



**FDG-PET/CT after 2 cycles of RCHOP in DLBCL predicts complete remission but has limited value in identifying patients with poor outcome - Final result of UK-NCRI prospective study**

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3 **FDG-PET/CT after 2 cycles of RCHOP in DLBCL predicts complete remission**  
4 **but has limited value in identifying patients with poor outcome - Final result of**  
5 **UK-NCRI prospective study**  
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8 College London Cancer Trials Centre.  
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## ABSTRACT

### PURPOSE

The UK-NCRI initiated a prospective study (UKCRN-ID 1760) to assess the prognostic value of early FDG-PET/CT in Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma (DLBCL).

### METHODS

189 DLBCL patients treated with RCHOP had baseline and post-cycle-2 PET (PET2) within a quality assurance framework. Treatment decisions were based on CT; PET2 was archived for central blinded reporting after treatment completion. The association of PET2 response with end-of-treatment CT, progression-free (PFS) and overall survival (OS) was explored.

### RESULTS

The end-of-treatment complete response rate on CT was 83.9%, 75.0%, 70.5%, 40.4% and 36.4% for Deauville score (DS) 1 (n=34), 2 (n=39), 3 (n=46), 4 (n=56) and 5 (n=14) ( $p<0.001$ ), and 64.1% and 50.0% for  $\Delta\text{SUVmax}\geq 66\%$  (n=168) and  $<66\%$  (n=21) respectively ( $p=0.25$ ). After 5.4 years median follow-up, 5-year PFS was 69.4%, 72.8%, 76.7%, 71.2% and 47.6% by DS 1-5 ( $p=0.01$ ), and 72.6% and 57.1% by  $\Delta\text{SUVmax}\geq 66\%$  and  $<66\%$  ( $p=0.03$ ) respectively. The association with DS remained in multivariable analyses, and was consistent for OS.

### CONCLUSIONS

**Early complete metabolic response (DS 1-3) at interim PET/CT after 2 cycles of RCHOP in DLBCL is associated with higher end-of-treatment complete and overall response rates; however, only DS-5 patients had inferior PFS and OS.**

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3 **Keywords:** Lymphoma, Large B-Cell, Diffuse (DLBCL); positron emission tomography  
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5 (PET); R-CHOP chemotherapy.  
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## INTRODUCTION

The cure rate of diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) has improved over the last two decades with the addition of rituximab (R) to cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine, prednisolone (CHOP) chemotherapy and improvements in supportive care that have enabled more patients to tolerate full-dose chemotherapy [1,2]. However, a significant proportion of patients are not cured with R-CHOP. In clinical trials this ranges from 20-30% and 30-40% in population-based studies [3]. Salvage treatments after R-CHOP are less effective than after CHOP [4]. Improving the outcome of DLBCL requires identification of patients who are unlikely to be cured by R-CHOP and the availability of alternative, more effective treatments. Efforts to classify DLBCL according to molecular profile and to target specific pathways are ongoing but have not resulted in a change in therapeutic options yet [5]. Therefore, early identification of patients unlikely to be cured with R-CHOP remains an important step towards testing alternative approaches to improve their chance of cure.

PET-CT shows metabolic response earlier than anatomical response on CT and early response assessment may predict final remission and prognosis. Studies have shown that interim PET (iPET) is a strong prognostic indicator in Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) and several clinical studies testing response-adapted treatment algorithms in HL have been performed [6,7]. In DLBCL, while early data favoured iPET [8,10], more recent data have suggested iPET is less predictive for prognosis with immunochemotherapy and end-treatment PET is a better predictor [11-13].

Response criteria have also evolved which affect the utility of iPET in response assessment.

The Deauville criteria, a 5-point scale, has been adopted worldwide as the visual assessment method of choice and is recommended by international guidelines replacing older criteria [14,15]. Semi-quantitative response assessment (e.g. reduction in the maximum standardised uptake value,  $\Delta$ SUVmax) has also been studied in DLBCL with some success [16].

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3 The UK National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) initiated a prospective blinded study  
4 (UKCRN-ID 1760) to evaluate the prognostic value of 18F-fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG)  
5 PET/CT after 2 cycles of R-CHOP in a subset of patients treated in the phase III randomised  
6 controlled trial of RCHOP-21 versus RCHOP-14 [17]. The study protocol allowed response  
7 assessment by CT only, and iPET performed after 2 cycles was not used for response  
8 assessment nor treatment decisions.  
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11 The study aims were to: (1) evaluate the prognostic value of FDG-PET-CT response after 2  
12 cycles of R-CHOP chemotherapy for newly diagnosed DLBCL, in terms of final remission  
13 status after treatment and long-term outcomes, and (2) evaluate if a quantitative method of  
14 response assessment ( $\Delta$ SUVmax) improved the prognostic value of visual assessment.  
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## 27 **PATIENTS AND METHODS**

### 28 **Study design and population:**

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30 Eligibility criteria included: a) newly diagnosed adult patients with histologically proven  
31 DLBCL confirmed by a specialist histopathologist, b) entry into UK-NCRI phase III  
32 randomised study (ISRCTN 16017947) comparing RCHOP-21 to RCHOP-14, c) written  
33 informed consent, and d) a baseline FDG-PET/CT showing uptake in sites of disease.  
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35 Exclusion criteria were: a) negative pre-treatment FDG-PET/CT, and b) PET/CT performed  
36 more than 2 weeks before commencing treatment. Patients were treated with R-CHOP given  
37 as either a 14-day cycle x6 + 2 cycles of rituximab or as a 21-day cycle x8 as published  
38 previously [17]. Following the completion of randomisation in the phase III study, the PET  
39 substudy was extended as a single arm with RCHOP-21 treatment (the main trial results  
40 showed that R-CHOP-14 was not superior to R-CHOP-21, so the 21-day cycle x8 remained  
41 standard of care).  
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56 Patient registration and trial management were performed by the Cancer Research UK and  
57 University College London Cancer Trials Centre. The trial was overseen by a trial steering  
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3 committee and an independent data monitoring committee. The protocol was approved by  
4 the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the Hull and East Riding  
5 Research Ethics Committee, and carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki  
6 and the European Union Clinical Trials Directive 2001/20/EC. Patients provided written  
7 informed consent.  
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### 13 14 15 16 **Blinding procedure:**

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18 The iPET scan was not reported but archived for central review at least 3 months later to  
19 allow completion of therapy. Treating clinicians were blinded to the scan findings and  
20 Nuclear Medicine physicians reporting the PET scans were blinded to the outcome of  
21 treatment. Response was assessed with a repeat CT scan after 4 cycles of chemotherapy  
22 and after completion of treatment according to the International Workshop Standardised  
23 Response Criteria [18]. Analysis of data was performed after completion of recruitment.  
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### 34 **Response assessment on PET:**

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36 The study started before the 5-point scale (known as Deauville criteria) was introduced [19],  
37 however the protocol was later modified to allow response to be assessed by the Deauville  
38 score [DS]. Response was recorded primarily using visual assessment, although semi-  
39 quantitative measurements of SUVmax of lesion to liver were made to confirm visual  
40 assessment to minimise reporter error [12, 20-21]. Score 5 was assessed as a maximum  
41 SUV in tumour that was at least 3 times higher than the maximum SUV in a large region in  
42 the right lobe of an area of normal liver and/or the presence of new lesions attributable to  
43 lymphoma [16]. The percentage change in the maximum standardised uptake value  
44 between baseline and interim was measured, with response classified as a reduction in  
45 SUVmax of  $\geq 66\%$  [16].  
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## **PET scanning and Quality assurance**

PET-CT scans were acquired at baseline, within two weeks prior to commencing treatment and at least 10 days after the second cycle of RCHOP. Scans were performed using commonly agreed methods for quality control, as previously reported [22]. Physicists from the Core Lab at St Thomas' Hospital, London visited each participating PET Centre to scan a standard phantom to check image quality and quantitative accuracy. Patients were asked to fast for 6 hours, prior to administration of 350-400 MBq of FDG with a recommended uptake period of 90 minutes. Half body scans were acquired using the site specific protocol with respect to 2D or 3D acquisition, time per bed position and image reconstruction, but OSEM reconstruction was specified. Baseline and response scans had to be performed on the same scanner. All scans were independently reported by two Nuclear Medicine Physicians (SFB, MJOD) each with > 20 years' experience, with any differences resolved by consensus.

## **Statistical considerations**

The primary endpoint was progression-free survival (PFS) measured from the date of randomisation to the date of first appearance of disease progression, relapse or death from any cause, and censored at the date last seen. The secondary endpoints were overall survival (OS), measured from the date of randomisation to the date of death from any cause, and complete response (CR) rate assessed in accordance with the International Workshop Standardised Response Criteria for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma [18].

Previous studies showed that approximately 50% of patients have a negative PET scan after 2 cycles of chemotherapy [9,10]. Two hundred patients were required to detect a minimal clinically important difference in PFS at 2-years, of either 80% to 55% or 75% to 50%, between PET negative and positive groups respectively, with 90% power and 2-sided 5% significance level.

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3 Hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated for PFS and OS  
4 using the Cox proportional hazards model, and survival curves presented using the  
5 Kaplan–Meier method. Odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were  
6 calculated for response rates using binary logistic regression. Protocol-defined  
7 analyses included exploring the associations between these outcome measures and  
8 Deauville criteria (scores 1-5) and SUV categories. Multivariable models were used to  
9 check robustness of findings after adjusting for potentially confounding baseline  
10 characteristics. The data analysis was generated using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS  
11 Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA) and IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows version 24.0 (IBM  
12 Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

#### 26 27 **Role of the funding source:**

28  
29 The funding bodies played no role in the study design, data collection, analysis or writing of  
30 final report.  
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## RESULTS

Between December 2006 and September 2012, 231 patients with histologically proven previously untreated DLBCL were recruited, of whom 189 had baseline (PET0) and post-cycle 2 PET (PET2) scans performed according to the study protocol and were eligible for analysis. PET/CT scans were performed in 13 UK PET centres which satisfied quality assurance requirements. Forty-two patients were excluded: 15 due to patient withdrawals or scan cancellations, 12 because the interim scan was not performed, 8 for imaging protocol violations and 7 for other reasons (Figure 1).

In total, 61 patients were included from the randomised phase (RCHOP-14, n=30; RCHOP-21, n=31) and 128 patients from the RCHOP-21 single arm extension. After a median follow-up of 5.4 years, the 2- and 5-year PFS rates were 79.9% (95% CI: 74.1-85.6) and 70.9% (95% CI: 64.1-77.6), and the 2- and 5-year OS rates were 85.7% (95% CI: 80.7-90.7) and 80.1% (95% CI: 74.1-86.1) respectively. There was no evidence of a difference between treatment arms (PFS, p=0.46; OS, p=0.63). The patient characteristics of the PET substudy cohort (Table 1) were generally similar to the characteristics of the randomised trial patients, however there was a lower proportion of patients with raised LDH, B symptoms and bulky disease and more patients with low risk IPI (0-1) in the substudy cohort.

### End of treatment response:

Table 2 shows early metabolic response on interim PET in relation to final CT response which was available for 174 patients. At the completion of treatment, assessment of response based on CT imaging showed that 109 patients (62.6%) achieved CR/CRu, of whom, 84 (77.1%) achieved complete metabolic response (CMR) on interim PET after 2 cycles by Deauville criteria (DS 1-3), and 100 (91.7%) by quantitative criteria ( $\Delta\text{SUV}_{\text{max}} \geq 66\%$ ).

**The likelihood of achieving CR/CRu was associated with the depth of metabolic response on PET2; the CR/CRu rate was 83.9% (26/31), 75.0%, (27/36) 70.5% (31/44),**

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3 **40.4% (21/52) and 36.4% (4/11) for DS 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. There was strong**  
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5 **evidence that CMR (i.e. DS 1-3) was associated with a higher CR/CRu rate compared**  
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7 **to no-CMR (OR=4.73, 95% CI: 2.43-9.20, p<0.001), and a higher overall response rate**  
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9 **(OR=2.80, 95% CI: 1.01-7.78, p=0.05). For  $\Delta$ SUVmax the frequency of achieving**  
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11 **CR/CRu was 64.1% (100/156) and 50.0% (9/18) for  $\geq$ 66% and <66% respectively**  
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13 **(OR=0.56, 95% CI: 0.21-1.49, p=0.25), and overall response rates were 91.7% (143/156)**  
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15 **and 77.8% (14/18) respectively (OR=0.32, 95% CI: 0.09-1.11, p=0.07).**

#### 18 **Progression-free & overall survival:**

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21 There was no strong evidence of a difference in PFS between the CMR **(DS 1-3)** and no-  
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23 CMR **(DS 4-5)** groups (HR=1.37, 95% CI: 0.80-2.34, p=0.25), with 2-year PFS rates of  
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25 82.3% (95% CI: 75.4-89.2) and 75.7% (95% CI: 65.7-85.7) respectively. PFS by individual  
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27 Deauville score is shown in Figure 2; there was no evidence of a difference between  
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29 individual scores 1-4, however, DS 5 had significantly worse PFS than the DS 1-4 group  
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31 (HR=2.68, 95% CI: 1.21-5.93, p=0.01), with 2-year PFS rates of 57.1% (95% CI: 31.2-83.0)  
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33 and 81.7% (95% CI: 76.0-87.4) respectively, **using predefined criteria for score 5 of**  
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35 **maximum SUV at least 3 times higher than the maximum SUV in liver and/or the**  
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37 **presence of new lesions. A post-hoc analysis was also performed assigning score 5**  
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39 **to patients with uptake at least 2 times higher than normal liver and/or new lesions**  
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41 **(suppl. Fig 1). Patients with  $\Delta$ SUVmax<66% had worse PFS than those with**  
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43  **$\Delta$ SUVmax $\geq$ 66% (HR=2.12, 95% CI: 1.07-4.21, p=0.03) (Figure 3); 11/14 (78.6%) of DS5 (3x**  
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45 **liver) patients had  $\Delta$ SUVmax<66% (suppl. Table 1).**

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49 Investigating the impact of IPI on PFS (Figure 4), there was strong evidence that patients in  
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51 the high-risk group (IPI score 4-5) had worse PFS than those with a score of 0-3 (HR=2.63,  
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53 95% CI: 1.41-4.92; p<0.01). **For patients with CMR (DS 1-3), there was a significant**  
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55 **difference in PFS between IPI 0-3 and IPI 4-5 (HR=3.16, 95% CI: 1.29-7.72, p=0.01),**  
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57 **whereas a smaller effect was observed in those with no-CMR (HR=2.01, 95% CI: 0.83-**  
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59 **4.90, p=0.12)(interaction p=0.57). Multivariable analysis demonstrated that both DS and IPI**

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3 were independently associated with PFS, but the association with  $\Delta$ SUVmax did not remain  
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5 (Table 3). **Similar results were observed in sensitivity analyses, both within RCHOP-21**  
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7 **patients only (n=169) and adjusting for trial arm, as well as when adjusting for other**  
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9 **baseline characteristics. Findings were also consistent across analyses of OS.**  
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## DISCUSSION

This is the largest prospective blinded observational study to assess the role of interim PET/CT in DLBCL treated homogenously with R-CHOP. PET/CT scans were performed after 2 cycles and not reported until the completion of treatment and all treatment decisions were made on the basis of CT. At the time of reporting, nuclear medicine physicians were blinded to treatment outcome on CT. Reporting was performed using the internationally recommended Deauville criteria and using the  $\Delta$ SUVmax, recently adopted as a method for PET-guided response adaptation in some clinical trials [23,24].

International guidance suggests using DS 1-3 to assign CMR for patients receiving standard treatment. In this study, CMR after 2 cycles using this definition was associated with a higher chance of complete remission after treatment and the depth of early metabolic response (as measured by Deauville score 1 to 5) correlated with the likelihood of CR/CRu. However, achieving early CMR was not associated with a marked improvement in PFS or OS. Whilst there was some suggestion of a difference in outcomes the effect was not as large as anticipated (i.e. observed a 6.6 percentage-point difference in 2-year PFS compared to the target of 25 percentage-points); there was only strong evidence of a difference for patients with DS 5 (24.6% difference), patients with DS 4 had similar prognosis to those with DS 1-3, **using the UK NCRI definition of score 5 of uptake greater than 3 times liver uptake and/or new lesions attributable to lymphoma. A post-hoc analysis using uptake at least 2 times higher than normal liver and/or new lesions to define DS 5, which has been used by other research groups, increased the number of patients with score 5 but with reduced discriminative power. Similar findings were reported in a US-Nordic study of 112 patients with DLBCL scanned after one cycle of R-CHOP(like) chemotherapy, whereby only the small proportion of patients with DS-5 had inferior PFS and OS [25].** There is **also** evidence from other studies that inferior outcomes are seen in patients with DS 5 in Hodgkin lymphoma, primary mediastinal B cell lymphoma and DLBCL, although these studies used response adapted strategies or treatment was

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3 consolidated with radiotherapy which could mitigate the adverse effect of a DS 4 result [26-  
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5 28].

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8 Quantitative response assessment using percentage reduction in SUVmax has been  
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10 reported to improve response prediction compared with a purely visual assessment using  
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12 the DS [21]. However, in our study with experienced readers using semi-quantitative  
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14 assessment of lesion to liver uptake to confirm their visual impression, the Deauville criteria  
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16 performed better in terms of identifying a group of patients with poor outcomes compared to  
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18  $\Delta$ SUVmax using the previously reported cut-off of 66% [21], **although it should be noted**  
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20 **that the majority of DS5 patients had  $\Delta$ SUVmax<66%**. We also studied the relationship  
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22 between IPI and DS after 2 cycles; patients with high risk (IPI 4-5) had worse PFS than the  
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24 remaining IPI categories (HR=2.63, p<0.01). A similar effect remained after adjusting for  
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26 response after 2 cycles (HR=2.86, p<0.01), suggesting that the baseline prognosis and  
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28 disease burden have an independent association with outcome even in patients showing  
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30 evidence of early chemo-sensitivity [29].

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34 There are a number of possible approaches going forwards to potentially improve the  
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36 predictive value of PET-2 in DLBCL. The addition of baseline total metabolic tumour volume  
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38 (MTV) to DS after 2 cycles has been shown to be strongly predictive, particularly for  
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40 separating patients with DS4-5 or  $\Delta$ SUVmax  $\geq$ 66% into good and poor prognosis groups  
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42 [29,30]. The addition of gene expression profiling to response may also be helpful in  
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44 improving the predictive value of PET-2 [30,31]. Testing the combination of novel agents  
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46 and R-CHOP may be a valid strategy in future studies using such a risk and response  
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48 adapted approach.

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51 A limitation of our study is the potential for selection bias, travel to a different hospital for the  
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53 additional PET scan was sometimes required and this may have resulted in preferential  
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55 accrual of motivated and fitter patients. This may explain the slightly better prognostic factors  
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57 of the study population compared to the main randomised study (RCHOP 21 versus 14).  
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59 Another limitation is the high dropout rate (18%, 42/231 patients), however, only 8 of these  
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3 were due to PET protocol violation. The majority of the dropouts were due to a lack of the  
4 second (PET2) scan, some of these patients may have missed the second scan because of  
5 disease progression which would have reduced the number of events in the study  
6 population.  
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12 The results of our study confirm reports that PET-2 is a good predictor of early response for  
13 patients with DLBCL treated with RCHOP [11, 24]. Nearly two-thirds (63.0%) of patients  
14 achieved CMR after 2 cycles and had a favourable PFS. Knowing this early has the  
15 advantage of reassuring patients and clinicians about the likely outcome of treatment as  
16 early as 4-6 weeks after starting therapy. The small proportion of patients (7.4%) with DS 5  
17 should be monitored closely as they have a high chance of earlier progression or relapse.  
18 However, unlike Hodgkin lymphoma, treatment should not be changed on the basis of PET-  
19 2. The positive predictive value of PET2 is low, even for patients with DS 5, and there is  
20 currently no treatment alternative in DLBCL that has been shown to improve outcomes for  
21 patients compared to RCHOP [32,33]. Several studies have examined treatment escalation  
22 for patients who do not achieve early CMR with RCHOP [24,26,34,35]. None showed clear  
23 evidence of benefit for non-responders, although one study where patients received  
24 intensified treatment with stem cell transplantation had similar outcomes to patients  
25 achieving CMR. The only exception to this might be the very small group of patients where  
26 there is no response or even progression on treatment who might benefit from a change of  
27 treatment.  
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46 In conclusion, this blinded prospective study of interim PET/CT in DLBCL showed that PET-  
47 2 predicts complete remission early and identifies a small group of patients who have inferior  
48 PFS and OS. However, PET-2 alone should not be used to change treatment in clinical  
49 practice and efforts to improve response assessment by combining early PET results with  
50 baseline risk factors such as metabolic tumour volume and gene expression profiling are  
51 needed.  
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**Author's contribution:**

NGM, MJO, DC & SFB designed the study. NGM, DC, AM & JAR recruited patients. MJO & SFB reported PET scans. NC was the study statistician. PS, NC, AL & LCH were responsible for data collection and all aspects of study management in trials office. All contributed to data interpretation & manuscript writing. NGM had oversight of the study.

**Compliance with Ethical Standards****Conflict of interest:**

DC received research grants from Roche, Amgen, Sanofi -Aventis, Novartis, Astra-Zeneca, Merck KGA, and Celgene; participated on compensated advisory boards for Amgen, Roche, Merck, and Sanofi -Aventis, and uncompensated advisory boards for Roche (honoraria), Merck, and Sanofi-Aventis; and provided uncompensated expert testimony for Amgen. KMA has received research funding and honoraria from Roche. JAR has received research grants from Millennium, and provided expert testimony for Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Bayer-Schering, Roche, Napp Pharmaceuticals, Novartis, and GlaxoSmithKline. AM has received a research grant from Roche, and consultancy fees, honoraria, and travel expenses from Roche. The other authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

**Role of Funding Source:**

The trial sponsor (University College London) was responsible for data gathering, entry, and validation, monitoring procedures, liaison with investigators, statistical analysis, and production of the report. The NHS and CRUK had no role in interpretation of the data or production of final report. The corresponding author had full access to all the data in the study and had final responsibility for the decision to submit for publication.

**Ethics Committee approval:**

The protocol was approved by the Hull and East Riding Research Ethics Committee, and carried out in accordance with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and the European Union Clinical Trials Directive 2001/20/EC.

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## TABLES

Table 1: Patient Characteristics

<b>Patient characteristics</b>		<b>n=189 (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Female	75 (39.7)
	Male	114 (60.3)
<b>Age</b>	Range	21 – 80 years
	Median	61 years
	≥60 years	96 (50.8%)
<b>Performance Status</b>		
	0	101 (53.4%)
	1	66 (34.9%)
	2	22 (11.6%)
<b>Raised LDH*</b>		105 (55.6%)
<b>&gt;1 extranodal site (n=187)</b>		47 (23.1%)
<b>B symptoms</b>		75 (39.7%)
<b>Bulky disease (≥10cm)</b>		78 (41.3%)
<b>Stage</b>	I	10 (5.3%)
	II	69 (36.5%)
	III	47 (24.9%)
	IV	63 (33.3%)
<b>IPI** (n=187)</b>	0/1	70 (37.4%)
	2	40 (21.4%)
	3	51 (27.3%)
	4/5	26 (13.9%)
<b>RCHOP21</b>		159 (84.1%)
<b>RCHOP14</b>		30 (15.9%)

\*LDH = serum lactate dehydrogenase. \*\*IPI = International Prognostic Index,

**Table 2: Association between final CT response and interim PET response by (A) Deauville score and (B)  $\Delta$ SUVmax**

**(A)**

Final CT response	Interim PET response – Deauville score					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>CR</b>	24 (77.4)	23 (63.9)	26 (59.1)	15 (28.8)	2 (18.2)	<b>90 (51.7)</b>
<b>CRu</b>	2 (6.5)	4 (11.1)	5 (11.4)	6 (11.5)	2 (18.2)	<b>19 (10.9)</b>
<b>PR</b>	3 (9.7)	6 (16.7)	11 (25.0)	24 (46.2)	4 (36.4)	<b>48 (27.6)</b>
<b>SD</b>	1 (3.2)	3 (8.3)	2 (4.5)	2 (3.8)	1 (9.1)	<b>9 (5.2)</b>
<b>PD</b>	1 (3.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (9.6)	2 (18.2)	<b>8 (4.6)</b>
<i>missing</i>	3	3	2	4	3	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>34 (18.0)</b>	<b>39 (20.6)</b>	<b>46 (24.3)</b>	<b>56 (29.6)</b>	<b>14 (7.4)</b>	<b>189</b>

**(B)**

Final CT response	Interim PET response – $\Delta$ SUVmax		Total
	$\geq 66\%$	$< 66\%$	
<b>CR</b>	83 (53.2)	7 (38.9)	<b>90 (51.7)</b>
<b>Cru</b>	17 (10.9)	2 (11.1)	<b>19 (10.9)</b>
<b>PR</b>	43 (27.6)	5 (27.8)	<b>48 (27.6)</b>
<b>SD</b>	8 (5.1)	1 (5.6)	<b>9 (5.2)</b>
<b>PD</b>	5 (3.2)	3 (16.7)	<b>8 (4.6)</b>
<i>missing</i>	12	3	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>168 (88.9)</b>	<b>21 (11.1)</b>	<b>189</b>

**Table 3: Analysis of (A) progression-free survival and (B) overall survival by interim PET response and IPI group****(A) Progression-Free Survival**

	Univariable HR (95% CI; p-value)	Multivariable HR (95% CI; p-value)
Deauville group 5 versus 1/2/3/4	2.68 (1.21-5.93; p=0.01)	2.80 (1.05-7.42; p=0.04)
SUV group <66% versus ≥66%	2.12 (1.07-4.21; p=0.03)	1.38 (0.60-3.19; p=0.45)
IPI group 4/5 versus 1/2/3	2.63 (1.41-4.92; p<0.01)	2.76 (1.45-5.24; p<0.01)

**(B) Overall Survival**

	Univariable HR (95% CI; p-value)	Multivariable HR (95% CI; p-value)
Deauville group 5 versus 1/2/3/4	3.10 (1.29-7.41; p=0.01)	3.02 (0.96-9.55; p=0.06)
SUV group <66% versus ≥66%	2.37 (1.08-5.17; p=0.03)	1.29 (0.46-3.62; p=0.63)
IPI group 4/5 versus 1/2/3	3.45 (1.70-7.01; p<0.01)	3.48 (1.68-7.17; p<0.01)

**Supplementary table 1: Correlation of Deauville score and  $\Delta$ SUVmax**

Deauville score on PET2	$\Delta$ SUVmax <66%	$\Delta$ SUVmax $\geq$ 66%
1 (n=34)	0 (0%)	34 (100%)
2 (n=39)	0 (0%)	39 (100%)
3 (n=46)	4 (8.7%)	42 (91.3%)
4 (n=56)	6 (10.7%)	50 (89.3%)
5 (n=14)	11 (78.6%)	3 (21.4%)

For Peer Review

**FIGURES**

**Figure 1: CONSORT flow diagram**

**Figure 2: Kaplan-Meier progression-free survival curves for Deauville criteria**

**A:** Deauville score (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

**B:** Deauville group (1-3, 4-5)

**C:** Deauville group (1-4, 5)

**Figure 3: Kaplan-Meier progression-free survival curves for  $\Delta$ SUVmax**

**Figure 4: Kaplan-Meier progression-free survival curves for IPI**

**A:** IPI score (0-1, 2, 3, 4-5)

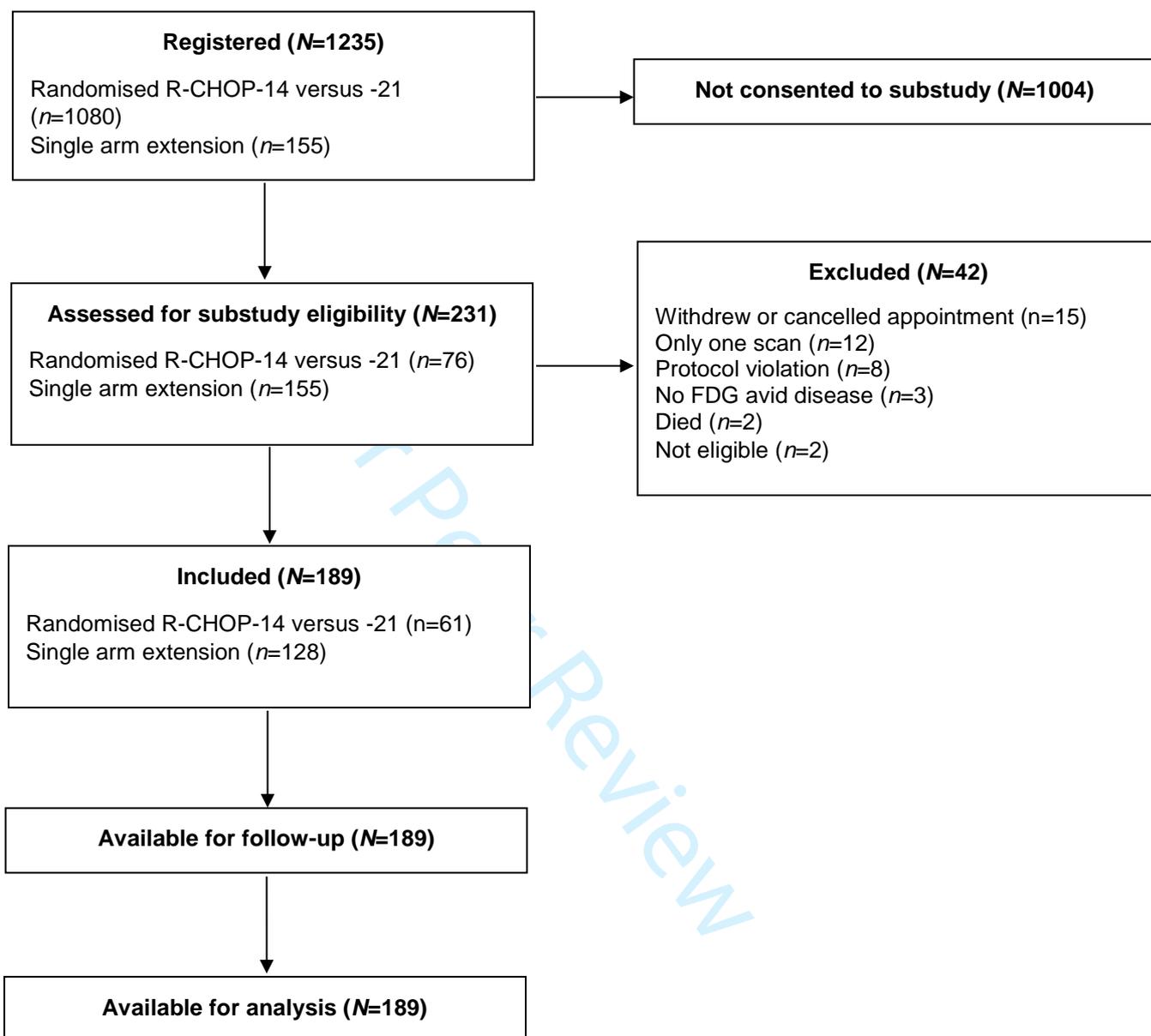
**B:** IPI risk group (0-3, 4-5)

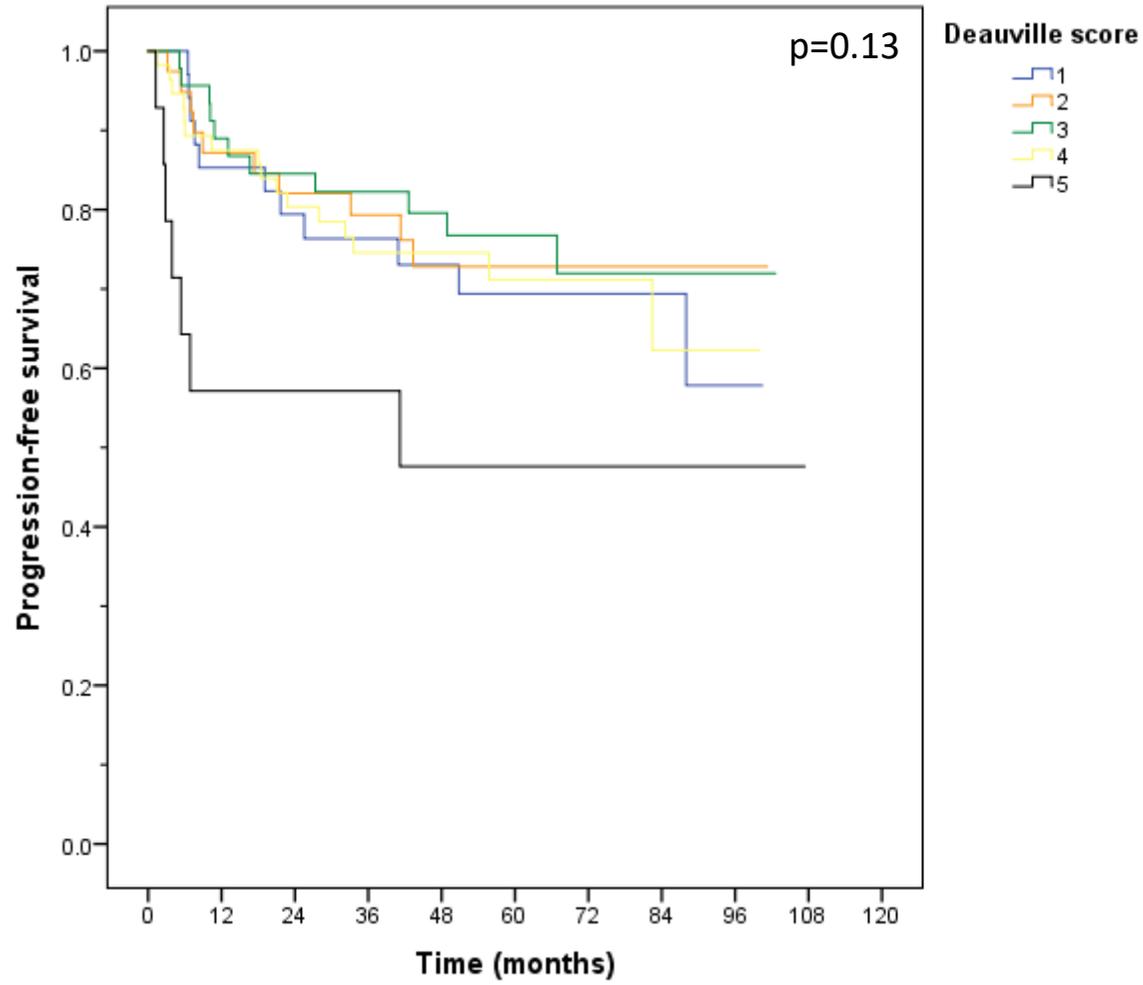
**C:** DS 1-3 divided by IPI 0-3 & 4-5

**D:** DS 4-5 divided by IPI 0-3 & 4-5

**Supplementary Figure 1: Kaplan-Meier progression-free survival curves for Deauville score (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) with DS-5 defined as 2x liver**

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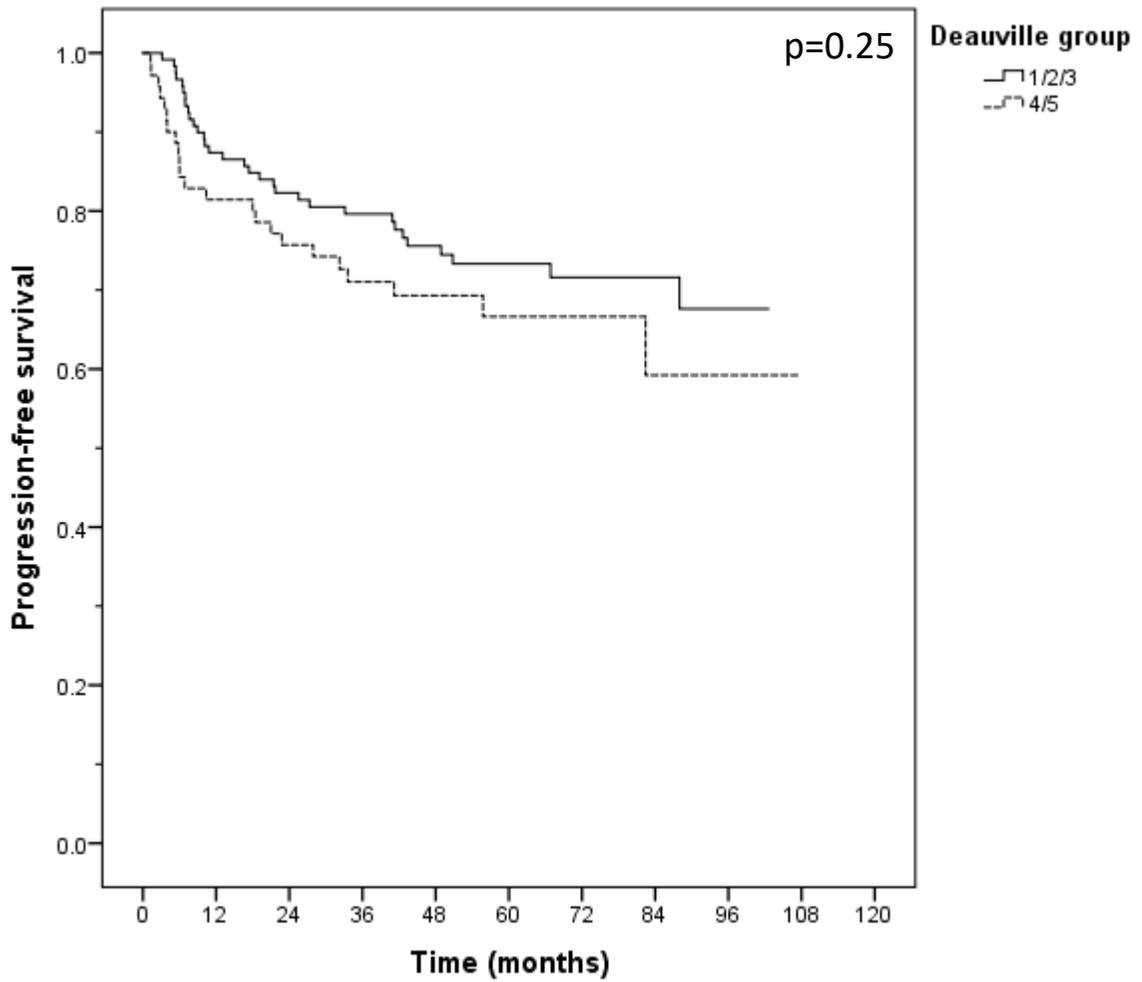




Number at risk:

1	34	29	26	24	20	18	12	7	2	0	0
2	39	34	32	28	21	19	9	4	2	0	0
3	46	40	37	34	28	18	14	11	4	0	0
4	56	49	44	38	29	21	17	6	2	0	0
5	14	8	8	6	5	3	1	1	1	0	0

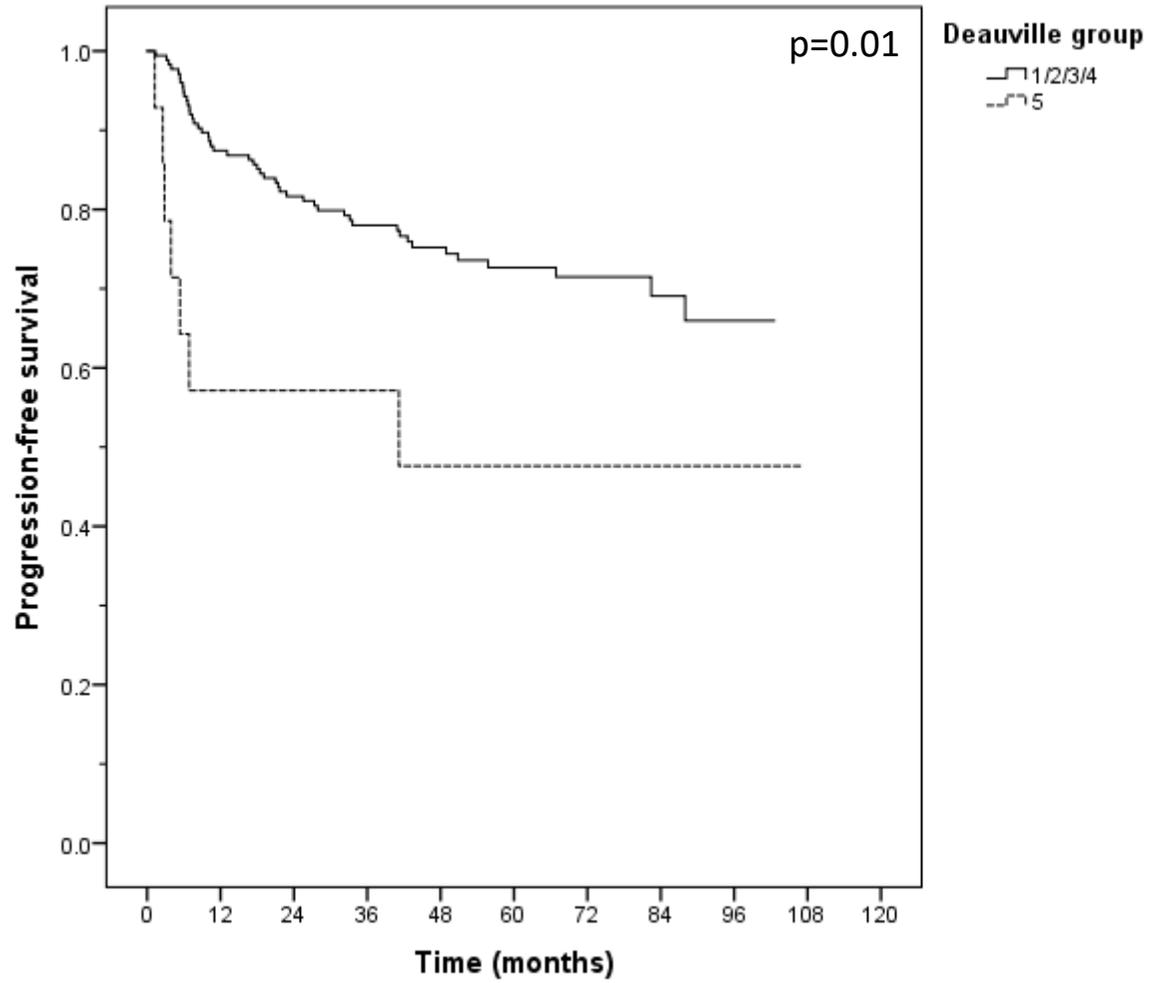
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**Number at risk:**

1-3	119	103	95	86	69	55	35	22	8	0	0
4-5	70	57	52	44	34	24	18	7	3	0	0

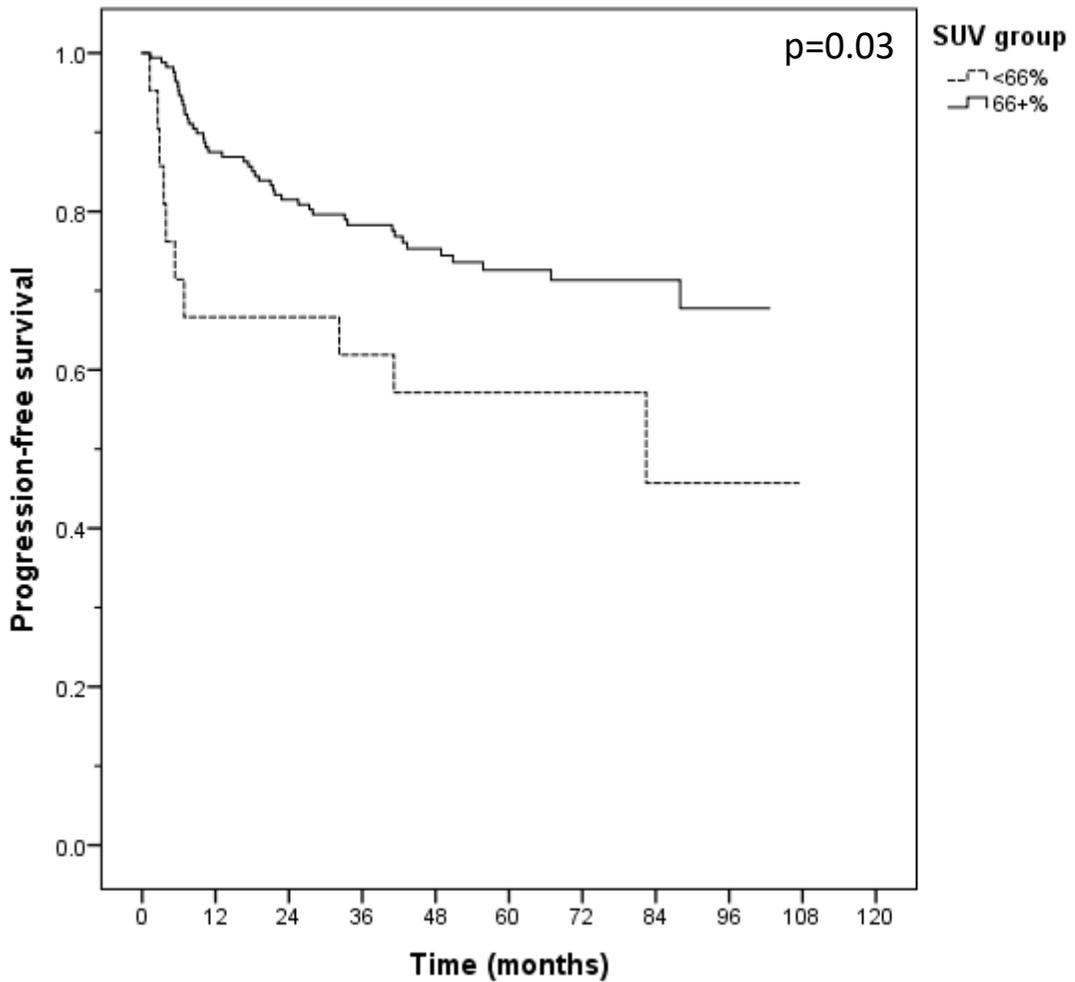
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Number at risk:

1-4	175	152	139	124	98	76	52	28	10	0	0
5	14	8	8	6	5	3	1	1	1	0	0

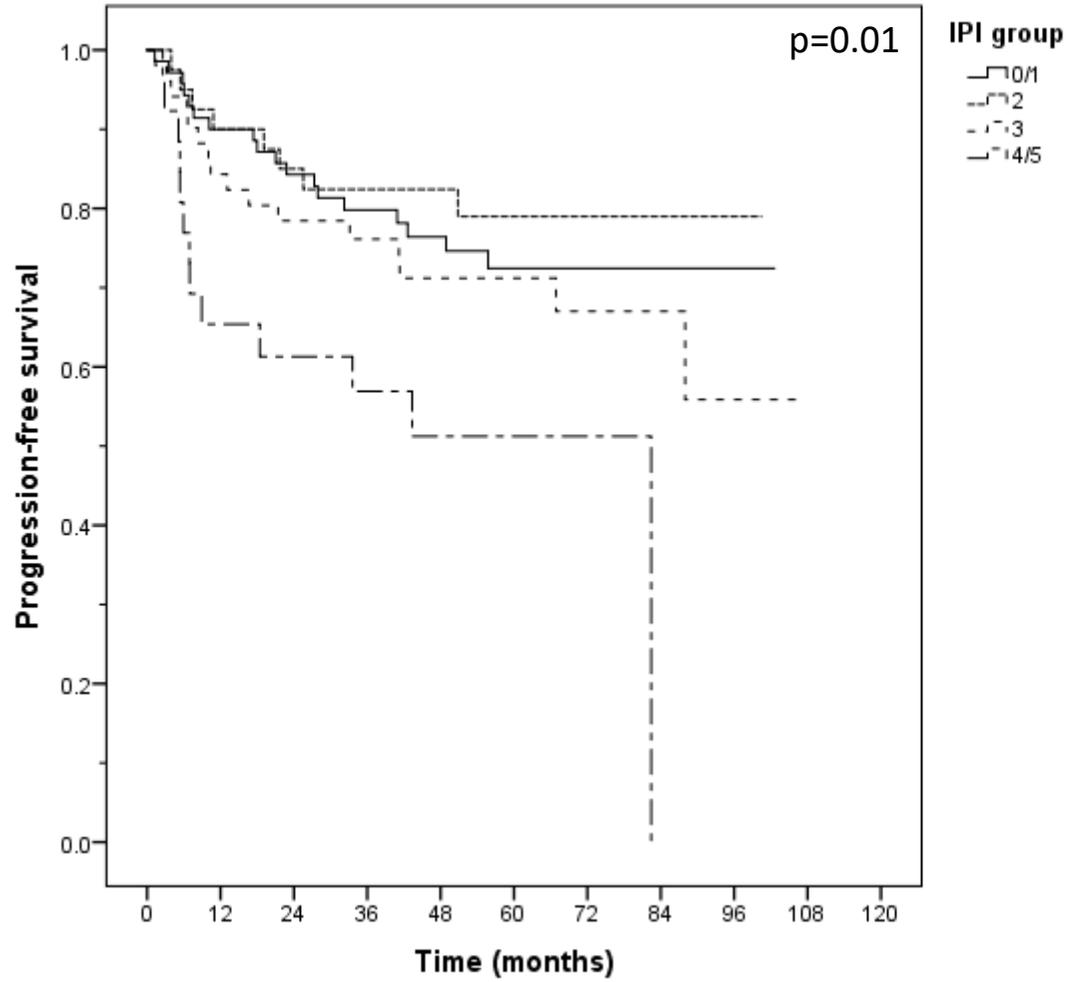
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**Number at risk:**

<66%	21	14	14	13	11	7	6	4	2	0	0
≥66%	168	146	133	117	92	72	47	25	9	0	0

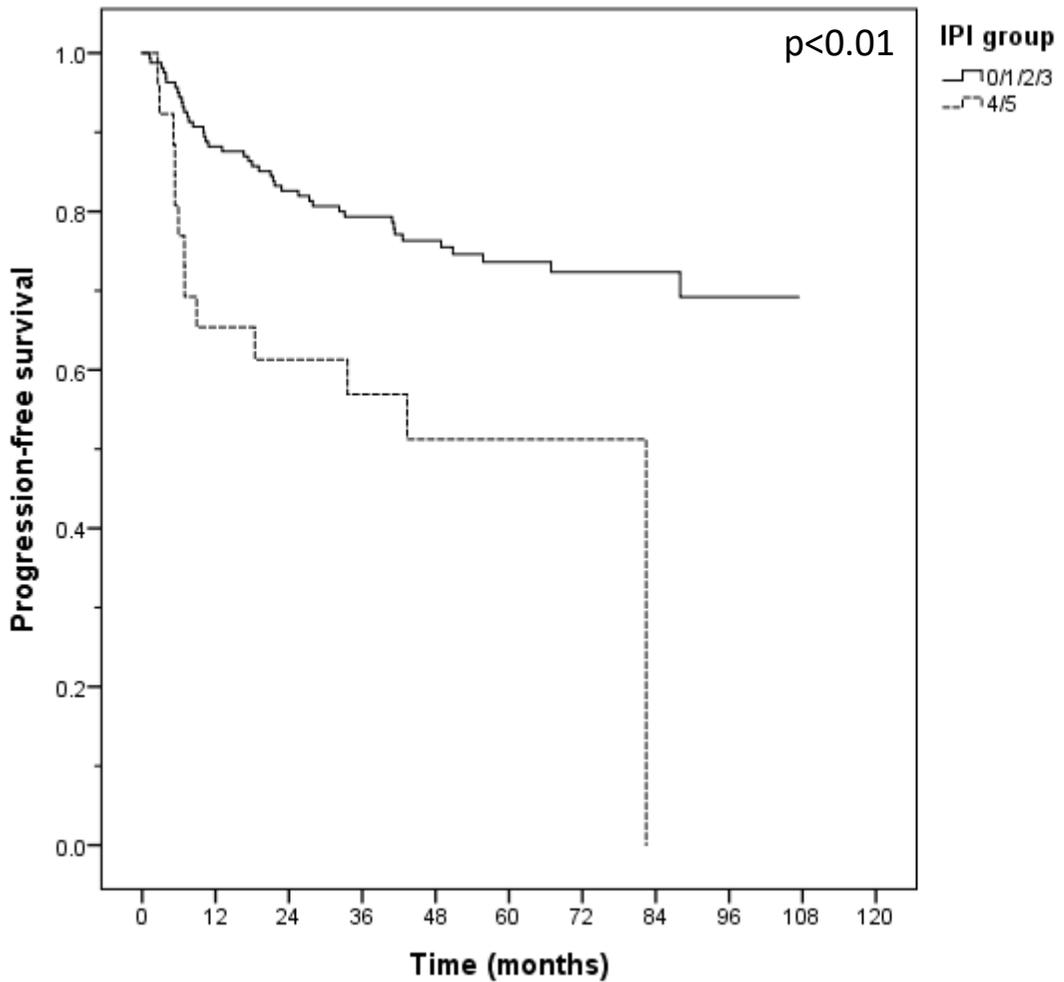
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Number at risk:

0-1	70	63	58	52	43	32	23	15	4	0	0
2	40	36	34	31	26	21	12	6	4	0	0
3	51	43	39	32	24	19	13	8	3	0	0
4-5	26	16	14	13	8	6	4	0	0	0	0

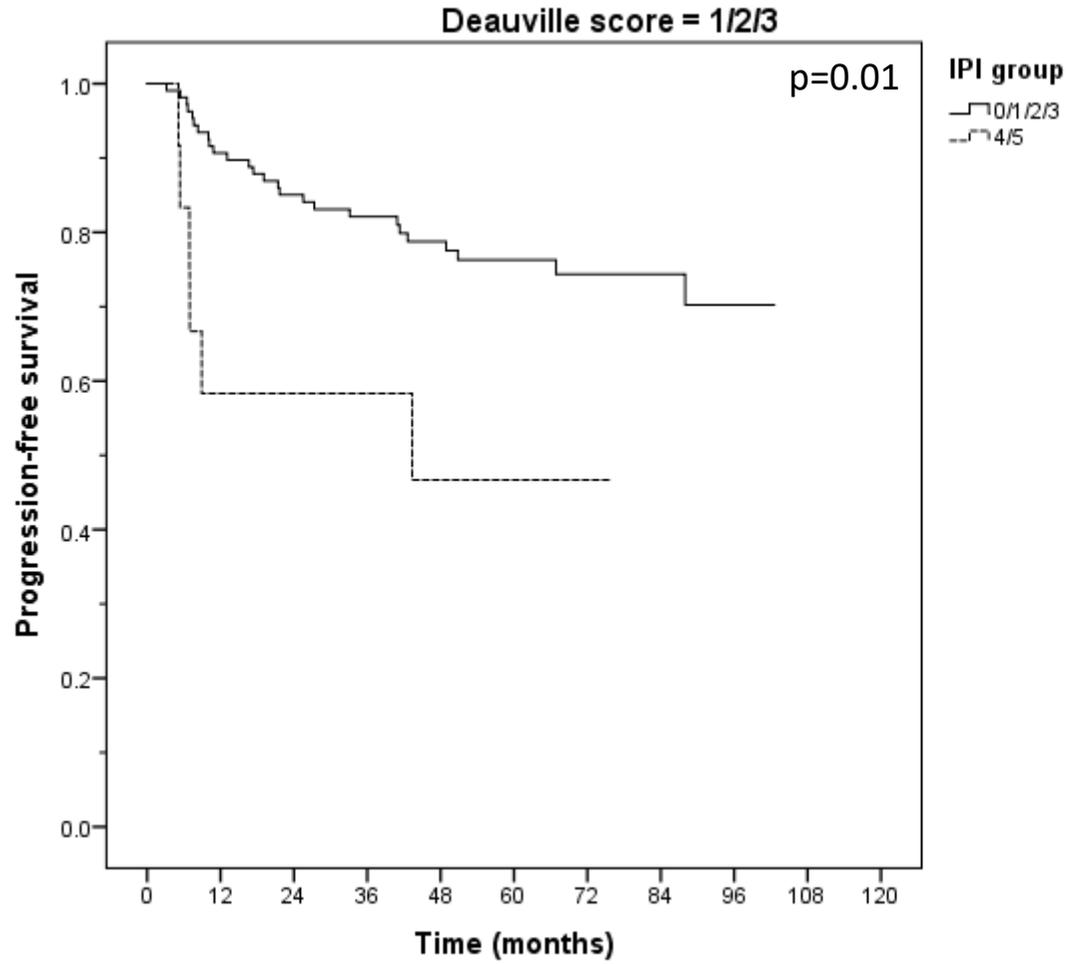
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**Number at risk:**

0-3	161	142	131	115	93	72	48	29	11	0	0
4-5	26	16	14	13	8	6	4	0	0	0	0

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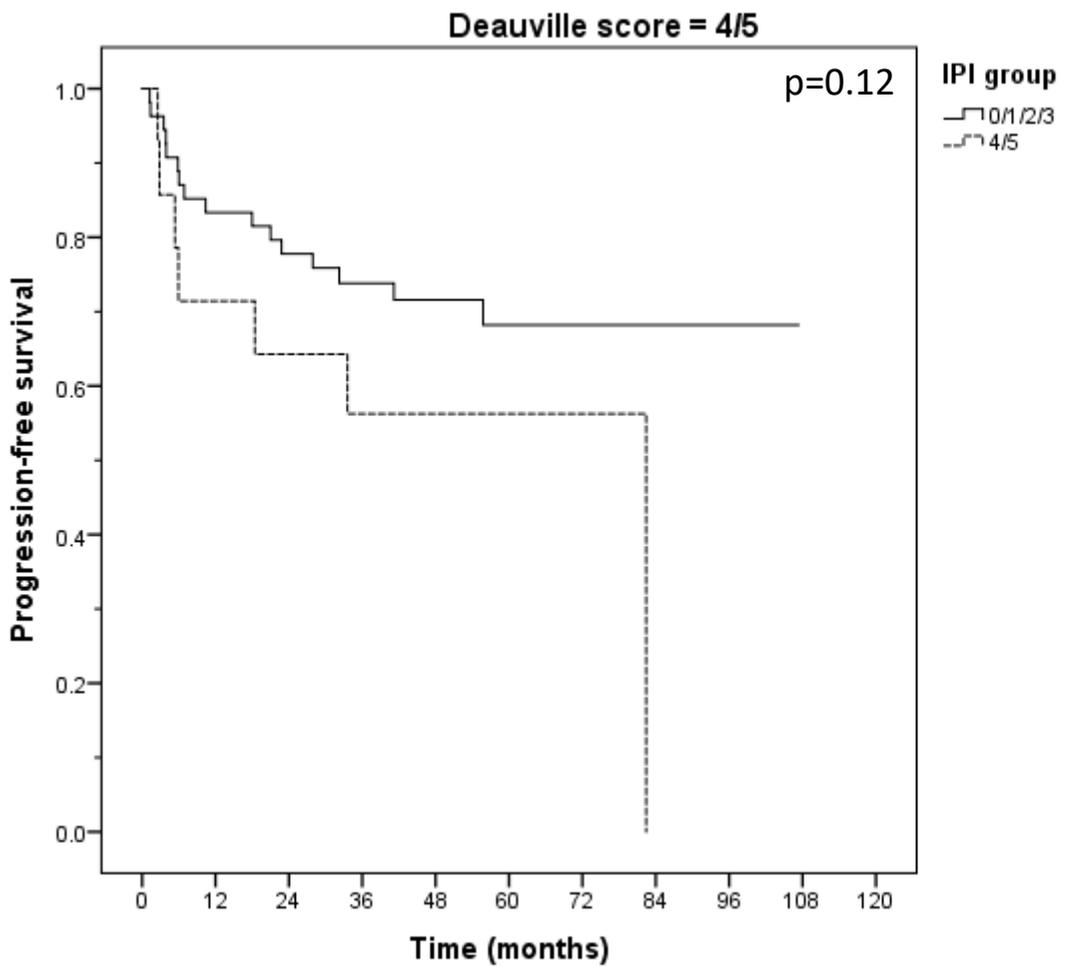


**Number at risk:**

0-3	107	97	89	80	66	52	33	22	8	0	0
4-5	12	6	6	6	3	3	2	0	0	0	0

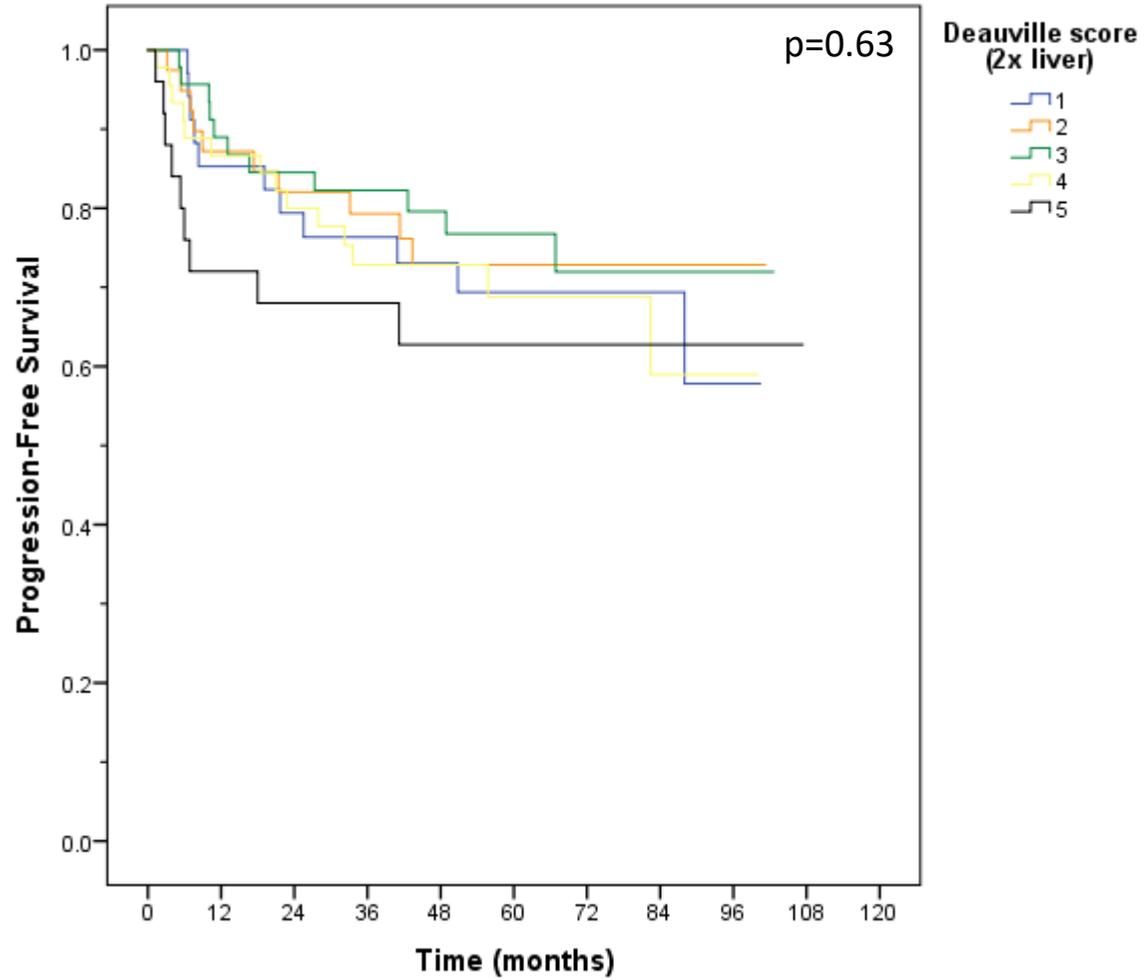
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**Number at risk:**

0-3	54	45	42	35	27	20	15	7	3	0	0
4-5	14	10	8	7	5	3	2	0	0	0	0



Number at risk:

	0	12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120
1	34	29	26	24	20	18	12	7	2	0	0
2	39	34	32	28	21	19	9	4	2	0	0
3	46	40	37	34	28	18	14	11	4	0	0
4	45	39	35	30	24	17	13	5	2	0	0
5	25	18	17	14	10	7	5	2	1	0	0

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