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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Treatment With Ledipasvir–Sofosbuvir for 12 or 24 Weeks in Kidney Transplant Recipients With Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Genotype 1 or 4 Infection A Randomized Trial

Massimo Colombo, MD; Alessio Aghemo, MD; Hong Liu, PhD; Jie Zhang, PhD; Hadas Dvory-Sobol, PhD; Robert Hyland, DPhil; Chohee Yun, MD; Benedetta Massetto, MD; Diana M. Brainard, MD; John G. McHutchison, MD; Marc Bourlière, MD; Markus Peck-Radosavljevic, MD; Michael Manns, MD; and Stanislas Pol, MD

Background: Use of interferon and ribavirin to treat chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection in kidney transplant recipients is limited because of the risk for allograft rejection and poor tolerability.

Objective: To evaluate the safety and efficacy of the interferonand ribavirin-free regimen ledipasvir-sofosbuvir in kidney transplant recipients with chronic genotype 1 or 4 HCV infection.

Design: Randomized, phase 2, open-label study. (ClinicalTrials .gov: NCT02251717)

Setting: 5 sites in Europe.

Patients: Treatment-naive or -experienced kidney transplant recipients with chronic genotype 1 or 4 HCV infection, with or without compensated cirrhosis, and with an estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) of 40 mL/min or greater were randomly assigned 1:1 to receive ledipasvir (90 mg) and sofosbuvir (400 mg) for 12 or 24 weeks.

Measurements: The primary end point was sustained virologic response at 12 weeks after therapy ended (SVR12).

Results: Among 114 patients, the median age was 53 years, 58% were male, 91% had genotype 1 infection, 69% were treatment naive, and 15% had compensated cirrhosis. The median

eGFR was 56 mL/min (range, 35 to 135 mL/min). One hundred percent of patients (57 of 57) treated for 12 weeks (95% CI, 94% to 100%) and 100% of those (57 of 57) treated for 24 weeks (CI, 94% to 100%) achieved SVR12. Serious adverse events were reported in 13 patients (11%). Of these, 3 events–syncope, pulmonary embolism, and serum creatinine increase–in 3 patients were determined to be treatment related. One patient permanently discontinued treatment because of an adverse event (syncope). The most frequent adverse events overall were headache (n = 22 [19%]), asthenia (n = 16 [14%]), and fatigue (n = 11 [10%]).

Limitations: The study was open label, no inferential statistics were planned, and only patients with genotype 1 or 4 infection were included. Few patients with HCV genotype 1a and cirrhosis were enrolled.

Conclusion: Treatment with ledipasvir-sofosbuvir for 12 or 24 weeks was well-tolerated and seemed to have an acceptable safety profile among kidney transplant recipients with HCV genotype 1 or 4 infection, all of whom achieved SVR12.

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Nearly 10% of kidney transplant recipients in West-ern countries have chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection (1). The higher HCV prevalence in kidney transplant recipients than in the general population is a direct consequence of the association between HCV infection and kidney impairment as well as an increased risk for HCV infection acquired during hemodialysis or from blood transfused before routine HCV screening (2, 3). Chronic HCV infection increases the risk for end-stage renal disease (4-7) and, in kidney transplant patients, is associated with higher graft loss and mortality rates (8-10). Treatment with interferon regimens has been limited because of the increased risk for interferon-mediated graft rejection and relatively low efficacy, resulting in an unacceptable risk-benefit ratio (8, 11). Direct-acting antiviral agents (DAAs) were developed that are highly effective against all HCV genotypes and seemed to be safe and effective in clinical trials as well as in studies of immunocompromised patients, such as orthotopic liver transplant recipients with HCV infection. Interest in using DAAs to treat HCV in-

fection in kidney transplant patients has increased; however, data regarding their use in this population are very limited (3, 12, 13). In 2 small studies, treatment with a combination of DAAs for 12 weeks led to high rates of sustained virologic response (SVR) in kidney transplant recipients, with no significant adverse events or graft rejection noted (14, 15).

In clinical trials, the fixed-dose combination of ledipasvir and sofosbuvir given for 12 or 24 weeks provided SVR rates ranging from 93% to 99% in treatmentnaive and -experienced patients with HCV genotype 1, 4, 5, or 6 infection (16-20). European and North American guidelines recommend as first-line options treatment with ledipasvir-sofosbuvir for 12 weeks, along with ribavirin for patients without cirrhosis or with riba-

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virin for those with cirrhosis, or for 24 weeks without ribavirin in patients with cirrhosis who are intolerant or have a contraindication to ribavirin (21, 22). The high efficacy observed with fixed-dose ledipasvir-sofosbuvir, even when not administered with ribavirin, represents a critical advantage for treating patients with impaired kidney function, avoiding the need for complicated ribavirin dosing strategies and assessment of ribavirin blood concentration. In addition, the lack of significant drug-drug interactions between ledipasvir-sofosbuvir and immunosuppressant drugs and the absence of a clinically relevant effect of hepatic dysfunction on drug pharmacokinetics support its use in treating HCV recurrence after liver transplantation (23, 24). On the basis of these encouraging data, we conducted the first multinational, randomized, controlled study to make an exploratory comparison of the efficacy and safety of 12 and 24 weeks of ledipasvir-sofosbuvir without ribavirin in kidney transplant patients with chronic HCV genotype 1 or 4 infection.

METHODS

Setting and Participants

Patients were enrolled at 5 clinical sites in 4 European countries: Italy, France, Austria, and Germany. Eligible patients were aged 18 years or older; had chronic HCV genotype 1 or 4 infection, with plasma HCV RNA levels of 15 IU/mL or greater; and had received a kidney transplant at least 6 months before the baseline study visit. Patients with compensated cirrhosis were eligible, with cirrhosis defined as a METAVIR score of 4 or an Ishak score of 5 or greater by biopsy, a FibroScan (Echosens) value greater than 12.5 kPa, or a FibroTest (BioPredictive) score greater than 0.75 plus an aspartate aminotransferase-platelet ratio index greater than 2. Patients were excluded from participation if they had a body mass index less than 18 kg/m^2 ; decompensated liver disease (that is, presence of ascites, encephalopathy, or variceal hemorrhage); an electrocardiogram with clinically significant abnormalities; HIV infection; hepatitis B virus infection; creatinine clearance less than 40 mL/min, as calculated by the Cockcroft-Gault equation; an albumin level lower than 30 g/L; an international normalized ratio greater than 1.5 times the upper limit of normal (unless the patient had hemophilia or was stable while receiving an anticoagulant regimen affecting international normalized ratio); a hemoglobin level lower than 100 g/L; a platelet level of 50×10^9 cells/L or less; a direct bilirubin level greater than 1.5 times the upper limit of normal, except for patients with Gilbert syndrome; and an alanine aminotransferase, aspartate aminotransferase, or alkaline phosphatase level greater than 10 times the upper limit of normal. All patients provided written informed consent before undertaking any study-related procedures.

Study Design

Patients were randomly assigned 1:1 to receive either 12 or 24 weeks of treatment with a fixed-dose combination of ledipasvir (90 mg) and sofosbuvir (400 mg) once daily by means of an integrated Web response system (Bracket). A statistician employed by the sponsor generated the randomization code by using SAS version 9.2 (SAS Institute). Randomization was stratified by genotype, treatment history (treatment naive or experienced), and the presence or absence of cirrhosis. Investigators, patients, and trial personnel were not blinded to treatment assignment.

The study protocol was approved by each institution's review board or ethics committee before study initiation. The study was conducted in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonisation (ICH) Good Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Declaration of Helsinki. All authors had access to the study data and reviewed and approved the final manuscript before journal submission.

Study Assessments

Plasma HCV RNA was analyzed by using the COBAS AmpliPrep/COBAS TaqMan HCV Test, v2.0 (Roche Molecular Systems), with a lower limit of quantification (LLOQ) of 15 IU/mL. Hepatitis C virus genotype and subtype were determined by using the Versant HCV Genotype INNO-LiPA 2.0 assay (Siemens). An interleukin-28B genotype test was done through polymerase chain reaction amplification and sequencing of the rs12979860 single-nucleotide polymorphism.

Plasma samples for viral sequencing were collected at the same time points as those for HCV RNA levels. Deep sequencing of the NS5A and NS5B regions of the HCV RNA with MiSeq technology (DDL Diagnostic Laboratory) was performed on samples collected from all patients at baseline and on posttreatment samples from all patients with virologic failure. The resulting sequences were compared with reference sequences to determine the prevalence of resistance-associated substitutions (RASs) and the association of RASs with virologic outcomes. Resistanceassociated substitutions present at more than 15% of sequence reads are reported.

Adverse events were recorded from day 1 of treatment until 30 days after the last dose; serious adverse events and adverse events related to protocolmandated procedures were collected from screening through the last day of follow-up (posttreatment week 24) or 30 days after the last dose. The data included reported adverse events as well as the results of physical examinations and clinical laboratory tests, vital signs, and electrocardiogram recordings. Treatmentemergent clinical and laboratory adverse events were summarized by using the Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities (MedDRA), version 19.0 (the MedDRA trademark is owned by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations on behalf of the ICH). Virologic relapse was defined as HCV RNA at the LLOQ or higher during the posttreatment period in a patient who had HCV RNA less than the LLOQ at the end of treatment.

End Points and Statistical Analysis

The primary efficacy end point was the percentage of patients with HCV RNA less than the LLOQ 12 weeks

after stopping the study drug (SVR12). In the primary efficacy analysis, the SVR12 rate was calculated with a 2-sided 95% exact CI by using the Clopper-Pearson method (25). Patients with missing HCV RNA values at posttreatment week 12 who had posttreatment HCV RNA values less than the LLOQ before and after the missing posttreatment week 12 value were assumed to have achieved SVR12. This study was exploratory in nature; no inferential statistics or statistical comparisons were planned. The primary safety end point was any adverse event leading to permanent discontinuation of the study drug. We used SAS, version 9.2, for all statistical analyses.

Role of the Funding Source

The sponsor designed and conducted the study in collaboration with the principal investigators, collected the data, and monitored the study conduct.

Results

Study Population

Of 130 patients screened, 16 (12.3%) were excluded: 11 did not meet eligibility criteria, 2 withdrew consent, and 3 were excluded because of existing clinically significant medical conditions (atrial fibrillation, planned heart surgery, and hyponatremia with a urinary tract infection). A total of 114 patients were enrolled and treated at 5 sites in 4 European countries between 7 November 2014 and 16 June 2015 (**Appendix Figure**, available at www.annals.org). Overall, 94% of the patients were white and 58% were male (**Table 1**). Most were treatment naive (69%), did not have cirrhosis (85%), and had genotype 1 infection (91%). Of the patients with genotype 1 infection, 75% had genotype 1b infection.

Efficacy

Ledipasvir-sofosbuvir treatment resulted in rapid HCV RNA suppression (Table 2). By week 4, 102 of 114 patients (89%) had HCV RNA less than the LLOQ (with target not detectable in 68%). By week 8, all 113 evaluable patients (100% [excluding 1 patient in the 12-week group who discontinued study treatment at week 4 because of a serious adverse event]) had HCV RNA less than the LLOQ (with target not detectable in 112 of 113 [99%]). At the end of treatment, all 113 evaluable patients (100%) had HCV RNA less than the LLOQ (target not detectable). All 57 patients (100% [95% CI, 94% to 100%]) in the 12-week treatment group achieved SVR12, including the patient who had discontinued treatment at week 4. All 57 patients (100% [CI, 94% to 100%]) in the 24-week group also achieved SVR12. Of 114 patients, 113 achieved SVR24; 1 patient from the 24-week group had achieved SVR12 but discontinued the study before the posttreatment week-24 visit because of hospitalization due to osteoarthritis, which was not considered treatment related.

Viral Resistance Testing

At baseline, NS5A RASs (15% cutoff) were detected in 22 of 113 patients (19%). All 22 patients achieved

SVR12, including 9 who had variants that confer greater than 100-fold reduced susceptibility to ledipasvir in vitro.

Safety and Tolerability

In general, the adverse events reported in this study were consistent with those reported in previous studies of ledipasvir-sofosbuvir (**Table 3**). The most common adverse event among all treatment groups was headache, followed by asthenia. Serious adverse events occurred in 13 patients; 3 of these eventsincreased serum creatinine, syncope, and pulmonary embolism-were considered treatment related.

The first patient was a 42-year-old woman with cirrhosis who had received a kidney transplant in October 2005 for chronic kidney failure. While receiving 24 weeks of ledipasvir-sofosbuvir, she had 2 urinary tract infections: the first beginning on day 13 of treatment, for which she received ciprofloxacin, and the second beginning on day 83 (study week 12), for which she received amoxicillin-clavulanic acid, which has been associated with interstitial nephritis. Because her serum creatinine levels increased from study week 8 onward, study treatment was interrupted temporarily between weeks 12 and 16. At posttreatment week 24, the patient still had elevated serum creatinine (360 µmol/L [4.3 mg/dL]) and low eGFR (14.4 mL/min) levels. Further follow-up with this patient after study completion was not possible.

The second patient was a 58-year-old woman who was treatment naive, did not have cirrhosis, and had HCV genotype 1. During week 2 of 12-week ledipasvirsofosbuvir treatment, she had atrial fibrillation, for which an external cardiologist prescribed amiodarone, a medication prohibited by the protocol. Despite the study site's indication to stop amiodarone and prescribe a new drug (unspecified) to treat the atrial fibrillation, the patient continued with amiodarone treatment. She had bradycardia and syncope at week 4, after which she discontinued study treatment.

The third patient was a 49-year-old woman with obesity who had received a kidney transplant in July 2003. While receiving 24 weeks of ledipasvirsofosbuvir, she had a pulmonary embolism that was treated successfully with anticoagulants without interruption of antiviral therapy.

Twenty-five patients (22%) had grade 3 to 4 laboratory abnormalities (**Appendix Table 1**, available at www.annals.org). Hyperuricemia, which occurred in 10 patients (9%), was most common; 6 (5%) of these cases were considered treatment related. There were no reports of gout among the patients with hyperuricemia during the study. Two patients (2%) had a grade 3 creatinine increase. One case, which the investigating physician considered to be treatment related, occurred in the previously described 42-year-old woman with hypertension, compensated cirrhosis, and stage 3 chronic kidney disease, whose creatinine clearance (by Cockcroft-Gault equation) was 55 to 61 mL/min, with a creatinine level of 88.4 to 106.1 µmol/L (1 to 1.2 mg/dL) at baseline. The patient had a recurrent urinary tract

Table 1. Demographic and Baseline Characteristics*			
Characteristic	Ledipasvir	Sofosbuvir	Total (<i>n</i> = 114)
	12 wk (<i>n</i> = 57)	24 wk (n = 57)	
Median age (range), y	53 (31-72)	53 (25-75)	53 (25-75)
Male, n (%)	33 (58)	33 (58)	66 (58)
Race, n (%)			
White	54 (95)	53 (93)	107 (94)
Black	2 (4)	2 (4)	4 (4)
Asian Othor	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (2)
Other	0(0)	1 (2)	1(1)
Median body mass index (range), <i>kg/m</i> ²	23 (18-43)	24 (20-39)	24 (18-43)
Interleukin-28B genotype, <i>n</i> (%)	14(25)	19 (22)	22 (20)
СС	34 (60)	34 (60)	32 (28)
П	9 (16)	5 (9)	14 (12)
			(/
HCV genotype, n (%)			
1 (no confirmed subtype)	2 (4)	0(0)	2 (2)
1a	/ (12)	10 (18)	17 (15)
	42 (74)	43 (75)	85 (75)
4	0(11)	4(7)	10(7)
Median HCV RNA level (range), log ₁₀ IU/mL	6.4 (4.5-7.6)	6.2 (4.7-7.0)	6.3 (4.5-7.6)
Prior HCV treatment, n/N (%)	10 (57 (70)	00/57 / / 0)	70///////00
No	40/57 (70)	39/57 (68)	79/114 (69)
Tes Productorforon and ribavirin	7/17 (41)	5/18 (28)	12/35 (34)
Peginterferon	4/17 (24)	4/18 (22)	8/35 (23)
Interferon	6/17 (35)	7/18 (39)	13/35 (37)
Interferon and ribavirin	0/0 (0)	1/18 (6)	1/35 (3)
Missing data	0/0 (0)	1/18 (6)	1/35 (3)
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Compensated cirrhosis, n (%)	8 (14)	9 (16)	17 (15)
Fibrosis stage of noncirrhotic participants, n/N (%)			
No or minimal (F0, F0-F1, or F1)	19/49 (39)	16/48 (33)	35/97 (36)
Moderate (F1-F2 or F2)	19/49 (39)	15/48 (31)	34/97 (35)
Severe (F3, F3-F4, or F4)	11/49 (22)	17/48 (35)	28/97 (29)
Manifest store store little sectore sub-states (second) as		12.0 (0.0, 42.0)	100 (0 F 40 0)
Median time since kidney transplantation (range), y	10.0 (0.5-40.0)	12.0 (0.8-42.0)	12.0 (0.5-42.0)
Median creatinine clearance by Cockcroft-Gault method (range), <i>mL/min/1.73 m</i> ²	50 (37-135)	60 (35-130)	56 (35-135)
Receiving immunosuppressants, n (%)			
Systemic corticosteroids	39 (68)	42 (74)	81 (71)
Other immunosuppressants	56 (98)	55 (97)	111 (97)
Type of immunosuppressant used $n/\%$			
Corticosteroids	39 (68)	42 (74)	81 (71)
Tacrolimus	24 (42)	30 (53)	54 (47)
Mycophenolate	38 (67)	31 (54)	69 (61)
Cyclosporine	23 (40)	21 (37)	44 (39)
Azathioprine	6 (11)	8 (14)	14 (12)
Immunosuppresents n/%)+			
1	6(11)	5 (9)	11 (10)
2	23 (40)	22 (39)	45 (39)
≥3	28 (49)	28 (49)	56 (49)

HCV = hepatitis C virus. * Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. † Information on immunosuppressant medications was unavailable for 2 patients in the 24-wk treatment group.

infection between treatment weeks 12 and 16, when her renal function became further impaired, with a decrease in creatinine clearance from 33 mL/min (creatinine, 172.4 μ mol/L [1.95 mg/dL]) at week 12 to 16.8 mL/min (creatinine, 335.9 μ mol/L [3.8 mg/dL]) at week 16. Ledipasvir-sofosbuvir treatment was interrupted during this period and resumed at week 16 to complete the 24-week course. The patient's creatinine clearance was 14 mL/min (creatinine, 387.0 μ mol/L [4.4 mg/dL]) at the end of treatment and 14.4 mL/min (creatinine, 382.0 μ mol/L [4.3mg/dL]) 24 weeks later.

Renal function remained stable in most patients, both during study treatment and up to posttreatment week 4 (median change in creatinine clearance [eGFR by Cockcroft-Gault equation], -0.6 to -3 mL/min) (Figures 1 and 2 and Appendix Table 2, available at www .annals.org). Overall, 25 patients (22%), including 8 who had an eGFR less than 40 mL/min at baseline, had decreases to below 40 mL/min. None of the 8 patients who had creatinine clearance less than 40 mL/min at baseline had a reduction in creatinine clearance to less than 30 mL/min during therapy. Four patients with clearance greater than 40 mL/min at baseline had decreases to less than 30 mL/min during therapy, including the patient who temporarily stopped receiving the study drug because of a urinary tract infection and had an increased creatinine level (described earlier). In 3 patients, creatinine clearance increased to greater than 30 mL/min at the last visit recorded; the patient who had interrupted study treatment had a final value of 14.4 mL/min. All but 1 of the 6 patients with cirrhosis whose creatinine clearance level decreased to below 40 mL/min continued study treatment without interruption; none permanently discontinued study treatment.

Twenty-one patients (18%) required adjustment in their immunosuppressant regimen: 7 patients had dosage reductions, 10 had dosage increases, and 4 required both reductions and increases. Thirteen of the 21 required dosage adjustment to manage immunosuppressant levels, 4 to align the dosage with the site's policy for managing immunosuppressants, 3 to address suspected drug-drug interactions, and 1 because of a skin eruption. Appendix Table 3 (available at www .annals.org) provides details on all changes in immunosuppressive regimens during the study. No documented episodes of graft rejection were reported during the study.

DISCUSSION

Chronic HCV infection is a significant cause of diminished graft survival in kidney transplant patients, and only limited data are available to guide clinical decision making regarding HCV therapy in this patient population. In the past, management of HCV infection was complicated by generally poor tolerance of interferon- and ribavirin-based regimens in graft recipients (because of hematologic side effects) and the potential for rejection due to interferon's immunemodulating effects (8).

Such treatment constraints, however, were lessened recently by the advent of oral DAA regimens that seem to be safe and effective in liver transplant recipients (26, 27). In the SOLAR-1 (Study Assessing the Efficacy and Safety of Alpelisib Plus Fulvestrant in Men and Postmenopausal Women With Advanced Breast Cancer Which Progressed on or After Aromatase Inhibitor Treatment) and SOLAR-2 studies, a 12-week course of ledipasvir-sofosbuvir plus ribavirin resulted in SVR rates as high as 96% in liver transplant patients with wellcompensated Child-Pugh class A cirrhosis due to recurrent HCV genotype 1 or 4. However, in patients with Child-Pugh class C decompensated cirrhosis, the success rate was reduced to 60%, which improved

Variable	Ledipasvir	-Sofosbuvir	Total (<i>n</i> = 114)
	12 wk (<i>n</i> = 57)	24 wk (n = 57)	
HCV RNA level less than the LLOQ during treatment, <i>n/N</i> (%)			
Baseline	0/57 (0)	0/57 (0)	0/114 (0)
Week 1	9/57 (16)	7/57 (12)	16/114 (14)
Week 2	31/57 (54)	33/57 (58)	64/114 (56)
Week 4	50/57 (88)	52/57 (91)	102/114 (89)
Week 8	56/56 (100)*	57/57 (100)	113/113 (100)
Week 12	56/56 (100)*	57/57 (100)	113/113 (100)
Week 16	NA	57/57 (100)	57/57 (100)
Week 20	NA	57/57 (100)	57/57 (100)
Week 24	NA	57/57 (100)	57/57 (100)
HCV RNA level less than the LLOQ after end of treatment, <i>n/N</i> (% [95% Cl])			
SVR4	57/57 (100 [94-100])	57/57 (100 [94-100])	114/114 (100 [97-100]
SVR12	57/57 (100 [94-100])	57/57 (100 [94-100])	114/114 (100 [97-100]
Overall virologic failure (relapse), n/N (%)	0/0 (0)	0/0 (0)	0/0 (0)

HCV = hepatitis C virus; LLOQ = lower limit of quantification; NA = not available; SVR4 = sustained virologic response at 4 wk; SVR12 = sustained virologic response at 12 wk.

* Excluding 1 patient in the 12-wk group who discontinued study treatment early at week 4 because of a serious adverse event. This patient achieved SVR12.

Table 3. Overall Adverse Events, Discontinuations, and Laboratory Abnormalities*

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Hyponatremia $0(0)$ $1(2)$ Hyperuricemia $6(11)$ $4(7)$ Urine blood level $1(2)$ $2(4)$ Glycosuria $0(0)$ $2(4)$ Adverse event occurring in $\geq 10\%$ of patients $7(16)$ $13(23)$ Headache $9(16)$ $13(23)$ Asthenia $8(14)$ $8(14)$ Fatique $4(7)$ $7(12)$	Hyperglycemia	0(0)	1 (2)
Hyperuricemia $6(11)$ $4(7)$ Urine blood level $1(2)$ $2(4)$ Glycosuria $0(0)$ $2(4)$ Adverse event occurring in $\geq 10\%$ of patients $7(16)$ $13(23)$ Headache $9(16)$ $13(23)$ Asthenia $8(14)$ $8(14)$ Fatique $4(7)$ $7(12)$	Hyponatremia	0 (0)	1 (2)
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Adverse event occurring in ≥10% of patients Headache 9 (16) Asthenia 8 (14) Fatioue 4 (7)	Glycosuria	0 (0)	2 (4)
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Asthenia 8 (14) 8 (14) Fatigue 4 (7) 7 (12)	Headache	9 (16)	13 (23)
Fatigue 4(7) 7(12)	Asthenia	8 (14)	8 (14)
	Fatigue	4 (7)	7 (12)

* Values are numbers of patients (percentages).

+ Event attributed by the investigator to treatment.

only marginally by extending the length of ledipasvirsofosbuvir treatment to 24 weeks (75% SVR) (28, 29). High SVR rates (97%) also were achieved by using the protease inhibitor-based regimen paritaprevirdasabuvir-ombitasvir and ribavirin in liver transplant recipients without advanced fibrosis who had HCV genotype 1 infection. However, this strategy requires substantial adjustment of calcineurin inhibitor dosing in most patients (30). These studies were instrumental in understanding the safety and efficacy of diverse classes of oral DAAs in liver transplant patients receiving immunosuppressive regimens, which helped set the stage for testing the feasibility of oral DAA therapy in kidney transplant recipients with HCV infection.

In this multicenter European study, 114 kidney graft recipients with predominantly genotype 1 infec-

tion (in addition to 10 patients with genotype 4 infection) were randomly assigned to receive ledipasvirsofosbuvir for 12 or 24 weeks to assess the potential clinical benefits of a ribavirin-free DAA regimen in this patient population. By protocol, all patients had compensated liver disease and stable eGFR values above 40 mL/min at screening, although by the day 1 visit, 8 patients had eGFR values between 35 mL/min and 40 mL/min. Overall, treatment for either 12 or 24 weeks resulted in 100% SVR12, with the 2 therapeutic regimens proving to be similar in terms of adverse events and efficacy in the patients with HCV genotype 1 and the small group with HCV genotype 4 infection.

Consistent with the results of studies of sofosbuvirbased regimens for HCV treatment in liver transplant patients, viral suppression in our population did not seem to be affected by posttransplant immunosuppressive treatment. In the SOLAR-1 and -2 studies, which included liver transplant patients with compensated or decompensated cirrhosis, ledipasvir-sofosbuvir was administered only in combination with ribavirin, precluding an assessment of benefit from ribavirin (28, 29). In our study, none of the patients had clinically decompensated cirrhosis, only 15% had cirrhosis, and 29% had severe liver fibrosis. Despite patients being treated with immunosuppressive regimens for an average of 10 years, median pretreatment HCV RNA levels, which ranged from 4.45 to 7.62 log IU/mL (median, 6.40 log IU/mL in the 12-week and 6.24 log IU/mL in the 24week group), were not significantly higher than those reported in immunocompetent patients. These HCV RNA levels, as well as the generally mild stage of hepatitis in the participants, may have resulted in the high absolute SVR rates achieved in this study. The exclusion of ribavirin also may have contributed to increased safety and adherence without compromising treatment efficacy, even in patients in whom previous interferonbased treatment failed.

Twenty-one patients (18%) required adjustment in their calcineurin inhibitor-based immunosuppressant



The horizontal line is the median value, the box is interquartile range, and the whiskers show overall range. BL = baseline; eGFR = estimated glomerular filtration rate; PT = posttreatment.

Figure 2. Individual-patient eGFRs over time.





Results for treatment weeks 16, 20, and 24 are available only for patients who received LDV-SOF for 24 wk. BL = baseline; eGFR = estimated glomerular filtration rate; LDV-SOF = ledipasvir-sofosbuvir; PT = posttreatment; SC = screening.

regimen. In most patients, modifications in the dosage or type of calcineurin inhibitor were determined by the attending nephrologist, independent of antiviral therapy. Antiviral therapy was well-tolerated by all but 1 patient, who prematurely discontinued treatment at week 4 because of bradycardia leading to syncope, which was temporally associated with the coadministration of amiodarone, a drug prohibited by the study protocol and now considered contraindicated in patients receiving sofosbuvir-containing regimens (31). Our results are consistent with those of 2 small studies in the United States and France. In the U.S. study, 20 patients, most of whom had genotype 1 HCV infection and half of whom had advanced liver fibrosis or received an HCV-infected donor graft, achieved SVR after treatment with a sofosbuvir-based regimen. Seven of the patients received ledipasvir in addition to sofosbuvir. The time to serum HCV RNA clearance ranged from 29 to 59 (mean, 34) days (14). Nearly half of the patients (45%) required adjustments in their calcineurin

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inhibitor dosage during antiviral therapy. In 4 patients (20%), serum creatinine transiently increased by more than 22.1 µmol/L (0.25 mg/dL), which was attributed to tacrolimus toxicity. No episodes of rejection occurred among these patients. Similar outcomes were observed in the study from France, in which 25 kidney transplant recipients, all with an eGFR greater than 30 mL/min, received treatment with sofosbuvir-based regimens and achieved SVR12 with no serious adverse events (15).

Interpretation of our study's results is limited by its open-label design and the exclusion of patients with HCV genotypes other than 1 or 4. Other limitations include the underrepresentation of patients with HCV genotype 1a and those with cirrhosis, as well as the small percentage of nonwhite patients enrolled. Because our study excluded patients with creatinine clearance less than 40 mL/min, our results cannot be generalized to patients with more severe renal impairment. Postmarketing data suggest that patients with creatinine clearance less than 30 mL/min should be monitored closely during treatment with DAA regimens (32).

A safe and highly effective interferon-free regimen to treat HCV infection in kidney transplant recipients might provide patients with end-stage renal disease access to HCV-infected donor kidneys. This possibility has implications for public health policy in an era when the ever-increasing success of kidney transplantation as a life-saving procedure has led to a demand for donor organs far exceeding the supply. This is particularly the case in the United States, where the wait time for a donated kidney may be years, whereas the average wait time for an HCV-infected organ is in the range of months (33).

From Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan, Italy; Gilead Sciences, Foster City, California; Hôpital Saint Joseph, Marseilles, and Hôpital Cochin, Paris, France; Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria; and Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany.

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Requests for Single Reprints: Massimo Colombo, MD, Unit of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico and Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan 20100, Italy; e-mail, massimo.colombo @unimi.it.

Current author addresses and author contributions are available at www.annals.org.

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Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico and Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan 20100, Italy.

Dr. Aghemo: Unit of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico and Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan 20100, Italy.

Drs. Liu, Zhang, Dvory-Sobol, Hyland, Yun, Massetto, Brainard, and McHutchison: Liver Diseases Therapeutic Area, Gilead Sciences, 333 Lakeside Drive, Foster City, CA 94404. Dr. Bourlière: Hépato-Gastroentérologie, Hôpital Saint-Joseph, 26 Boulevard de Louvain, Marseille 13008, France. Dr. Peck-Radosavljevic: Medical University of Vienna, Schulgasse 38, 1180 Wien, Austria.

Dr. Manns: Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Endocrinology, Hannover Medical School, Carl Neuberg Strasse 1, 30625 Hannover, Germany.

Dr. Pol: Departement d'Hepatologie, Hopital Cochin, 7 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Jacques, 75679 Paris, France.

Author Contributions: Conception and design: M. Colombo, A.Aghemo, R. Hyland, B. Massetto, D.M. Brainard, J.G. McHutchison, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic.

Analysis and interpretation of the data: M. Colombo, A.Aghemo, H. Liu, J. Zhang, H. Dvory-Sobol, R. Hyland, C. Yun, B. Massetto, D.M. Brainard, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, S. Pol.

Drafting of the article: M. Colombo, A. Aghemo, H. Dvory-Sobol, C. Yun, D.M. Brainard, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, S. Pol. Critical revision for important intellectual content: M. Colombo, A. Aghemo, R. Hyland, B. Massetto, D.M. Brainard, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, S. Pol.

Final approval of the article: M. Colombo, A. Aghemo, H. Liu, J. Zhang, H. Dvory-Sobol, R. Hyland, C. Yun, B. Massetto, D.M. Brainard, J.G. McHutchison, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, M. Manns, S. Pol.

Provision of study materials or patients: M. Colombo, A. Aghemo, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, S. Pol.

Statistical expertise: H. Liu and J. Zhang.

Obtaining of funding: J.G. McHutchison.

Administrative, technical, or logistic support: R. Hyland.

Collection and assembly of data: H. Dvory-Sobol, R. Hyland, M. Bourlière, M. Peck-Radosavljevic, S. Pol.



Appendix Figure. Patient disposition.

LDV-SOF = ledipasvir-sofosbuvir.

Appendix Table 1. (Grade 3 and	4 Adverse Events*	
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Events	Ledipasvir	-Sofosbuvir
	12 wk (n = 57)	24 wk (n = 57)
Grade 3 (severe)		
Anemia	1 (2)	0 (0)
Aortic stenosis	0(0)	1 (2)
Diarrhea hemmorhagic	0(0)	1 (2)
Erysipelas	1 (2)	0(0)
Gastroenteritis	1 (2)	0(0)
Hypoparathyroidium	0(0)	1 (2)
Intervertebral disc protusion	0(0)	1 (2)
Papillary thyroid cancer	0(0)	1 (2)
Pulmonary embolism	0(0)	1 (2)
Total grade 3 events	3 (5)	5 (9)
-		
Grade 4 (life-threatening)		
Suicide attempt	1 (2)	0 (0)
Total grade 4 events	1 (2)	0(0)

* Values are numbers of patients (percentages).

Appendix Table 2. Estin	nated Glo	merular	. Filtrat	ion Rate a	nd Chang	e From B	aseline, by	Visit*								
Variable			Ledipa	asvir-Sofosl	buvir for 12	wk (n = 5	7) †				Ledipa	svir-Sofos	buvir for 24	wk (n = 5]	(/	
	Patients, r	A Mean	SD	Minimum	Quartile 1	Median	Quartile 3	Maximum	Patients, n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Quartile 1	Median	Quartile 3	Maximum
Baseline	57	59.1	20.51	36.6	46.2	50.4	68.4	135.0	57	63.5	20.26	35.4	49.8	60.0	73.8	130.2
At week 1	55	58.4	21.16	25.8	44.4	52.2	66.0	132.6	54	62.9	18.25	31.8	48.6	61.8	73.8	118.2
At week 2	57	59.5	22.34	34.2	45.6	50.4	67.2	121.8	56	62.9	20.62	31.2	50.1	58.8	72.0	123.0
At week 4	57	58.4	21.35	27.0	44.4	52.8	66.6	121.8	56	62.7	20.63	33.0	47.1	59.1	72.9	123.0
At week 8	56	58.7	21.34	30.6	44.1	52.5	64.2	121.2	57	61.3	19.62	32.4	47.4	57.0	72.6	117.6
At week 12	53	57.0	21.23	30.6	42.6	49.8	64.2	123.6	56	61.9	18.66	24.6	49.2	59.7	72.9	114.0
At week 16	AN	I	ı	ı	I	ı	I	I	57	60.2	21.25	16.8	44.4	55.2	70.2	124.8
At week 20	AN	ı	ı	ı	ı	ı	ī	ī	55	59.1	18.98	21.0	45.0	56.4	65.4	102.6
At week 24	AN	ı	ı	I	I	ı	ı	I	53	60.6	19.76	14.4	48.0	57.0	73.2	117.6
At follow-up week 4	50	58.6	21.84	31.2	44.4	50.4	66.0	127.2	52	59.6	20.98	24.0	45.9	55.2	69.6	128.4
Change at week 1	55	-0.4	9.49	-23.4	-4.8	-1.8	1.8	40.8	54	0.3	6.30	-12.0	-4.8	0.0	4.2	17.4
Change at week 2	57	0.4	7.56	-24.6	-3.0	-0.6	4.2	22.2	56	-0.6	7.00	-16.8	-4.2	-0.9	2.1	20.4
Change at week 4	57	-0.7	7.96	-21.0	-4.8	-1.8	4.2	27.6	56	-1.2	6.19	-15.0	-4.5	-1.8	1.5	19.8
Change at week 8	56	-0.6	8.38	-33.0	-4.5	-0.6	3.0	22.2	57	-2.2	7.00	-14.4	-6.0	-2.4	1.2	21.6
Change at week 12	53	-1.6	7.62	-20.4	-7.2	-1.8	3.0	16.8	56	-2.0	8.97	-28.2	-6.0	-1.8	2.4	18.6
Change at week 16	NA	ı	ı	ı	I	ı	ı	ı	57	-3.3	9.03	-44.4	-7.2	-3.0	1.8	20.4
Change at week 20	AN	ı	ī	ı	I	ı	ı	I	55	-4.4	9.51	-40.2	-6.6	-3.0	1.8	9.0
Change at week 24	NA	ı	ı	I	I	ı	I	I	53	-2.7	10.00	-46.8	-7.8	-1.2	3.0	16.2
Change at follow-up week 4	50	-0.4	7.60	-16.8	-4.8	-0.9	1.8	22.2	52	-3.3	9.11	-37.2	-8.1	-3.0	0.6	15.6
VA = not available.																

* Values are mL/min/1.73 m² unless otherwise indicated. † Results for weeks 16, 20, and 24 are not available for patients who received treatment for 12 wk.

Appenaix Lable 3. Patients With Change in Immunosuppres	ssant Medicatior	S					
Generic Name	Reported Drug Name	Dose	Dose Frequency	Route	Start Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Stop Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Reason for Regimen Change
Patient 1 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 65/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2014-11-25; last dose = 2015-02-17 (85)							
Cyclosporine	Neoral	50 mg	QD	Oral	1987-07	2015-01-28 (65 D)	Suspected drug-drug interaction: related to treatment regimen
Prednisone	Neoral	75 mg	QD	Oral	2015-01-29 (66 D)	(Cont.)	
	Cortancyl	5 mg	QD	Oral	1987-07	(Cont.)	
Patient 2 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 63/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2014-12-10; last dose = 2015-03-04 (85)							
Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept	500 mg	TID	Oral	2004	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Advagraf Advagraf	2 mg 3 mg	QD DD	Oral Oral	2004 2015-07-10 (128* D)	2015-07-09 (127* D) (Cont.)	Management of rejection
Patient 3 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 44/F/WH/H; first dose = 2014-12-10; last dose = 2015-03-06 (87)							
Mycophenolate sodium	Myfortic	360 mg	BID	Oral	2004	(Cont.)	
Prednisone	Cortancyl	5 mg	QD	Oral	2004	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Advagraf Advagraf	2 mg 1.5 mg	QD QD	Oral Oral	2004 2014-12-19 (10 D)	2014-12-18 (9 D) 2015-02-14 (67 D)	Management of rejection Management of rejection
	Advagraf Advagraf	2 mg 2.5 mg	QD OD	Oral Oral	2015-02-15 (68 D) 2015-04-13 (38* D)	2015-04-12 (37* D) (Cont.)	Management of rejection
Patient 4 Treatment = I DV-SOF 12 weeks: age/sex/race/ethnic = 57/F/WH/NH:							
first dose = 2014-11-17; last dose = 2015-02-09 (85) Azathioprine	Imurel	50 mg	BID	Oral	1974	(Cont.)	
Hydrocortisone	Hydrocortisone (Roussel)	10 mg	QD	Oral	2014-10-27 (-21 D)	(Cont.)	Renal insufficiency status
Prednisone	Cortancyl	10 mg	QD	Oral	1974	(Cont.)	
Patient S Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 56/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-01-09; last dose = 2015-04-01 (83)							
Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept Myfenax	1750 mg 1750 mg	0D 0D	Oral Oral	2009-12-29 (-5 Υ) 2015-01-27 (19 D)	2015-01-27 (19 D) (Cont.)	Other: Cellcept is out of the trade
Prednisone	Deltacortene Deltacortene	7.5 mg 6.25 mg	00	Oral Oral	2009-12-29 (-5 Y) 2015-08-30 (151* D)	2015-08-29 (150* D) (Cont.)	Other: Optimize minimum dosage of immunosuppressant
Patient 6 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 53/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-03-12; last dose = 2015-06-03 (84)							
Prednisone	Deltacortene	5 mg	OD OD	Oral	2005-07-13 (-10 Y)	(Cont.)	
lacrolmus	Prograf Prograf	1.5 mg 2 mg	D D D	Oral Oral	2005-0/-13 (-10 Y) 2015-07-15 (42* D)	2015-0/-14 (41* U) (Cont.)	Other: PK

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Appendix Table 3Continued							
Generic Name	Reported Drug Name	Dose	Dose Frequency	Route	Start Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Stop Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Reason for Regimen Change
Patient 7 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 66/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-04-15; last dose = 2015-07-07 (84)							
Mycophenolate sodium	Myfortic	540 mg	QD	Oral	2002-01	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Tacrolimus Tacrolimus	0.5 mg 0.75 mg	QD	Oral Oral	2001-03-26 (-14 Υ) 2015-06-26 (73 D)	2015-06-25 (72 D) (Cont.)	Other: PK
Patient 8 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 69/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-05-06; last dose = 2015-07-29 (85)							
Sirolimus	Sirolimus Sirolimus	1 mg 0.75 mg	000	Oral Oral	2006 2015-06-08 (34 D)	2015-06-07 (33 D) (Cont.)	Suspected drug-drug interaction: not related to treatment regimen
Patient 9 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 54/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-05-13; last dose = 2015-08-04 (84) Cvclosporine	Neoral	25 ma	BID	Oral	1995-09-05 (-20 Υ)	(Cont.)	
Prednisone	Deltacortene	5 mg	QD	Oral	2014-09	2015-03-18 (-56 D)	Other: Switch to sirolimus
	Deltacortene	5 mg	QD	Oral	2015-05-13 (1 D)	2015-08-08 (4* D)	Other: Optimize minimal level of immunosuppressant
Sirolimus	Sirolimus	0.5 mg	QD	Oral	2015-03-19 (-55 D)	(Cont.)	
Patient 10 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 45/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2014-12-16; last dose = 2015-06-02 (169)							
Azathioprine	Imurel	75 mg	QD	Oral	1989	(Cont.)	
Cyclosporine	Neoral Neoral Neoral	90 mg 100 mg 110 mg	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	Oral Oral Oral	1989 2015-01-09 (25 D) 2015-02-06 (53 D)	2015-01-08 (24 D) 2015-02-05 (52 D) (Cont.)	Management of rejection Management of rejection
Prednisone	Cortancyl	5 mg	QD	Oral	1989	(Cont.)	
Patient 11 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 54/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2014-12-17; last dose = 2015-06-04 (170) Cyclosporine	Neoral Neoral	190 mg 225 mg	QD	Oral Oral	2014-02 2014-01-23 (38 D)	2015-01-22 (37 D) (Cont.)	Management of rejection, suspected drug-drug interaction: related to treatment
	=	(l (-			regimen
Mycophenolate motetil	Cellcept	2 g	QD 01	Oral	2014-02	(Cont.)	
Prednisone	Cortancyl Cortancyl	10 mg 7.5 mg	000	Oral Oral	2014-02 2015-01-23 (38 D)	2015-01-22 (37 U) (Cont.)	Other: Normal gradual stop
							Continued on following page

Appendix Table 3-Continued							
Generic Name	Reported Drug Name	Dose	Dose Frequency	Route	Start Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Stop Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Reason for Regimen Change
Patient 12 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 55/F/BL/NH; first dose = 2014-11-12; last dose = 2015-04-29 (169)							
Azathioprine	Imurel	150 mg	QD	Oral	2014-11-27 (16 D)	(Cont.)	
Cyclosporine	Neoral	75 mg	BID	Oral	2015-04-20 (160 D)	(Cont.)	
Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept	500 mg	BID	Oral	2012-09	2014-11-26 (15 D)	Management of rejection
Prednisone	Cortancyl	7.5 mg	QD	Oral	2012-09	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Advagraf	5 mg	QD	Oral	2012-09	2015-04-19 (159 D)	Management of rejection
Patient 13 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 67/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2014-11-20; last dose = 2015-05-06 (168) Everolimus	Certican	500 µg	BID	Oral	2014-08-07 (-105 D)	(Cont.)	
Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept	500 mg	BID	Oral	2006	2015-02-08 (81 D)	Other: skin problem
	Cellcept	250 mg	BID	Oral	2015-02-09 (82 D)	(Cont.)	
Prednisone	Cortancyl	10 mg	QD	Oral	2006	(Cont.)	
Patient 14 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 51/F/BL/NH; first dose = 2015-01-05; last dose = 2015-06-22 (169)							
Cyclosporine	Neoral	175 mg	QD	Oral	2007 2015 05	2015-05	Management of rejection
Muconhonolato mototil	Colleont	1000 m d		Oral Oral	CU-CIU2	(Cont.)	
	Cellcept		210	Gal	1002		
Prednisone	Cortancyl	10 mg	QD	Oral	1987	(Cont.)	
Patient 15 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 41/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-02-11; last dose = 2015-07-29 (169) Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept	1000 mg	BID	Oral	2014-01-30(-1 Y)	(Cont.)	
Prednisone	Decortin	7.5 mg	QD	Oral	2014-01-30 (-1 Y)	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Prograf Prograf	1 mg 1 mg	BID TID	Oral Oral	2014-01-30 (-1 Y) 2015-05-21 (100 D)	2015-05-20 (99 D) (Cont.)	Other: immunosuppressive Adjustment
Patient 16 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 43/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-06-24; last dose = 2015-12-08 (168)							
Tacrolimus	Prograf	1 mg	BID	Oral	1994	2015-08-03 (41 D)	Other: PK
Tacrolimus	Prograf	1.5 mg	BID	Oral	2015-08-04 (42 D)	2005-10-13 (112 D)	Other: PK
Tacrolimus	Prograf	3.5 mg	QD	Oral	2015-10-14 (113 D)	(Cont.)	
							Continued on following page

Appendix Table 3-Continued							
Generic Name	Reported Drug Name	Dose	Dose Frequency	Route	Start Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Stop Date (Study/Follow-up* Day)	Reason for Regimen Change
Patient 17 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 69/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-07-06; last dose = 2015-12-20 (168) Methylprednisolone	Medrol Medrol	2 mg 1 ma	00	Oral Oral	2013-07 2015-10-15 (102 D)	2015-10-14 (101 D) (Cont.)	Other: Improved immunosuppression
Mycophenolate mofetil	Mycophenolate Mycophenolate	500 mg 250 mg	BID TID	Oral Oral	2013-07 2015-10-15 (102 D)	2015-10-14 (101 D) (Cont.)	Other: PK
Tacrolimus	Tacrolimus	0.5 mg	BID	Oral	2013-07	(Cont.)	
Patient 18 Treatment = LDV-SOF 12 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 52/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-07-09; last dose = 2015-09-30 (84) Methylprednisolone Mycophenolate sodium Tacrolimus	Medrol Myfortic Advacraf	4 mg 720 mg 2.5 ma	QD DD	Oral Oral Oral	2013-06-29 (-2 Y) 2013-06-29 (-2 Y) 2013-06-29 (-2 Y) 2013-06-29 (-2 Y)	(Cont.) (Cont.) 2015-07-13 (5 D)	Other: PK
	Advagraf	2 mg	QD	Oral	2015-07-14 (6 D)	(Cont.)	
Patient 19 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 64/M/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-03-12; last dose = 2015-08-29 (171) Mycophenolate mofetil	Cellcept	500 mg	BID	Oral	2007	(Cont.)	
Tacrolimus	Prograf Prograf	0.5 mg 1 mg	BID BID	Oral Oral	2007 2015-09-22 (24* D)	2015-09-21 (23* D) (Cont.)	Institutional protocol defined change
Patient 20 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 49/IM/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-03-12; last dose = 2015-08-30 (172) Mycophenolate mofetil	Myfenax Myfenax	2 2 0	QD D	Oral Oral	2012 2015-09-22 (23* D)	2015-09-21 (22* D) (Cont.)	Institutional protocol defined change
Tacrolimus	Advagraf	1 mg	QD	Oral	2007	2015-05-13 (63 D)	Institutional protocol defined change
	Advagraf Advagraf	1.5 mg 3 mg	000	Oral Oral	2015-05-14 (64 D) 2015-09-22 (23* D)	2015-09-21 (22* D) (Cont.)	Institutional protocol defined change
Patient 21 Treatment = LDV-SOF 24 weeks; age/sex/race/ethnic = 42/F/WH/NH; first dose = 2015-05-28; last dose = 2015-11-12 (169) Mycophenolate mofetil	Mycofenolat Mycofenolat	250 mg 250 mg	TID	Oral Oral	2005-10 2015-10-09 (135 D)	2015-10-08 (134 D) (Cont.)	Institutional protocol defined change
Prednisone	Prednisone Prednisone	20 mg 15 mg	0000	Oral Oral	2015-09-23 (119 D) 2015-10-01 (127 D) 2015 10 08 (135 D)	2015-09-30 (126 D) 2015-10-08 (134 D) 2015 10 14 (142 D)	Renal insufficiency status Renal insufficiency status
	Prednisone	5 mg	90	Oral	2015-10-17 (143 D)	(Cont.) (Cont.)	Renal Insumclency status
Tacrolimus	Advagraf	0.5 mg	QD	Oral	2005-10	2015-09-22 (118 D)	Institutional protocol define change
	Advagraf Advagraf	3.5 mg 4 mg	QD QD	Oral Oral	2015-09-23 (119 D) 2015-10-09 (135 D)	2015-10-08 (134 D) (Cont.)	Renal insufficiency status
BID = twice daily: BI = black: F = female: H = Hispanic: I DV-SOF = lec	dinasvir-sofoshuv	ir: M = mal	le: NH = non-	Hispanic	:: PK = pharmacokine	tics: OD = once daily	: TID = 3 times daily: WH = white.

ž ž -2 . 5 BID = twice daily; BL = black; F = female; H = πιspano, * Follow-up days as calculated from date of last dose.

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