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Background

- EPIDIOLEX® oral solution is a plant-derived pharmaceutical formulation of highly purified cannabidiol (CBD) approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS), Dravet syndrome (DS), and tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC) in individuals aged ≥1 year.¹
- There is a growing body of real-world evidence on the effectiveness of CBD treatment based on caregiver-reported seizure and nonseizure outcomes.^{2,3}
- However, there is still a limited understanding of how CBD may be associated with health care resource utilization (HCRU) and medical costs in the real-world setting.

Objective

- To assess the difference in HCRU and medical costs before and after initiation of CBD, among commercially insured patients with DS, LGS, TSC, and other refractory epilepsies.

Methods

- This was a retrospective pre–post claims study using the US MarketScan® administrative claims database (**Figure 1**).
- HCRU and medical costs included visits to the physician's office, hospital outpatient, and emergency department (ED), home health, inpatient admissions, and intensive care unit admissions.
- Within-person differences between outcomes in the 6-month baseline versus 6-month follow-up were analyzed.
- Interrupted time series (ITS) model (SAS proc autoreg) estimates and plots (**Figure 2**) were used to explore trends in HCRU, medical costs, and the impact of COVID-19.

Results

- Of 506 patients included in the analysis, 271 had LGS, 15 had DS, 15 had TSC, and 205 had other refractory epilepsies.
 - Patient characteristics are shown in **Table 1**.

Analysis of within-person differences

- Difference between 6 months pre- and post-CBD initiation was analyzed.
- The mean ± standard deviation (SD) difference in the number of visits per patient after CBD initiation was −0.07 ± 1.02 (*P*=0.042) for ED and −0.14 ± 3.65 (*P*=0.009) for the physician's office visits with epilepsy as the first or second diagnosis.
- For patients with epilepsy as the first diagnosis, mean ± SD difference in the number of visits per patient after CBD initiation was −0.05 ± 0.89 (*P*=0.098) for ED and −0.13 ± 3.02 (*P*=0.001) for physician's office visits.
- The mean cost of ED and physician's office visits per patient was 47% and 14% lower (*both P*=0.002) for patients with epilepsy as the first or second diagnosis after CBD initiation.
- The mean cost of ED and physician's office visits was reduced by 39% (*P*=0.014) and 17% (*P*<0.0005) per patient, respectively, after CBD initiation for patients with epilepsy as the first diagnosis.

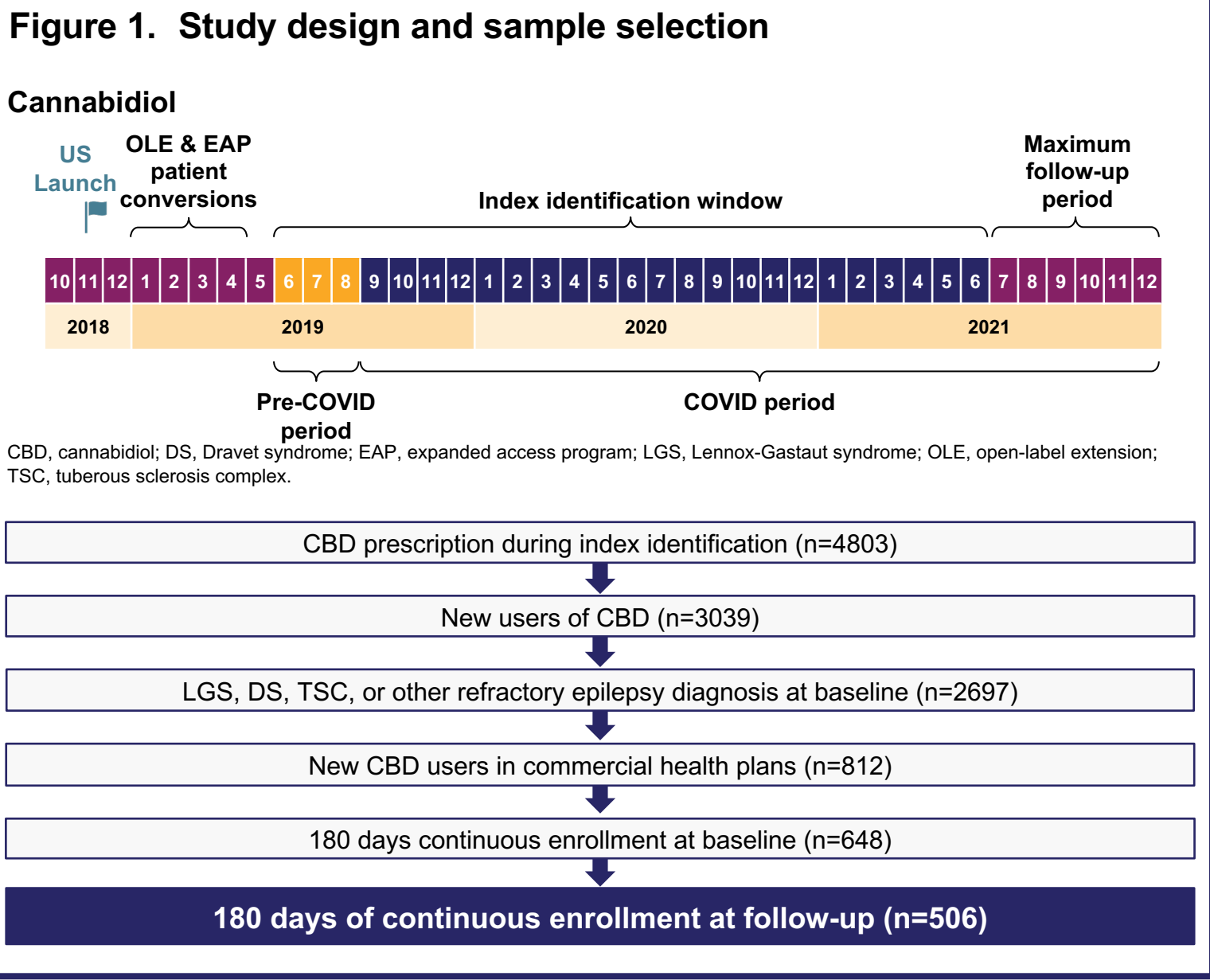


Table 1. Patient characteristics					
Characteristic	All ^a (n=506)	LGS (n=271)	DS (n=15)	TSC (n=15)	Other refractory epilepsy (n=205)
Age, mean (SD)	15.7 (10.9)	15.0 (9.4)	11.9 (9.2)	12.8 (8.2)	17.2 (12.7)
Female gender, n (%)	249 (49)	121 (45)	6 (40)	11 (73)	111 (54)
Comorbidities, n (%)					
CCI ^b					
0	10 (2)	0	0	1 (7)	9 (4)
1–2	272 (54)	133 (49)	9 (60)	10 (67)	120 (59)
3–4	186 (37)	117 (43)	4 (27)	3 (20)	62 (30)
5+	38 (8)	21 (8)	2 (13)	1 (7)	14 (7)
Asthma	33 (7)	21 (8)	2 (13)	0	10 (5)
Diabetes	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer	8 (2)	0	0	1 (7)	7 (3)
Anxiety	62 (12)	27 (10)	2 (13)	3 (20)	30 (15)
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	7 (1)	1 (0.4)	0	2 (13)	4 (2)
Autism spectrum disorder	96 (19)	69 (25)	7 (47)	5 (33)	15 (7)
Bipolar disorder	5 (1)	2 (1)	1 (7)	0	2 (1)
Depression	34 (7)	3 (1)	1 (7)	2 (13)	28 (14)
Intellectual disorder(s)	259 (51)	187 (69)	14 (93)	6 (40)	52 (25)
Learning disabilities	28 (6)	20 (7)	0	0	8 (4)
Schizophrenia	1 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	0	0	0

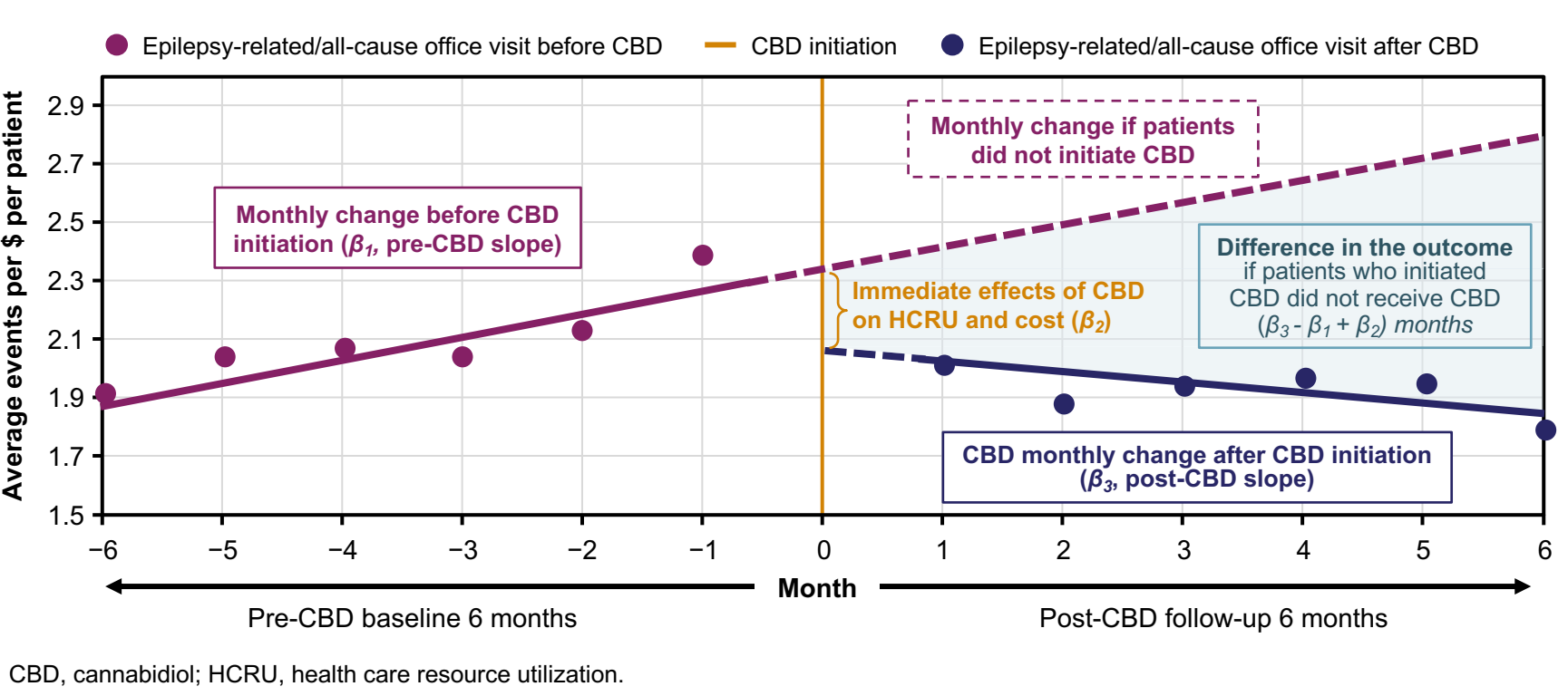
^aThe epilepsy categories are mutually exclusive. Three patients with both LGS and TSC diagnosis at baseline were assigned to TSC only. ^bCCI includes myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, dementia, paraplegia and hemiplegia, diabetes, diabetes with complications, renal disease, mild liver disease, moderate/severe liver disease, peptic ulcers, rheumatic disease, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, cancer, and metastatic solid tumor. CCI, Charlson Comorbidity Index; DS, Dravet syndrome; LGS, Lennox-Gastaut syndrome; SD, standard deviation; TSC, tuberous sclerosis complex.

Conclusions

- After the initiation of CBD, the average physician's office and ED visits and their costs were lower in the study period among the commercially insured patients in the US.
- Patients had significant trends toward lower epilepsy-related physician's office and outpatient office visits. There was also a significantly lower trend of epilepsy-related physician's office medical costs. Other epilepsy-related HCRUs and their associated medical costs had flat (non-increasing) trends of post-CBD initiation versus pre-CBD initiation.
- Patients had significant trends toward lower all-cause HCRU, except for physician's office visits (underpowered), and a significant trend toward lower all-cause associated medical costs for ED visits and flat (non-increasing) trends for other HCRU categories post-CBD initiation versus pre-CBD initiation.

Interrupted time series (ITS) analysis^{4,5}

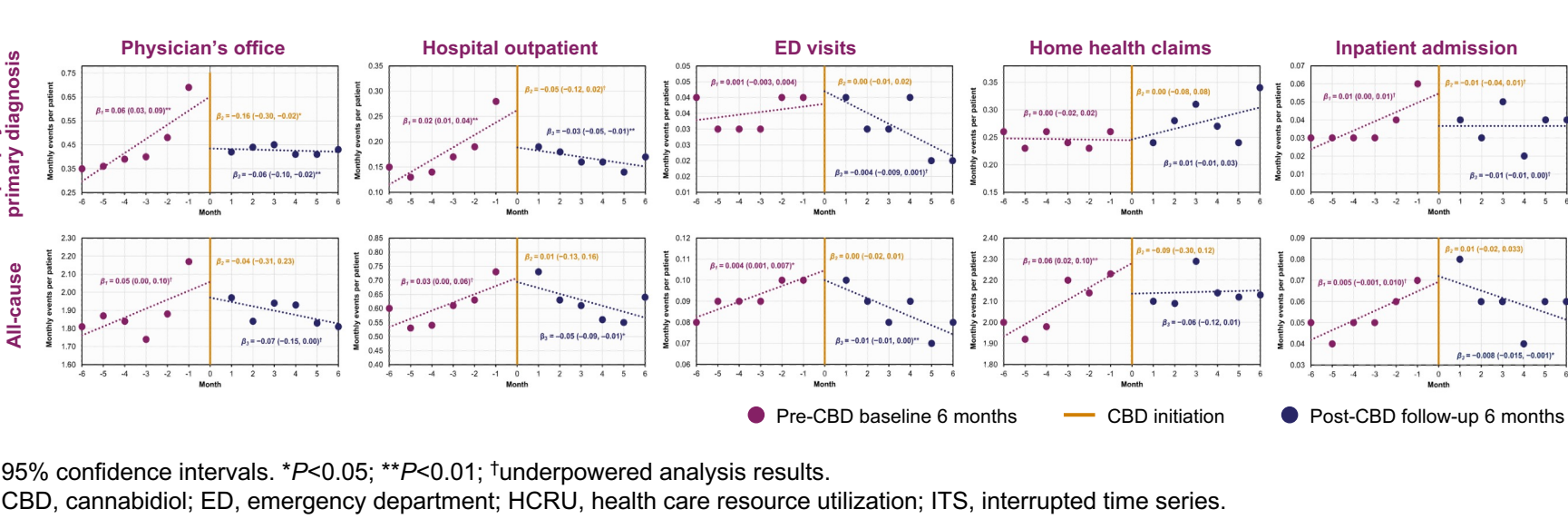
Figure 2. ITS analysis to demonstrate trends in HCRU before and after CBD initiation



CBD, cannabidiol; HCRU, health care resource utilization.

- ITS analysis is a quasi-experimental observational study that involves analyzing the time-series data or an outcome that is measured over time in a population and comparing the outcome before versus after an intervention.
- ITS segmented regression-based techniques are used to estimate linear trends.

Figure 3. ITS analysis of HCRU (mean number of events per month per patient)



- Epilepsy-related HCRU is defined as HCRU with epilepsy as the first diagnosis.
- ITS analysis of change in epilepsy-related HCRU shows increasing trends pre-CBD initiation and clear decreasing/flat trends post-CBD for all categories, except in home health care use (**Figure 3** and **Table 2**).
- Changes in all-cause HCRU show increasing trends pre-CBD and clear decreasing/flat trends post-CBD initiation for all categories (**Figure 3** and **Table 2**).

Figure 4. ITS analysis of medical costs (mean \$ per month per patient)

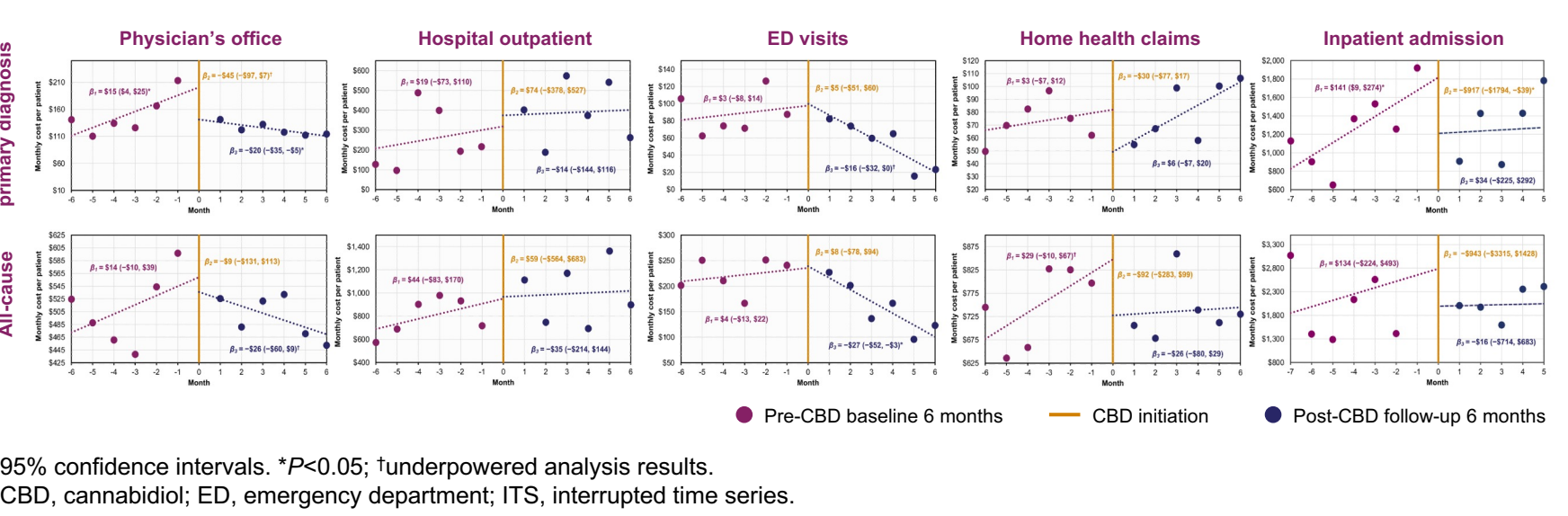


Table 2. Estimated changes in HCRU pre- and post-CBD initiation

Based on pre- and post-changes estimated from ITS analysis	Epilepsy as primary diagnosis		All-cause	
	Average change in number of events	Average % change in number of events	Average change in number of events	Average % change in number of events
	Per patient across 12 months		Per patient across 12 months	
Physician's office	−3.35	−94	NS	NS
Hospital outpatient	−0.67	−48	−0.60	−10
Emergency department	NS	NS	−0.14	−14
Home health	0	0	−0.70	−3
Inpatient admission	NS	NS	−0.10	−21
ICU admission	NS	NS	−0.07	−34

CBD, cannabidiol; ICU, intensive care unit; NS, not statistically significant (underpowered due to sample size and event rates).

Effect of COVID-19 and lockdown (details available via QR code)

- The impact of COVID-19 is limited to the utilization of inpatient admissions and hospital outpatient visits during the lockdown period. Further analysis may exclude patients with an index date in the COVID-19 lockdown period.

Limitations of the study

- No causality can be inferred based on the study design.
- Generalizability of the findings is limited beyond the population in the MarketScan database.
- Potential misclassification is possible because of reliance on the accuracy of diagnostic codes and the patient identification algorithm.
- Follow-up time was short, restricted to 6 months. A longer follow-up period may be more informative in evaluating changes in HCRU and costs post-CBD initiation.

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Acknowledgments: Writing and editorial assistance was provided to the authors by Luke Ward, PhD, Ritu Pathak, PhD, and Maria Starr, of Ashfield MedComms, an Inizio company, and funded by Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Support: The study was sponsored by Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Disclosures: All authors met the ICMJE authorship criteria and had full access to relevant data. Neither honoraria nor payments were made for authorship. **AMM** has consulted for, conducted studies funded by, or received honoraria for services provided to Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc. **GF, TG, KD, TBS, and HV** are employees of Jazz Pharmaceuticals and hold stock and/or stock options in Jazz Pharmaceuticals, plc.



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