



The Effect of Dapagliflozin on Albuminuria in DECLARE-TIMI 58

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OBJECTIVE

Sodium–glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) improve albuminuria in patients with high cardiorenal risk. We report albuminuria change in the Dapagliflozin Effect on Cardiovascular Events (DECLARE-TIMI 58) cardiovascular outcome trial, which included populations with lower cardiorenal risk.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

DECLARE-TIMI 58 randomized 17,160 patients with type 2 diabetes, creatinine clearance >60 mL/min, and either atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (CVD; 40.6%) or risk-factors for CVD (59.4%) to dapagliflozin or placebo. Urinary albumin-to-creatinine ratio (UACR) was tested at baseline, 6 months, 12 months, and yearly thereafter. The change in UACR over time was measured as a continuous and categorical variable (≤ 15 , >15 to <30 , ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 , and >300 mg/g) by treatment arm. The composite cardiorenal outcome was a $\geq 40\%$ sustained decline in the estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) to <60 mL/min/1.73 m², end-stage kidney disease, and cardiovascular or renal death; specific renal outcome included all except cardiovascular death.

RESULTS

Baseline UACR was available for 16,843 (98.15%) participants: 9,067 (53.83%) with ≤ 15 mg/g, 2,577 (15.30%) with >15 to <30 mg/g, 4,030 (23.93%) with 30–300 mg/g, and 1,169 (6.94%) with >300 mg/g. Measured as a continuous variable, UACR improved from baseline to 4.0 years with dapagliflozin, compared with placebo, across all UACR and eGFR categories (all $P < 0.0001$). Sustained confirmed ≥ 1 category improvement in UACR was more common in dapagliflozin versus placebo (hazard ratio 1.45 [95% CI 1.35–1.56], $P < 0.0001$). Cardiorenal outcome was reduced with dapagliflozin for subgroups of UACR ≥ 30 mg/g ($P < 0.0125$, $P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.033$), and the renal-specific outcome was reduced for all UACR subgroups ($P < 0.05$, $P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.480$).

CONCLUSIONS

In DECLARE-TIMI 58, dapagliflozin demonstrated a favorable effect on UACR and renal-specific outcome across baseline UACR categories, including patients with normal albumin excretion. The results suggest a role for SGLT2i also in the primary prevention of diabetic kidney disease.

Sodium–glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) reduce the risk for adverse renal outcomes in people with type 2 diabetes, including a reduction in deterioration of the

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estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) and progression to end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) (1–7). This has been demonstrated as secondary/exploratory outcomes in cardiovascular (CV) outcomes trials (CVOTs) (1–4,7) and confirmed as a primary outcome in patients with proteinuric chronic kidney disease (CKD), with or without type 2 diabetes (5,6).

Albuminuria is frequently a component of diabetic kidney disease (8,9). The presence of albuminuria in patients with or without diabetes has been associated with an increased risk for adverse renal and CV outcomes (10,11), while a reduction in albuminuria has been associated with lower rates of adverse renal and CV outcomes, both in observational studies (12) and clinical trials (13,14). The American Diabetes Association *Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes* recommends testing urinary albumin excretion annually (15) as part of the laboratory screening in patients with type 2 diabetes.

The Dapagliflozin Effect on Cardiovascular Events trial (DECLARE-TIMI 58) was a CVOT with dapagliflozin in 17,160 patients with type 2 diabetes and either multiple risk factors (MRFs) for atherosclerotic CV disease (ASCVD) (59.4%) or established ASCVD (eASCVD) (40.6%) that demonstrated a significant 17% reduction in one of its two dual primary efficacy outcomes of CV death and hospitalization for heart failure (3). The main secondary prespecified renal outcome in DECLARE-TIMI 58 was the composite cardiorenal outcome, defined as a sustained decline of at least 40% in eGFR to <60 mL/min/1.73 m², ESKD, or death from renal or CV causes (3). A renal-specific composite outcome was similarly predefined but excluded death from CV causes. We previously published significant reductions in both the cardiorenal and renal-specific composite outcomes (3).

In this secondary exploratory analysis, we present the effect of dapagliflozin on urinary albumin-to-creatinine ratio (UACR), both in the entire trial population and according to baseline UACR and eGFR categories. We also present the effect of dapagliflozin on the cardiorenal and renal-specific composite outcomes according to baseline UACR.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The DECLARE-TIMI 58 design, participants' baseline characteristics, main outcomes, and main renal results have been previously reported (3,4,16,17). Briefly, we recruited patients with type 2 diabetes and either MRFs for ASCVD (age ≥ 55 years for men or ≥ 60 years for women plus one or more of the following: dyslipidemia, hypertension, or current tobacco use), or eASCVD (age ≥ 40 years and ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, or peripheral arterial disease). Other inclusion criteria were HbA_{1c} between 6.5 and 12.0% (47.5–113.1 mmol/mol) and creatinine clearance of ≥ 60 mL/min as estimated by the Cockcroft-Gault equation (18). The institutional review board at each participating site approved the trial protocol, and all participants provided written informed consent.

Participants were randomly assigned in a double-blinded manner to once-daily dapagliflozin 10 mg or matching placebo (1:1). The primary end points of the trial, major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE), a composite of CV death, myocardial infarction, or ischemic stroke, achieved noninferiority, and a composite of CV death or hospital admission for heart failure achieved superiority (3). Since the trial met only one of its dual primary outcomes for superiority, all other analyses of additional outcomes should only be considered as hypothesis generating. The cardiorenal outcome was defined as time to first event of a composite of sustained confirmed decrease in eGFR by at least 40% (as confirmed by two tests at the central laboratory at least 4 weeks apart) to <60 mL/min/1.73 m², ESKD (defined as dialysis for ≥ 90 days, kidney transplantation, or sustained [i.e., two measurements at the central laboratory at least 4 weeks apart] eGFR of <15 mL/min/1.73 m²), or CV or renal death. The renal-specific outcome included all the components of the cardiorenal outcome except CV death (3).

The serum creatinine and spot urine albumin and creatinine were measured at the central laboratories (LabCorp Clinical Trials [Covance], Singapore, Geneva, and New York) at screening, baseline, 6 months, 12 months, yearly thereafter, and at the end of the trial. eGFR was calculated using the Chronic Kidney Disease

Epidemiology Collaboration equation (18). Baseline values and categorization of these values were defined according to the laboratory test on the date of randomization. The change from baseline was calculated for these parameters, and time to onset of renal outcomes was calculated according to the first of the two subsequent laboratory assessments.

Participants were divided into prespecified subgroups according to their baseline eGFR (eGFR ≥ 90 , <90 to ≥ 60 , and <60 mL/min/1.73 m²) and according to their baseline UACR (UACR ≤ 15 , >15 to <30 , ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 , and >300 mg/g) (19). Patients with baseline urinary albumin below the laboratory's lowest detectable level were recognized as a distinct UACR category and grouped together with patients with UACR ≤ 15 mg/g. Due to a change in the assay used in the central laboratory to measure urinary albumin, the lowest detectable level of albumin was modified during the trial from urine albumin <3.0 mg/L since the initiation of the trial on 25 April 2013 until 30 April 2017, and then <7.0 mg/L until the end of the trial on 18 September 2018. For calculation of the continuous change in UACR over time and avoid bias due to the date of enrollment, all measured values of urine albumin <7.0 mg/L were recognized as below the detectable level and assigned a value of 7 mg/g UACR for continuous analysis. A sensitivity analysis was performed assigning below detectable measures of urinary albumin to UACR = 3.5 mg/g (the midpoint of the range). Confirmed sustained change in the categorical UACR was defined as a change in the UACR categories in two consecutive tests done according to the schedule for UACR testing at the central laboratory, as mentioned above.

Statistical Analysis

Baseline characteristics of the four predefined subgroups of baseline UACR are reported as absolute numbers and percentages for categorical variables and as mean and SD or median and interquartile range (IQR), as appropriate, for continuous variables. We used the χ^2 test to compare categorical variables and the Kruskal-Wallis test to compare continuous variables between UACR subgroups. Analyses were performed

according to the intention-to-treat principle, using data from all randomly assigned participants.

Change in the geometric mean UACR over time were analyzed using mixed models for each baseline UACR and eGFR category separately, adjusting for treatment arm, baseline ACE inhibitors (ACEi)/angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs) treatment, use of diuretics, baseline HbA_{1c}, visit, the interaction between treatment arm and visit, stratification factors (hematuria and eASCVD/MRF status), and the baseline value of the UACR.

UACR data were log-transformed before analysis due to their nonnormal distribution as was previously done in similar analyses (20,21). Adjusted least-square means, 95% CIs, and differences between treatments were back-transformed to the original scale.

Cox proportional hazards models were used to compare the change in categorical UACR between treatment arms, both for confirmed sustained repeated change, done according to UACR test timelines, and for a single change in UACR category. The hazard ratio (HR) and 95% CI are reported. We used Kaplan-Meier curves to demonstrate the risk of deterioration in categorical albuminuria status over time and compared between treatment arms using a log-rank test. In addition, the percentage of participants distributed within the UACR categories at baseline and 6 months, among those with readings at both time points, are presented, and a comparison between treatment arms was performed using the χ^2 test.

Cox proportional hazards models were also used to compare treatment arms for risk of cardiorenal and renal-specific composite outcomes according to baseline UACR categories. All Cox models were stratified by baseline ASCVD (i.e., established disease vs. MRFs) and hematuria (i.e., present vs. absent) at baseline.

No adjustments for multiple comparisons were made. Analyses were performed using SAS 9.4 software (SAS Institute, Cary, NC). DECLARE-TIMI 58 is registered with ClinicalTrials.gov, clinical trial reg. no. NCT01730534.

Data and Resource Availability

Individual participant data will not be made available. However, we encourage

parties interested in collaboration to contact the corresponding author directly for further discussions.

RESULTS

Of the 17,160 participants of DECLARE-TIMI 58, 16,843 (98.15%) had baseline UACR data. There were 9,067 (53.83%) participants with baseline UACR ≤ 15 mg/g category, of which 551 (3.30%) had albumin below detectable levels; 2,577 (15.30%) with UACR of >15 to <30 mg/g; 4,030 (23.93%) with baseline UACR ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 mg/g; and 1,169 (6.94%) with baseline UACR >300 mg/g (Table 1).

Participants with lower baseline UACR categories were more likely to be female and White, had shorter diabetes duration, and were less likely to have a history of eASCVD, heart failure, or hypertension. Patients with a higher baseline UACR had higher mean HbA_{1c}, lower eGFR, and higher systolic blood pressure. ACEi/ARBs use was common across all baseline UACR categories (80.0–85.5%) but differed with statistical significance among UACR categories ($P < 0.0001$) (Table 1).

Change in the geometric mean in UACR over time by treatment arm is presented according to the four UACR baseline subgroups ≤ 15 , >15 to <30 , ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 , and >300 mg/g (Fig. 1A–D). At 6 months, the dapagliflozin arm had a statistically significant lower mean UACR compared with placebo in all UACR baseline subgroups ($P = 0.0033$ for UACR ≤ 15 mg/g and $P < 0.0001$ for all other subgroups) (Fig. 1A–D). Between 6 months and 4 years, UACR in the subgroup of UACR >15 mg/g was lower in the dapagliflozin arm than in the placebo arm (Fig. 1B–D). A separation of the curves as a marker for effect in the lowest UACR category (≤ 15 mg/g) was seen after 36 months ($P = 0.0140$ at 36 months, $P < 0.0001$ at 48 months) (Fig. 1A). In the high-risk category of patients with baseline proteinuria (UACR >300 mg/g), after a large decrease in mean UACR during the first 6 months of treatment, the mean UACR remained stable to decreased during 48 months of treatment with dapagliflozin (Fig. 1D). Sensitivity analyses in which below detectable levels of albumin were imputed differently (UACR = 3.5 mg/g) did not materially change outcomes.

Change in the geometric mean in UACR over time by treatment arm is presented according to the three baseline eGFR subgroups eGFR ≥ 90 , <90 – ≥ 60 , and <60 mL/min/1.73 m² (Fig. 1E–G). In all three eGFR subgroups and at all time points after baseline, the dapagliflozin arm had a statistically significant lower mean UACR compared with placebo (at 4 years $P < 0.0001$ for all three eGFR subgroups).

Analysis of confirmed sustained change in the categorical UACR from baseline to end of trial (EOT) demonstrated an improvement in UACR categories for all UACR subgroups with dapagliflozin versus placebo (Fig. 2A). The improvement with dapagliflozin was statistically significant for each UACR category separately as well as for the sum of patients who improved by at least one UACR category (HR 1.45 [95% CI 1.35–1.56], $P < 0.0001$) and two UACR categories (HR 1.43 [1.23–1.65], $P < 0.0001$). A statistically significant reduction in the deterioration in UACR categories from baseline to EOT was also seen with dapagliflozin in most categories (the increase to UACR >15 mg/g in those with baseline UACR ≤ 15 mg/g was the only category that was numerically but not statistically reduced with dapagliflozin) (Fig. 2B). The overall one-category and two-category deteriorations in UACR were both reduced with dapagliflozin versus placebo (HR 0.82 [0.77–0.88], $P < 0.0001$; and HR 0.79 [0.69–0.91], $P = 0.0007$, respectively).

In addition, improvement in categorical UACR on one measure from baseline to EOT was increased with dapagliflozin compared with placebo (Supplementary Fig. 1A), while one-time worsening in categorical UACR was greatly reduced with dapagliflozin (Supplementary Fig. 1B).

Looking specifically at the change in the distribution of UACR categories from randomization to 6 months according to treatment arms, there were statistically significant differences between patients treated with dapagliflozin versus placebo. While at baseline the UACR categories distribution was equal between treatment arms ($P = 0.99$), at 6 months there was a higher percentage of patients treated with dapagliflozin than placebo in the UACR ≤ 15 mg/g category, at 56% vs. 52%. The opposite was true for the ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 mg/g category, at 23% vs. 25%, and for the >300 mg/g category, at 5% vs. 7%, in the dapagliflozin and

Table 1—Patients' baseline characteristics in DECLARE-TIMI 58 according to four baseline UACR categories: UACR ≤15, >15 to <30, ≥30 to ≤300, and >300 mg/g

	UACR ≤15 mg/g (n = 9,067)	UACR >15 to <30 mg/g (n = 2,577)	UACR ≥30 to ≤300 mg/g (n = 4,030)	UACR >300 mg/g (n = 1,169)	P
Demographic characteristics					
Female sex	3,583 (39.5)	1,083 (42.0)	1,292 (32.1)	339 (29.0)	<0.0001
Age, years, mean (SD)	63.8 (6.6)	64.4 (7.0)	64 (7.1)	63.5 (6.9)	0.0008
BMI, kg/m ²	31.2 (27.7–35.2)	31.2 (27.7–35.4)	31.5 (28.0–35.5)	32.0 (28.1–36.3)	0.0002
BMI, kg/m ² , mean (SD)	31.9 (5.9)	32.0 (6.1)	32.1 (6.0)	32.7 (6.2)	0.0002
Race					
White	7,441 (82.1)	2,000 (77.6)	3,079 (76.4)	860 (73.6)	
Asian	1,015 (11.2)	402 (15.6)	674 (16.7)	190 (16.3)	<0.0001
Black	319 (3.5)	81 (3.1)	139 (3.4)	49 (4.2)	
Other	292 (3.2)	94 (3.6)	138 (3.4)	70 (6.0)	
Medical history					
Diabetes duration					
≤5 years	2,303 (25.4)	555 (21.5)	750 (18.6)	145 (12.4)	<0.0001
>5 to ≤15 years	4,647 (51.3)	1,325 (51.4)	1,997 (49.6)	567 (48.5)	
>15 years	2,117 (23.3)	697 (27)	1,283 (31.8)	457 (39.1)	
eASCVD	3,415 (37.7)	1,037 (40.2)	1,786 (44.3)	578 (49.4)	<0.0001
History of congestive heart failure					
History of congestive heart failure	811 (8.9)	274 (10.6)	437 (10.8)	169 (14.5)	<0.0001
Hypertension	8,025 (88.5)	2,333 (90.5)	3,690 (91.6)	1,096 (93.8)	<0.0001
Hyperlipidemia	7,319 (80.7)	2,071 (80.4)	3,217 (79.8)	930 (79.6)	0.5815
CV and glucose-lowering drug used					
ACEi/ARB	7,257 (80.0)	2,115 (82.1)	3,316 (82.3)	1,000 (85.5)	<0.0001
MRAs	413 (4.6)	93 (3.6)	182 (4.5)	59 (5.0)	0.1355
Diuretic	3,561 (39.3)	1,051 (40.8)	1,708 (42.4)	517 (44.2)	0.0004
Metformin	7,482 (82.5)	2,119 (82.2)	3,308 (82.1)	919 (78.6)	0.013
Insulin	3,248 (35.8)	1,073 (41.6)	1,897 (47.1)	656 (56.1)	<0.0001
Sulfonylurea	3,896 (43.0)	1,137 (44.1)	1,680 (41.7)	489 (41.8)	0.2196
DPP-4 inhibitors	1,562 (17.2)	453 (17.6)	646 (16.0)	185 (15.8)	0.1975
GLP-1 receptor agonist	383 (4.2)	115 (4.5)	181 (4.5)	50 (4.3)	0.8928
Laboratory and clinical measurements					
HbA _{1c} , %	7.9 (7.3–8.8)	8.1 (7.5–9.1)	8.3 (7.5–9.3)	8.4 (7.6–9.6)	<0.0001
HbA _{1c} , %, mean (SD)	8.1 (1.1)	8.4 (1.2)	8.5 (1.3)	8.6 (1.3)	<0.0001
eGFR, mL/min/1.73 m ² , mean (SD)	85.9 (15.0)	86.2 (15.7)	84.6 (17.0)	80.7 (18.3)	<0.0001
eGFR (CKD-EPI) categories					
<60 mL/min/1.73 m ²	508 (5.6)	178 (6.9)	381 (9.5)	167 (14.3)	<0.0001
60 to <90 mL/min/1.73 m ²	4,156 (45.8)	1,111 (43.1)	1,761 (43.7)	554 (47.4)	
≥90 mL/min/1.73 m ²	4,403 (48.6)	1,288 (50.0)	1,887 (46.8)	448 (38.3)	
Blood pressure					
Systolic, mmHg	132.5 (122.5–142.5)	135 (125.0–145.0)	137.5 (127.0–147.5)	142 (132.0–154.0)	<0.0001
Systolic, mmHg, mean (SD)	132.9 (14.8)	135.4 (15.2)	137.3 (15.6)	142.7 (16.1)	<0.0001
Diastolic, mmHg	78 (71.0–83.5)	79 (71.5–84.5)	79 (71.5–85.0)	80 (74.0–86.5)	<0.0001
Diastolic, mmHg, mean (SD)	77.6 (9.0)	78.2 (9.1)	78.2 (9.2)	79.9 (9.3)	<0.0001
Total cholesterol, mg/dL	163 (138.0–194.0)	163 (138.0–195.0)	162 (137.0–193.0)	171 (142.0–206.0)	<0.0001
Total cholesterol, mg/dL, mean (SD)	168.7 (43.2)	168.6 (42.6)	168.7 (45.1)	178.2 (53.3)	<0.0001
Fasting triglycerides, mg/dL	141 (104.0–197.0)	149 (107.0–208.0)	155 (112.0–224.0)	160.5 (114.0–238.0)	<0.0001
Fasting triglycerides, mg/dL, mean (SD)	168.4 (120.9)	175.7 (112.9)	192.6 (153.2)	211.1 (191.3)	<0.0001

Categorical data are shown as *n* (%) and continuous data as median (IQR) or as indicated otherwise. The *P* value between UACR subgroups was calculated using the χ^2 test to compare categorical variables and the Kruskal-Wallis test to compare continuous variables. CKD-EPI, Chronic Kidney Disease Epidemiology Collaboration; DPP-4, dipeptidyl peptidase 4; GLP-1, glucagon-like peptide 1; MRAs, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists.

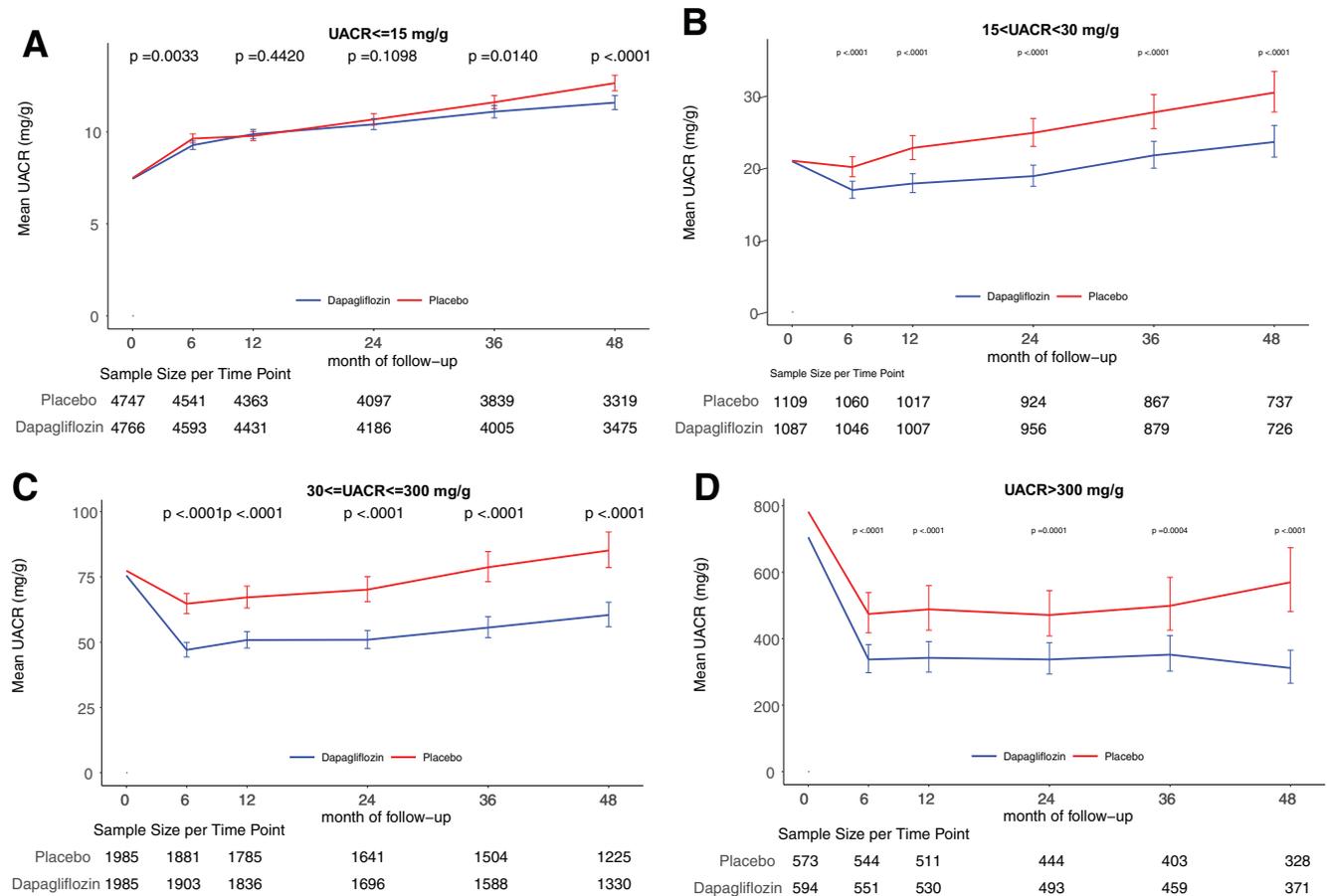


Figure 1—Change in UACR over time by treatment arm at baseline, 6 months, and 1, 2, 3, and 4 years in the group of patients with baseline UACR ≤ 15 mg/g (A), baseline UACR > 15 to < 30 mg/g (B), baseline UACR ≥ 30 to ≤ 300 mg/g (C) and baseline UACR > 300 mg/g (D), and in the group of patients with baseline eGFR ≥ 90 mL/min/1.73 m² (E), baseline eGFR < 90 to ≥ 60 mL/min/1.73 m² (F), and baseline eGFR < 60 mL/min/1.73 m² (G). Shown are point estimates and 95% confidence intervals of geometric mean back-transformed to the original scale.

placebo arm, respectively ($P < 0.0001$) (Supplementary Table 1).

Kaplan-Meier curves for new onset of UACR > 15 mg/g in patients with a baseline UACR ≤ 15 mg/g did not achieve statistical significance (log-rank $P = 0.0536$) (Supplementary Fig. 2A). Kaplan-Meier curves for new onset of UACR ≥ 30 mg/g in patients with a baseline UACR < 30 mg/g (Supplementary Fig. 2B) and new onset of UACR ≥ 300 mg/g in patients with a baseline UACR < 300 mg/g (Supplementary Fig. 2C) demonstrated an improvement with dapagliflozin compared with placebo (log-rank $P < 0.0001$ for both).

The cardiorenal event rates in the placebo arm in participants with UACR ≤ 15 mg/g versus those with UACR > 15 to < 30 mg/g were 3.1% and 4.9% ($P < 0.0001$), and the renal-specific event rates in the placebo arm were 1.3% and 2.4% ($P < 0.0001$) for the UACR ≤ 15 mg/g versus those with UACR > 15 to < 30 mg/g, respectively. Together these

findings demonstrate an increased risk for both outcomes with higher baseline UACR categories, even in the normoalbuminuria range. The cardiorenal outcome was reduced with dapagliflozin for all UACR ≥ 30 mg/g subgroups ($P < 0.0125$, $P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.0327$) while the renal-specific outcome was reduced with dapagliflozin versus placebo for all UACR subgroups ($P < 0.05$, $P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.480$) (Fig. 3).

CONCLUSIONS

In this exploratory analysis of the results from DECLARE-TIMI 58, dapagliflozin reduced the deterioration of UACR, regardless of baseline eGFR and UACR, even in the category of UACR ≤ 15 mg/g. Dapagliflozin increased the likelihood of categorical improvement in UACR and decreased the risk for categorical UACR deterioration. This improvement was already demonstrated in the first postrandomization UACR test at 6 months. We

also demonstrated a decreased risk for cardiorenal outcome with dapagliflozin for those with baseline UACR ≥ 30 mg/g. In addition, a decreased risk for renal-specific outcomes with dapagliflozin was demonstrated for all baseline UACR categories.

SGLT2i have been previously demonstrated to reduce albuminuria by 30–40% (22–24), and various mechanisms have been proposed to explain this effect. These include an increase in natriuresis, a contraction in plasma volume, and a reduction in single nephron hyperfiltration (25). Reduction in hyperfiltration has been suggested to result from sodium delivery to the macula densa, thereby restoring glomerular pressure to physiological levels (26,27). The decrease in nephron perfusion back to normal levels may cause reduced wall tension and shear stress (28), leading to the deactivation of proinflammatory cytokines and a possible reduction in renal fibrosis (29). Moreover, SGLT2i have been shown to decrease renal cortical hypoxia

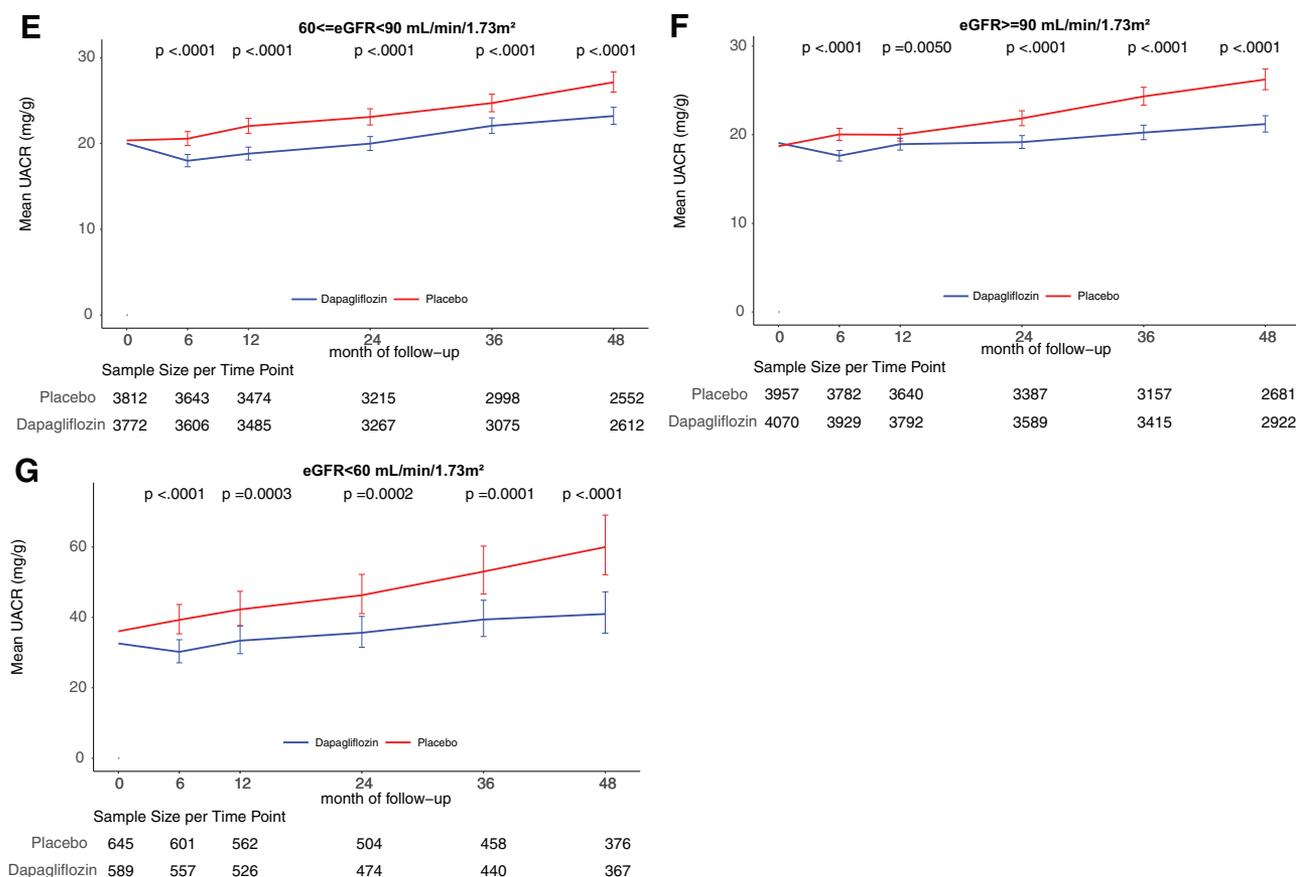


Figure 1—Continued.

due to a reduction in the energy requirement of proximal tubular cells (30) and in contrary to increased renal medullary hypoxia causing an increase in the expression of hypoxia-inducible factors and erythropoietin (31).

Compared with placebo, dapagliflozin treatment reduced UACR across all baseline eGFR and UACR categories, including those with UACR ≤ 15 mg/g and those with eGFR ≥ 90 mL/min/1.73 m², during ~4 years of follow-up. The results indicate a beneficial effect for dapagliflozin on UACR as early as 6 months following treatment initiation. Dapagliflozin decreased UACR compared with placebo after 6 months for most baseline eGFR and UACR categories, except for the UACR ≤ 15 mg/g subgroups. In the placebo arm at 6 months, UACR values in the subgroups of UACR > 15 mg/g seemed lower compared with baseline, a phenomenon that may be partially explained by regression to the mean, placebo-effect, or adjustment of background medications. Nonetheless, in all these subgroups, the

reduction in UACR in the dapagliflozin arm was significantly larger, which testifies to the effect of the drug. Analysis of the distribution between subgroups of UACR after 6 months of treatment compared with baseline demonstrated an increase in the percentage of patients with UACR ≤ 15 mg/g in the dapagliflozin treatment arm, while the percentage of patients with UACR ≥ 30 mg/g was increased in the placebo arm. These findings add important information to the findings from the BI 10773 (Empagliflozin) Cardiovascular Outcome Trial in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients (EMPA-REG OUTCOME) trial and the Canagliflozin Cardiovascular Assessment Study (CANVAS) program, which had smaller populations with normoalbuminuria and did not divide this group category into two subgroups (1,2,20,21). The population in DECLARE-TIMI 58 was larger than previous trials and included a higher percentage of participants both without eASCVD and with normal kidney function and UACR at baseline (3). The length of follow-up

in the trial was also longer, with a median follow-up of 4.2 (IQR 3.9–4.4) years compared with 3.1 (IQR 2.2–3.6) years of follow-up and 2.6 years (IQR 2.0–3.4) of treatment duration in the EMPA REG and 188 (SD 106) weeks in CANVAS and 108 (SD 20) weeks in Canagliflozin Cardiovascular Assessment Study-Renal (CANVAS-R) (1–3). Similar to previous trials, the effect of dapagliflozin on UACR was in addition to widespread treatment with ACEi/ARBs (81.3% of participants) (3).

Unlike previous trials, we grouped our population into four categories of baseline UACR, dividing the large group of patients with normal albuminuria at baseline (11,644 patients, 69.1% of patients with baseline UACR measurements) into those with UACR ≤ 15 versus those with UACR > 15 to < 30 mg/g. The greater representation of patients with normal albumin excretion compared with previous trials allowed us to better define subtle changes within this important group of patients, which according to prior publications represent

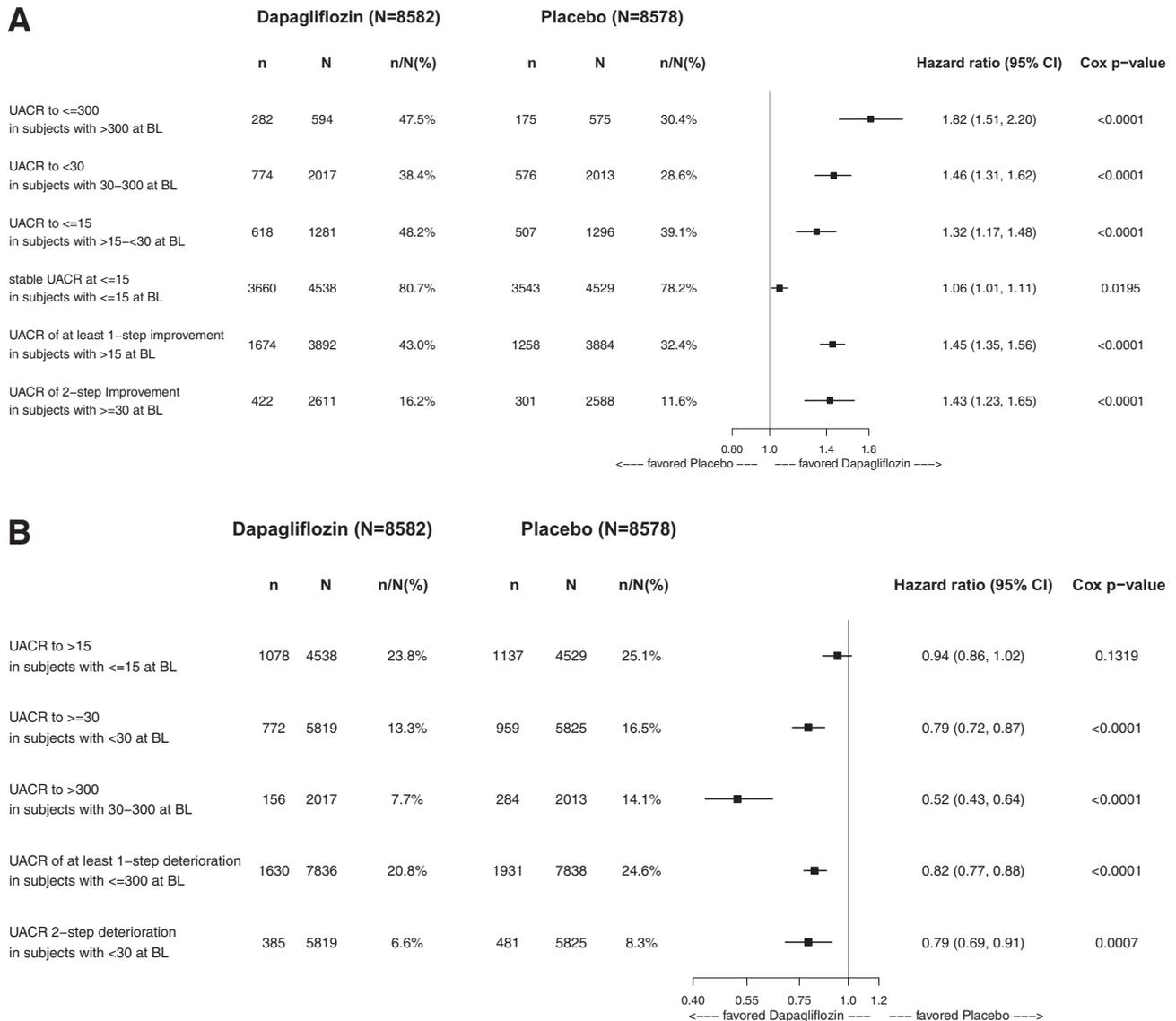


Figure 2—Change in confirmed sustained categorical UACR (mg/g) from baseline (BL) to EOT in dapagliflozin vs. placebo arm. A: Improvement in UACR categories. B: Deterioration in UACR categories.

50–70% of the general population of patients with type 2 diabetes (32–34). We were able to demonstrate an improvement in UACR deterioration even in this group of patients with UACR ≤15 mg/g. The division into four categories also confirms to the current knowledge that both increased renal and CV risk do not begin at UACR ≥30 mg/g, but rather at much lower levels of UACR (35–37), and to the current Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) recommendation to divide the range of normoalbuminuria into two separate groups (19). The data presented here further emphasize the association between higher levels of UACR within the normoalbuminuria range and increased risk for adverse renal events.

Studying the categorical changes in UACR, we found that patients treated with dapagliflozin were more likely to experience a categorical improvement and were less likely to experience deterioration. The observation was consistent when defined as at least one categorical shift, or at least two shifts, and remained stable when calculated as a single measurement change or as sustained change. Although albuminuria-based end points are limited by high day-to-day variability, recent analyses indicated that similar drug effects are achieved when comparing single and confirmed measurements (38). The single measurement analysis may suffer from increased “noise” but benefits

from a higher number of events, resulting in a possible increase in statistical power (39). Time wise, dapagliflozin reduced the rate of new onset micro- or macroalbuminuria relatively early during the trial, and the separation between the populations was maintained throughout (Supplementary Fig. 2B and C). Considering these findings, the analyses of the change in UACR both as a continuous and categorical variable provide a comprehensive picture, emphasizing the beneficial effect for dapagliflozin on urinary albumin excretion across all baseline UACR and eGFR categories.

Albumin excretion rate is a clinically useful surrogate marker for severity of

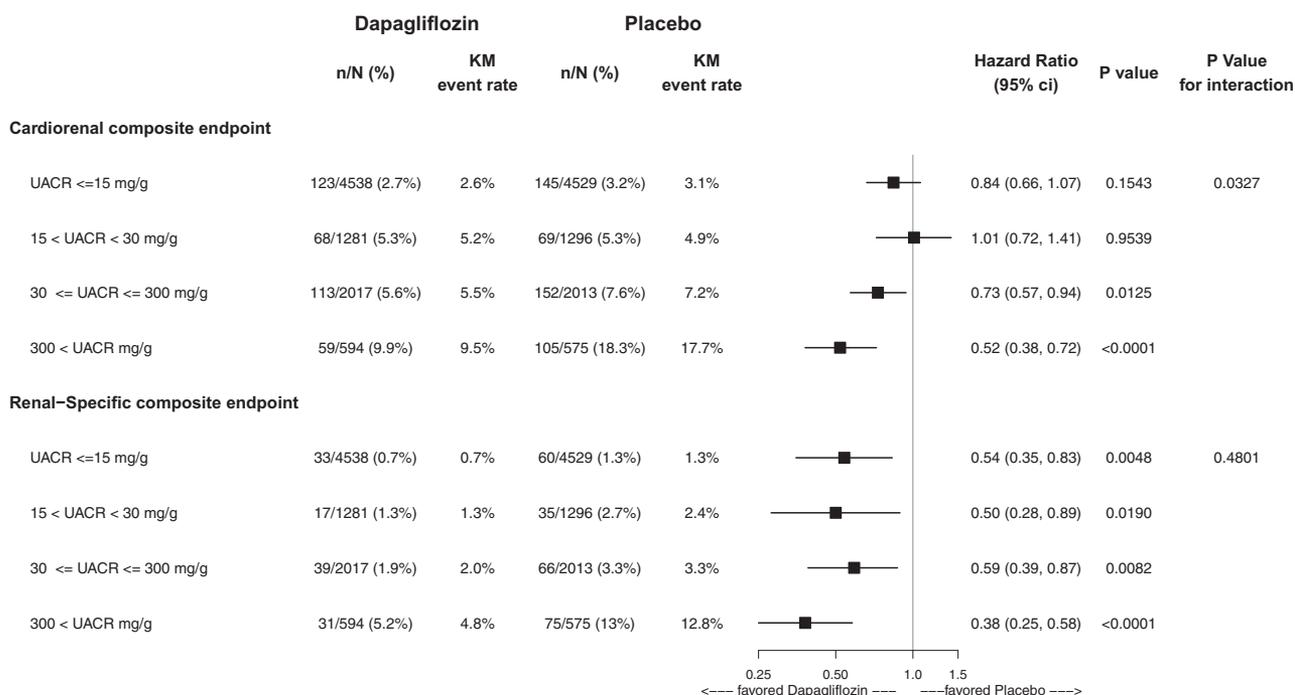


Figure 3—Treatment effect of dapagliflozin vs. placebo on composite cardiorenal and renal-specific outcomes according to baseline UACR categories of ≤15, >15 to <30, ≥30 to ≤300, and >300 mg/g. Cox model with stratification factor (baseline hematuria status and eASCVD or MRF status). KM, Kaplan-Meier.

kidney disease. Treatments that improve albuminuria status are associated with a reduction in the progression of CKD (13). Clinically, improvement in albuminuria status serves as a positive prognostic factor for adverse CV and renal outcomes, while increased albumin excretion serves as a warning sign (14). We previously reported a 24% decrease in the composite cardiorenal outcome of the trial (40% sustained decrease in eGFR, ESKD, and renal or CV death) (3,4). Here we demonstrated that the improvement was most pronounced in those patients with higher albuminuria at baseline ($P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.0327$), however this analysis was not adjusted for the differences in the subgroups population. This stands in contrast to the renal-specific composite outcome (defined as all of the above but without CV death), in which the improvement with dapagliflozin was independent of baseline UACR ($P_{\text{interaction}} = 0.4801$). These results emphasize that dapagliflozin improved renal outcomes in all patients, but improvement of composite cardiorenal outcomes was achieved in patients who already had renal damage, as evidenced by an increased UACR. This finding widens the newer findings from the Canagliflozin and Renal Events

in Diabetes with Established Nephropathy Clinical Evaluation (CREDESCENCE) (5) and Dapagliflozin And Prevention of Adverse outcomes in Chronic Kidney Disease (DAPA-CKD) (6) trials, both of which demonstrated a lower rate of both renal and cardiorenal outcomes in different populations of patients with CKD, with (5,6) and without (6) type 2 diabetes.

While treatment with dapagliflozin may improve prognosis even when initiated in patients with kidney markers in the normal-healthy range, the low rate of adverse renal events in this population may require longer duration of treatment to demonstrate dapagliflozin's full effect. These results, along with the improvement demonstrated in the renal-specific outcome for all UACR subgroups, emphasize the way in which DECLARE-TIMI 58 was able to add supporting information to the renal-specific outcomes trials (CREDESCENCE, DAPA-CKD, EMPA-KIDNEY and others) (4–6,40) regarding the effect of SGLT2i in the healthier population of patients with type 2 diabetes that is a large part of the population with type 2 diabetes in our daily practice but not well represented in renal outcomes trials.

These analyses must be viewed as hypothesis generating, since one of the

dual primary efficacy outcomes (MACE) was not achieved and because DECLARE-TIMI 58 was a CV outcome trial rather than a renal outcome trial. Though African American and Hispanic patients are at high risk for CKD, the limited number of subjects enrolled from these categories precludes a definitive understanding of any race- or ethnicity-based differences in outcomes or treatment effects (41). Another limitation of our trial was that we tested UACR only as a single sample, rather than an average of two to three samples, and only 6 months from baseline and thereafter once yearly. The eGFR dynamics in DECLARE-TIMI 58, including the early drop following dapagliflozin initiation, are not included in this analysis. An additional limitation is the relatively low number of patients in the highest risk category of albuminuria (1,169 patients with UACR >300 mg/g at baseline, <7% of the entire trial population), reflected in the relatively small number of renal events. However, this can also be seen as a possible strength of the trial, as this is more representative of the general population of patients with type 2 diabetes worldwide (32–34).

In conclusion, in the large population of patients with type 2 diabetes and low renal risk in DECLARE-TIMI 58, we

were able to demonstrate a significant positive long-term effect of dapagliflozin on UACR, irrespective of baseline eGFR and UACR, and even in patients with normoalbuminuria at baseline. We also demonstrated a reduction in renal-specific outcomes across all baseline UACR categories. This reduction in UACR and renal outcomes with dapagliflozin was achieved on top of >80% use of ACEi/ARBs. The possible association between the positive effect of dapagliflozin on albuminuria and its positive effect on the cardiorenal and renal-specific outcomes in DECLARE-TIMI 58 remain to be further analyzed.

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