

A Multicenter, Real-World Study of Treatment Patterns and Clinical Outcomes of Later-Line Therapy in Chinese Patients with Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Harboring Non-Actionable Genomic Alterations (RECAP Study)

Hanxiao Chen¹, Xiangjiao Meng², Ling Cai³, Wei Lei⁴, Yu Tang⁵, Xi Shi⁶, Leilei Ma⁷, Jun Zhao¹

¹Peking University Cancer Hospital, Beijing, China; ²Shandong First Medical University & Shandong Cancer Hospital Affiliated to Shandong First Medical University, Jinan, China; ³Sun Yat-sen University Cancer Center, Guangzhou, China; ⁴The First Affiliated Hospital of Soochow University, Suzhou, China;

⁵Liaoning Cancer Hospital, Shenyang, China; ⁶The First Affiliated Hospital of Fujian Medical University, Fuzhou, China; ⁷Daiichi Sankyo (China) Holdings Co., Ltd, Shanghai, China

Introduction

- Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) accounts for approximately 85% of all lung cancer diagnoses¹. Approximately 40–60% of patients with advanced NSCLC lack known actionable genomic alterations (non-AGA), making them ineligible for targeted agents².
- The emergence and widespread adoption of immunotherapy have significantly expanded treatment options for non-AGA NSCLC and are now established as first-line (1L) therapy. For patients with non-AGA receiving second- or third-line therapy after disease progression, guideline-recommended options remain limited and often nonspecific³.
- Clinical decision-making in later lines is further complicated by considerable heterogeneity in patient characteristics and treatment practices. However, real-world evidence remains limited regarding how post-first-line treatment patterns and these heterogeneity factors affect clinical outcomes in non-AGA advanced NSCLC.

Objective

- To address these gaps, we conducted the RECAP study to evaluate clinical outcomes associated with second- and third-line treatment strategies in patients with non-AGA advanced NSCLC. The study also offers a descriptive analysis of treatment patterns and outcomes across key sources of clinical heterogeneity, including histological subtype.

Methods

Study design :

- The RECAP study is a multicenter, retrospective, real-world study (NCT06617390) conducted at six centers across China. Patients diagnosed with advanced NSCLC on or after January 1, 2018, and who initiated second- (2L) or third-line (3L) systemic therapy between September 1, 2019, and December 31, 2022, were eligible for inclusion.
- In the non-AGA cohort, patients were categorized based on the line of therapy they were receiving at the time of study enrollment into the second-line (2L-enrolled) or third-line (3L-enrolled) groups.

Patient Selection:

- Age of 18 years or older at enrollment; Stage IV NSCLC confirmed by histological or cytological examination; Had received prior immunotherapy in the first- or second-line setting.

Variables:

- Regimens were categorized into six groups—immunotherapy (I), immunotherapy-based combinations (I+), chemotherapy monotherapy (C+), chemotherapy-based combinations without immunotherapy agents (C+), anti-angiogenic monotherapy (A), and other regimens (O).

Outcomes:

- The primary outcome was the real-world distribution of different treatment options in NSCLC patients with non-AGA in 2L+ setting. Secondary outcomes included biomarker testing patterns (including timing, proportion, methods, and specimen types associated with biomarker detection) and clinical outcomes (including real-world effectiveness and safety profiles). Real-world effectiveness included real-world progression-free survival (rwPFS), time to treatment discontinuation (rwTTD), time to next treatment or death (rwTTNT), and real-world overall survival (rwOS).

Results

- The full analysis set of the non-AGA cohort included 383 patients with NSCLC, all of whom were also included in the efficacy analysis set and safety set (Figure 1).
- The mean age was 61.11 ± 9.94 years. Female patients accounted for 62 (16.2%) cases. Comorbidities were present in 256 (66.8%) patients.
- Surgical resection of the primary tumor had been performed in 40 (10.4%) patients, and 141 (36.8%) had received radiotherapy (Table 1).

Figure 1. Patient flowchart

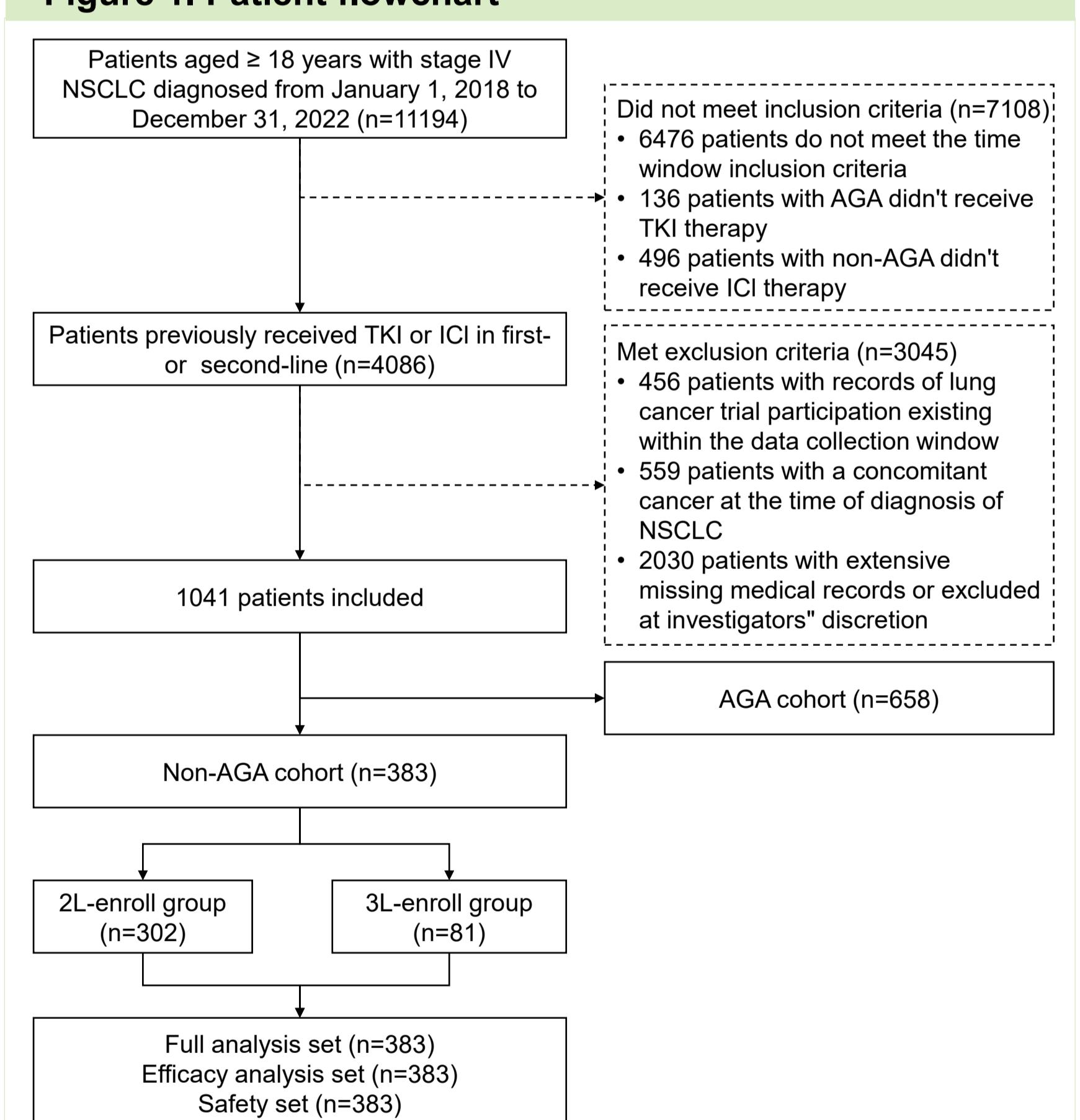
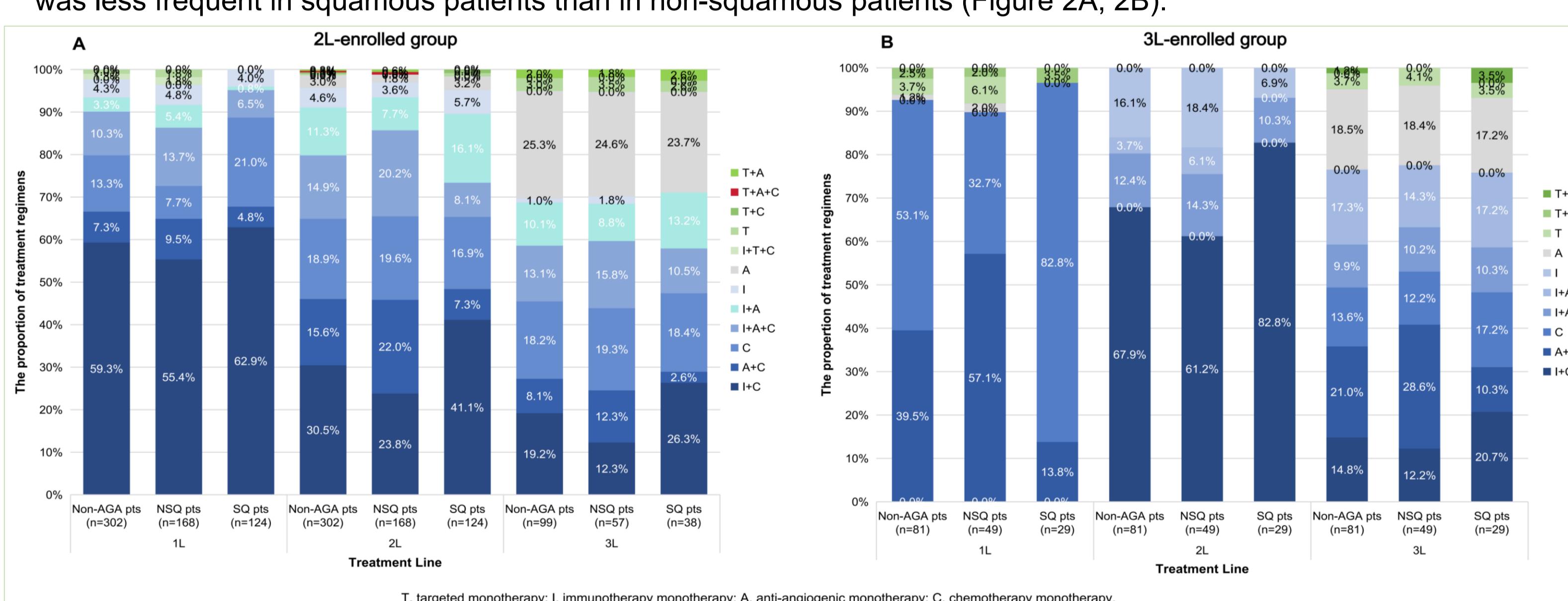


Table 1. Baseline characteristics of patients

Characteristic	All (N=383)
Age, years, mean \pm SD	61.1 \pm 9.9
Age at first diagnosis of advanced NSCLC, years, mean \pm SD	60.7 \pm 9.7
Sex, n (%)	
Male	321 (83.8)
Female	62 (16.2)
Family history of lung cancer, n (%)	28 (7.3)
Smoking history, n (%)	
Yes	229 (59.8)
No	143 (37.3)
Unknown	11 (2.9)
Treatment line at enrolment, n (%)	
Second-line	302 (78.9)
Third-line	81 (21.1)
Use of docetaxel in second-line at enrolment, n (%)	46 (15.2)
Pathological subtype, n (%)	
Squamous cell carcinoma	153 (39.9)
Non-squamous cell carcinoma	217 (56.7)
Adenosquamous carcinoma	4 (1.0)
Other	2 (0.5)
Unknown	7 (1.8)
ECOG performance status, n (%)	
0	33 (8.6)
1	113 (29.5)
2	15 (3.9)
3	4 (1.0)
4	0 (0.0)
Unknown	218 (56.9)
Presence of intracranial metastasis, n (%)	124 (32.4)
Presence of other distant metastases, n (%)	377 (98.4)
Comorbidities, n (%)	256 (66.8)
Previous tumor surgery, n (%)	40 (10.4)
Previous tumor radiotherapy, n (%)	141 (36.8)

Figure 2. Treatment patterns.

- Among patients enrolled in second-line therapy, the most common first-line regimen was immunotherapy plus chemotherapy (I+C) (179 patients, 59.3%) (Figure 2A). Among patients enrolled in third-line therapy, first-line treatment most commonly was C (43 patients, 53.1%) (Figure 2B).
- In patients who were enrolled in 2L and 3L treatment, the proportion of non-squamous patients receiving I+C was consistently lower than that of squamous patients from 1L to 3L setting. Conversely, the use of regimens containing A was less frequent in squamous patients than in non-squamous patients (Figure 2A, 2B).



Abbreviations:

1L, first-line; 2L, second-line; 3L, third-line; AE, adverse event; AGA, actionable genomic alterations; ECOG, eastern cooperative oncology group; NA, not available; NSCLC, non-small-cell lung cancer; rwOS, real-world overall survival; rwPFS, real-world progression-free survival; rwTTD, time to treatment discontinuation; rwTTNT, time to next treatment or death; TKI, tyrosine kinase inhibitors.

Disclosures:

All authors declare no competing interests. Leilei Ma is employed by Daiichi Sankyo (China) Holdings Co., Ltd.

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Corresponding author email address: ohjerry@163.com.

Results

Figure 3. Sankey diagrams of treatment sequences among 2L-enrolled patients.

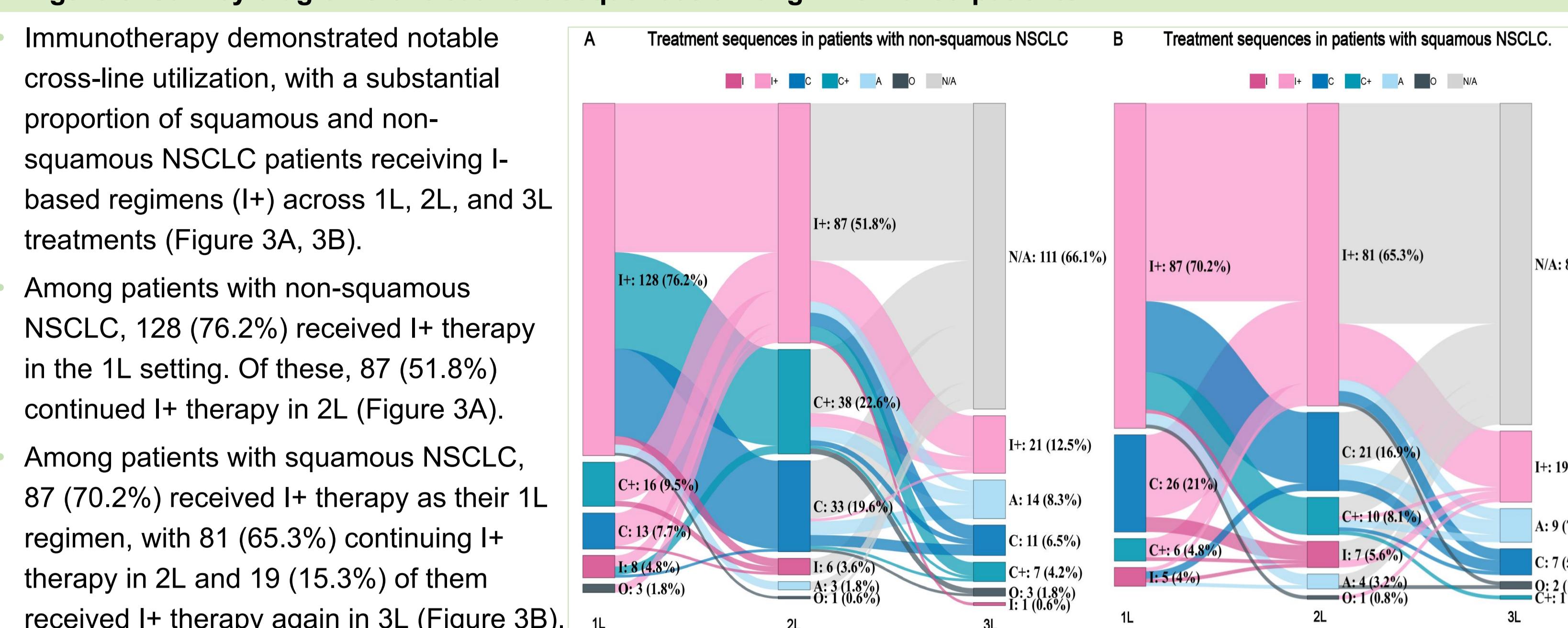


Figure 4. Median rwPFS by pathological subtype in second-line therapy for 2L-enrolled patients.

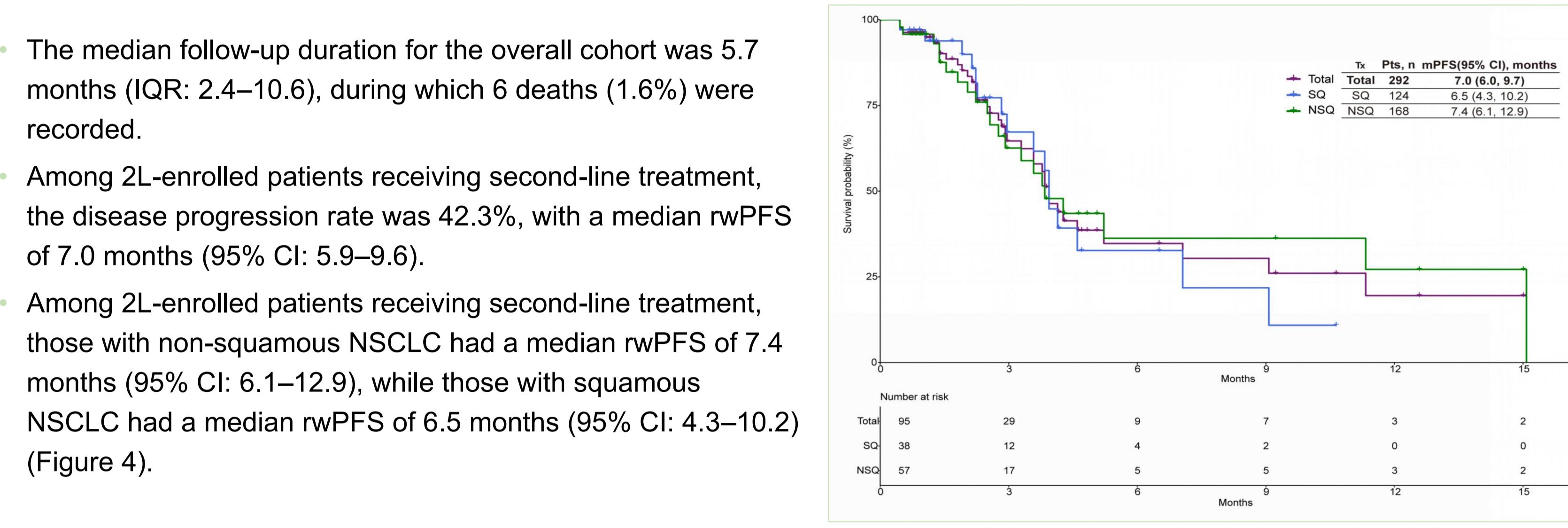


Figure 5. Median rwPFS by treatment regimen in 2L-enrolled patients, stratified by histological subtype.

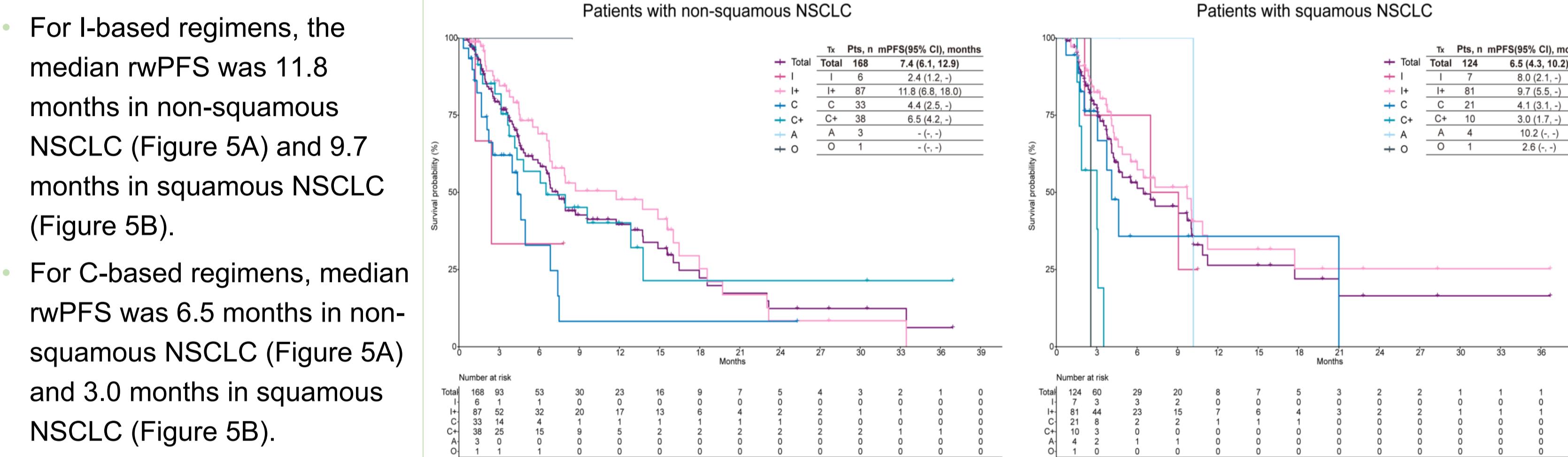


Figure 6. Median rwPFS in patients with non-squamous or squamous NSCLC, stratified by enrollment line.

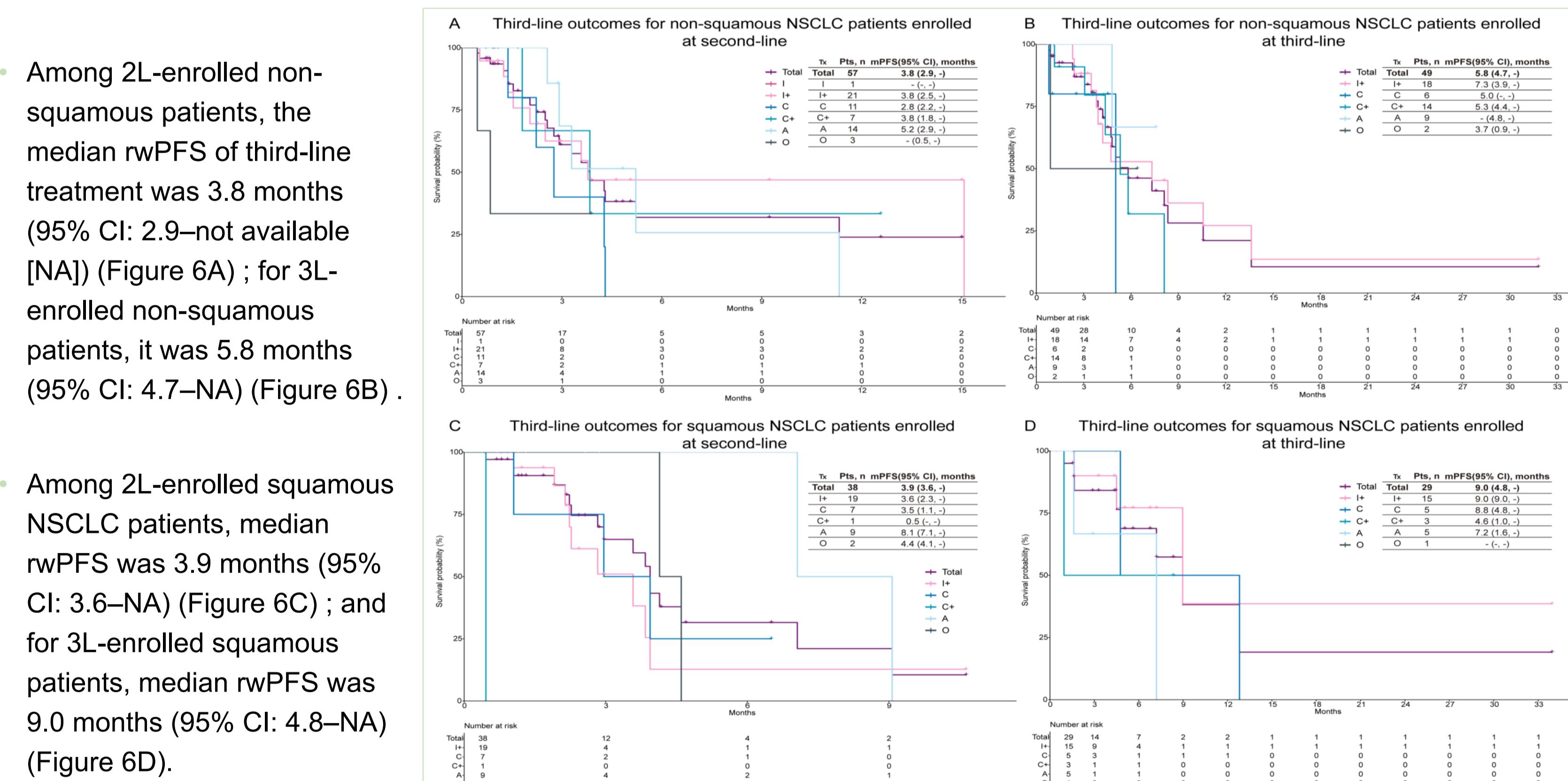


Table 2. Summary of adverse events (AEs).

- During the study period, 50 patients (13.1%) experienced at least one AE, with a total of 94 AEs recorded.
- AEs led to treatment discontinuation in 12 patients (3.1%), treatment interruption in 4 (1.0%), and dose modification in 4 (1.0%).
- It is important to note that the incidence of AEs was likely underreported due to incomplete documentation by clinicians.

Variables	Number of events, n	Number of cases, n (%)	Variables	Number of events, n	Number of cases, n (%)
Any AE	94	50 (13.1)	Common AEs		
AE severity			Myelosuppression	32	25 (6.5)
Grade 1	11	6 (1.6)	Gastrointestinal reactions	21	21 (5.5)
Grade 2	14	13 (3.4)	Skin and mucosal abnormalities	7	7 (1.8)
Grade 3	11	9 (2.4)	Fatigue	4	4 (1.0)
Grade 4	4	4 (1.0)	Infection	10	9 (2.4)
Unknown	54	33 (8.6)	Anemia	4	4 (1.0)
Impact of AEs on treatment			Cardiac dysfunction	3	3 (0.8)
No impact	62	32 (8.4)	AE outcome		
Treatment discontinuation at current line	12	12 (3.1)	Remission	44	26 (6.8)
Treatment interruption	12	4 (1.0)	No change	3	2 (0.5)
Dose adjustment	5	4 (1.0)	Unknown	47	31 (8.1)
Unknown	3	2 (0.5)			

Conclusion

- The RECAP study characterized treatment distribution and effectiveness across therapy lines, revealing that I+C was most frequently used in the second-line setting, whereas A+C predominated in third-line treatment.
- Immunotherapy was commonly administered across treatment lines in this population. Immune-based combination therapies may confer greater clinical benefit in both second-line and third-line settings.

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