

# VASCEPA COVID-19 CardioLink-9: First Human Trial of a Loading Dose of Icosapent Ethyl in Patients with COVID-19



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on behalf of the **COVID-19 CardioLink-9** Investigators

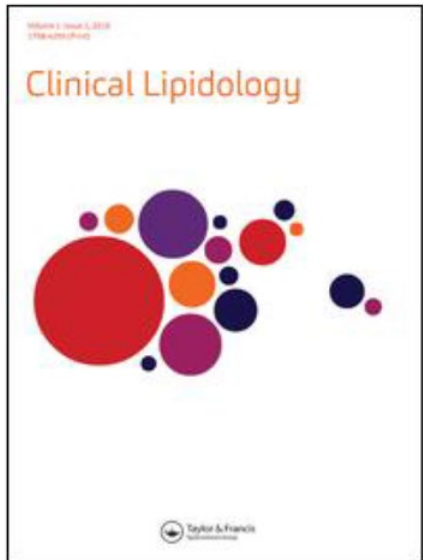


# Disclosures

**Dr. Deepak L. Bhatt** discloses the following relationships - Advisory Board: Cardax, Cereno Scientific, Elsevier Practice Update Cardiology, LevelEx, Medscape Cardiology, PhaseBio, PLx Pharma, Regado Biosciences; Board of Directors: Boston VA Research Institute, Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care, TobeSoft; Chair: American Heart Association Quality Oversight Committee; Data Monitoring Committees: Baim Institute for Clinical Research (formerly Harvard Clinical Research Institute, for the PORTICO trial, funded by St. Jude Medical, now Abbott), Cleveland Clinic (including for the ExCEED trial, funded by Edwards), Duke Clinical Research Institute, Mayo Clinic, Mount Sinai School of Medicine (for the ENVISAGE trial, funded by Daiichi Sankyo), Population Health Research Institute; Honoraria: American College of Cardiology (Senior Associate Editor, Clinical Trials and News, ACC.org; Vice-Chair, ACC Accreditation Committee), Baim Institute for Clinical Research (formerly Harvard Clinical Research Institute; RE-DUAL PCI clinical trial steering committee funded by Boehringer Ingelheim; AEGIS-II executive committee funded by CSL Behring), Belvoir Publications (Editor in Chief, Harvard Heart Letter), Duke Clinical Research Institute (clinical trial steering committees, including for the PRONOUNCE trial, funded by Ferring Pharmaceuticals), HMP Global (Editor in Chief, Journal of Invasive Cardiology), Journal of the American College of Cardiology (Guest Editor; Associate Editor), Medtelligence/ReachMD (CME steering committees), MJH Life Sciences, Population Health Research Institute (for the COMPASS operations committee, publications committee, steering committee, and USA national co-leader, funded by Bayer), Slack Publications (Chief Medical Editor, Cardiology Today's Intervention), Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care (Secretary/Treasurer), WebMD (CME steering committees); Other: Clinical Cardiology (Deputy Editor), NCDR-ACTION Registry Steering Committee (Chair), VA CART Research and Publications Committee (Chair); **Research Funding:** Abbott, Afimmune, **Amarin**, Amgen, AstraZeneca, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Cardax, Chiesi, CSL Behring, Eisai, Ethicon, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Forest Laboratories, Fractyl, Idorsia, Ironwood, Ischemix, Lexicon, Lilly, Medtronic, Pfizer, PhaseBio, PLx Pharma, Regeneron, Roche, Sanofi Aventis, Synaptic, The Medicines Company; Royalties: Elsevier (Editor, Cardiovascular Intervention: A Companion to Braunwald's Heart Disease); Site Co-Investigator: Biotronik, Boston Scientific, CSI, St. Jude Medical (now Abbott), Svelte; Trustee: American College of Cardiology; Unfunded Research: FlowCo, Merck, Novo Nordisk, Takeda.

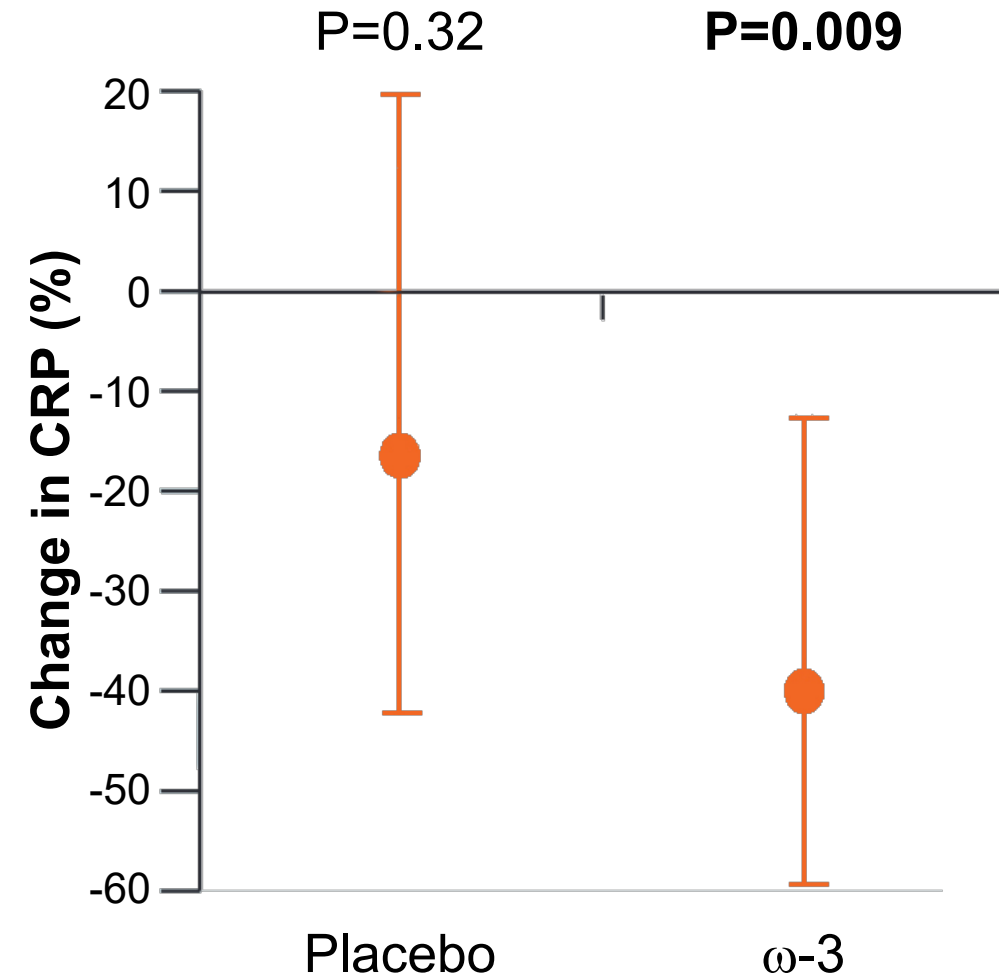
**This presentation includes off-label and/or investigational uses of drugs. COVID-19 CardioLink-9 was sponsored by Amarin Pharma, Inc. and HLS Therapeutics, Inc.**

# Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Inflammation

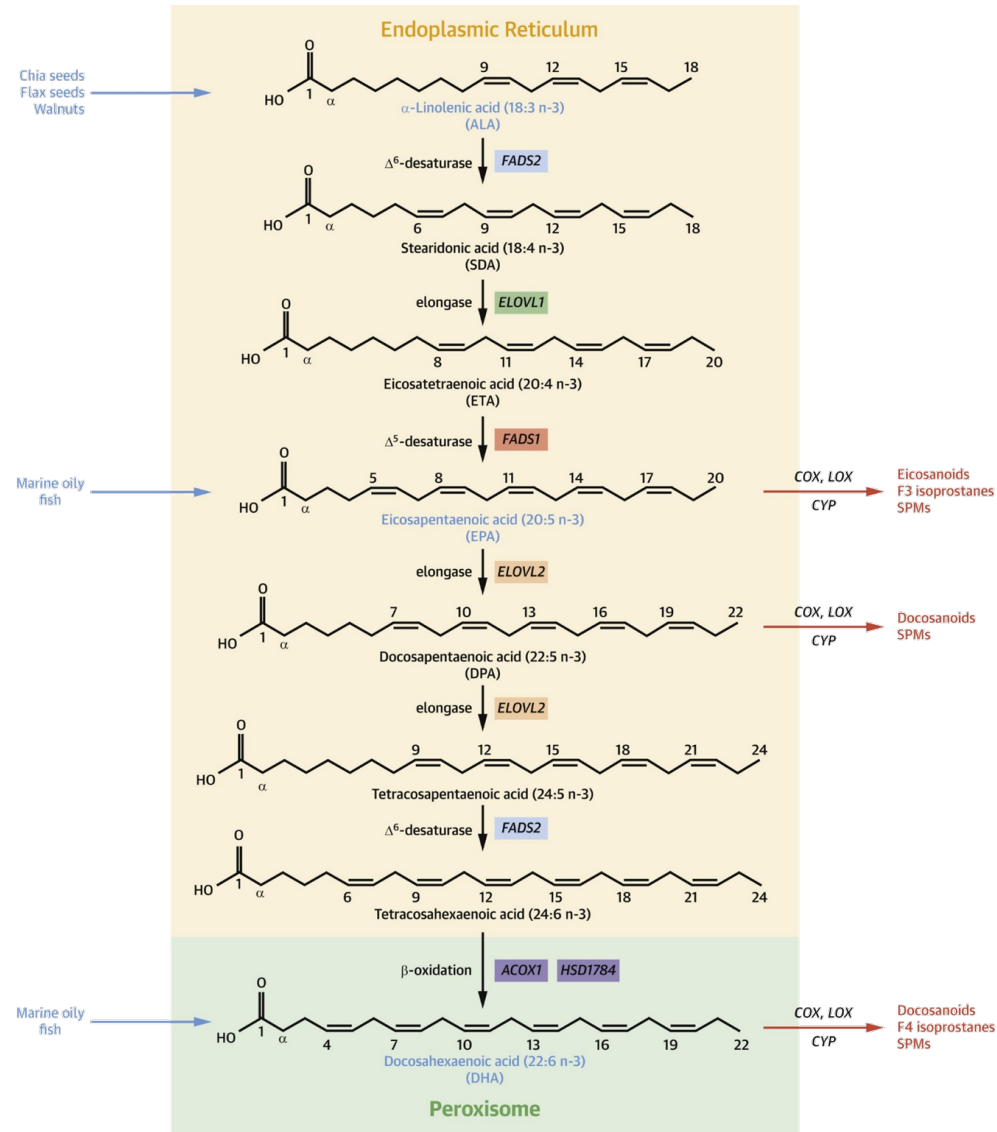


## Treatment with w-3 fatty acids reduces serum C-reactive protein concentration

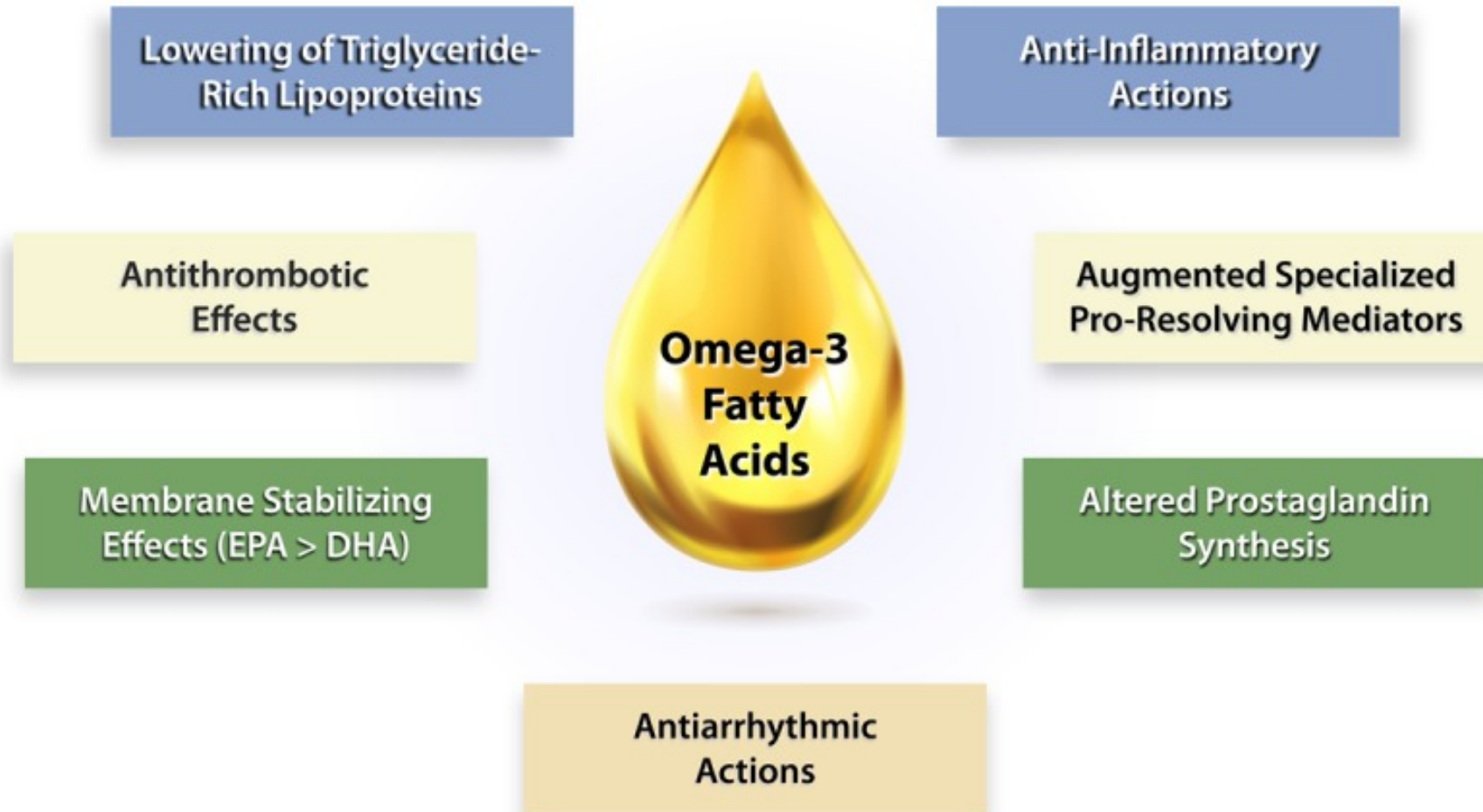
Kamran I. Muhammad, Thomas Morledge, Ravish Sachar, Annette Zeldin, Kathy Wolski & Deepak L. Bhatt



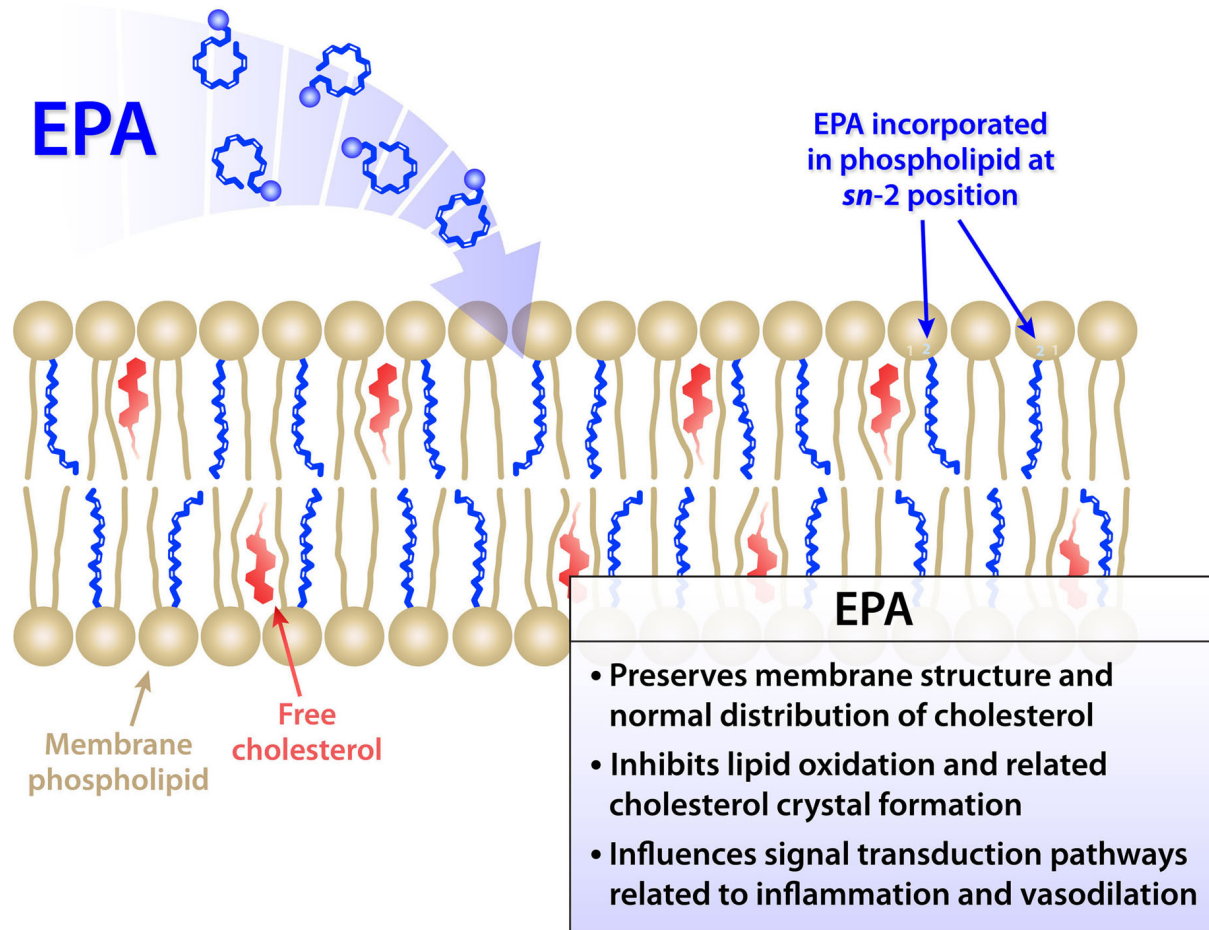
# A Revolution in Omega-3 Fatty Acid Research



# Potential Mechanisms of Cardioprotection for Omega-3 Fatty Acids

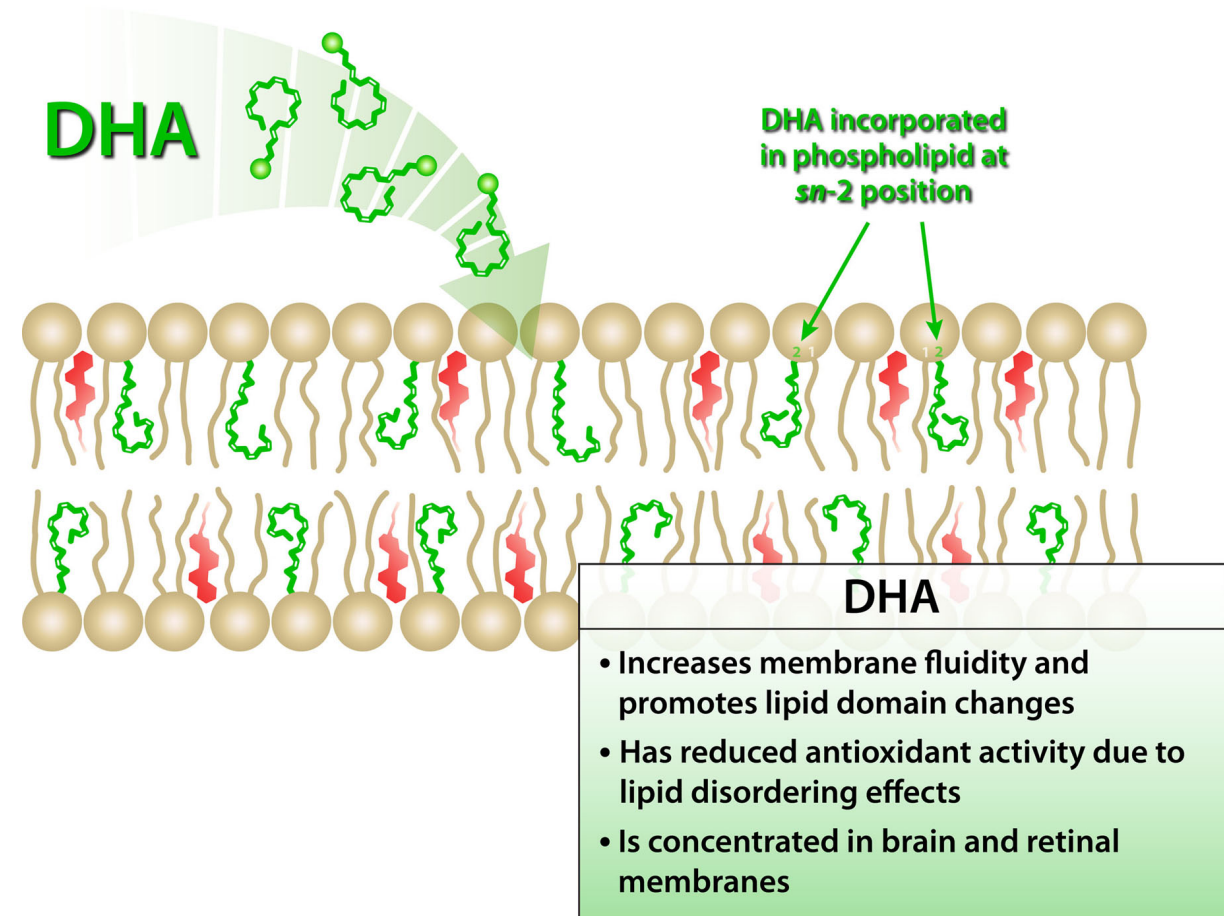
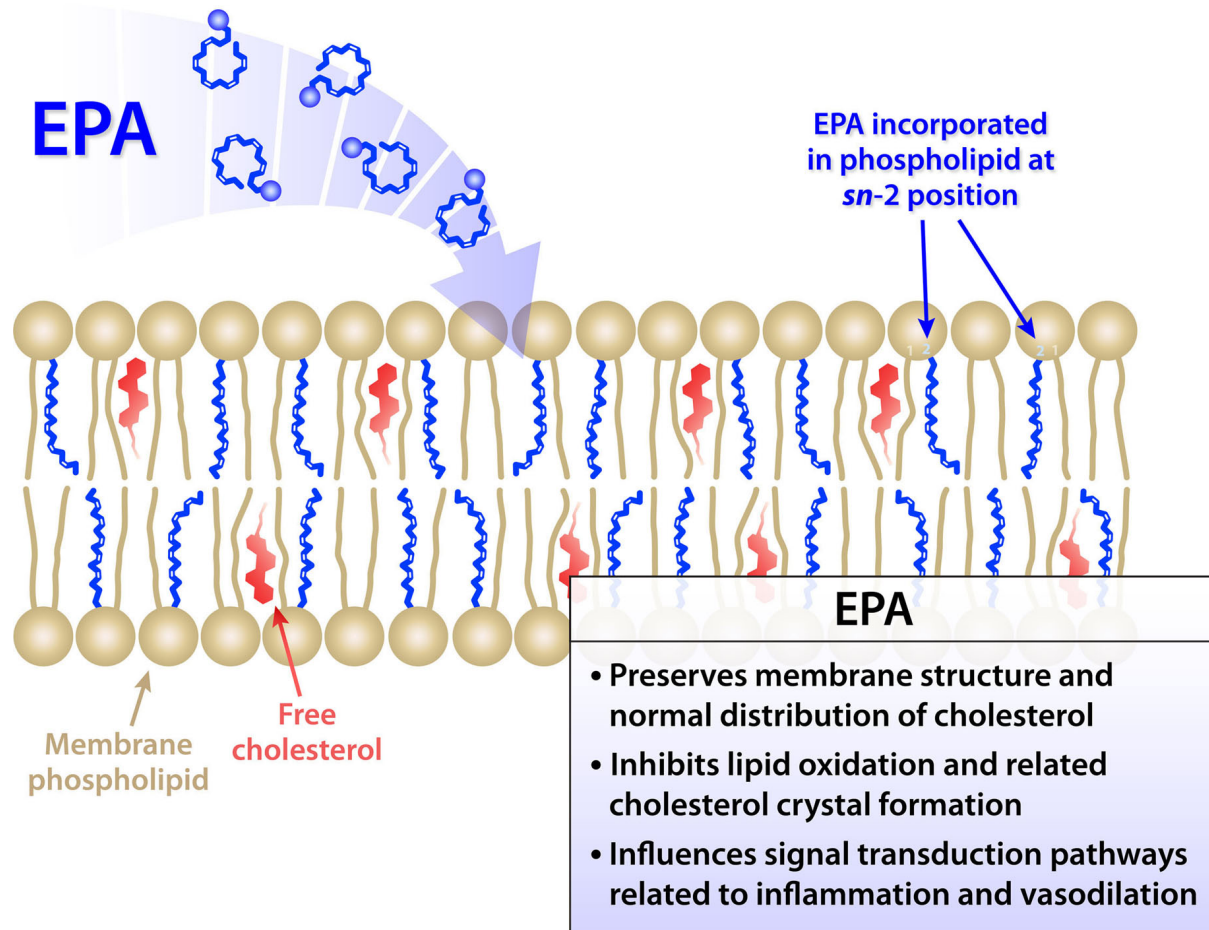


# Contrasting Effects of EPA and DHA





# Contrasting Effects of EPA and DHA



# Potential Benefits of EPA

## Effects of EPA on Plaque Progression

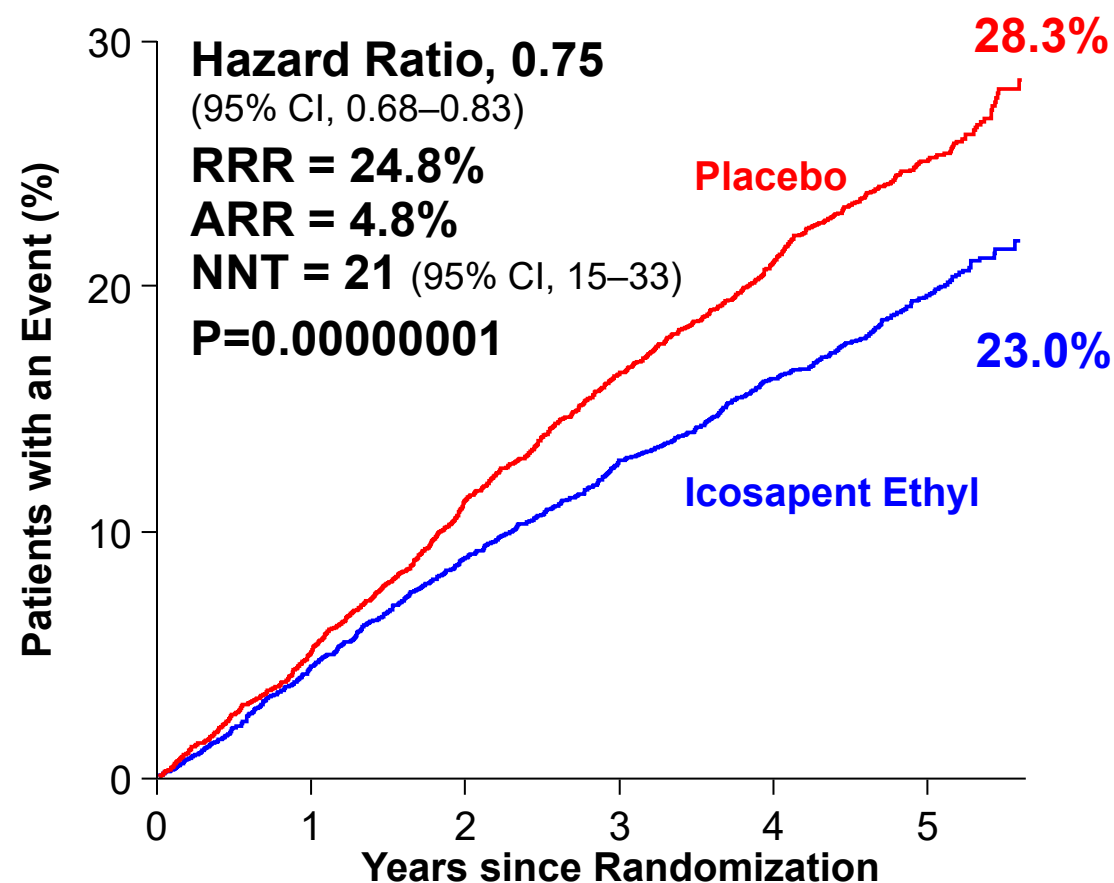
	Endothelial Dysfunction/ Oxidative Stress	Inflammation/ Plaque Growth	Unstable Plaque
Increase	Endothelial function Nitric oxide bioavailability	EPA/AA ratio IL-10	Fibrous cap thickness Lumen diameter Plaque stability
Decrease	Cholesterol crystalline domains Ox-LDL RLP-C Adhesion of monocytes Macrophages Foam cells	IL-6 ICAM-1 hsCRP Lp-PLA <sub>2</sub> MMPs	Plaque volume Arterial stiffness Plaque vulnerability Thrombosis Platelet activation



# Primary and Key Secondary Composite Endpoints

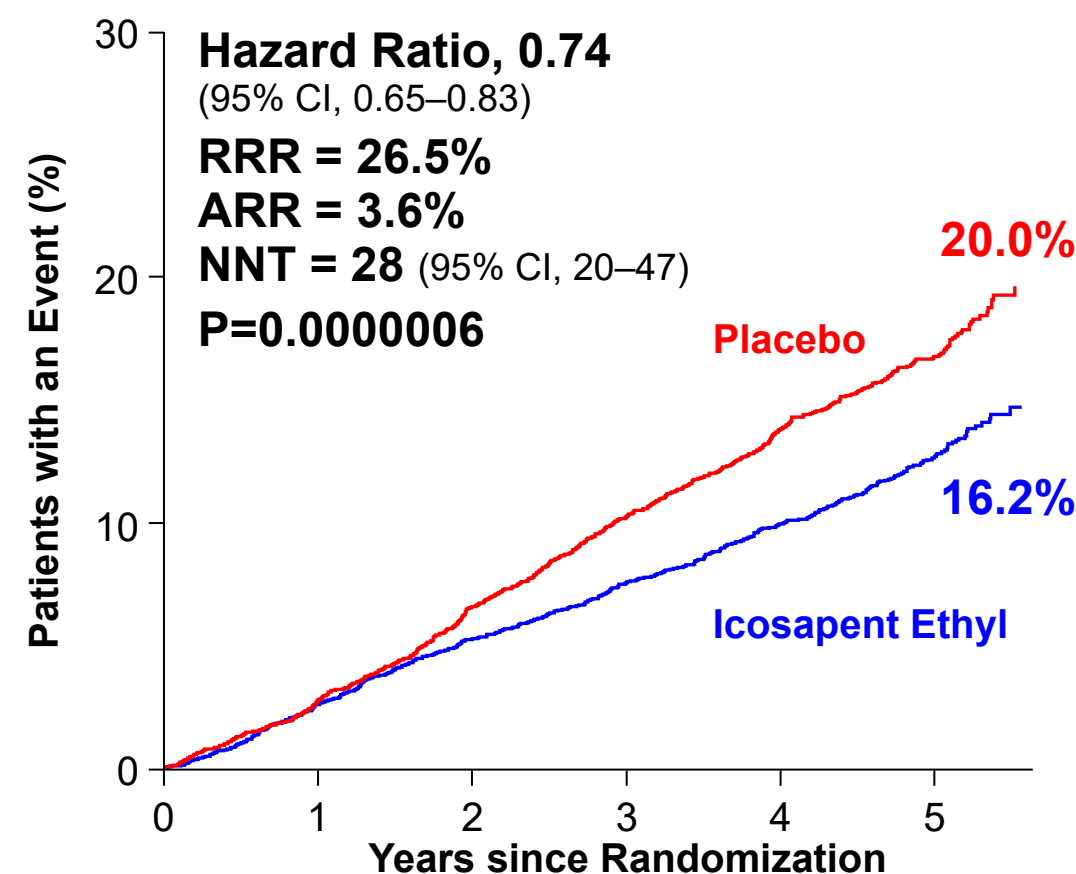
## Primary Composite Endpoint:

CV Death, MI, Stroke, Coronary Revasc, Unstable Angina

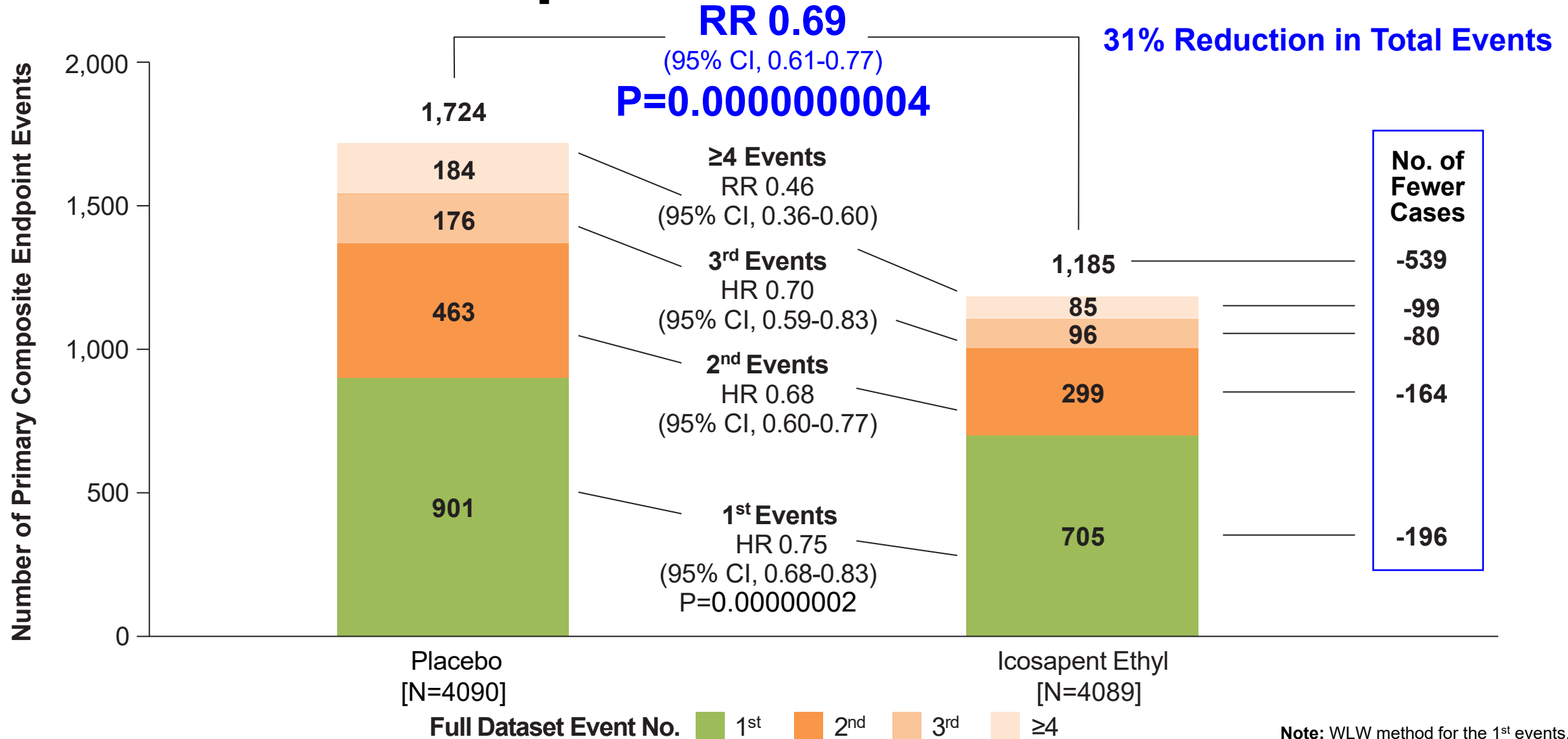


## Key Secondary Composite Endpoint:

CV Death, MI, Stroke



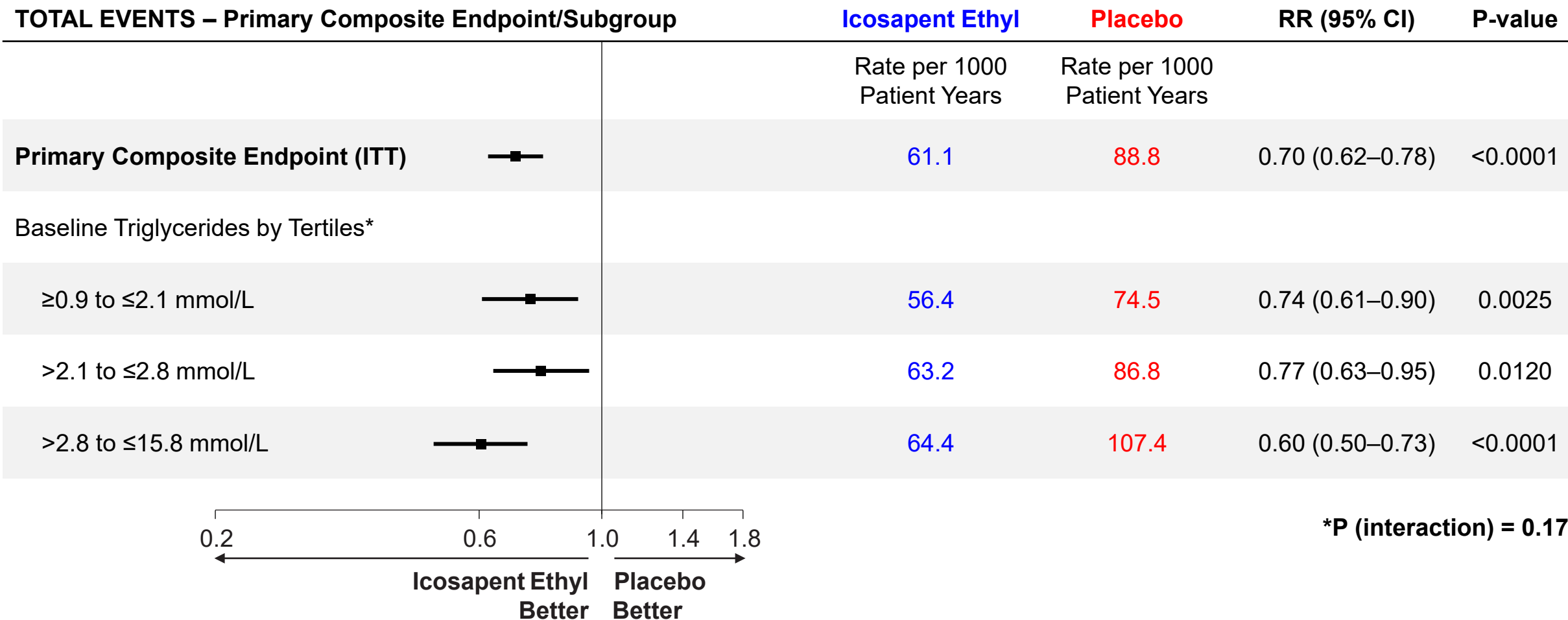
# First and Subsequent Events – Full Data



Bhatt DL, Steg PG, Miller M, et al. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2019;73:2791-2802. Bhatt DL. ACC 2019, New Orleans, LA.

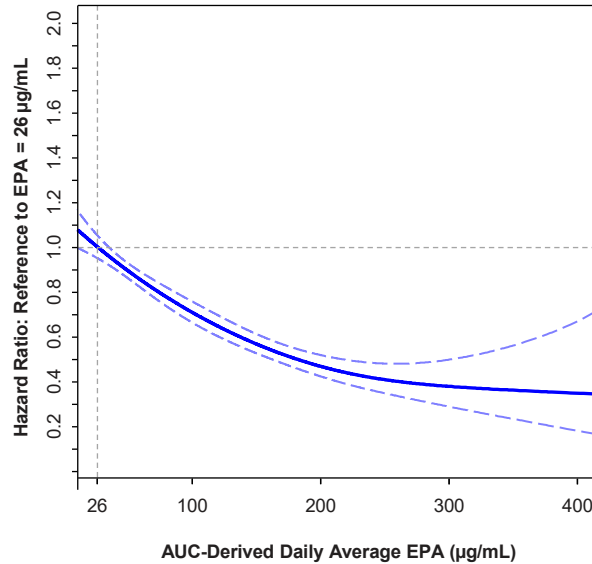
**Note:** WLW method for the 1<sup>st</sup> events, 2<sup>nd</sup> events, and 3<sup>rd</sup> events categories; Negative binomial model for ≥4<sup>th</sup> events and overall treatment comparison.

# Primary Composite Endpoint: Total Events by Baseline TG Tertiles

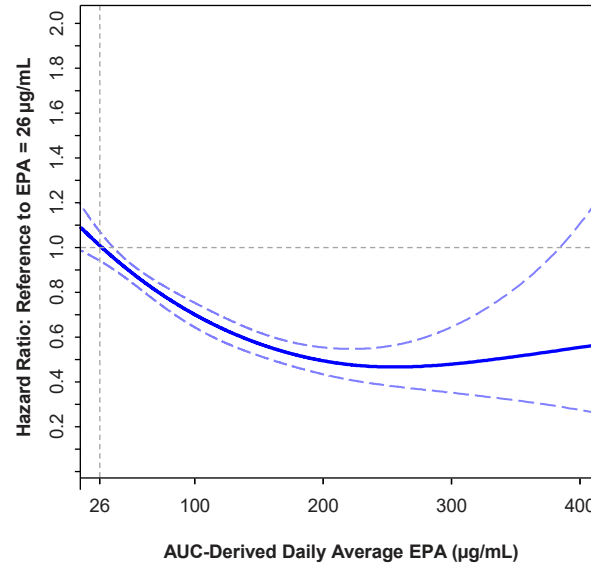


# Primary and Key Secondary Composite Endpoints, Cardiovascular Death, and Total Mortality by On-Treatment Serum EPA

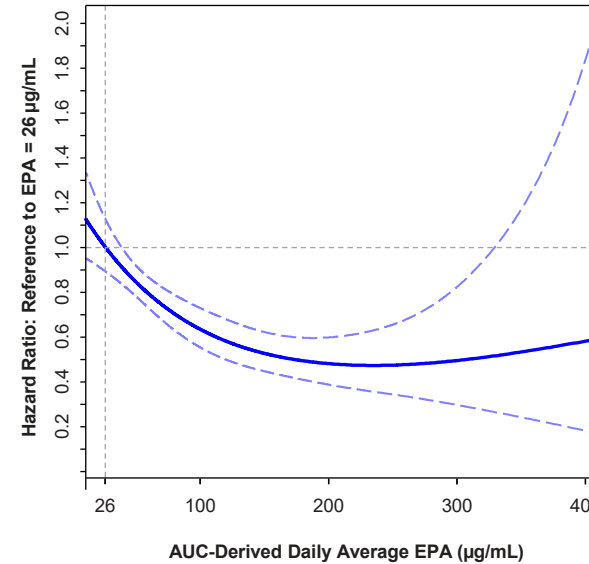
Primary Endpoint<sup>1-5</sup>



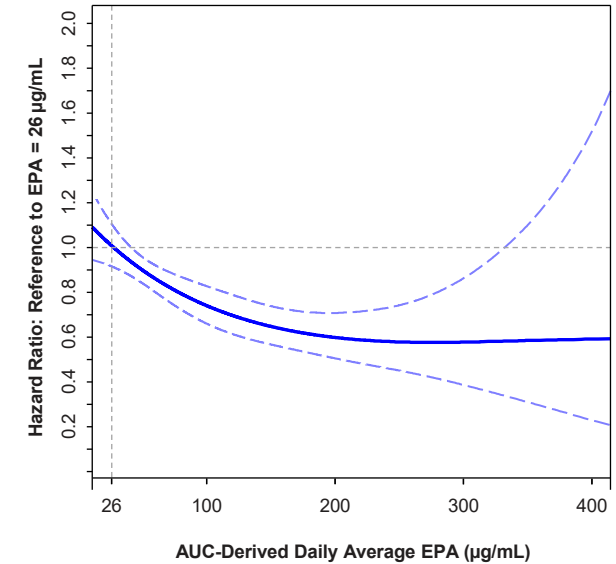
Key Secondary Endpoint<sup>1-5</sup>



Cardiovascular Death<sup>1,2,4-6</sup>



Total Mortality<sup>1,2,4-6</sup>



No. of Patients 5196 2400 756 87 10

5212 2442 771 89 11

5226 2471 789 94 12

5225 2471 789 94 12

**P\* < 0.001 for all**

Dose-response hazard ratio — 95% Confidence Interval (CI) - - -

Note: Area under the curve (AUC)-derived daily average serum EPA (µg/mL) is the daily average of all available post baseline EPA measurements prior to the event. Dose-response hazard ratio (solid line) and 95% CI (dotted lines) are estimated from the Cox proportional hazard model with a spline term for EPA and adjustment for randomization factors and statin compliance<sup>1</sup>, age<sup>2</sup>, sex<sup>3</sup>, baseline diabetes<sup>4</sup>, hsCRP<sup>5</sup>, treatment compliance<sup>6</sup>.

\*P value is <0.001 for both non-linear trend and for regression slope.

Bhatt DL. ACC/WCC 2020, Chicago (virtual).

# Treatment-Emergent Adverse Events

## No Overall Treatment Difference in Adverse Event Profiles

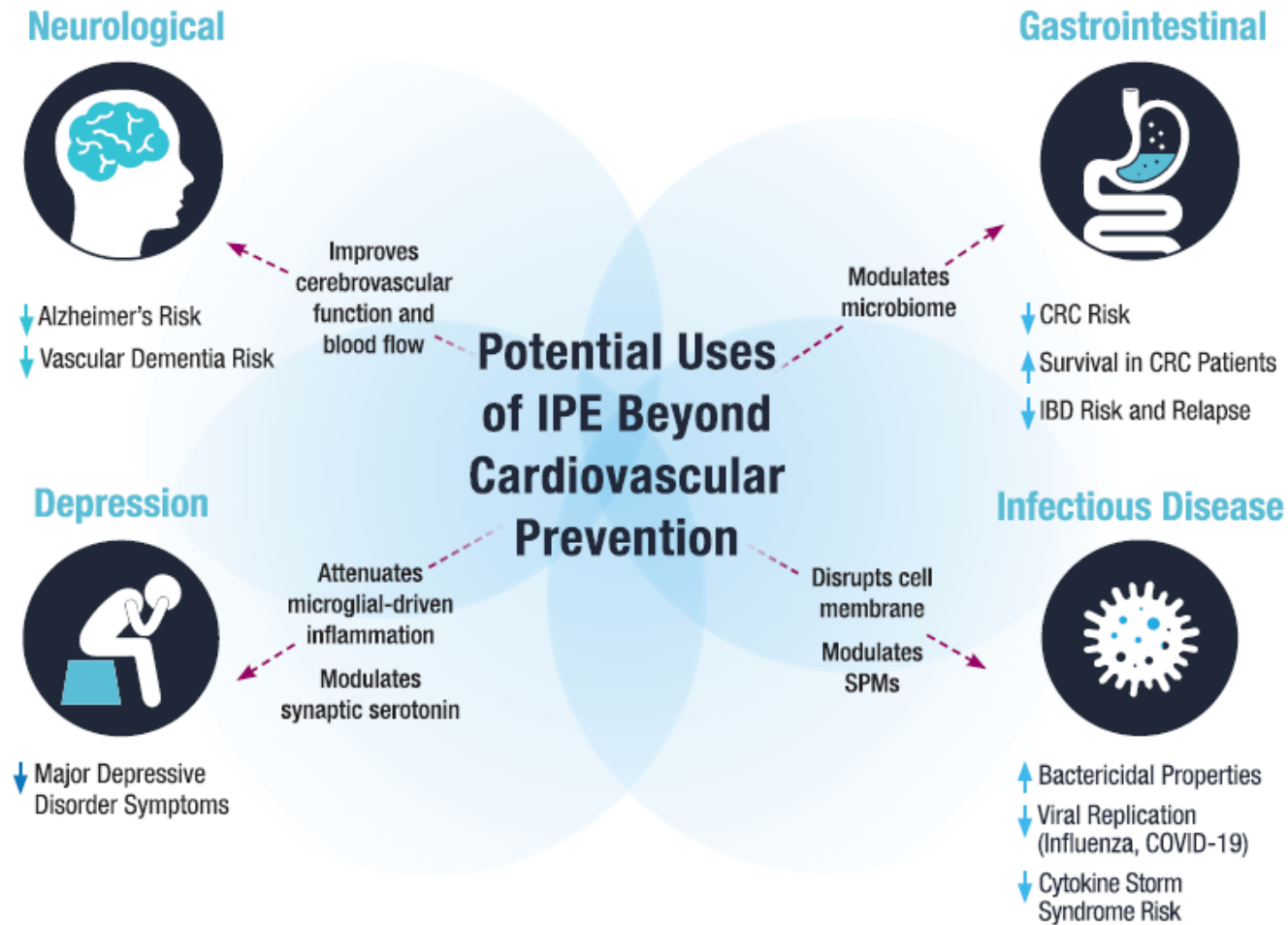
	Icosapent Ethyl (N=4089)	Placebo (N=4090)	P-value*
Subjects with at Least One TEAE, n (%)	3343 (81.8%)	3326 (81.3%)	0.63
Serious TEAE	1252 (30.6%)	1254 (30.7%)	0.98
TEAE Leading to Withdrawal of Study Drug	321 (7.9%)	335 (8.2%)	0.60
Serious TEAE Leading to Withdrawal of Study Drug	88 (2.2%)	88 (2.2%)	>0.99
Serious TEAE Leading to Death	94 (2.3%)	102 (2.5%)	0.61

TEAE event rates represent the enrolled high CV risk patients and the 4.9-year median study follow-up.

\* From Fisher's exact test.



# Potential Future Uses of Icosapent Ethyl Beyond CV Prevention



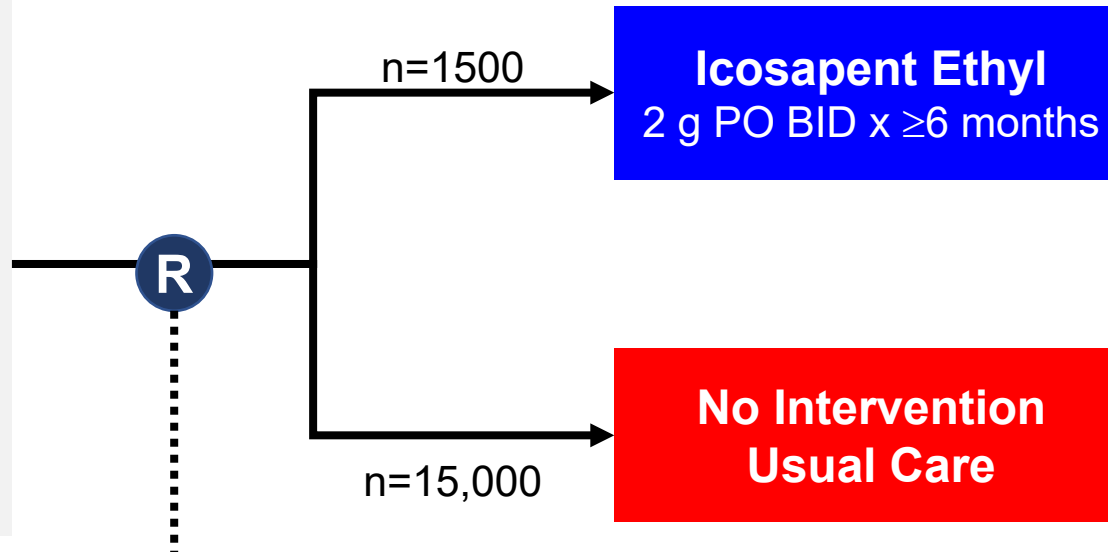
# Ongoing SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Trials With **IPE**

## MITIGATE:

A Pragmatic Randomized Trial of **Icosapent Ethyl** for High-Cardiovascular Risk Adults (Open-Label)

### Inclusion Criteria

- $\geq 50$  years of age
- No prior history of COVID-19
- Established ASCVD (prior MI, PCI, CABG, ischemic stroke, and/or PAD)



### Stratification

- Age
- Pre-existing respiratory status

### Primary Endpoints

- Rate of patients with moderate or severe confirmed viral URI at minimum follow-up of 6 months
- Worst clinical status due to a confirmed viral URI over a minimum follow-up of 6 months

MITIGATE: ~500 patients consented to **IPE** arm as of 12/12/2020

ASCVD, atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; BID, twice daily; CABG, coronary artery bypass graft; MI, myocardial infarction; PAD, peripheral artery disease; PCI, percutaneous coronary intervention; PO, per os; URI, upper respiratory tract infection.

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04505098>.

# Σc1a SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Trials With IPE



## PREPARE-IT 1

### Prevention of COVID-19 With EPA in Healthcare Providers at Risk - Intervention Trial (Double-Blind)

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Doctors, nurses, ancillary/ cleaning staff working in ICU or EDs that care for COVID-19 patients
- Personnel performing aerosol-generating procedures on COVID-19 patients
- Relatives of confirmed COVID-19 patients who have been in contact
- Laboratory staff currently running COVID-19 tests
- General population at risk



#### Primary Endpoints

- Percentage of patients positive for SARS-CoV-2 up to day 60
- Highest mean WHO descriptive score of COVID-19 in the icosapent ethyl group vs placebo group up to day 60

**PREPARE-IT 1 - 1430 Patients Randomized as of 12/12/2020**

**PREPARE-IT 2 - 9 Patients Randomized as of 12/12/2020**

BID, twice daily; ED, emergency department; ICU, intensive care unit; IPE, icosapent ethyl; WHO, World Health Organization.

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04460651>.

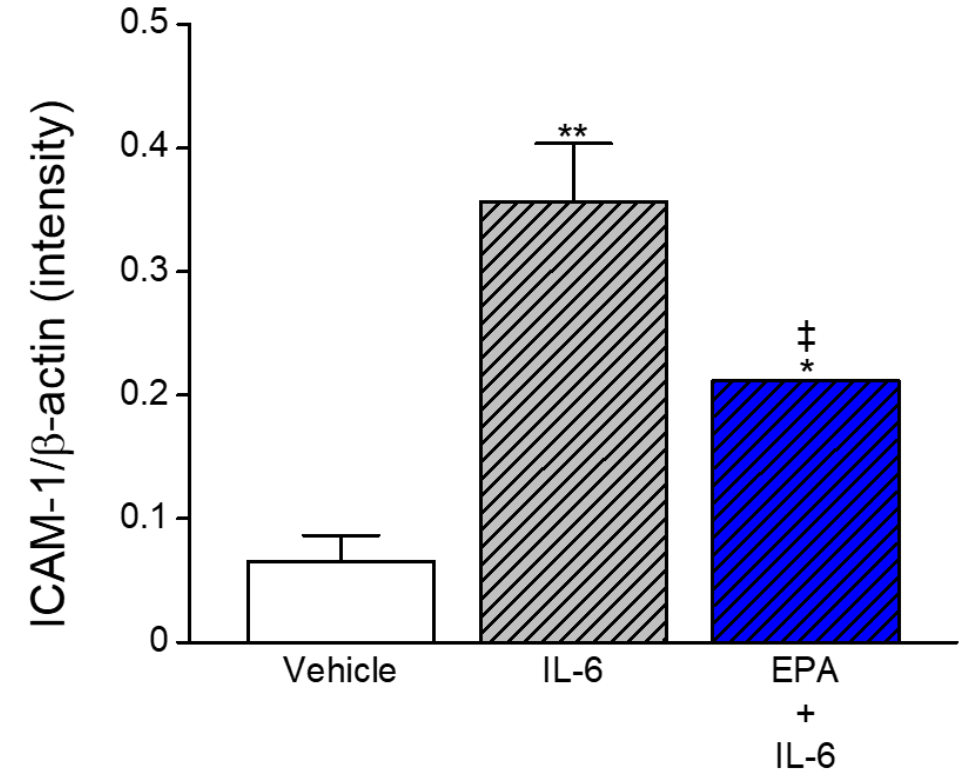
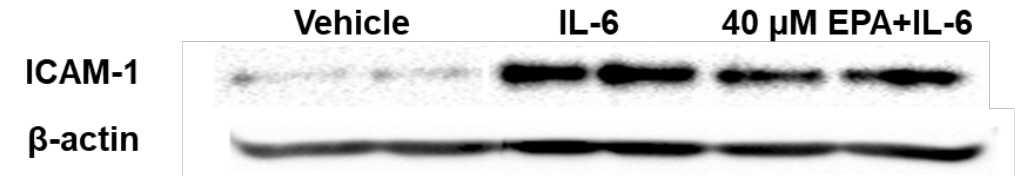
# Novel Anti-inflammatory Effects of EPA in Human Pulmonary and Vascular Endothelium in Vitro

1. EPA Reduces Expression of Pulmonary ACE and ICAM-1 During Inflammation with IL-6<sup>1</sup>
2. EPA Preserves Vascular Endothelial Function Following IL-6 Exposure as Compared to DHA and AA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Presented at NLA 2020 (*Abstract #*: 245). Sherratt SCR, Dawoud H, Malinski T, Libby P, Bhatt DL, Mason RP.

<sup>2</sup>Presented at NLA 2020 (*Abstract #*: 244). Mason RP, Dawoud H, Sherratt SCR, Libby P, Bhatt DL, Malinski T.

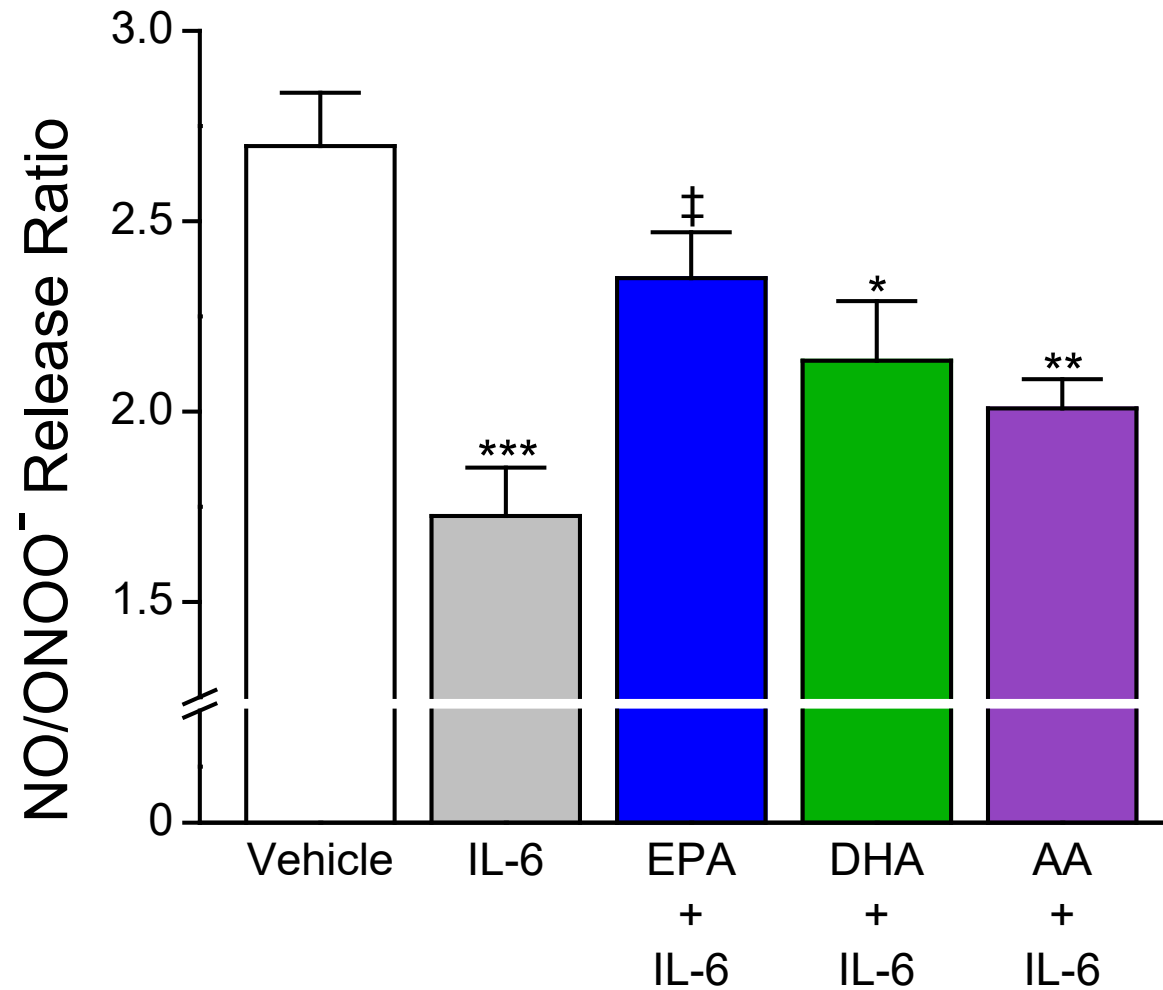
# EPA Reduces Expression of Pulmonary ACE and ICAM-1 During Inflammation Induced by IL-6



Statistical indicators: \*\* $p < 0.01$  versus vehicle; \* $p < 0.05$  versus vehicle;  $\ddagger p < 0.05$  versus IL-6 alone (Student-Newman-Keuls Multiple Comparisons Test; overall ANOVA:  $p = 0.0052$ ,  $F = 48.203$ ). Values are mean  $\pm$  SD ( $N = 2$ ).



# **EPA Preserves Vascular Endothelial Function Following IL-6 Exposure Compared with DHA and AA**



Statistical indicators: \*\*\*p<0.001 versus vehicle; \*\*p<0.01 versus vehicle; \*p<0.05 versus vehicle; ‡p<0.05 versus IL-6 alone (Student-Newman-Keuls Multiple Comparisons Test; overall ANOVA: p = 0.0007, F = 8.488). Values are mean ± SEM (N = 4-5).

Presented at NLA 2020 (Abstract #: 244). Mason RP, Dawoud H, Sherratt SCR, Libby P, Bhatt DL, Malinski T.

# **VASCEPA COVID-19 CardioLink-9**

# VASCEPA COVID-19 CardioLink-9

An Investigation on the Effects of **Icosapent Ethyl** on  
Inflammatory Biomarkers in Individuals With COVID-19

Jun 04,  
2020

## Inclusion Criteria

- Positive local SARS-CoV-2 test result within the preceding 72 hours
- $\geq 1$  of the following:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Sore throat
  - Shortness of breath
  - Myalgia

n=50  
R  
n=50

**Icosapent Ethyl**  
4 g PO BID x 3 days

**Icosapent Ethyl**  
2 g PO BID x 11 days

**No Placebo (Open-Label)**

Nov 06,  
2020

## Biomarker Endpoint

Change in hs-CRP levels from randomization to day 14 in the **icosapent ethyl** arm

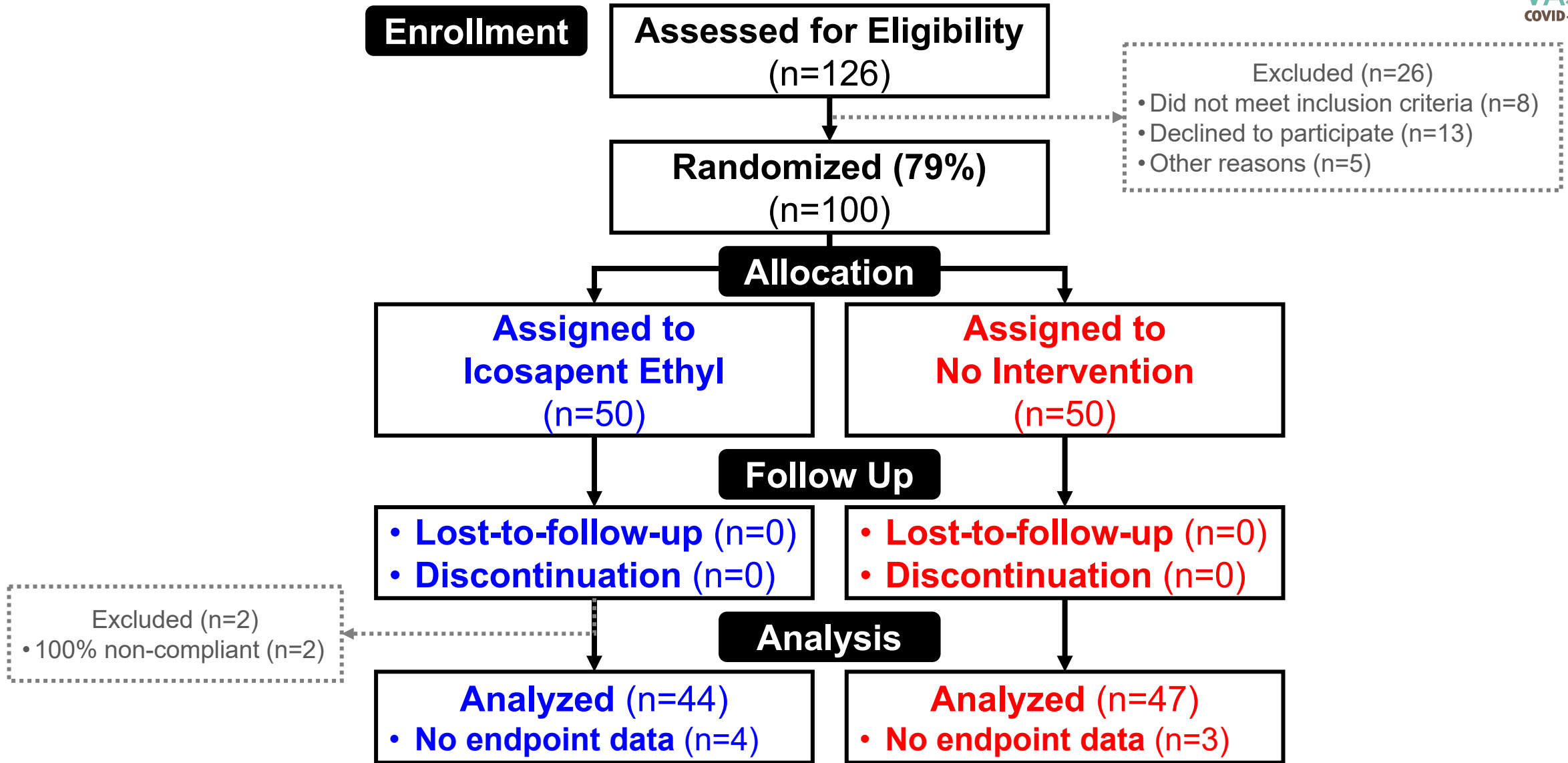
## Clinical Endpoint

Change in FLU-PRO score from randomization to day 14 in the **icosapent ethyl** arm

# CONSORT Figure



VASCEPA  
COVID-19 CardioLink-9



# Baseline Characteristics

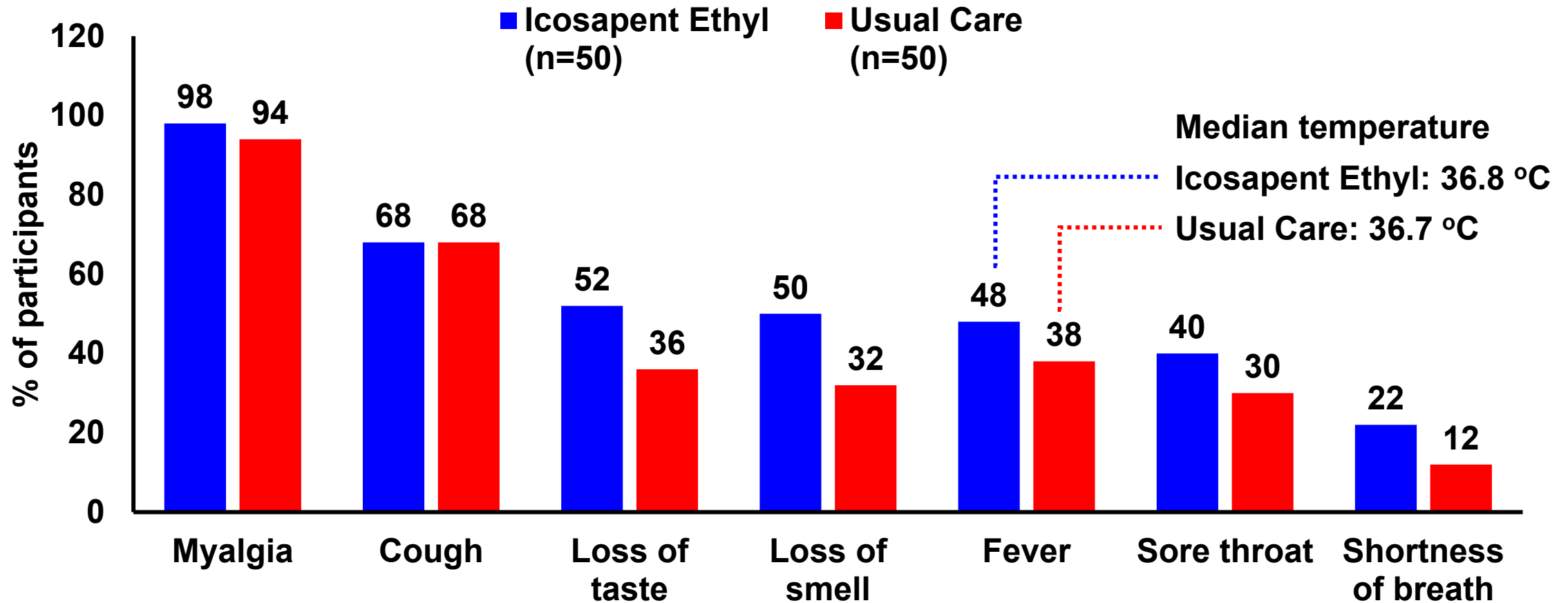
	Icosapent Ethyl (n=50)	Usual Care (n=50)
Age, years	46	40
Women	52%	58%
Median Body Mass Index, kg/m <sup>2</sup>	25	24
Blood Pressure, mmHg	121/80	118/79
Total cholesterol, mg/dL	162	166
LDL-cholesterol, mg/dL	85	89
HDL-cholesterol, mg/dL	43	46
Triglycerides, mg/dL	133	124
Any Comorbidity	36%	42%

Data shown are for the intention-to-treat population. Continuous data are presented as median values.

**Bhatt DL et al. NLA 2020 Late Breaking Presentation**



# COVID-19 Symptoms Within 72 h Preceding the Baseline Visit



# Inflammatory Biomarker Endpoint

# Inflammatory Biomarker Endpoint

## Unadjusted hs-CRP Changes from Baseline to Day 14

	Baseline (mg/L)	Day 14 (mg/L)	Median Percent Change from Baseline	Median Change from Baseline (mg/L)	P-value (within group)
<b>Icosapent Ethyl (n=44)</b>	3.2 (0.9, 11.6)	1.6 (0.6, 4.4)	-25.0 (-80.1, 26.7)	-0.5 (-6.9, 0.4)	0.011
<b>Usual Care (n=47)</b>	2.3 (0.7, 6.5)	2.1 (0.5, 5.8)	-5.6 (57.1, 84.2)	-0.1 (-3.2, 1.7)	0.51

P-value (between groups) 0.082

Data are presented as median (interquartile range).

hs-CRP, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein.

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# Inflammatory Biomarker Endpoint

## Changes in hs-CRP from Baseline to Day 14

*Adjusted by Sex, Age<sup>a</sup> and Baseline CV Risk<sup>b</sup>*

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P-value (between groups) 0.043

<sup>a</sup>, men <45 vs ≥45 years and women <55 vs ≥55 years. <sup>b</sup>, absence or presence of cardiovascular comorbidities.

Data are presented as median (interquartile range).

CV, cardiovascular; hs-CRP, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein.

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CV, cardiovascular; hs-CRP, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein.

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# Other Biomarker Endpoints

## Changes in D-Dimer and Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate from Baseline to Day 14

D-Dimer	Baseline (µg/L)	Day 14 (µg/L)	P-value (within group)
Icosapent Ethyl (n=44)	324.0	286.5	0.048
Usual Care (n=47)	292.5	270.0	0.53
P-value (between groups) 0.30			

Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate	Baseline (mm/hour)	Day 14 (mm/hour)	P-value (within group)
Icosapent Ethyl (n=44)	18.0	15.5	0.20
Usual Care (n=47)	14.0	15.0	0.96
P-value (between groups) 0.28			

Data are presented as medians.

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# Other Biomarker Endpoints

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Usual Care (n=47)	14.0	15.0	0.96

P-value (between groups) 0.2775

Data are presented as medians.

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# Clinical Endpoint

# FLU-PRO SCORE

- The FLU-PRO score is a validated patient-reported outcome measure to evaluate the presence, severity and duration of flu symptoms in clinical trials
- The 32-item score provides a comprehensive evaluation of the full range of symptoms
- The 6 domains are Nose, Throat, Eyes, Chest/Respiratory, Gastrointestinal, and Body/Systemic

# Clinical Endpoint

## Prevalence of FLU-PRO Symptoms

$P=0.003$



Values shown are based on number of patients with non-missing assessments at respective visits.

FLU-PRO, InFLUenza Patient-Reported Outcome.

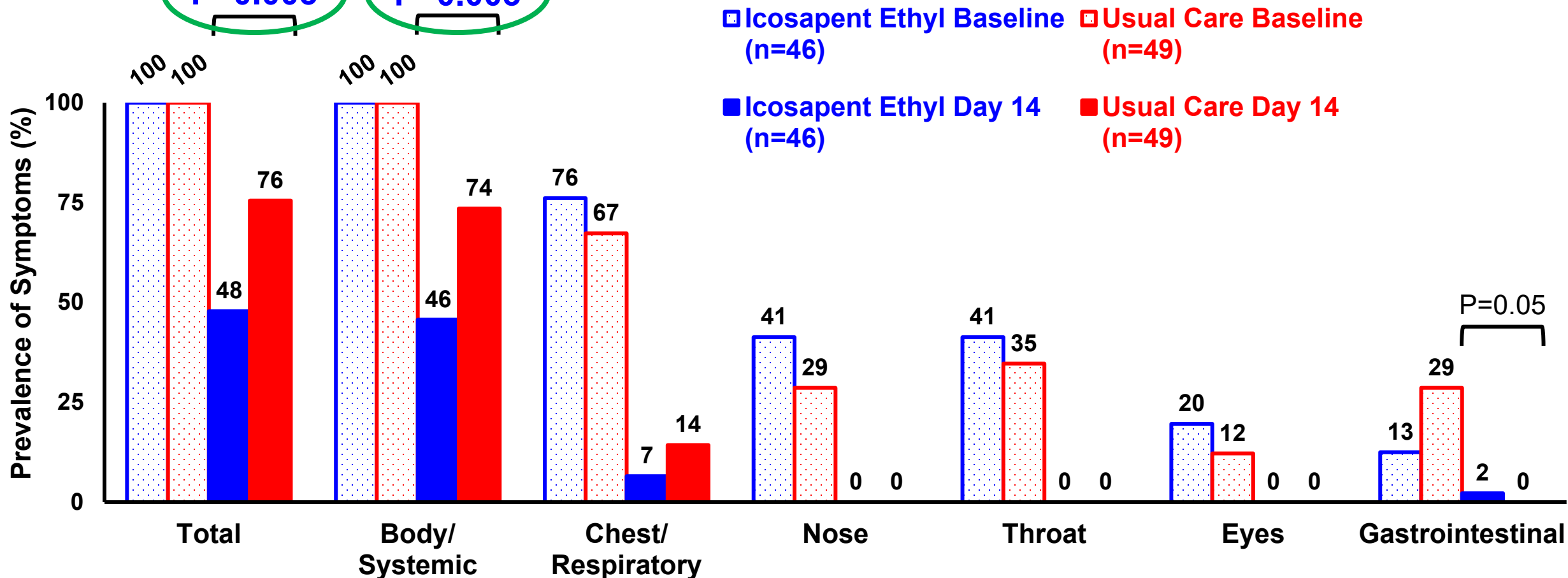
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# Clinical Endpoint

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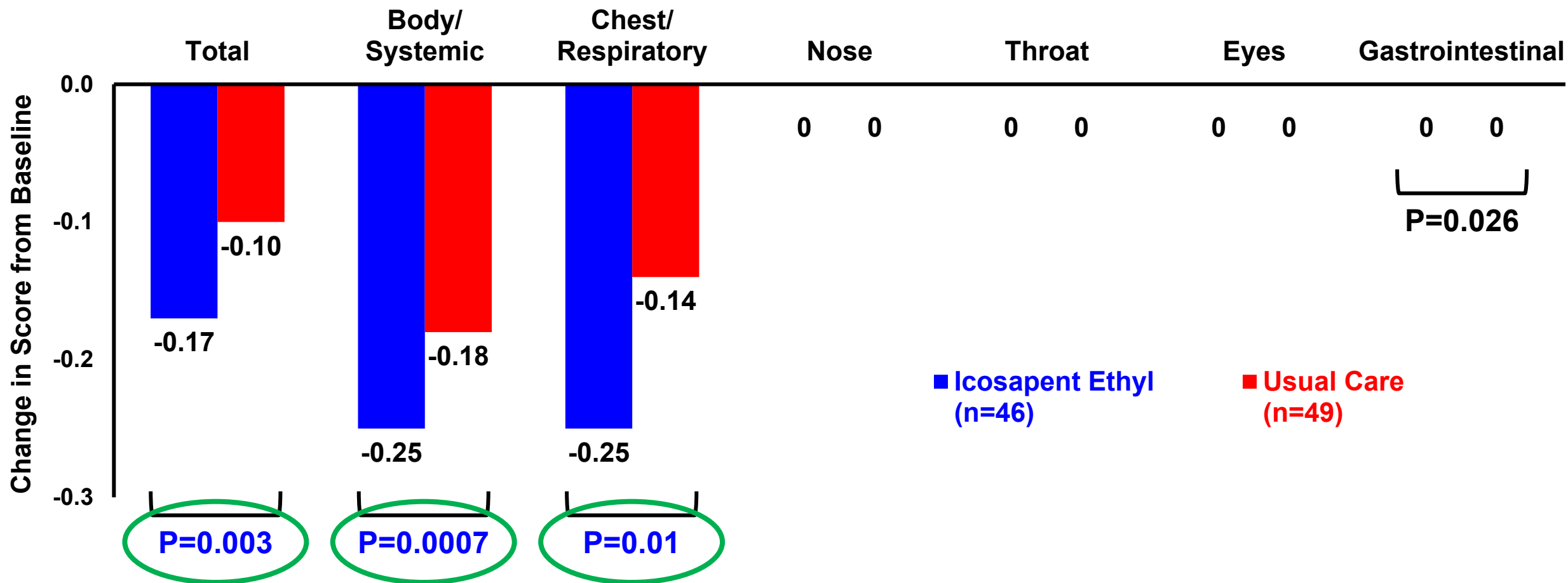
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FLU-PRO, InFLUenza Patient-Reported Outcome.

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# FLU-PRO Scores

## Changes in Total and Individual Domain Scores from Baseline to Day 14





# Adverse Events

n (%)	Icosapent Ethyl (n=50)	Usual Care (n=50)
Total adverse events	6 (12)	3 (6)
Mild adverse events		
Gastrointestinal disorders	4 (8)	0 (0)
Moderate adverse events		
Gastrointestinal disorders	1 (2)	0 (0)
Respiratory disorders	1 (2)	3 (6)

# Limitations

Limitations include the modest sample size and unblinded nature of this randomized trial.

Also, while the reduction in high sensitivity C-reactive protein within the **icosapent ethyl** arm was statistically significant, the between group comparison was not statistically significant in the unadjusted model.

Finally, the trial was not powered for clinical events.

- Nevertheless, with the caveats of an unblinded trial, the highly significant improvement in patient-reported outcomes in the context of a pandemic may be important.

# Significant Correlation Between Improvement in FLU-PRO and Decrease in hs-CRP with **IPE**

FLU-PRO Scores	Icosapent Ethyl (n=44)		Usual Care (n=47)	
	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-value	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Total	41%	0.004	22%	0.14
Body/Systemic	41%	0.005	18%	0.24
Chest/Respiratory	57%	0.00004	3%	0.86

# Significant Correlation Between Improvement in FLU-PRO and Decrease in hs-CRP with **IPE**

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	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-value	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Total	41%	<b>0.004</b>	22%	0.14
Body/Systemic	41%	<b>0.005</b>	18%	0.24
Chest/Respiratory	57%	<b>0.00004</b>	3%	0.86

# Conclusions – Loading Dose of **IPE**

In conclusion, this randomized trial represents the **first human experience with a loading dose of icosapent ethyl**.

It has demonstrated the **safety and tolerability of this loading dose** in a modest sample size, which is being confirmed in **PREPARE-IT**.

This safety experience opens the door on **future studies using a loading dose in other conditions**, including at the time of:

- Acute coronary syndromes
- Stroke
- PCI
- CABG

# Conclusions – **IPE** in COVID-19 Outpatients



Regarding COVID-19, this study provides the **first evidence of an early anti-inflammatory effect of icosapent ethyl** in symptomatic COVID-19 positive outpatients.

The **25% reduction in hsCRP** is consistent with anti-inflammatory effects of **icosapent ethyl** demonstrated in hypertriglyceridemic patients.

The **large and significant improvement in patient-reported symptoms** may provide a safe, well-tolerated, and relatively inexpensive option to impact upon COVID-19 related morbidity.

- Though this finding should be confirmed in a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial.





BRIGHAM AND  
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| Heart & Vascular Center |

***Thank You!***

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HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL



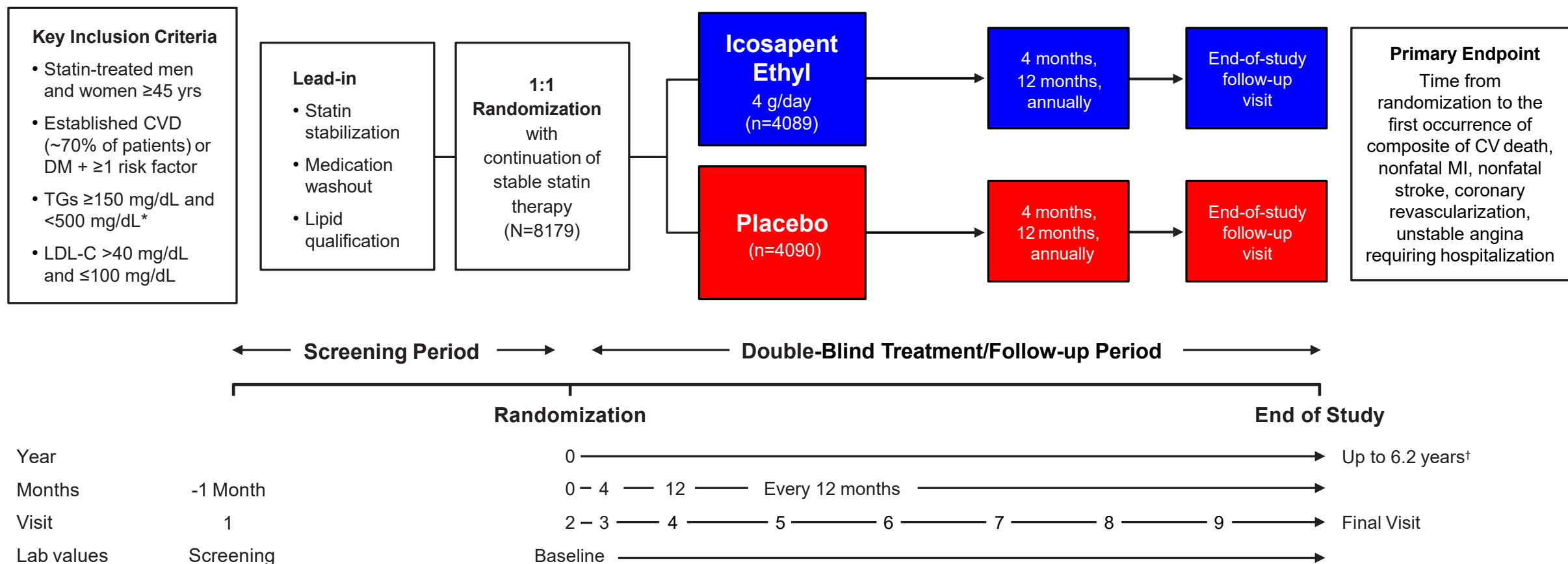
[www.brighamandwomens.org/heart](http://www.brighamandwomens.org/heart)

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR INVESTIGATORS,  
STUDY COORDINATORS, AND PATIENTS!**



**BACKUP**

# REDUCE-IT Design



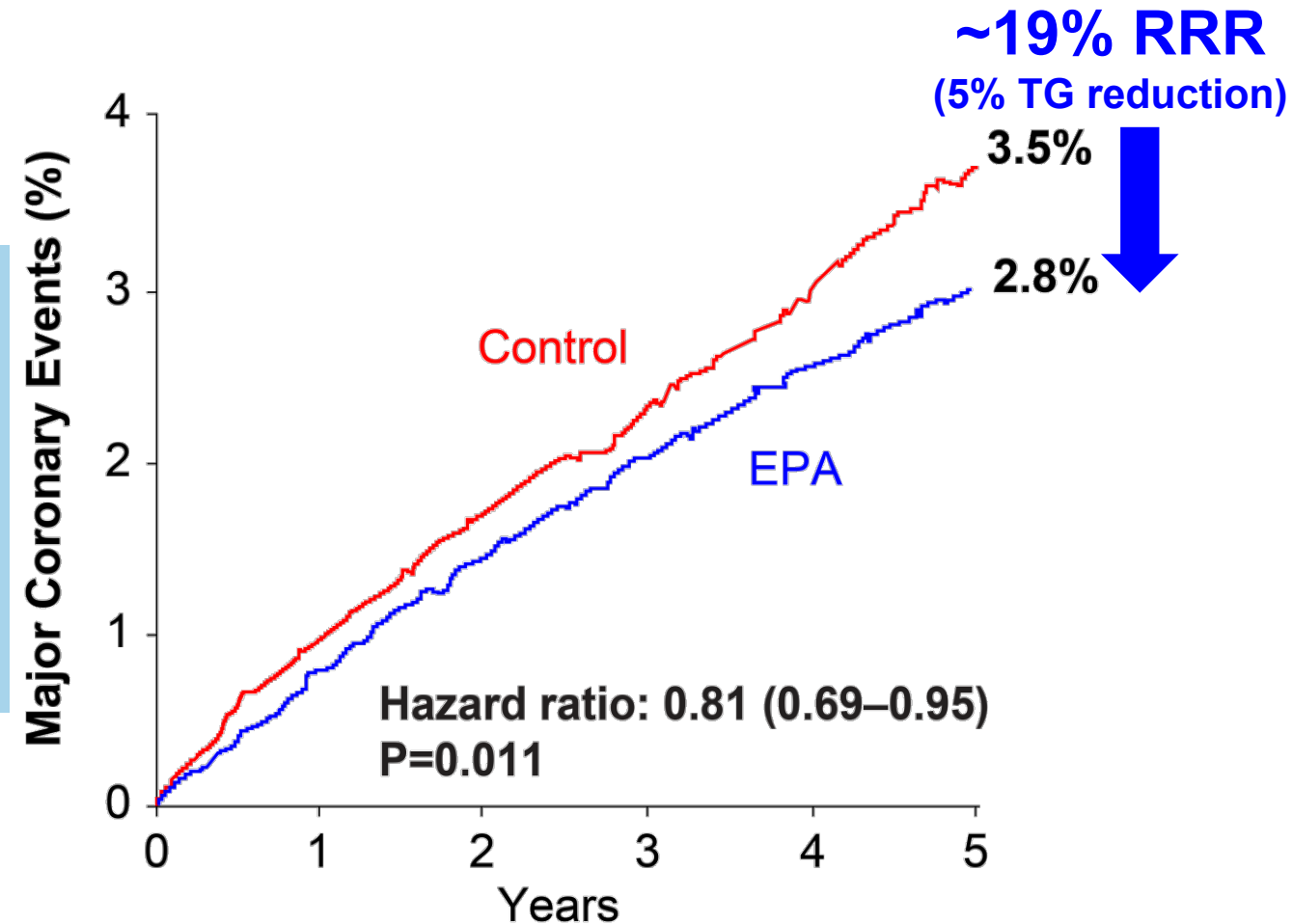
\*Due to the variability of TGs, a 10% allowance existed in the initial protocol, which permitted patients to be enrolled with qualifying TGs  $\geq 135$  mg/dL. Protocol amendment 1 (May 2013) changed the lower limit of acceptable TGs from 150 mg/dL to 200 mg/dL, with no variability allowance.

†Median trial follow-up duration was 4.9 years (minimum 0.0, maximum 6.2 years).

**Bhatt DL, Steg PG, Brinton EA, et al; on behalf of the REDUCE-IT Investigators. Rationale and design of REDUCE-IT: Reduction of Cardiovascular Events with Icosapent Ethyl–Intervention Trial. *Clin Cardiol.* 2017;40:138-148.**  
**REDUCE-IT ClinicalTrials.gov number, NCT01492361.**

# JELIS Found Significant CV Risk Reduction with Icosapent Ethyl (EPA)

- N=18,645 Japanese patients
- Elevated total cholesterol
- No pre-specified minimum triglyceride (TG) level
- Randomized, open-label (no placebo)
- Blinded endpoint adjudication (PROBE design)
- 80% primary prevention
- 69% women
- ~Half of patients with baseline normal TGs



# JELIS Found Significant Reduction in Joint, Back, and Muscle Pain with Icosapent Ethyl

## Common adverse experiences

<b>Pain</b> (joint pain, lumbar pain, muscle pain)	180 (2.0%)	144 (1.6%)	0.04
<b>Gastrointestinal disturbance</b> (nausea, diarrhea, epigastric discomfort)	155 (1.7%)	352 (3.8%)	<0.0001
<b>Skin abnormality</b> (eruption, itching, exanthema, eczema)	65 (0.7%)	160 (1.7%)	<0.0001
<b>Hemorrhage</b> (cerebral, fundal, epistaxis, subcutaneous)	60 (0.6%)	105 (1.1%)	0.0006

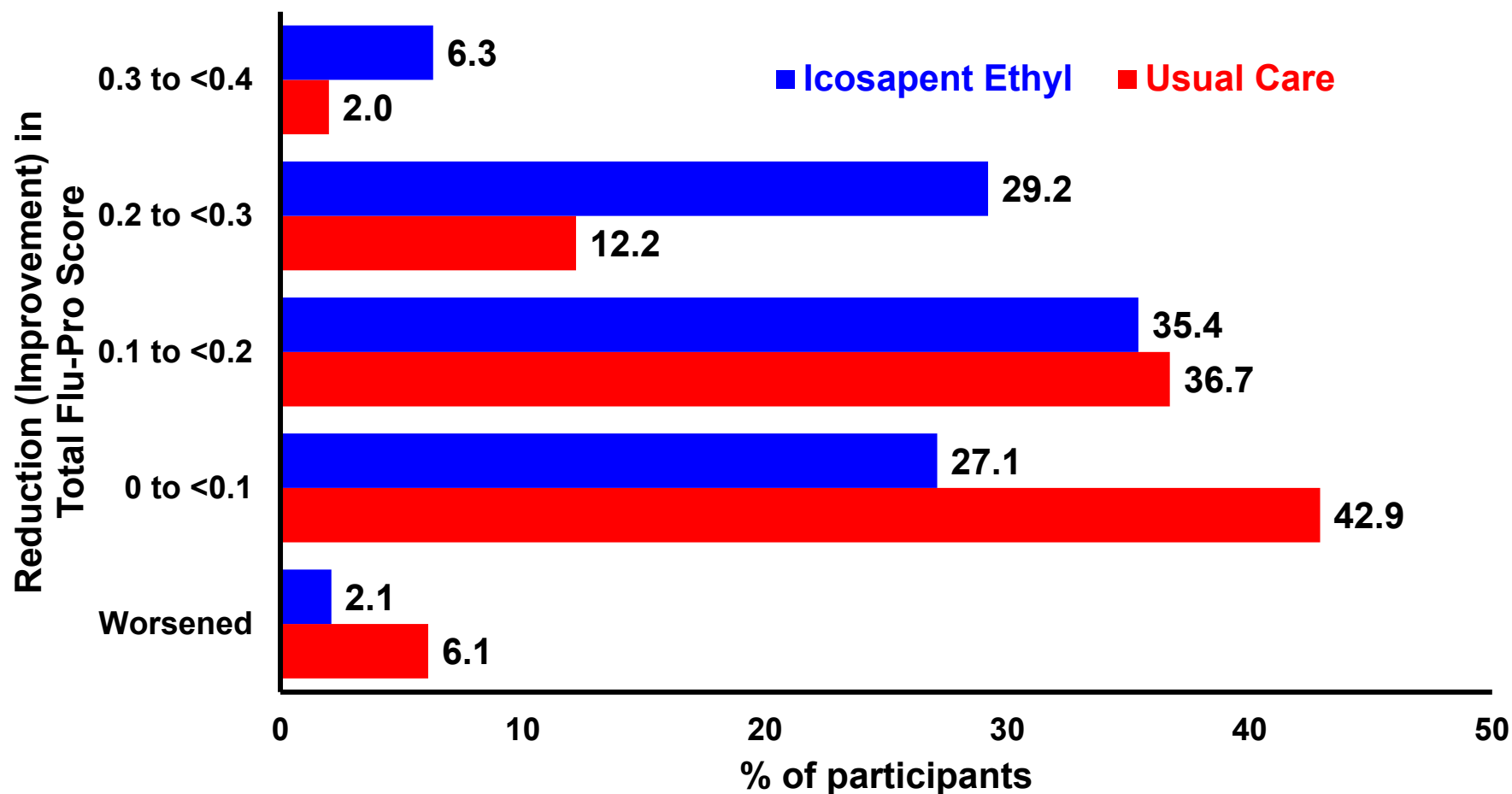
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# FLU-PRO Scores

## Changes in Total Score from Baseline to Day 14



Percent values are based on number of patients in each treatment group.

FLU-PRO, InFLUenza Patient-Reported Outcome.

Bhatt DL et al. NLA 2020 Late Breaking Presentation