

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Lecanemab in Early Alzheimer's Disease

van Dyck CH et al. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2212948

CLINICAL PROBLEM

Some evidence suggests that amyloid removal slows the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Lecanemab, an anti-amyloid monoclonal antibody with high affinity for soluble amyloid protofibrils, is being tested in early Alzheimer's disease.

CLINICAL TRIAL

Design: A phase 3, multicenter, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial assessed the efficacy and safety of lecanemab in patients 50 to 90 years of age with early Alzheimer's disease.

Intervention: 1795 participants in North America, Europe, and Asia were assigned to receive intravenous lecanemab (10 mg per kilogram of body weight every 2 weeks) or placebo. The primary efficacy end point was the change in the score on the Clinical Dementia Rating–Sum of Boxes (CDR-SB) from baseline, with higher scores indicating greater impairment.

RESULTS

Efficacy: At 18 months, mean CDR-SB scores had worsened in both groups. The mean change in CDR-SB score was smaller (indicating less cognitive and functional decline) in the lecanemab group.

Safety: Overall incidences of adverse events were similar in the two groups. The most common adverse events in the lecanemab group included infusion-related reactions and amyloid-related imaging abnormalities with edema or effusions.

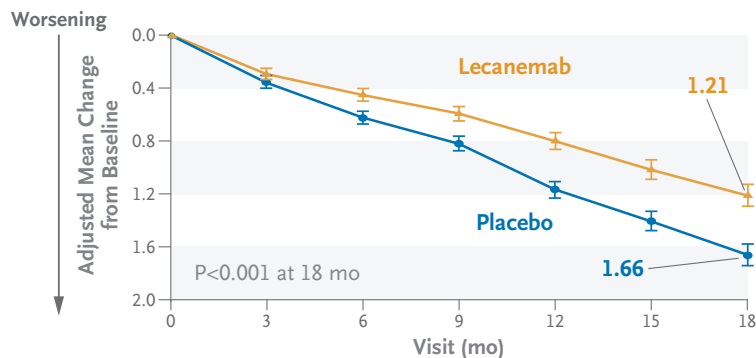
LIMITATIONS AND REMAINING QUESTIONS

- Longer-term follow-up is needed; an open-label extension study is ongoing.
- The trial was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and, as a result, faced challenges including missing data, missed doses, delayed assessments, and intercurrent illnesses.
- Occurrences of amyloid-related imaging abnormalities may have led to unblinding of participants and investigators.

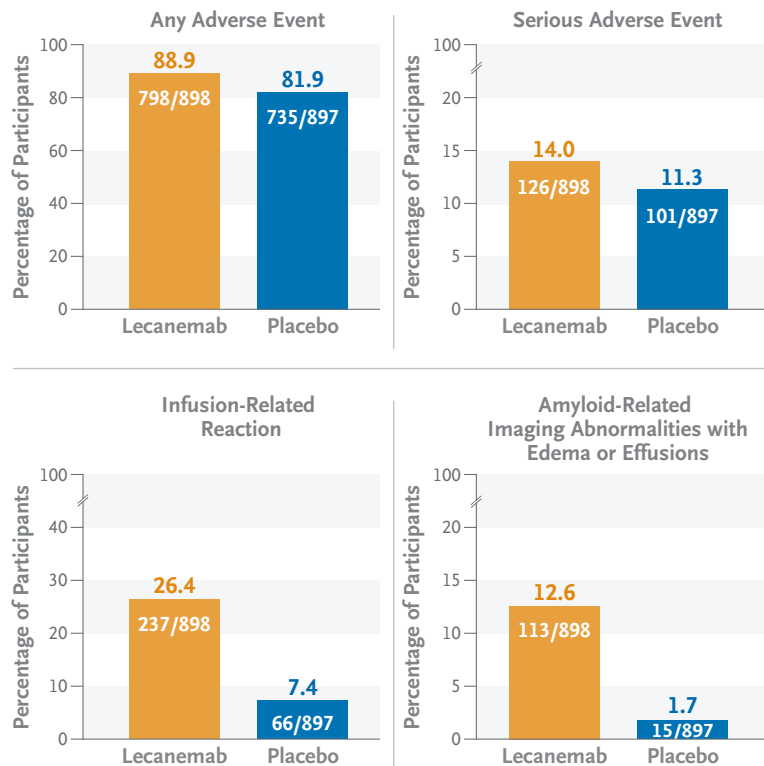
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Change in CDR-SB Score (Range 0–18)

Difference in least-squares mean change, -0.45 (95% CI, -0.67 to -0.23)



Safety Outcomes



CONCLUSIONS

In patients with early Alzheimer's disease, lecanemab was associated with moderately less decline on measures of cognition and function than placebo over a period of 18 months.