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## Letter to the Editor:

### Triple or dual therapy for HCV-1 naive patients? Optimizing selection tools

Lucio Boglione, Amedeo De Nicolò, Giovanni Di Perri, Antonio D'Avolio

We read with interest the paper by Andriulli et al. [1] about the identification of naïve HCV-1 patients who can be treated with dual therapy according to baseline and on-treatment parameters. Important predictive factors of sustained virological response (SVR) are the IL28B single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), however the authors considered only the rs12979860 SNP, forgetting the more important rs8099917 [2–4]; this is, in our opinion, not just an academic discussion, because the role of rs8099917 has been clarified and deepened in several studies and we think it should be included as best SVR predictor in the genotype 1 [2–4]. The major impact of rs12979860 has been documented on the early response [5], while rs8099917 in a recent meta-analysis evidenced the best predictive effect on the SVR (OR = 5.171 vs. 4.473) [6]. In fact, the effect of this SNP explains the higher rate of relapse in patients who achieved both RVR and ETR with the CC rs12979860 genotype, but with the presence of a G allele for the rs8099917 SNP [5]. Conversely, patients without the CC genotype for rs12979860 retain good probability to reach SVR if they have the TT genotype for rs8099917; this issue could underlie the high rate of SVR in non-CC patients reported by Andriulli et al. [1] and according with the TT prevalence in the Italian population. Therefore, we consider it essential to get both rs12979860 and rs8099917 SNPs as predictors on SVR and, in more detail, we could select the patients with CC/TT or CT/TT, but not with CC/TG or CC/GG genotype, for dual therapy. Another not considered issue in the analysis is the role of therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) of ribavirin (RBV) as useful early on treatment predictor of response and toxicity. Ribavirin shows a wide inter-individual variability in plasma concentrations (25–30%) and weight-based dose results often inadequate without TDM support [3,4,7]. Interestingly, RBV concentrations are related both with EVR and SVR [3,4,8,9] or treatment failure in HCV-1 infected patients, according to different plasma concentrations at different time-points. The optimal therapeutic range of RBV could maximize the SVR achievement and it should be comprised between 2–2.5 mg/L (at week 4 of therapy), according to the majority of the reviewed studies [10]. In conclusion, we suggest that both IL28B SNPs should be considered in order to refine the selection of candidate patients for dual therapy and then the TDM of RBV should be used to improve the on-treatment management.

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