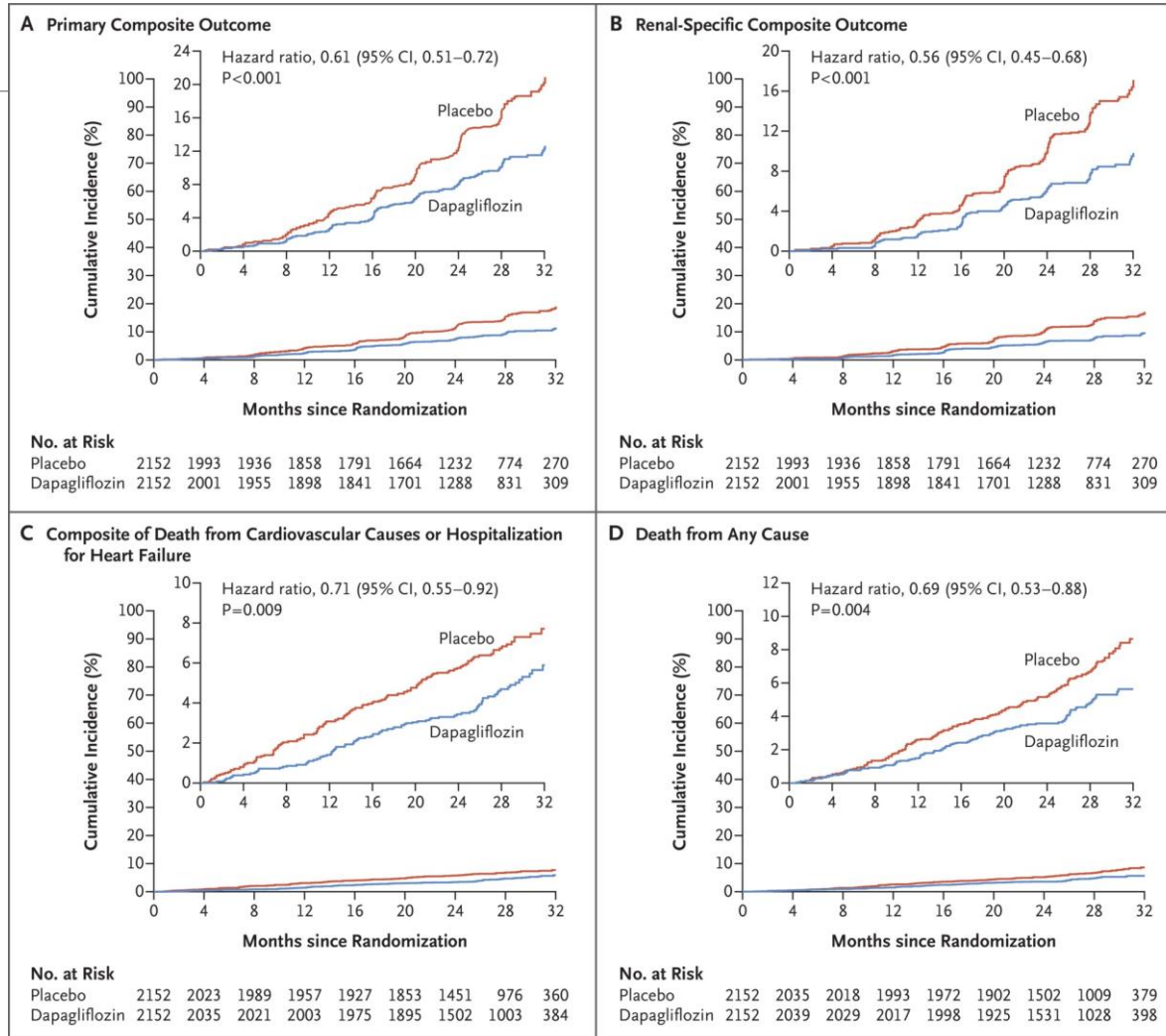
- Halving eGFR
- ESRD
- Renal or cardiovascular death

Study stopped early for efficacy

# Participant Characteristics in DAPA CKD

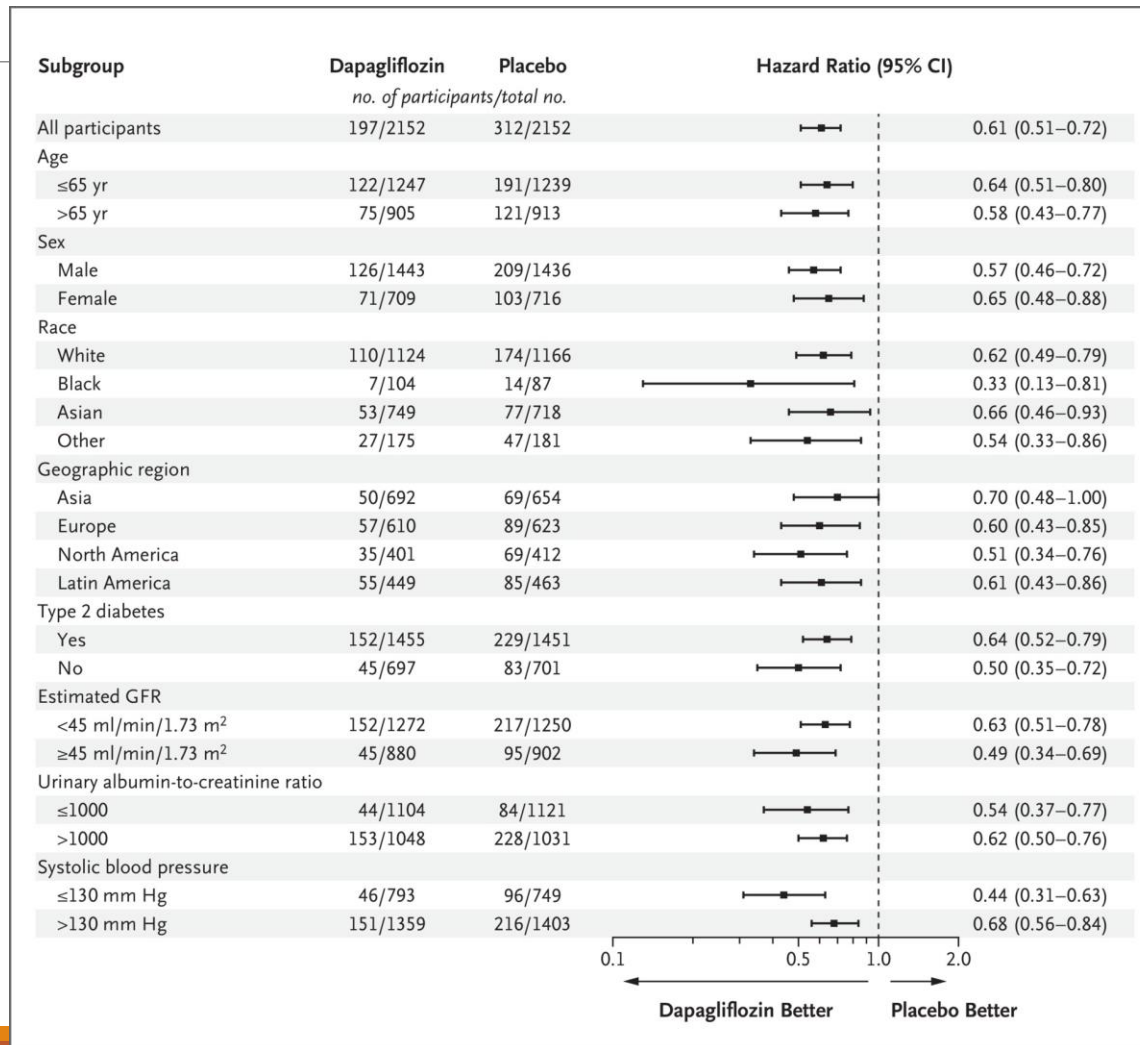
	Dapagliflozin (n=2152)	Placebo (n=2152)
Age	61.8 ± 12.1	61.9 ± 12.1
Female (%)	32.9 (%)	33.3 (%)
Race (%)		
White	52.2	54.2
Black	4.8	4.0
Asian	34.8	33.4
Other	8.1	8.4
ACEI or ARB (%)	98.4	97.9
Diabetes (%)	67.6	67.4
eGFR	43.2 ± 12.3	43.0 ± 12.4
% below 30 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	13.6%	15.4%
Median UACR (IQR)	965 (472, 1903)	934 (482, 1868)

# DAPA CKD Results





# Subgroups DAPA CKD



# EMPA-KIDNEY

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eGFR 20 to <45 regardless of albuminuria or eGFR 45 to < 90 with UACR at least 200 mg/g

Either diabetic or nondiabetic

Primary endpoint

- eGFR < 10 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>
- 40% decline in eGFR
- ESRD
- Renal death

Study stopped early for efficacy

# Participant Characteristics in EMPA-KIDNEY

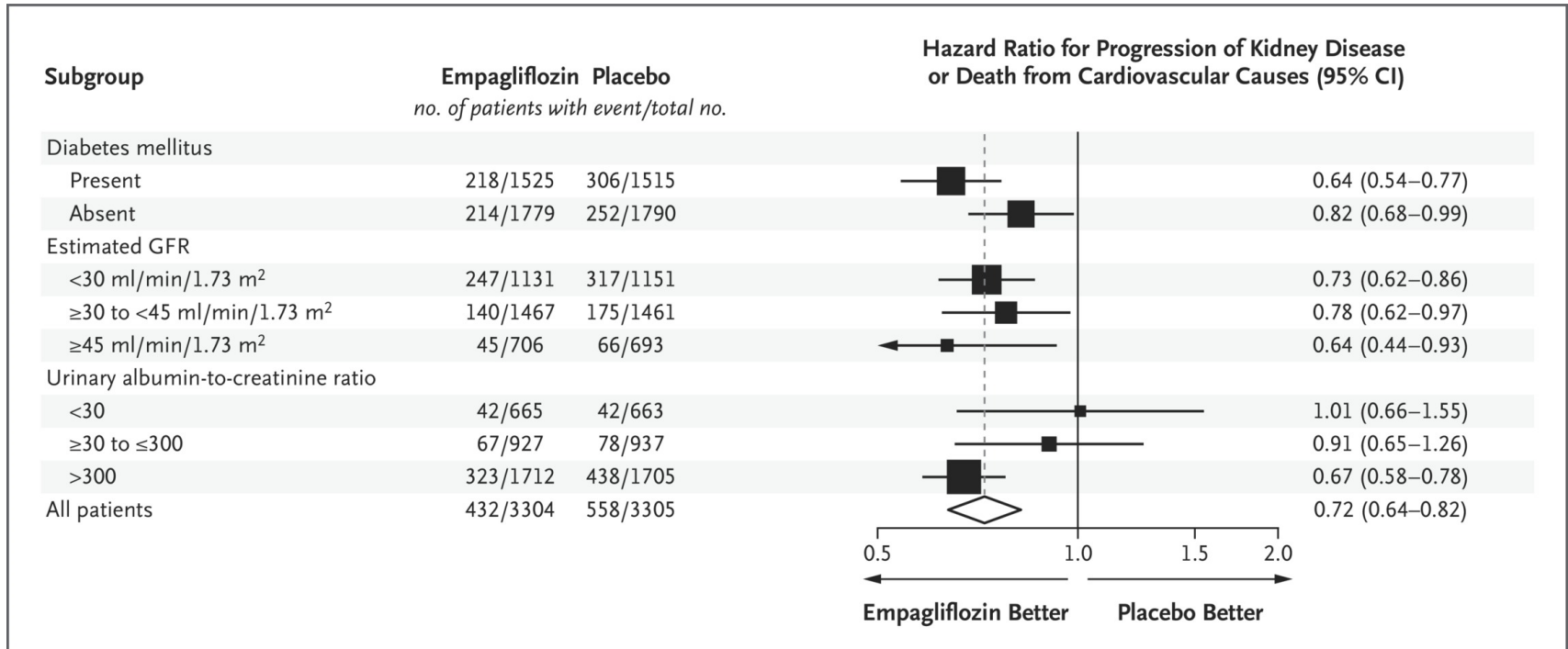
	Empagliflozin (n=3304)	Placebo (n=3305)
Age	63.9 ± 13.9	63.8 ± 13.9
Female (%)	332 (%)	33.1 (%)
Race (%)		
White	58.7	58.1
Black	3.9	4.1
Asian	36.1	36.3
Other	1.3	1.6
ACEI or ARB (%)	85.7	84.6
Diabetes (%)	46.2	45.8
eGFR	37.4 ± 14.5	37.3 ± 14.4
% below 30 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	34.2%	34.8%
Median UACR (IQR)	331 (46, 1061)	327 (54, 1074)

# Outcomes in EMPA-KIDNEY

	Empagliflozin (3304) n, %	Placebo (3305) n, %	HR (95% CI)
Primary Outcome (Progression of kidney disease or CV death)	432 (13.1)	558 (16.9)	0.72 (0.63,0.82)
Hospitalization for CHF or CV death	131 (4.0)	152 (4.6)	0.84 (0.67, 1.07)
All cause death	148 (4.5)	167 (5.1)	0.87 (0.70, 1.08)
CV death	59 (1.8)	699 (2.1)	0.84(0.60, 1.19)
ESRD or CV death	163 (4.9)	217 6.6)	0.73 (0.59, 0.89)
Progression of Kidney Disease*	384 (11.6)	504 (15.2)	0.71 (0.62, 0.81)

Defined as ESRD, decrease eGFR to 10 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>, 40% decline in eGFR, or renal death

# Subgroups EMPA Kidney



# Side Effects

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# Initial Prescribing Information

The first FDA approved SGLT2 inhibitor was canagliflozin in 2017

- Approved for treatment of diabetes
- Initiation was not recommended if eGFR < 45 and contraindicated if eGFR < 30 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Adverse Reactions From Pool of Four 26-Week Placebo-Controlled Studies Reported in ≥ 2% of INVOKANA-Treated Patients\***

<b>Adverse Reaction</b>	<b>Placebo N=646</b>	<b>INVOKANA 100 mg N=833</b>	<b>INVOKANA 300 mg N=834</b>
Urinary tract infections <sup>†</sup>	3.8%	5.9%	4.4%
Increased urination <sup>§</sup>	0.7%	5.1%	4.6%
Thirst <sup>#</sup>	0.1%	2.8%	2.4%
Constipation	0.9%	1.8%	2.4%
Nausea	1.6%	2.1%	2.3%
	<b>N=312</b>	<b>N=425</b>	<b>N=430</b>
Female genital mycotic infections <sup>†</sup>	2.8%	10.6%	11.6%
Vulvovaginal pruritus	0.0%	1.6%	3.2%
	<b>N=334</b>	<b>N=408</b>	<b>N=404</b>
Male genital mycotic infections <sup>†</sup>	0.7%	4.2%	3.8%

# Warnings and Precautions: Canagliflozin Initial FDA Label

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Lower Limb Amputation

Hypotension

Ketoacidosis

AKI and Impairment in Renal Function

Hyperkalemia

Urosepsis and Pyelonephritis

Hypoglycemia and Concomitant Use with Insulin and Insulin Secretagogues

Genital Mycotic Infections

Hypersensitivity reactions

Bone fracture

Increase in LDL



# Amputation

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Initial CANVAS studies suggested a 2 fold increase in amputation

- 95 amputations canagliflozin vs. 22 (1.5%) Placebo
- Most amputations were toe or foot

There was a black box warning regarding leg and foot amputation. This box was removed in 2020

- FDA felt that there was an increased risk, but less than previous trials suggested
- Balanced by benefit on cardiovascular and renal outcomes
- Risk may be less with other SGLT2 inhibitors

# Pooled analyses suggest side effect incidence lower

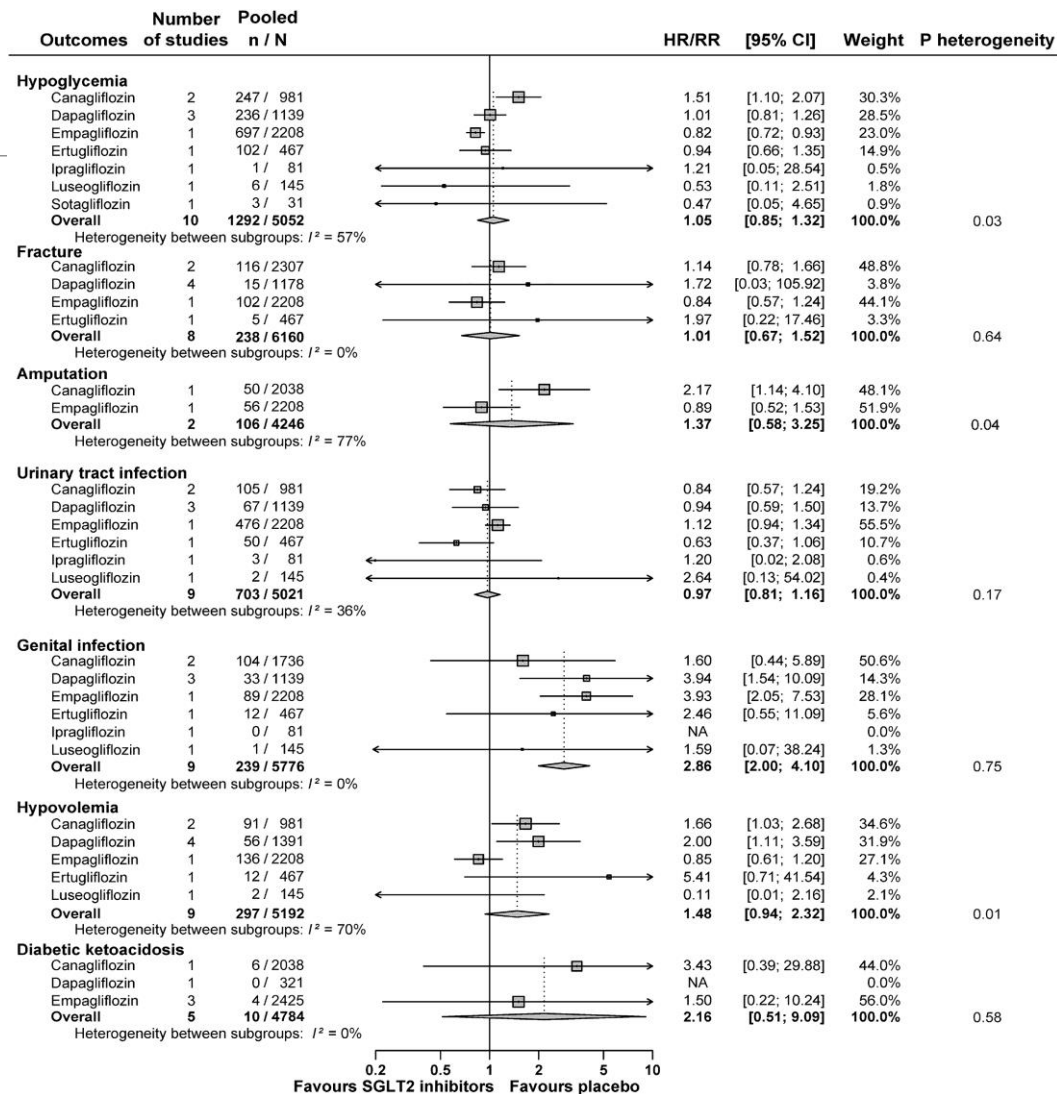
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With more clinical trials, pooled analyses of safety outcomes suggests that other risks are lower than previously thought

Most consistent increased risks are

- Volume depletion
- Genital infections
- Ketoacidosis

# Safety Outcomes SGLT2 inhibitors: Meta-analysis



# Ketoacidosis

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## Increased occurrence of ketoacidosis with SGLT2 inhibitors

- Wasn't very common in trials (<1%)
- Post-marketing risk appears to be higher
  - Estimated rate 1.4 per 1,000 person years, which was 3 fold higher than DPP-4 inhibitors (Douros et al Ann Intern Med 2020;173:417)
- Risk higher in Type 1 diabetes. Not approved for use by FDA, though dapagliflozin is approved for Type 1 diabetes in Europe
- Risk higher with
  - Reduction in insulin dose
  - Sudden restriction of carbohydrate availability (fasting, decreased intake in illness)
  - Surgical stress, trauma, intercurrent illness
  - Heavy alcohol use

# Safety Outcomes in EMPA-KIDNEY

	Empagliflozin (3304) n, %	Placebo (3305) n, %	HR (95% CI)
Serious UTI	52 (1.6)	54 (0.84)	0.94 (0.64,1.37)
Serious Genital Infection	1 (< 0.1)	1 (< 0.1)	
Serious Hyperkalemia	92 (2.8)	109 (3.3)	0.83 (0.63, 1.09)
Serious AKI (admission)	107 (3.2)	135 (4.1)	0.78 (0.60, 1.00)
Serious Dehydration	30 (0.9)	24 (0.7)	1.25 (0.73, 2.14)
Ketoacidosis	6 (0.2)	1 (<0.1)	
Lower-limb amputation	28 (0.8)	19 (0.6)	1.43 (0.80,2.57)
Bone Fracture	133 (4.0)	123 (3.7)	1.08 (0.84,1.38)
Symptomatic Dehydration	83 (2.5)	76 (2.3)	1.10 (0.81, 1.15)

# In Practice

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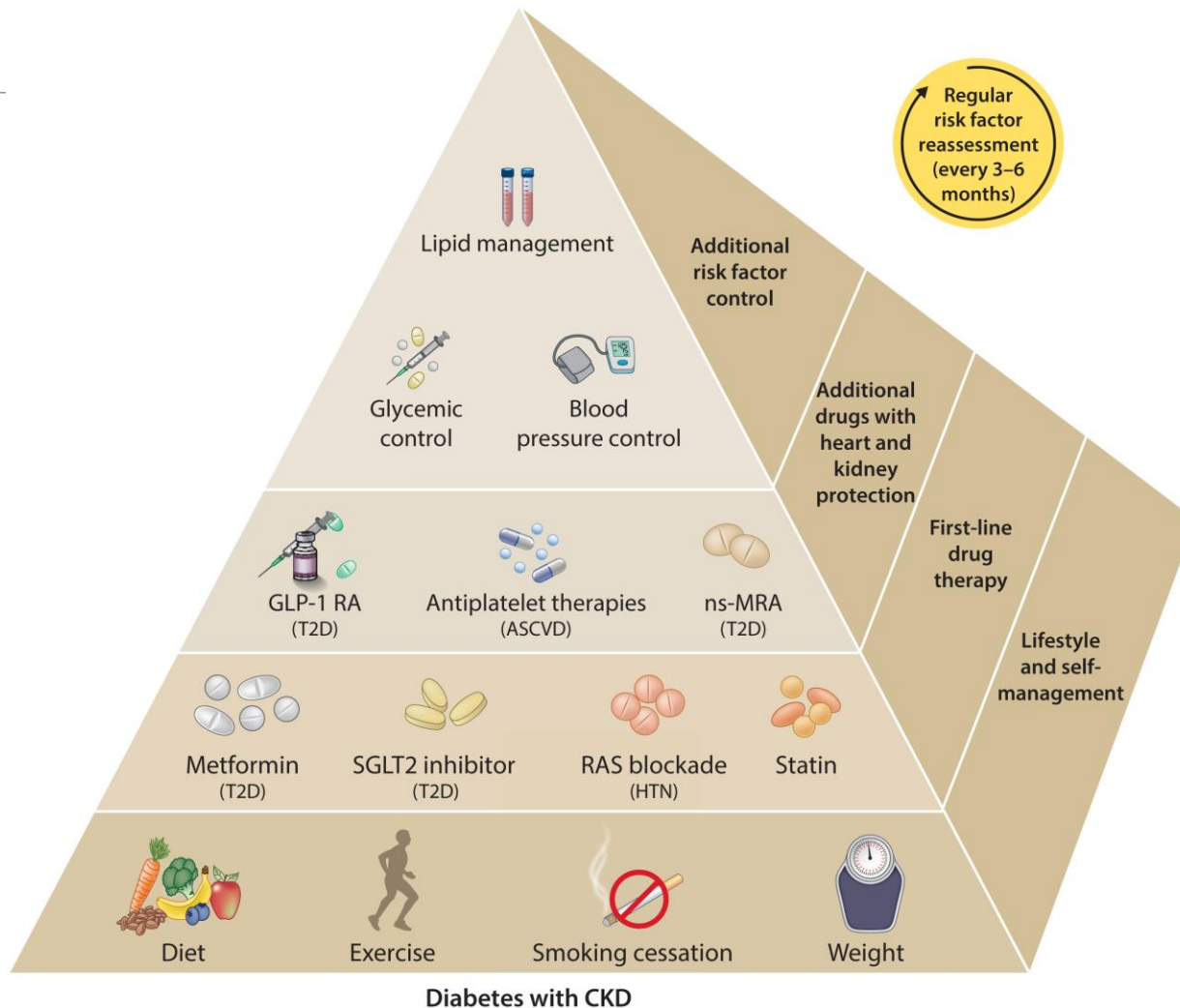
# Indications for SGLT2 inhibitors

**Table 1.** Current indications for SGLT2 inhibitors

Indication	Criteria	Kidney function
Congestive heart failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYHA classes II–IV</li> <li>• Elevated NT-proBNP</li> <li>• All ejection fractions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR &gt;20 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Glycemic control or metabolic risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 2 diabetes mellitus</li> <li>• First-line for glycemic control (along with metformin)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR ≥60 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Anticipated HbA1c ↓: 0.6%–0.9%</li> <li>• Anticipated weight ↓: 2–3 kg</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR 45–59 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Anticipated HbA1c ↓: 0.3%–0.5%</li> <li>• Anticipated weight ↓: 1–2 kg</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR &lt; 45 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Anticipated HbA1c ↓: minimal</li> <li>• Anticipated weight ↓: 1–2 kg</li> </ul>
Reduction in ASCVD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 2 diabetes mellitus</li> <li>• Established ASCVD or high risk for ASCVD<sup>a</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR ≥ 30 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
* Diabetic kidney disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 2 diabetes mellitus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR ≥25 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• UACR 200–5000 mg/g<sup>b</sup></li> </ul>
* Nondiabetic kidney disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etiology of kidney disease: ischemic nephropathy, IgA nephropathy, FSGS, chronic pyelonephritis, chronic interstitial nephritis</li> <li>• No immunosuppression in prior 6 mo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eGFR ≥ 25 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• UACR 200–5000 mg/g<sup>b</sup></li> </ul>

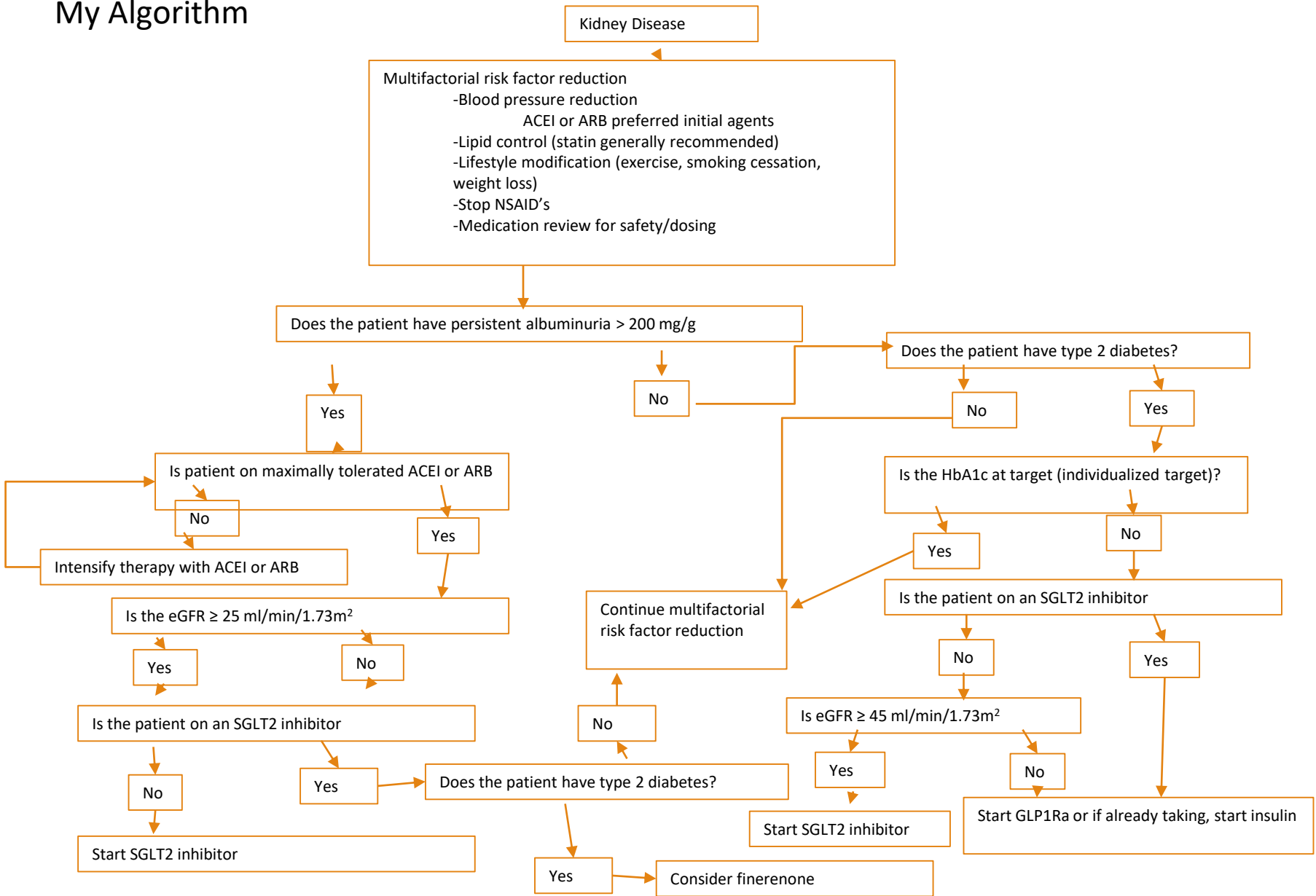
\*Note that this is before EMPA Kidney was reported with inclusion eGFR ≥ 20 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

# KDIGO Diabetes with CKD Care





# My Algorithm



# KDIGO Practice points SGLT2

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It is reasonable to withhold SGLT2i in times of prolonged fasting, surgery or critical medical illness to decrease risk of ketosis

If a patient is at risk for hypovolemia,

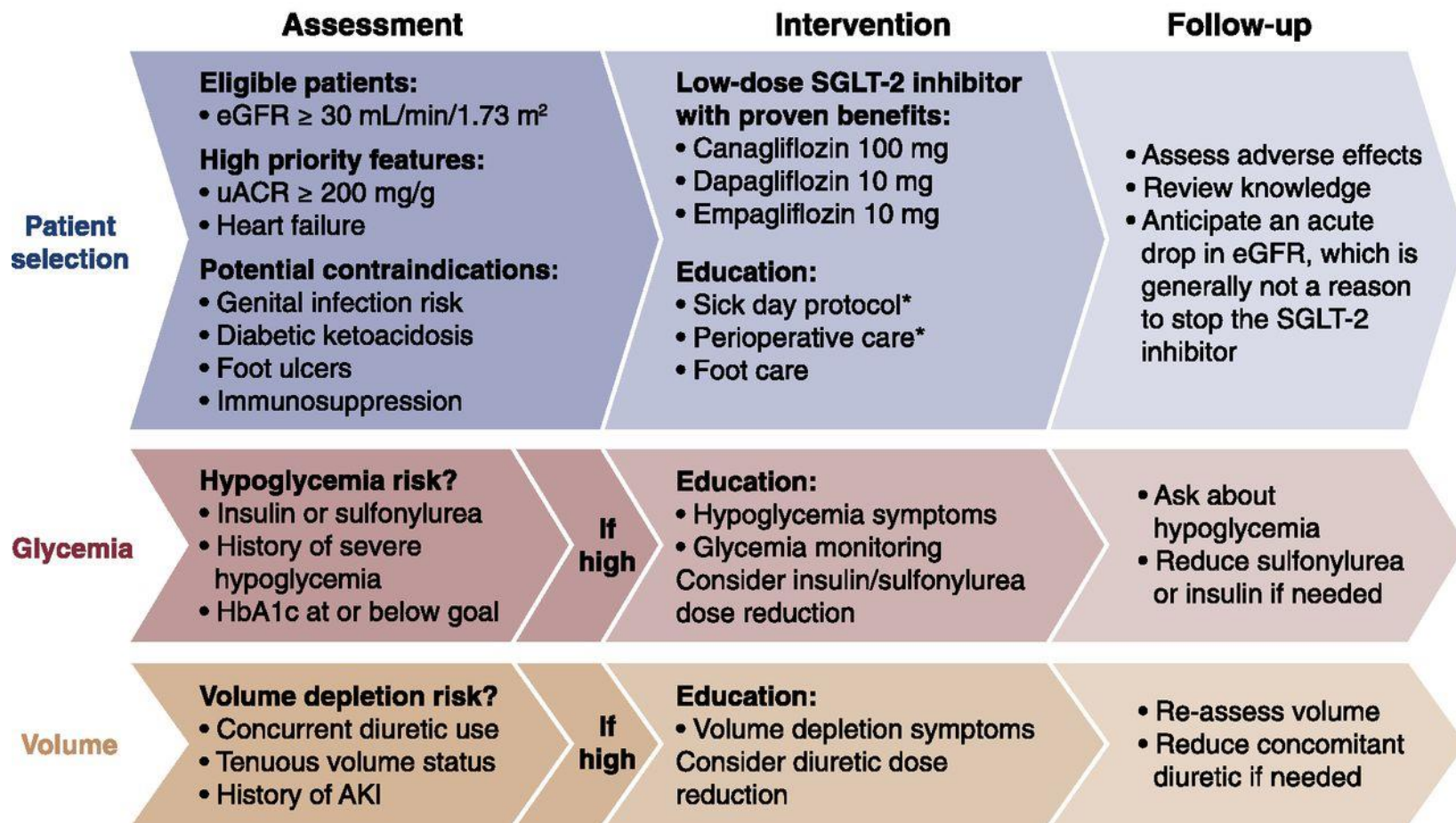
- decreasing thiazide or loop diuretics before commencement of SGLT2i treatment
- Advise on symptoms of hypovolemia and hypotension
- F/U on volume status

A reversible decrease in the eGFR with initiation may occur and is generally not an indication to discontinue treatment

Once an SGLT2i is initiated, it is reasonable to continue an SGLT2i even if the eGFR falls below 20 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup>, unless it is not tolerated or kidney replacement therapy is initiated

**Practical approach to initiating sodium-glucose transport protein 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors in patients with type 2 diabetes and CKD. \*Sick day protocol (for illness or excessive exercise or alcohol intake): temporarily withhold sodium-glucose transport protein ...**

**Practical provider guide to initiating SGLT-2 inhibitors in patients with type 2 diabetes and CKD**



# Summary 1

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While initially approved as a diabetic medication, SGLT2 inhibitors decrease cardiovascular outcomes (especially CHF) and progression of kidney disease

As a nephrologist, I do not consider these diabetes medications, I consider them medications to slow progression to dialysis

They should be standard of care in patients with CKD and proteinuria

- They can be started if eGFR  $\geq 20$  ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>
- They should be continued until dialysis

# Summary 2

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When starting, evaluate volume status as the medications are mild diuretics

- If euvolemic, consider decreasing diuretic

When starting, evaluate glucose control and hypoglycemia risk

- By themselves, do not cause hypoglycemia but can when combined with sulfonylurea or insulin
- If risk for hypoglycemia and on other agents, decrease those agent

Hold with acute illness or if going to be NPO

Increased risks of DKA, mycotic infections

- Small but present risk of amputation. May avoid in those with foot lesions