

A Comprehensive Global Systematic Literature Review Of Real-World Evidence Of Relapsed/Refractory And Post-Bruton Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor Mantle Cell Lymphoma

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CONCLUSIONS

- This SLR found incomplete reporting of RWE in R/R MCL, with consistent evidence that outcomes worsen with each subsequent line of therapy. Major gaps in HCRU, cost, and PRO reporting (particularly in the post-BTKi setting) highlight the need for more standardized, prospective real-world research to inform treatment decisions and support access to emerging therapies.

BACKGROUND

- Mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) is a rare, aggressive, and incurable subtype of B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) that accounts for approximately 2%–6% of all NHL cases; incidence is rising globally¹.
- MCL is marked by a high risk of relapse, with up to 58% of newly diagnosed patients experiencing disease progression following first-line therapy.²
- As treatment paradigms have evolved, a growing proportion of patients now relapse after covalent Bruton tyrosine kinase inhibitor (BTKi) therapy; outcomes following BTKi failure remain poor, reflecting the limited availability of effective subsequent treatment options.³

OBJECTIVES

- To conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) summarizing real-world evidence (RWE) in relapsed/refractory (R/R) MCL, including the post-BTKi treatment setting.

METHODS

- A global SLR of Embase, PubMed, and CENTRAL was conducted to identify RWE publications and abstracts (January 1, 2020–April 30, 2025).
- Studies were assessed for eligibility (Table 1) and selected by two reviewers independently during title, abstract, and full-text screening according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines.
- Eligible studies were summarized descriptively by line of therapy, treatments for R/R MCL, and outcomes of interest.

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	
Relapsed or refractory MCL	2 or more lines of therapy
No restrictions on comparators	Reporting outcomes data from at least one of: overall response rate (ORR), complete response (CR), progression-free survival (PFS), overall survival (OS), duration of response (DOR), time to next treatment (TTNT), discontinuation, adherence, healthcare resource utilization (HCRU), costs, or patient-reported outcomes (PROs)
Real-world study design, inclusive of cohort, retrospective, and prospective studies	
Exclusion Criteria	
1L or untreated MCL	Clinical trials, case studies, non-human studies, pre-clinical studies
Non-English studies	Studies published prior to January 1, 2020

RESULTS

Study Identification and Characteristics

- Forty-four R/R MCL studies were identified, including 21 that evaluated patients in post-BTKi settings. Most included studies reported clinical outcomes only (n=42), with OS and PFS being the most frequently evaluated clinical outcome. Six of the identified studies evaluated HCRU (n=6), costs (n=4), or adherence (n=2). No real-world PROs were identified. Study characteristics are summarized in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Characteristics of Included Studies Reporting Real-World Clinical and Economic Outcomes for R/R MCL

Study	Intervention	Line of Therapy	Study design	Data Source	Country	Sample Size	Reported Outcomes
CAR-T Therapy							
Ahmed 2024 ⁴	Brexu-cel	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	US	12	CR, OS, PFS
Chong 2024 ⁵	Brexu-cel	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from a university hospital	US	17	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR
Herboux 2024 ⁶	Brexu-cel	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from DESCAR-T	France	152	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, HCRU
Iacoboni 2022 ⁷	Brexu-cel	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from an Early Access Program	Europe	33	ORR, CR, OS, PFS
Kambhampati 2023 ⁸	Brexu-cel	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from CIMBTR	US	446	ORR, CR, DOR
Nie 2024 ⁹	Brexu-cel	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from a university hospital	US	10	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR
O'Reilly 2024 ¹⁰	Brexu-cel	3L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	EMRs from CAR-T Centers	UK	83	ORR, CR, OS, PFS
Rejeski 2023 ¹¹	Brexu-cel	3L+	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	International	103	ORR, CR, OS, PFS
Stella 2025 ¹²	Brexu-cel	3L+ (post-BTKi)	Prospective	Medical records from multiple sites	Italy	106	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR
Wang 2023a ¹³	Brexu-cel	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	US	Overall: 168 Post-BTKi: 144	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR, HCRU
BTKi Regimens							
Villa 2023 ¹⁴	BTKi monotherapy	2L	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	International	160	CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Narkhede 2022 ¹⁵	BTKis	2L	Retrospective	EMRs from Flatiron Health Research Database	US	647	OS, CR, TTNT
Wang 2023b ¹⁶	BTKis	2L	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple institutions	US	203	ORR, CR, OS
Hess 2022 ¹⁷	Covalent BTKis	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Retrospective	EMRs from ConcertA/RWD360	US	Overall: 946 Post-BTKi: 352	OS, TTNT, discontinuation
Cencini 2021 ¹⁸	Ibrutinib	2L (includes post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from onco-Hematological Centers	Italy	Overall: 69 Post-BTKi: 14	OS, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Dartigeas 2022 ¹⁹	Ibrutinib	2L	Prospective	Medical records from FIRE Study	Europe	59	OS, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Ghosh 2021 ²⁰	Ibrutinib Chemoinmunotherapy	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from Optum Research Database	US	Ibrutinib: 144 Chemoimmunotherapy: 156	HCRU, cost
Lee 2023 ²¹	Ibrutinib	2L	Retrospective	Medical records from Samsung Medical Center	South Korea	42	OS, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Maruyama 2024 ²²	Ibrutinib	2L	Prospective	Medical records from multiple centers	Japan	248	OS, CR, OS, PFS
McCulloch 2021 ²³	Ibrutinib	2L	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple centers	UK	211	OS, CR, OS, PFS
Obr 2023 ²⁴	Ibrutinib	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from the Observational Epidemiological and Clinical Study	Czech Republic	77	OS, PFS
Rusconi 2022 ²⁵	Ibrutinib Chemotherapy Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from FIL, EMLCN	International	Ibrutinib: 29 Chemotherapy: 29 Mixed regimens: 30	ORR, OS, PFS
Sancho 2022 ²⁶	Ibrutinib	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	Spain	66	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, TTD, discontinuation
Sharma 2021 ²⁷	Ibrutinib	2L, 3L	Retrospective	EMRs from iKnowMed	US	2L: 86 3L: 61	OS, PFS, TTD, discontinuation
Tivey 2024 ²⁸	Ibrutinib	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Prospective	Medical records from multiple sites	UK	26	ORR, CR, OS
Tucker 2021 ²⁹	Chemoimmunotherapy Lenalidomide or Venetoclax	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	UK, Ireland	Ibrutinib: 65 Lenalidomide or Venetoclax: 5	OS, PFS
Yi 2021 ³⁰	Ibrutinib	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	South Korea	Overall: 88 Post-BTKi: 16	CR, PFS, TTD, discontinuation
Zhang 2022 ³¹	Ibrutinib	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	China	121	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Aydilek 2024 ³²	Pirtrotinib	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from a compassionate use program	Europe	10	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR
Mixed Regimens							
Bock 2023 ³³	Mixed Regimens	2L	Prospective	Medical records from Molecular Epidemiology Resource	US	183	ORR, CR, OS
Eskelund 2021 ³⁴	Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from local physicians	Europe	149	ORR
Hess 2023 ³⁵	Mixed Regimens	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from SCHOLAR-2	Europe	149	OS
Join 2021 ³⁶	Mixed regimens	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records	US	7	ORR, CR
Keating 2023 ³⁷	Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Claims from Merative MarketScan	US	243	HCRU, cost
Kilgore 2025 ³⁸	Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Medicare FFS claims data; Inovaton MORE Registry	US	2,835	TTNT, HCRU, cost
Mathys 2022 ³⁹	Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Medical records from a university hospital	Switzerland	43	OS, PFS
Minson 2024 ⁴⁰	Mixed Regimens	2L, 3L	Retrospective	Medical records from institutional databases	Australia, UK	2L: 150 3L: 55	OS, PFS
Rai 2022 ⁴¹	Mixed Regimens	2L	Retrospective	Claims from Medical Data Vision	Japan	Overall: 247 Post-BTKi: 137	OS, discontinuation
Squires 2023 ⁴²	Mixed Regimens	2L+	Retrospective	Claims from Chronic Conditions Warehouse 100% Medicare Parts A, B, and D	US	2L: 1,476 3L: 649 4L: 284	OS, HCRU, costs
Squires 2024 ⁴³	Mixed Regimens	3L (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Claims from Chronic Conditions Warehouse 100% Medicare Parts A, B, and D	US	230	OS, DOR, TTNT, discontinuation
Chemotherapy Regimens							
Hohlloch 2020 ⁴⁴	Radioimmunotherapy	2L+	Retrospective	Registry data from RIT Network	International	45	CR, OS, PFS
Karadurmus 2021 ⁴⁵	Bendamustine	3L+	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	Turkey	18	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation, TTNT
McCulloch 2020 ⁴⁶	R-BAC	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from multiple sites	UK, Italy	36	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation, HCRU
BCL2L Regimens							
Sawalha 2023 ⁴⁷	Venetoclax	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from university hospital	US	80	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, discontinuation
Zhao 2020 ⁴⁸	Venetoclax	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Retrospective	Medical records from university hospital	US	24	ORR, CR, OS, PFS, DOR, discontinuation

Abbreviations: 2L: Second-line treatment; 2L+: Second-line treatment and greater; 3L: Third-line treatment and greater; 4L: Fourth-line treatment and greater; BCL2L: B-cell lymphoma 2 inhibitor; BTKi: Bruton Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor; CIMBTR: Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research; CR: Complete response; DOR: Duration of response; EMLCN: European MCL Network; EMR: Electronic Medical Records; FIL: Fondazione Italiana Linfomi; FFS: Fee for service; HCRU: Healthcare resource use; ORR: Overall response rate; OS: Overall survival; PFS: Progression-free survival; TTNT: Time to next treatment.

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Overall Survival

- Thirty-eight studies reported outcomes data for OS, including 17 that reported OS data for post-BTKi settings (Table 3). Median OS (n=25) ranged from 1.4 to 10.5 months, and 1-year OS (n=15) 39.3% to 90.0%. Three-year OS was reported in one study evaluating CAR-T cell therapy in post-BTKi settings (17.0%).
- Among ibrutinib regimens with median OS data (n=12), median OS ranged from 16.8 to 50.1 months. Mixed regimens with OS data (n=7) had a wider range for median (2.8 to 10.5 months) than BTKi regimens (1.4 to 50.1 months) and chemotherapy regimens (n=4) (4.4 to 46.2 months).
- OS generally decreased with later lines of therapy. In a 2023 study by Squires et al., median OS declined from 22.0 months at 2L+ to 7.8 months at 4L+ in patients receiving mixed regimens.
- Among studies reporting OS for post-BTKi settings, median OS ranged from 5.0 to 24.0 months. Among mixed regimens (n=3) reporting data for the post-BTKi setting, median OS ranged from 1.4 to 24.0 months.

Progression-Free Survival

- Thirty study reports outcomes data for PFS, including 13 in the post-BTKi setting (Table 4). Median PFS (n=26) ranged from 2.2 to 28.0 months in R/R MCL and 1-year PFS rates (n=14) ranged from 33.0% to 82.0%. Three and 5-year PFS rates were not reported.
- Among ibrutinib regimens, median PFS ranged from 10.3 to 21.7 months for the general R/R MCL population. CAR-T therapy (brexu-cel) showed favorable PFS in later lines, with median PFS ranging from 9.5 months in 2L+ to 25.2 months in 3L+ patients.
- Outcomes worsened with later lines of therapy. In Eskelund (2021), median PFS declined from 8.6 months after 2L to 3.6 months after 4L in patients receiving mixed treatment regimens.
- Among studies reporting PFS data for post-BTKi settings, (n=16), median PFS ranged from 3.7 to 16.2 months (Table 4), with venetoclax regimens (n=2) reporting median PFS of 3.7 to 8.0 months. CAR-T regimens (n=8) 9.5 to 21.0 months, and chemotherapy regimen R-BAC 10.1 months.

Table 3. Real-World OS Outcomes in R/R MCL

Study	Line of Therapy*	Intervention	Evaluable N	Median OS, months†	1-Year OS Rate (%)‡	3-Year OS Rate (%)§
CAR-T Therapy						
Ahmed 2024 ⁴	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	12	-	67.0%	17.0%
Chong 2024 ⁵	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	17	-	64.0%	-
Herboux 2024 ⁶	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	144	-	69.8%	-
Iacoboni 2022 ⁷	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	33	-	61.0%	-
Nie 2024 ⁹	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	10	-	90.0%	-
O'Reilly 2024 ¹⁰	3L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	83	-	74.0%	-
Rejeski 2023 ¹¹	3L+	Brexu-cel	103	-	80.0%	-
Stella 2025 ¹²	3L+ (post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	106	-	62.0%	-
Wang 2023a ¹³	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Brexu-cel	Overall: 168 Post-BTKi: 144	-	Overall: 75.0% Post-BTKi: 72.6%	-
BTKi Regimens						
Villa 2023 ¹⁴	2L	BTKi monotherapy	160	34.8	-	-
Narkhede 2022 ¹⁵	2L	BTKis	647	24.0	-	-
Wang 2023b ¹⁶	2L	BTKis	203	24.8	-	-
Hess 2022 ¹⁷	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Covalent BTKis	Overall: 2L: 284 Overall: 3L: 88 Overall: 4L: 30 Overall: 5L: 13	Overall: 5L: 9.9 Overall: 4L: 2.5 Overall: 3L: 1.8 Overall: 2L: 1.1	-	-
Cencini 2021 ¹⁸	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Ibrutinib	Overall: 69 Post-BTKi: 14	Overall: 34.8 Post-BTKi: 5.0	-	-
Dartigeas 2022 ¹⁹	2L	Ibrutinib	59	-	65.8%	-
Lee 2023 ²¹	2L+	Ibrutinib	42	50.1	-	-
Maruyama 2024 ²²	2L	Ibrutinib	202	-	69.3%	-
McCulloch 2021 ²³	2L	Ibrutinib	211	23.9	-	-
Obr 2023 ²⁴	2L+	Ibrutinib	77	23.1	-	-
Rusconi 2022 ²⁵	2L+	Ibrutinib Chemotherapy Mixed Regimens	29 29 66	16.8 4.4 32.0	-	-
Sancho 2022 ²⁶	2L+	Ibrutinib	66	32.0	-	-
Sharma 2021 ²⁷	2L, 3L	Ibrutinib	2L: 86 3L: 61	2L: 22.3 3L: 25.8	-	-
Tivey 2024 ²⁸	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Ibrutinib	26	1.4	-	-
Tucker 2021 ²⁹	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Ibrutinib	Overall: 65	Overall: 18.5	-	-
Zhang 2022 ³¹	2L+	Ibrutinib	121	37.6	86.9%	-
Aydilek 2024 ³²	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Pirtrotinib	10	-	56.0%	-
Mixed Regimens						
Bock 2023 ³³	2L	Mixed Regimens	183	43.2	-	-
Hess 2023 ³⁵	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Mixed Regimens	149	9.7	-	-
Mathys 2022 ³⁹	2L+	Mixed Regimens	43	105.0	-	-
Minson 2024 ⁴⁰	2L, 3L	Mixed Regimens	2L: 150 3L: 55	2L: 30.0 3L: 14	-	-
Rai 2022 ⁴¹	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Mixed Regimens	Overall: 247 Post-BTKi: 137	Overall: 5.6 Post-BTKi: 8.7	-	-
Rusconi 2022 ²⁵	2L+	Mixed Regimens	29 29 66	22.0 2.8 32.0	-	-
Squires 2023 ⁴²	2L+	Mixed Regimens	2L: 1,476 3L: 649 4L: 284	2L: 2.8 3L: 11.8 4L: 7.8	2L: 63.8% 3L: 49.9% 4L: 39.3%	-
Squires 2024 ⁴³	3L (post-BTKi)	Mixed Regimens	230	9.4	43.7%	-
BCL2L Regimens						
Sawalha 2023 ⁴⁷	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Venetoclax	80	12.5	-	-
Tucker 2021 ²⁹	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Lenalidomide or Venetoclax	Post-BTKi: 5	Post-BTKi: 16.0	-	-
Zhao 2020 ⁴⁸	2L+ (post-BTKi)	Venetoclax	24	13.5	-	-
Chemotherapy Regimens						
Hohlloch 2020 ⁴⁴	2L+	Radioimmunotherapy	45	46.2	-	-
Karadurmus 2021 ⁴⁵	3L+	Bendamustine	18	-	74.9%	-
McCulloch 2020 ⁴⁶	2L+ (post-BTKi)	R-BAC	36	12.5	-	-
Rusconi 2022 ²⁵	2L+	Chemotherapy	29	4.4	-	-
Tucker 2021 ²⁹	2L+ (includes post-BTKi)	Chemoimmunotherapy	Post-BTKi: 7	Post-BTKi: 24.0	-	-

*Includes post-BTKi†Indicates a study with a post-BTKi subgroup for which there is outcomes data of interest reported; †Unless otherwise stated, results are for overall population. ‡Abbreviations: 2L: Second-line treatment and greater; 3L: Third-line treatment and greater; 4L: Fourth-line treatment and greater; BTKi: Bruton tyrosine kinase inhibitor; R/R: Relapsed or refractory; MCL: Mantle cell lymphoma; OS: Overall survival

ORR

- Twenty-seven studies reported outcomes data for ORR in the R/R MCL population, including 13 in the post-BTKi setting. ORR ranged from 40.3% to 100% in the overall R/R MCL population, and from 23.1% to 90.9% in post-BTKi settings.

- CAR-T therapy in post-BTKi settings (n=5) demonstrated ORR ranging from 92.4% to 90.9% and CR rates of 64.7% to 93.8%. These rates were higher than for venetoclax (ORR 40.3%-50%; CR 16.4%-20.8%), BTKi rechallenge/switch (ORR 57.1%-70.0%; CR 10.0%-14.3%), and mixed regimens (ORR 23.1%-28.6%).

TTNT

- Four studies reported outcomes for TTNT, with none reporting data for regimens in post-BTKi settings (Figure 1). Median TTNT ranged from 0.4 to 22.7 months in patients receiving mixed regimens and 1.7 to 4.0 months for covalent BTKis.
- Across mixed regimen studies, TTNT generally decreased with later lines of therapy. Median TTNT among patients receiving mixed regimens were observed to have decreasing TTNT as patients progressed from 2L (22.7 months) to 6L (1.6 months) in Kilgore (2025), and 2L+ (2.6 months) to 4L+ (0.4 months) in Squires (2023).