

Real-world evidence on venetoclax in chronic lymphocytic leukemia: The KROHEM(Croatian cooperative group for hematological diseases experience



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INTRODUCTION

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is the most common form of leukemia in the western adult population. The B cell lymphoma-2 (BCL-2) family proteins play a key role in regulating intrinsic apoptosis and in many cancers have a major impact on tumor survival and therapy resistance. Hence, the role of BCL-2 inhibitors is very beneficial in the treatment of CLL. Venetoclax is the first selective, orally bioavailable BCL-2 inhibitor in use for both frontline and relapse/refractory CLL

In this trial we conducted a multicenter retrospective chart analysis of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia treated with venetoclax to describe outcomes and toxicities. From 2017 to 2023 a total of 188 patients were treated in 9 hematological centres in Croatia.

Patients characteristics are shown in table 1.

ORR was achieved in 161(85%) patients in all analysed cohorts with 94(50%) patients achieved CR. 14(7%) patients were not yet evaluated, 6(3%) did not respond to treatment and died early in treatment and 6(3%) patients progressed during treatment.

Patients treated in first line had an OR rate of 100% and patients treated in a second line had an ORR of 96%.

Estimated 2-year OS across all cohorts was 83.5%(median not reached). Figure 1.(EFS) was 83% but when analysed by subgroups patients in first line had an EFS of 93.8%, second line 85% and third and subsequent lines had an EFS of 70.3% with a significant difference(93.8% vs 70.3%, p=0.042). Figure 2.

The most frequent adverse events included AEs: infections including COVID 19, tumor lysis syndrome, diarrhea, and elevated liver enzymes. Grade III/IV Aes occurred in 86(45%) patients, mostly neutropenia (90%), but only 33(18%) needed hospitalization. 67(35%) had a temporary treatment discontinuation due to adverse events and 53(28%) patients had a dose reduction.

In only 11(6%) patients venetoclax treatment was permanently discontinued due to toxicity. Richters transformation occurred in 18(10%) patients. Of those patients 16 were in second or subsequent lines while 2 patients had a concurrent Richters transformation at the beginning of treatment. Two patients developed secondary malignancy(breast cancer and skin cancer).

SEX(male/female)	122/66
AGE(median/range)	66(33-90)
NUMBER OF LINES	64(34%) 1.line 60(32%) 2.line 64(34%) in later lines
PRIOR BTK/anti CD20 THERAPY	33(17%) BTK inhibitor 83(44%) anti CD20
MONOTHERAPY OR COMBINATION	75 patients (40%) monotherapy while 113(60%) in combination with anti CD20
ORR/CR rate(no, pct)	160(84%) / 94(50%)

TABLE 2

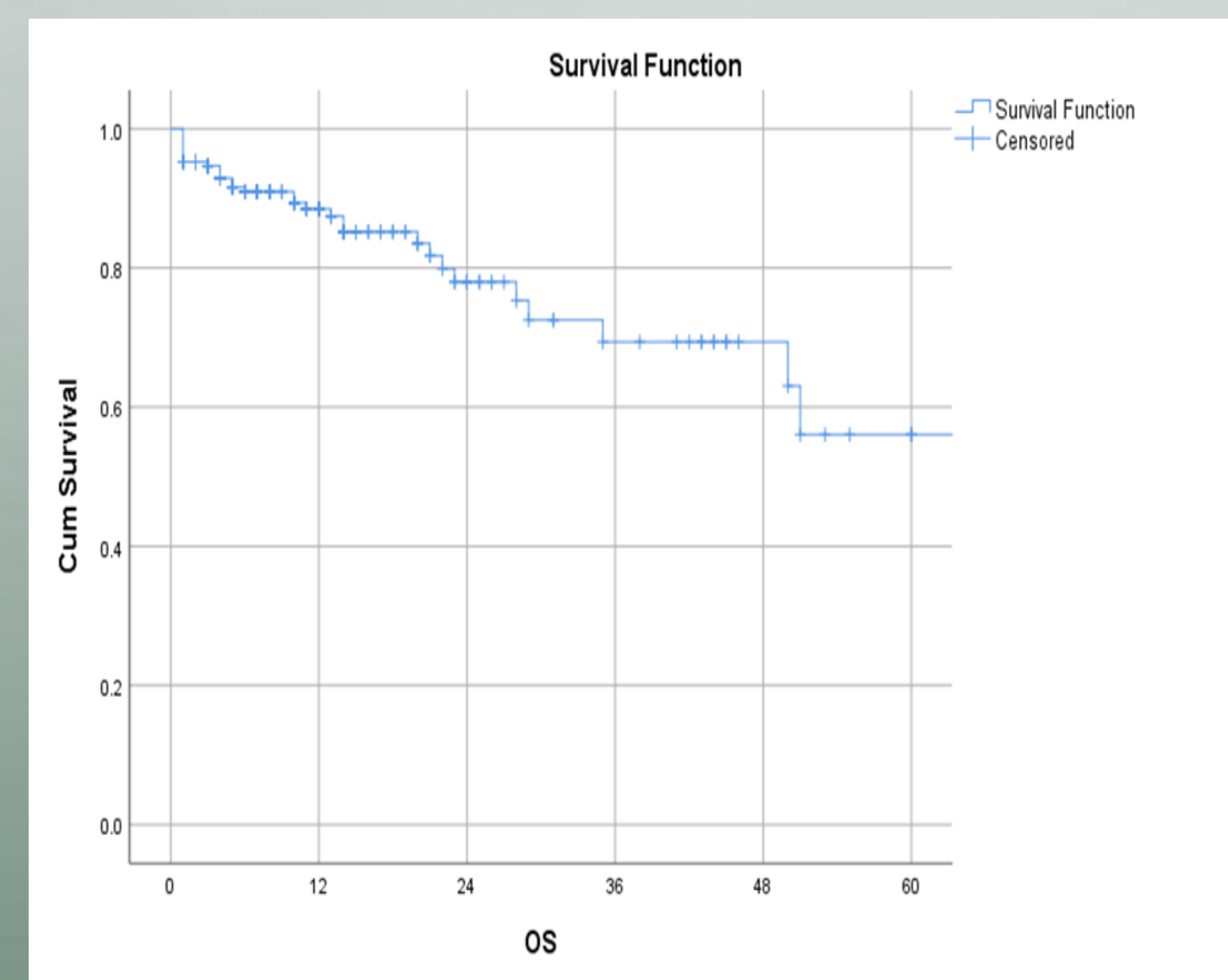


FIGURE 1

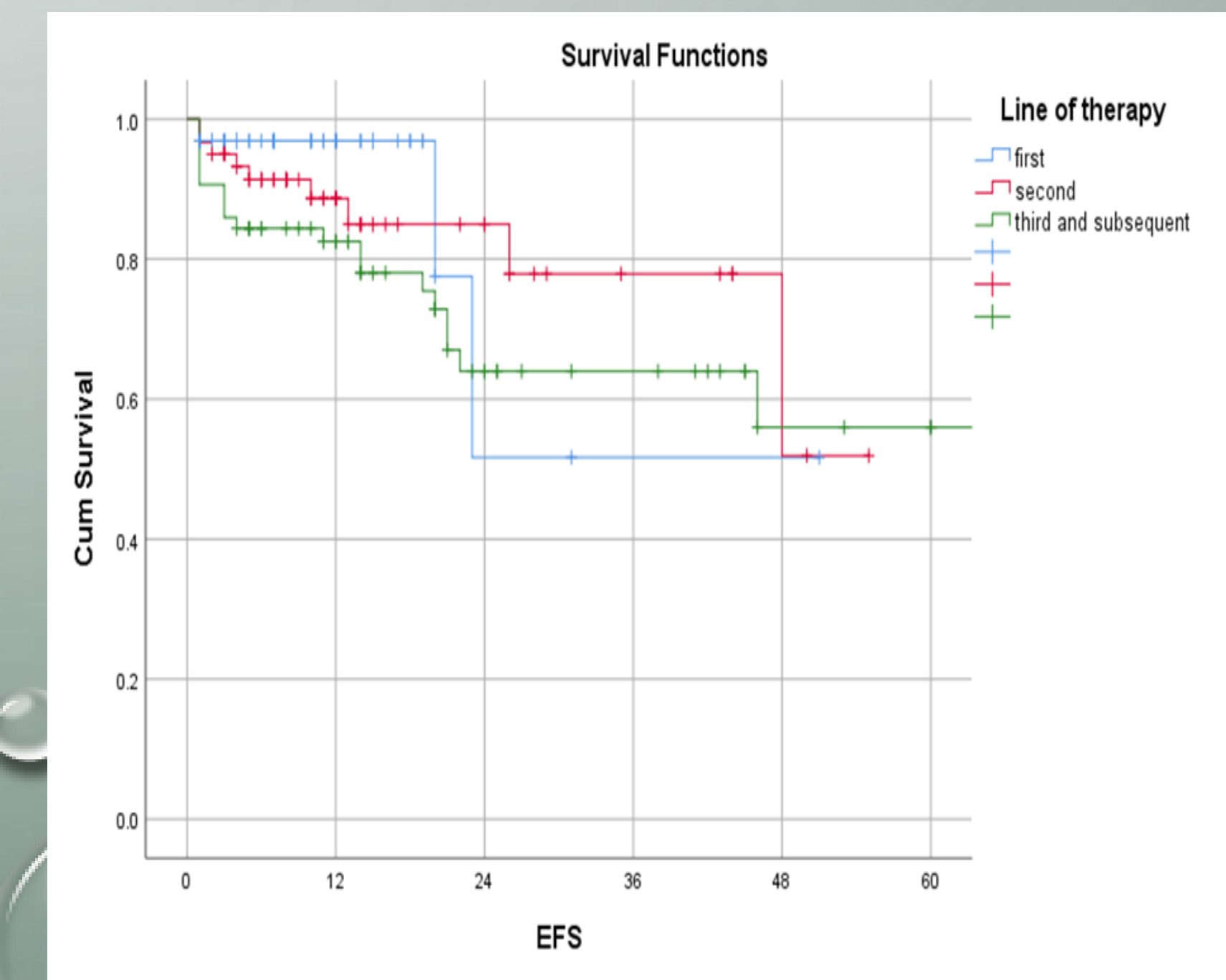


FIGURE 2

Our real-life data tend to confirm that venetoclax used as monotherapy or in combination with rituximab or Obinutuzumab is effective treatment for both untreated and relapse/refractory CLL patients. Adverse events were observed at a similar incidence as in the clinical trials, and the most of AEs. were easily manageable.