Abemaciclib plus a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor as initial therapy for HR+, HER2advanced breast cancer: Final overall survival results of MONARCH 3

M.P. Goetz, M. Toi, J. Huober, J. Sohn, O. Trédan, I.H. Park, M. Campone, S.-C. Chen, L.M. Manso, S. Paluch-Shimon, O.C. Freedman, J. O'Shaughnessy, X. Pivot, S.M. Tolaney, S. Hurvitz, A. Llombart-Cussac, V. André, A. Saha, G. van Hal, A. Shahir, H. Iwata, S.R.D. Johnston

PII: S0923-7534(24)00139-X

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annonc.2024.04.013

Reference: ANNONC 1472

To appear in: Annals of Oncology

Received Date: 6 March 2024

Revised Date: 29 April 2024

Accepted Date: 30 April 2024

Please cite this article as: Goetz MP, Toi M, Huober J, Sohn J, Trédan O, Park IH, Campone M, Chen SC, Manso LM, Paluch-Shimon S, Freedman OC, O'Shaughnessy J, Pivot X, Tolaney SM, Hurvitz S, Llombart-Cussac A, André V, Saha A, van Hal G, Shahir A, Iwata H, Johnston SRD, Abemaciclib plus a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor as initial therapy for HR+, HER2- advanced breast cancer: Final overall survival results of MONARCH 3, *Annals of Oncology* (2024), doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annonc.2024.04.013.

This is a PDF file of an article that has undergone enhancements after acceptance, such as the addition of a cover page and metadata, and formatting for readability, but it is not yet the definitive version of record. This version will undergo additional copyediting, typesetting and review before it is published in its final form, but we are providing this version to give early visibility of the article. Please note that, during the production process, errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.

© 2024 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of European Society for Medical Oncology.



- 1 Article type: original article
- 2
- 3 Abemaciclib plus a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor as initial therapy for
- 4 HR+, HER2- advanced breast cancer: Final overall survival results of
- 5 MONARCH 3
- 6
- 7 M. P. Goetz^{1*}, M. Toi², J. Huober³, J. Sohn⁴, O. Trédan⁵, I. H. Park⁶, M. Campone⁷, S-C. Chen⁸,
- 8 L. M. Manso⁹, S. Paluch-Shimon¹⁰, O. C. Freedman¹¹, J. O'Shaughnessy¹², X. Pivot¹³, S. M.
- 9 Tolaney¹⁴, S. Hurvitz¹⁵, A. Llombart-Cussac¹⁶, V. André¹⁷, A. Saha¹⁷, G. van Hal¹⁷, A. Shahir¹⁷,
- 10 *H. Iwata*¹⁸, *S. R. D. Johnston*¹⁹
- 11
- ¹Department of Oncology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA
- 13 ²Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
- ¹⁴ ³Breast Center Cantonal Hospital St. Gallen, Switzerland and University of Ulm, Ulm,
- 15 Germany
- 16 ⁴Yonsei Cancer Center, Seoul, Korea
- 17 ⁵Centre Léon Bérard, Lyon, France
- 18 ⁶National Cancer Center, Goyang-si, Korea
- 19 ⁷Institut de Cancérologie de l'Ouest, Angers, France
- 20 ⁸Chang Gung University Medical College, Taipei, Taiwan
- 21 ⁹Hospital Universitario 12 de Octubre, Madrid, Spain
- ¹⁰Hadassah University Hospital & Faculty of Medicine Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

- 23 ¹¹Durham Regional Cancer Center, Ontario, Canada
- ¹²Baylor University Medical Center, Texas Oncology, US Oncology, Dallas, TX, USA
- ¹³Centre Paul Strauss, INSERM 110, Strasbourg, France
- ¹⁴Department of Medical Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA, USA
- ¹⁵Department of Medicine, UW Medicine, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Seattle, WA, USA
- 28 ¹⁶Hospital Arnau de Vilanova, FISABIO, Valencia, Spain
- 29 ¹⁷Eli Lilly, Indianapolis, IN, USA
- ¹⁸Department of Breast Oncology, Aichi Cancer Center Hospital, Nagoya, Japan
- ¹⁹Breast Unit, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK
- ***Corresponding author:** Dr. Matthew P. Goetz, Department of Oncology, Mayo Clinic, 200
- 33 First St. S.W., Rochester, MN 55905, USA. Tel: 507-422-6304. e-mail:
- 34 goetz.matthew@mayo.edu
- Prior presentation: This work was presented in part at San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium
 46th Annual Meeting (Dec 6th, 2023, San Antonio, TX, USA).
- 37 Short title: Overall survival with abemaciclib + NSAI as initial therapy for HR+, HER2- ABC

38

39 <u>Highlights</u>

40	1.	This phase 3 trial evaluated abemaciclib + NSAI versus placebo + NSAI as initial therapy
41		for HR+, HER2- ABC.
42	2.	Addition of abemaciclib to an NSAI resulted in numerically longer OS; however,
43		statistical significance was not reached.
44	3.	Absolute improvement in median OS was clinically meaningful (ITT: 13.1 months; sVD:
45		4.9 months).
46	4.	The previously demonstrated PFS benefit with the addition of abemaciclib was sustained
47		(median improvement 14.3 months).
48	5.	The addition of abemaciclib delayed subsequent receipt of chemotherapy (median
49		improvement 16.1 months).
50		
51		

52 Abstract

53	Background: In MONARCH 2, the addition of abemaciclib to fulvestrant significantly
54	improved both progression-free survival (PFS) and overall survival (OS) in patients with HR+,
55	HER2- advanced breast cancer (ABC) with disease progression on prior endocrine therapy (ET).
56	In MONARCH 3, the addition of abemaciclib to a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor (NSAI) as
57	initial therapy for HR+, HER2- ABC significantly improved PFS. Here, we present the
58	prespecified final OS results for MONARCH 3.
59	Patients and Methods: MONARCH 3 is a randomized, double-blind, phase 3 study of
60	abemaciclib plus NSAI (anastrozole or letrozole) versus placebo plus NSAI in postmenopausal
61	women with HR+, HER2- ABC without prior systemic therapy in the advanced setting. The
62	primary objective was investigator-assessed PFS; OS was a gated secondary endpoint, and
63	chemotherapy-free survival (CFS) was an exploratory endpoint.
64	Results: A total of 493 women were randomized 2:1 to receive abemaciclib plus NSAI ($n = 328$)
65	or placebo plus NSAI ($n = 165$). After a median follow-up of 8.1 years, there were 198 OS
66	events (60.4%) in the abemaciclib arm and 116 (70.3%) in the placebo arm (hazard ratio, 0.804;
67	95% confidence interval [CI], 0.637-1.015; $P = 0.0664$, non-significant). Median OS was 66.8
68	versus 53.7 months for abemaciclib versus placebo. In the subgroup with visceral disease (sVD),
69	there were 113 OS events (65.3%) in the abemaciclib arm and 65 (72.2%) in the placebo arm
70	(hazard ratio, 0.758; 95% CI, 0.558-1.030; <i>P</i> = 0.0757, non-significant). Median OS was 63.7
71	months versus 48.8 months for abemaciclib versus placebo. The previously demonstrated PFS
72	benefit was sustained, and CFS numerically improved with the addition of abemaciclib. No new
73	safety signals were observed.

- 74 **Conclusion:** Abemaciclib combined with an NSAI resulted in clinically meaningful
- improvement in median OS (ITT: 13.1 months; sVD: 14.9 months) in patients with HR+ HER2-75
- ABC; however, statistical significance was not reached. 76
- Keywords: overall survival; abemaciclib; CDK4/6 inhibitor; first-line therapy; HR-77
- positive/HER2-negative; advanced breast cancer 78

ournal Prevension

79 INTRODUCTION

Hormone receptor-positive (HR+), human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-negative (HER2-) 80 breast cancer is the most prevalent breast cancer subtype (approximately 70% of all breast 81 cancers),¹ and metastatic disease remains incurable. The majority of patients with HR+ HER2-82 83 advanced breast cancer (ABC) treated with aromatase inhibitors (AIs) in the first-line setting will experience disease progression/recurrence within approximately 15 months.²⁻⁴ Thus, alternative 84 therapies that synergize with endocrine therapy (ET) are needed to improve patient survival. 85 Cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) 4/6 inhibitors in combination with ET have improved outcomes 86 for patients with HR+, HER2- ABC and have become a standard treatment option on the basis of 87 prolonged progression-free survival (PFS).^{5,6} Abemaciclib is an oral, selective CDK4/6 inhibitor 88 with greater selectivity for CDK4 than CDK6, which, unlike other currently approved CDK4/6 89 inhibitors, allows continuous dosing due to less myelosuppression.⁷ Abemaciclib has 90 91 demonstrated efficacy as monotherapy and in combination with AIs/fulvestrant in ABC in the MONARCH trials^{2,8-10} and also in combination with ET in node-positive, high-risk early breast 92 cancer (EBC) in the monarchE trial,¹¹ which has led to regulatory approvals in both the 93 94 metastatic and adjuvant settings.

In the absence of cure, improvement in overall survival (OS) remains an important goal for
patients with ABC. In MONARCH 2, the addition of abemaciclib to fulvestrant significantly
improved both PFS and OS in patients with HR+, HER2- ABC with disease progression on prior
ET.^{8,12} MONARCH 3 is a phase 3 trial evaluating abemaciclib in combination with a
nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor (NSAI) in postmenopausal women with HR+, HER2- ABC who
have not received prior systemic therapy in the advanced setting. The primary objective was
previously met with the results showing significantly prolonged PFS with the addition of

- 102 abemaciclib versus placebo to NSAI (median, 28.2 months versus 14.8 months; hazard ratio,
- 0.540; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.418-0.698; P = 0.000002).² At the last interim OS 103
- analysis (5.8-year follow-up), a numerically favorable median OS difference of 12.6 months was 104
- observed (hazard ratio, 0.754; 95% CI, 0.584-0.974; P = 0.0301, non-significant).¹³ Here, we 105
- report the results of the prespecified final OS analysis of MONARCH 3. 106

H. Reppose

107 METHODS

108 **Procedures**

109 MONARCH 3 is a global, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase 3 study

- 110 evaluating abemaciclib with an NSAI versus placebo with an NSAI in postmenopausal women
- 111 with HR+, HER2- ABC who have not received prior systemic therapy in the advanced setting.
- 112 The NSAI selected was anastrozole or letrozole per physician's choice. Prior ET in the
- neoadjuvant or adjuvant setting was permitted if the patient had a disease-free interval >12
- 114 months from the completion of ET. This study was conducted in 158 centers in 22 countries.
- 115 Eligible patients were randomized in a 2:1 ratio to receive abemaciclib or placebo (150 mg twice

116 daily continuous schedule) plus either 1 mg anastrozole or 2.5 mg letrozole daily. Cycles were

117 28 days. Stratification factors included metastatic site (visceral, bone only, other) and prior

118 (neo)adjuvant ET (AI, other, none). The presence of visceral disease refers to lung, liver, pleural,

peritoneal, or adrenal gland involvement at the time of randomization. Additional study details
were previously reported.¹⁰

This study was funded by the sponsor, Eli Lilly and Company, and designed together with the steering committee. The study was performed in compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki.
The study protocol and amendments were approved by the relevant ethical and institutional review boards and all patients gave written informed consent.

125 **Patients**

126 Women \geq 18 years of age with locally tested HR+, HER2- breast cancer, postmenopausal status,

127 locoregionally recurrent disease not amenable to resection or radiation therapy with curative

128 intent, or metastatic disease were eligible. Patients must have had measurable disease or non-

measurable bone-only disease, as defined by RECIST v1.1, in addition to adequate organ

130 function and an Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) performance status (PS) score of
 131 ≤1.

Patients with visceral crisis, lymphangitic spread, leptomeningeal carcinomatosis, inflammatory
breast cancer, or evidence or history of central nervous system metastasis were excluded. Prior
CDK4/6 inhibitor or systemic therapy for advanced disease was not permitted.

135 Endpoints

The primary endpoint was investigator-assessed PFS, defined as the time from randomization
until progressive disease or death. OS, a key secondary endpoint, was assessed from time of
randomization until death. Chemotherapy-free survival (CFS), an exploratory endpoint, was
defined as time from randomization to initiation of first post-discontinuation chemotherapy or
death. Efficacy and safety measures have been previously described.¹⁰ Adverse events (AEs)
were graded according to the National Cancer Institute Common Terminology Criteria, version
4.0, and coded by MedDRA.

143 Statistical Analysis

All efficacy analyses were performed on the intent-to-treat (ITT) population, which included all
randomized patients, and all safety analyses were performed in patients who received at least one
dose of abemaciclib, placebo, or NSAI.

With 240 PFS events, the study was powered to 80% with a 2-sided alpha of 5% assuming a hazard ratio of 0.67 in favor of the abemaciclib arm. No power assumptions were made for the secondary endpoint of OS. A gate-keeping hierarchical strategy between the primary PFS and secondary OS endpoints was used to control the overall familywise 2-sided type I error rate at

151	5%, such that OS was to be tested only if PFS was statistically significant. The alpha of 0.05 was
152	split between the ITT population and the subgroup with visceral disease (sVD) using a graphical
153	approach, with an initial allocation of 0.04 for the ITT population and 0.01 for the sVD. The
154	cumulative type I error rate within each population was maintained using the Lan-DeMets
155	spending function with O'Brien-Fleming boundary used to control multiplicity for all the interim
156	and final analyses. The final OS analysis was to be performed after observing approximately 315
157	events. For this final OS analysis, based on the actual number of events observed, the 2-sided P-
158	value boundary was 0.034 for the ITT population and 0.009 for the sVD.
159	The Kaplan-Meier method was used to estimate survival curves. OS of the treatment groups was
160	compared in the ITT population using a stratified log-rank test and in the sVD using an
161	unstratified log-rank test. Cox proportional hazards (PH) model was used to estimate the
162	treatment effect hazard ratio between the abemaciclib plus NSAI arm and the placebo plus NSAI
163	arm. The inverse probability of censoring weights (IPCW) method was prespecified as a
164	sensitivity analysis and used to evaluate the impact of follow-up systemic therapy with other
165	CDK4/6 inhibitors on OS. ¹⁴ The IPCW method involved (a) censoring patients in both arms at
166	the time of initiation of additional post-progression CDK4/6 inhibitor treatment and (b)
167	determining appropriate weights for each subject at risk at each censoring timepoint using a Cox
168	PH model. The variables to be used as weights for the model were selected from a set of
169	prespecified covariates including demographics and baseline disease characteristics: race, age
170	group, geographical region, baseline ECOG PS, disease extent at study entry, prior (neo)adjuvant
171	ET, nature of disease, progesterone receptor status, and number of organs involved. The final
172	IPCW-adjusted treatment effect was estimated using a weighted Cox PH model. SAS version 9.4

173 (SAS Institute) and R version 4.2.2 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing) were used for174 statistical analyses.

175 RESULTS

176 **Patients**

Between November 18, 2014, and November 11, 2015, 493 patients were randomly assigned 2:1 177 to receive abemaciclib plus an NSAI (n = 328) or placebo plus an NSAI (n = 165) (Figure 1). At 178 the final OS cut-off (September 29, 2023), a total of 23 (7.0%) patients in the abemaciclib arm 179 and 5 (3.0%) patients in the placebo arm continued to receive study treatment. The majority 180 (79.1%) of patients received letrozole. Baseline patient and disease characteristics were well 181 balanced between treatment arms (Table S1). A total of 263 (53.3%) patients had visceral 182 disease. Overall, 196 (39.8%) patients had de novo metastatic breast cancer and 297 (60.2%) 183 patients had locoregional or metastatic recurrent breast cancer. A total of 231 (46.9%) patients 184 had received prior (neo)adjuvant ET (including 135 [27.4%] who had received prior AI therapy) 185 and 191 (38.7%) patients had received prior (neo)adjuvant chemotherapy. 186

187 Overall Survival

188 At the cut-off for this final OS analysis with a median follow-up of 8.1 years, 314 OS events had

- 189 occurred among 493 patients in the ITT population (abemaciclib arm, n = 198 [60.4%]; placebo
- 190 arm, n = 116 [70.3%]). The hazard ratio for death was 0.804 (95% CI, 0.637-1.015; P = 0.0664).
- 191 The threshold for statistical significance was not reached.
- 192 Median OS was 66.8 months in the abemaciclib arm and 53.7 months in the placebo arm, an
- absolute difference of 13.1 months in the ITT population (Figure 2). The 5- and 6-year OS rates

194	were 54.5% versus 42.1% and 45.7% versus 35.2%, respectively, for abemaciclib versus
195	placebo.

196 Consistent OS effect sizes were observed across prespecified subgroups, including patients who

197 had de novo and recurrent metastatic disease (Figure 3). In subgroup analyses, the hazard ratios

198 for the abemaciclib arm versus the placebo arm were consistent across subgroups with respect to

199 prognosis and endocrine sensitivity, with a numerically greater effect observed in patients with

200 bone-only disease, progesterone receptor-negative tumors, or prior AI therapy.

In the sVD, 178 OS events had occurred among 263 patients (abemaciclib arm, n = 113 [65.3%];

202 placebo arm, n = 65 [72.2%]). The hazard ratio for death was 0.758 (95% CI, 0.558-1.030; P =

203 0.0757). The threshold for statistical significance was not reached. Median OS was 63.7 months

in the abemaciclib arm and 48.8 months in the placebo arm, an absolute difference of 14.9

months in the sVD (Figure 2). The 5- and 6-year OS rates were 50.1% versus 37.0% and 41.5%

versus 28.0%, respectively, for abemaciclib versus placebo.

207 **Post-Discontinuation Therapy**

208 Most patients who entered the post-treatment discontinuation follow-up received additional
209 therapies post-progression (Table 1). Across all lines of therapies post-progression, ETs were

210 most frequently reported (abemaciclib arm, 59.8%; placebo arm, 73.3%).

A total of 41.5% of patients in the abemaciclib arm and 61.8% in the placebo arm received

subsequent chemotherapy. CFS was prolonged with the addition of abemaciclib to NSAI (hazard

ratio, 0.693; 95% CI, 0.557-0.863; nominal P = 0.0010). Median CFS (including both

chemotherapy and death as events) was 46.7 months in the abemaciclib arm versus 30.6 months

in the placebo arm (absolute difference 16.1 months; Figure 4).

Subsequent targeted agents were received by 28.7% of patients in the abemaciclib arm and 216 48.5% in the placebo arm. Of note, a lower proportion of patients in the abemaciclib arm versus 217 the placebo arm received additional CDK4/6 inhibitor treatment in any subsequent line after 218 study treatment completion (abemaciclib arm, 11.6%; placebo arm, 31.5%). Among these 219 patients, the median time from randomization until initiation of the additional CDK4/6 inhibitor 220 221 treatment was 49.0 months in the abemaciclib arm and 33.0 months in the placebo arm. For IPCW analysis, the censoring weights used to calculate the adjusted treatment effect were 222 derived based on the progesterone receptor status covariate, which was selected using a stepwise 223 variable selection procedure. The resulting hazard ratio for death for this sensitivity analysis was 224 0.772 (95% CI, 0.593-1.003; nominal P = 0.0531) in favor of the abemaciclib arm. 225

226 Updated Investigator-Assessed Progression-Free Survival

With a median follow-up of 8.1 years (additional 5.9 years from the final PFS analysis), the PFS treatment effect is persistent. Consistent with results of the primary analysis, the updated PFS at this final OS analysis was significantly improved by the addition of abemaciclib to NSAI (hazard ratio, 0.535; 95% confidence interval, 0.429-0.668; nominal P < 0.0001) with a continued separation of the curves. Median PFS was 29.0 months in the abemaciclib arm and 14.8 months in the placebo arm (absolute difference 14.3 months; Figure 5).

233 Safety

The type, relative frequency, and severity of AEs remained consistent with those in previous

analyses (Table S2). The most common hematologic AEs graded 3 or higher in the abemaciclib

arm were neutropenia (n = 90 [27.5%]), anemia (n = 31 [9.5%]), and leukopenia (n = 35

[10.7%]). Diarrhea was the most frequent non-hematologic AE reported in the abemaciclib arm

but was predominantly low grade (n = 273 [83.5%] any grade; n = 32 [9.8%] grade ≥ 3). Diarrhea

- cases were managed using medication or dose adjustments; treatment discontinuation due todiarrhea remained infrequent (1.2%).
- 241 Interstitial lung disease/pneumonitis and venous thromboembolic events, including pulmonary
- embolism and deep vein thrombosis, are clinically important AEs for abemaciclib and have
- previously been described.¹⁵ Overall, there were 23 (7.0%) interstitial lung disease events in the
- abemaciclib arm (n = 5 [1.5%] grade ≥ 3) versus 1 (0.6%) in the placebo arm (grade 2). A total of
- 245 25 (7.6%) venous thromboembolic events occurred in the abemaciclib arm (n = 13 [4.0%] grade
- 246 ≥3) versus 2 (1.2%) in the placebo arm (n = 1 [0.6%] grade ≥3).

ournalPre

247 DISCUSSION

In the MONARCH 3 trial, a clinically and statistically significant prolongation of PFS was seen 248 in postmenopausal women with HR+, HER2- ABC receiving initial therapy of abemaciclib and 249 NSAI.^{2,10} Endpoints based on tumor assessments, such as PFS, enable faster drug approvals and 250 251 access to patients, but it is important to confirm that the initially demonstrated PFS benefit translates into a clinically meaningful improvement in OS. At this final OS analysis from 252 MONARCH 3 with a median follow-up of 8.1 years, although the results did not meet the 253 prespecified threshold for statistical significance in the ITT population (hazard ratio, 0.804; P =254 0.0664) or the sVD (hazard ratio, 0.758; P = 0.0757), clinically meaningful improvements in 255 median OS were observed with the addition of abemaciclib to NSAI (ITT: 13.1 months; sVD: 256 14.9 months). 257

No new safety concerns were observed after this longer follow-up period and with prolonged use of abemaciclib. Consistent with the findings of previous analyses, the most common AE observed was low-grade diarrhea, which was effectively managed with antidiarrheal medications and dose adjustments without risk of compromising efficacy. The combination of abemaciclib plus NSAI continues to demonstrate an acceptable AE profile. The numerical OS improvement combined with the sustained separation of the PFS curves and favorable safety profile reinforces the use of this combination as first-line treatment for HR+, HER2- ABC.

In HR+ HER2- metastatic disease, the post-progression survival after first-line therapy is relatively long, and patients often receive multiple lines of therapy during the metastatic disease course.¹⁶ In this context, the OS assessment of first-line therapy can take years and potentially be confounded by additional systemic therapies post-progression. In MONARCH 3, we hypothesize that additional post-progression therapies, including CDK4/6 inhibitors, may have contributed to

270	the slight dilution of the OS effect observed beyond 6 years, consistent with the increased effect
271	size (hazard ratio, 0.772; $P = 0.0531$) from the prespecified sensitivity analysis adjusting for
272	CDK4/6 inhibitor use. Additionally, the greatest degree of separation between the OS curves is
273	observed prior to 6 years, as reflected by the hazard ratio of 0.754 observed at the MONARCH 3
274	second OS interim analysis with a median follow-up of 5.8 years. ¹³ This numerically greater
275	effect size (compared to that observed at the final analysis at 8.1 years) corresponds to the hazard
276	ratio, which would have been obtained with a shorter follow-up of approximately 6 years, and
277	confirms the important impact of the timing of final analysis.
278	CDK4/6 inhibitors have transformed the treatment landscape of HR+, HER2- ABC in both the
279	first- and second-line setting and also the EBC setting and are included in clinical guidelines
280	such as NCCN and ABC5 with an ET partner as the preferred regimens in these settings. ^{5,6}
281	However, inconsistencies have been observed between CDK4/6 inhibitors with respect to their
282	impact on OS. In the PALOMA-2 trial ($n = 666$; 2:1 randomization; 7.5 years median follow-
283	up), the addition of palbociclib versus placebo to letrozole did not lead to a statistically
284	significant improvement in OS, and the observed increase in median OS was 2.7 months (median
285	OS 53.9 versus 51.2 months). ^{17,18} In the MONALEESA-2 trial ($n = 668$; 1:1 randomization; 6.6
286	years median follow-up), the addition of ribociclib versus placebo to letrozole demonstrated a
287	significant improvement in OS, with a median OS increase of 12.5 months (median OS 63.9
288	versus 51.4 months). ¹⁹ In MONARCH 3, the addition of abemaciclib versus placebo to an NSAI
289	did not reach formal statistical significance, but the 13.1-month increase in median OS (median
290	OS 66.8 versus 53.7 months) was comparable to the 12.5-month improvement in median OS
291	observed in the MONALEESA-2 trial. These results show that ribociclib and abemaciclib both
292	led to a clinically meaningful median OS improvement, while the clinical relevance of the

observed median OS improvement for palbociclib is less clear. While recognizing the limitations
of cross-trial comparisons, it must be considered that there are important differences between
these studies with respect to design, size, and resulting statistical power. MONARCH 3 was the
smallest of the phase 3 CDK4/6 inhibitor studies in the first-line ABC setting, with a sample size
of 493 patients and a 2:1 randomization design.

298 The use of CDK4/6 inhibitors in the first-line setting for ABC was recently challenged by findings from the SONIA trial, which showed no survival advantage of introducing CDK4/6 299 inhibitors in first-line treatment compared to second-line treatment.²⁰ Of note, 91% of the 300 patients enrolled in SONIA received palbociclib, which in contrast to abemaciclib and ribociclib, 301 has not shown a clinically meaningful or statistically significant difference in OS in the first- or 302 second-line ABC setting or an invasive disease-free survival (IDFS) benefit in the EBC 303 setting.^{17,18,21,22} While head-to-head comparisons of these three CDK4/6 inhibitors have not been 304 conducted, consistent differences in outcomes (OS and IDFS) have emerged across phase 3 305 studies of these therapies such that the results of the SONIA trial should not be extrapolated to 306 assume similar outcomes across this class of therapies. Furthermore, patients in the SONIA trial 307 received fulvestrant following a CDK4/6 inhibitor, the use of which as a single-agent is now 308 309 suboptimal in the second line, with newer, more effective alternatives available that target ESR1 mutations (eg, elacestrant) or PIK3CA/AKT signaling pathway alterations (either alpelisib or 310 capivasertib in combination with fulvestrant).²³⁻²⁵ 311

Consistent OS effect size was seen across all subgroups in MONARCH 3, notably in patients with the potential to have more comorbidities such as the elderly and those with an ECOG PS score of 1, and also in those with bone-only and visceral disease. The latter is an interesting finding considering no numerical effect was observed in patients with liver metastases with the

addition of ribociclib to letrozole in MONALEESA-2.²¹ Importantly, the effect size was 316 consistent in de novo and recurrent metastatic disease. It was previously reported that the benefit 317 of adding abemaciclib to either AI or fulvestrant appeared largest in patients with concerning 318 tumor characteristics, including progesterone receptor-negative tumors, and those with visceral 319 disease.²⁶ In this MONARCH 3 final OS analysis, the effect of abemaciclib was largest in 320 321 patients with prior AI therapy as well as those with progesterone receptor-negative disease. These OS data are consistent with the findings in MONARCH 2, where the addition of 322 abemaciclib to fulvestrant resulted in a larger OS effect in patients with primary endocrine 323 resistance.12 324 Although the lack of statistical significance in this final OS analysis may be viewed as a 325

limitation of these data, it is important to consider the clinical relevance of the absolute effect 326 size in the context of the limitations of the study design, including the smaller sample size than 327 that in the PALOMA-2 and MONALEESA-2 studies, along with the body of consistent evidence 328 generated with abemaciclib across the first- and second-line ABC and EBC settings. MONARCH 329 3 is the third contemporary clinical trial investigating CDK4/6 inhibitors as first-line therapy in 330 postmenopausal patients to report final OS data. In addition to extent of follow-up and the 331 332 natural history of the disease during which patients receive multiple additional therapies, both study size and randomization ratio impact the ability to prove statistical significance for OS. 333

334 Conclusions

Abemaciclib in combination with an NSAI resulted in numerically longer OS compared to NSAI

alone not only in the ITT population (median improvement 13.1 months), but also in patients

337 with visceral disease (median improvement 14.9 months) in postmenopausal women with HR+,

HER2- ABC in this pivotal phase 3 trial; however, statistical significance was not reached at this

339 final analysis. After a median follow-up of 8.1 years, the previously demonstrated PFS benefit

was sustained, median CFS was substantially improved, and no new safety signals were 340

observed. These data continue to support the consistent and meaningful clinical benefit 341

abemaciclib has demonstrated across the MONARCH program, including as adjuvant therapy in 342

- node-positive, high-risk EBC, as initial therapy with AI for metastatic disease, in combination 343
- with fulvestrant following disease progression, and as monotherapy in later lines of therapy. 344

345

,py in

346 Acknowledgements

We thank the patients and their caregivers for participating in the MONARCH 3 trial. We thank the MONARCH study steering committee as well as the investigators and support staff who generously participated in this trial. Writing support was provided by Maeve O'Connell, PhD, of Eli Lilly and Company.

351 Funding

This work was supported by Eli Lilly and Company who sponsored the study and provided support for medical writing assistance (no grant numbers apply).

354 Disclosure

MPG: Continuing medical education funding - Research to Practice, Clinical Educational
Alliance, Medscape, MJH Life Alliance; honoraria - Total Health Conferencing and Curio
Science; research funding (institute) - AstraZeneca, ATOSSA Therapeutics, Eli Lilly and

358 Company, Loxo@Lilly, Pfizer, Sermonix; consulting funding (institute) - ARC Therapeutics,

359 AstraZeneca, Biotheranostics, Blueprint Medicines, Loxo@Lilly, Novartis, Rna Diagnostics,

360 Sanofi, Seattle Genetics, Sermonix, Engage Health Media. MT: Grants or contracts (institute) -

361 Chugai, Takeda, Pfizer, Taiho, JBCRG assoc., KBCRN assoc., Eisai, Eli-Lilly and companies,

362 Daiichi-Sankyo, AstraZeneca, Astellas, Shimadzu, Yakult, Nippon Kayaku, AFI technology,

363 Luxonus, Shionogi, GL Science, Sanwa Shurui, Zene; Payment or honoraria for lectures -

364 Chugai, Takeda, Pfizer, Kyowa-Kirin, Taiho, Eisai, Daiichi-Sankyo, AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly and

365 companies, MSD, Exact Science, Shimadzu, Yakult, Nippon Kayaku Devicore medical Japan,

366 Sysmex; participation on advisory board - Daiichi-Sankyo, Eli Lilly and companies, Bertis,

367 Terumo, Kansai Medical Net; Associate Editor - British Journal of Cancer, Scientific Reports,

368	Breast Cancer Research and Treatment, Cancer Science. JH: Grants or contracts (institute) -
369	Lilly; consulting fees - Lilly, Novartis, Roche, Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Daiichi, Gilead; payment or
370	honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript writing or educational events
371	- Lilly, Novartis, Roche, Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Seagen, Gilead, Daiichi; travel support - Roche,
372	Novartis, Daiichi, Gilead. JS: Research grants (institute) – AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim,
373	Daiichi Sankyo, GSK, Lilly, MSD, Novartis, Pfizer, Roche, Sanofi. MC: Research grants
374	(institute) - Pfizer, Astrazeneca, Sanofi, Pierre Fabre, Takeda, Abbvie, ACCORD, Servier,
375	Sandoz; payment or honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript writing
376	or educational events - Novartis, Lilly. LMM: Speaker honoraria - Lilly. SP-S: Research grant
377	(institute) – Pfizer; consulting fees - Roche, Astrazeneca, Lilly, Novartis, Pfizer, Exact Sciences,
378	Gilead, MSD; Payment or honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript
379	writing or educational events - Roche, Astrazeneca, Lilly, Novartis, Pfizer, Exact Sciences,
380	Gilead, MSD. JOS: AbbVie Inc., Agendia, Amgen, Aptitude Health, AstraZeneca, BioNTech,
381	Byondis, Carrick Therapeutics, Daiichi Sankyo, DAVA Oncology, Eisai, Fishawack Health, G1
382	Therapeutics, Genzyme, GlaxoSmithKline, Genentech, Gilead Sciences, Lilly, Loxo Oncology,
383	Merck, Novartis, Ontada, Pfizer, Pierre Fabre Pharmaceuticals, Puma Biotechnology, Roche,
384	Samsung Bioepis, Sanofi, Seagen, Stemline Therapeutics, Taiho Oncology, Very. SMT:
385	Honorarium for Consulting or Advisory Role - Novartis, Pfizer, Merck, Eli Lilly, AstraZeneca,
386	Genentech/Roche, Eisai, Sanofi, Bristol Myers Squibb, Seattle Genetics, CytomX Therapeutics,
387	Daiichi Sankyo, Gilead, OncXerna, Zymeworks, Zentalis, Blueprint Medicines, Reveal
388	Genomics, ARC Therapeutics, Infinity Therapeutics, Sumitovant Biopharma, Umoja Biopharma,
389	Artios Pharma, Menarini/Stemline, Aadi Bio, Bayer, Incyte Corp, Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Natera,
390	Tango Therapeutics, Systimmune, eFFECTOR, Hengrui USA; Research Funding (institute) -

391	Genentech/Roche, Merck, Exelixis, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Novartis, Bristol Myers Squibb, Eisai,
392	AstraZeneca, NanoString Technologies, Gilead, Seattle Genetics, OncoPep, Daiichi Sankyo;
393	Travel support - Eli Lilly, Sanofi, Gilead. SH: Research grants or contracts - Ambrx, Amgen,
394	Arvinas, Astra Zeneca, Bayer, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Celcuity, Cytomx, Daiichi Sankyo,
395	Dantari, Eli Lilly, G1 Therapeutics, Genentech/Roche, Gilead, Greenwich Life Sciences,
396	Immunomedics, Loxo Oncology, Macrogenics, Medivation/Biomarin, Pfizer, Novartis, Orum,
397	Phoenix Molecular Design, PUMA, OBI Pharma, Sanofi, Seattle Genetics, Zymeworks, Jazz
398	Pharmaceuticals, Stemline/Menarini. AL-C: Research support - Roche, Agendia, Lilly, Pfizer,
399	Novartis, Merck Sharp&Dhome, Gilead, Daiichi Sankyo; consulting/advisor - Lilly, Roche,
400	Pfizer, Novartis; Speaker's Bureaus - Lilly, Astrazeneca, Merck Sharp&Dhome, Pfizer, Novartis;
401	travel support - Roche, Pfizer, Astrazeneca, Steamline therapeutics, Merck Sharp&Dhome. VA:
402	Stock ownership and employment – Lilly. AS: Stock ownership and employment – Lilly. GVH:
403	Stock ownership and employment – Lilly. AS: Stock ownership and employment – Lilly. HI:
404	Support for writing for the current manuscript – Lilly; grants or contracts – Chugai, Daiichi
405	Sankyo, AstraZeneca; consulting fees - Chugai, Daiichi Sankyo, AstraZeneca, Lilly, MSD,
406	Pfizer, Gilead; payment or honoraria for lectures/speakers bureaus - Chugai, Daiichi Sankyo,
407	AstraZeneca, Lilly, MSD, Pfizer, Taiho, Kyowa Kirin. SRDJ: Consulting fees – AstraZeneca, Eli
408	Lilly, Pfizer, Sanofi Genzyme; advisory board - AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, Sanofi Genzyme;
409	Speakers' Bureaus – AstraZeneca. All other authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

410 REFERENCES

411

1. Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program. Cancer Stat Facts: Female

- Breast Cancer Subtypes. Available at: <u>https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/breast-subtypes.html</u>.
 Accessed February 23, 2024.
- 2. Johnston S, Martin M, Di Leo A et al. MONARCH 3 final PFS: a randomized study of
 abemaciclib as initial therapy for advanced breast cancer. NPJ Breast Cancer 2019; 5: 5.
- 417 3. Rugo HS, Finn RS, Dieras V et al. Palbociclib plus letrozole as first-line therapy in estrogen
- receptor-positive/human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-negative advanced breast cancer
- 419 with extended follow-up. Breast Cancer Res Treat 2019; 174(3): 719-729.
- 420 4. Hortobagyi GN, Stemmer SM, Burris HA et al. Updated results from MONALEESA-2, a
- 421 phase III trial of first-line ribociclib plus letrozole versus placebo plus letrozole in hormone
- receptor-positive, HER2-negative advanced breast cancer. Ann Oncol 2018; 29(7): 1541-1547.
- 423 5. Gradishar WJ, Moran MS, Abraham J et al. NCCN guidelines® insights: breast cancer,
- 424 version 4.2023. J Natl Compr Canc Netw 2023; 21(6): 594–608
- 6. Cardoso F, Paluch-Shimon S, Senkus E et al. 5th ESO-ESMO international consensus
 guidelines for advanced breast cancer (ABC 5). Ann Oncol 2020; 31(12): 1623-1649.
- 427 7. Torres-Guzmán R, Ganado MP, Mur Perez C et al. Abemaciclib, a CDK4 and 6 inhibitor with
- 7. Torres-Guzmán R, Ganado MP, Mur Perez C et al. Abemaciclib, a CDK4 and 6 inhibitor with
 unique pharmacological properties for breast cancer therapy. J Clin Oncol 2021; 39(suppl 15):
- 429 e12506 [Abstract].
- 430 8. Sledge GW, Jr., Toi M, Neven P et al. MONARCH 2: abemaciclib in combination with
- 431 fulvestrant in women with HR+/HER2- advanced breast cancer who had progressed while
- 432 receiving endocrine therapy. J Clin Oncol 2017; 35(25): 2875-2884.
- 433 9. Dickler MN, Tolaney SM, Rugo HS et al. MONARCH 1, a phase II study of abemaciclib, a
- 434 CDK4 and CDK6 inhibitor, as a single agent, in patients with refractory HR(+)/HER2(-)
 435 metastatic breast cancer. Clin Cancer Res 2017; 23(17): 5218-5224.
- 436 10. Goetz MP, Toi M, Campone M et al. MONARCH 3: abemaciclib as initial therapy for
 437 advanced breast cancer. J Clin Oncol 2017; 35(32): 3638-3646.
- 438 11. Johnston SRD, Toi M, O'Shaughnessy J et al. Abemaciclib plus endocrine therapy for
- 439 hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative, node-positive, high-risk early breast cancer
- 440 (monarchE): results from a preplanned interim analysis of a randomised, open-label, phase 3
- trial. Lancet Oncol 2023; 24(1): 77-90.
- 12. Sledge GW, Toi M, Neven P et al. The effect of abemaciclib plus fulvestrant on overall
- survival in hormone receptor–positive, ERBB2-negative breast cancer that progressed on
- endocrine therapy—MONARCH 2: a randomized clinical trial. JAMA Oncol 2020; 6(1): 116-
- 445 124.

- 13. Goetz MP, Toi M, Huober J et al. MONARCH 3: interim overall survival (OS) results of
- abemaciclib plus a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor (NSAI) in patients (pts) with HR+, HER2advanced breast cancer (ABC). Ann Oncol 2022; 33(suppl 7): S1384 [Abstract].
- 14. Robins JM, Finkelstein DM. Correcting for noncompliance and dependent censoring in an
- AIDS clinical trial with inverse probability of censoring weighted (IPCW) log-rank tests.
 Biometrics 2000: 56(3): 779-788
- 451 Biometrics 2000; 56(3): 779-788
- 452 15. Rugo HS, Huober J, García-Sáenz JA et al. Management of abemaciclib-associated adverse
- 453 events in patients with hormone receptor-positive, human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-
- 454 negative advanced breast cancer: safety analysis of MONARCH 2 and MONARCH 3.
- 455 Oncologist 2021; 26(1): e53-e65.
- 16. Seidman AD, Maues J, Tomlin T, Bhatnagar V, Beaver JA. The evolution of clinical trials in
- 457 metastatic breast cancer: design features and endpoints that matter. Am Soc Clin Oncol Educ
 458 Book 2020; 40: 1-11.
- 17. Finn RS, Rugo HS, Dieras VC et al. Overall survival (OS) with first-line palbociclib plus
- 460 letrozole (PAL+LET) versus placebo plus letrozole (PBO+LET) in women with estrogen
- 461 receptor–positive/human epidermal growth factor receptor 2–negative advanced breast cancer
- 462 (ER+/HER2- ABC): Analyses from PALOMA-2. J Clin Oncol 2022 40(17_suppl): LBA1003
- 463 [Abstract].
- 18. Slamon DJ, Diéras V, Rugo HS et al. Overall survival with palbociclib plus letrozole in
- 465advanced breast cancer. J Clin Oncol 2024. January 22 [Epub ahead of print]
- 466 doi:10.1200/JCO.23.00137
- 467 19. Hortobagyi GN, Stemmer SM, Burris HA et al. Overall survival with ribociclib plus letrozole
 468 in advanced breast cancer. N Engl J Med 2022; 386(10): 942-950.
- 469 20. Sonke GS, Van Ommen-Nijhof A, Wortelboer N et al. Primary outcome analysis of the phase
- 470 3 SONIA trial (BOOG 2017-03) on selecting the optimal position of cyclin-dependent kinases 4
- and 6 (CDK4/6) inhibitors for patients with hormone receptor-positive (HR+), HER2-negative
- 472 (HER2-) advanced breast cancer (ABC). J Clin Oncol 2023 41(17_suppl): LBA1000
- 473 [Presentation Slides].
- 474 21. Turner NC, Slamon DJ, Ro J et al. Overall survival with palbociclib and fulvestrant in
 475 advanced breast cancer. N Engl J Med 2018; 379: 1926-1936.
- 476 22. Gnant M, Dueck AC, Frantal S et al. Adjuvant palbociclib for early breast cancer: the
- 477 PALLAS trial results (ABCSG-42/AFT-05/BIG-14-03). J Clin Oncol 2022; 40(3): 282-293.
- 478 23. Bidard FC, Kaklamani VG, Neven P et al. Elacestrant (oral selective estrogen receptor
- degrader) versus standard endocrine therapy for estrogen receptor-positive, human epidermal
- 480 growth factor receptor 2-negative advanced breast cancer: results from the randomized phase III
- 481 EMERALD trial. J Clin Oncol 2022; 40(28): 3246-3256.

- 482 24. André F, Ciruelos E, Rubovszky G et al. Alpelisib for PIK3CA-mutated, hormone receptor483 positive advanced breast cancer. N Engl J Med 2019; 380(20): 1929-1940.
- 484 25. Turner NC, Oliveira M, Howell SJ et al. Capivasertib in hormone receptor-positive advanced
 485 breast cancer. N Engl J Med 2023; 388(22): 2058-2070.
- 486 26. Di Leo A, O'Shaughnessy J, Sledge GW Jr et al. Prognostic characteristics in hormone
- 487 receptor-positive advanced breast cancer and characterization of abemaciclib efficacy. NPJ
- 488 Breast Cancer 2018; 4: 41.

489	FIGURE CAPTIONS
490	Figure 1. CONSORT Diagram. *One patient who was randomized to placebo actually received
491	abemaciclib during cycle one. This patient is counted in the abemaciclib safety population.
492	NSAI, nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor.
493	Figure 2. Kaplan-Meier Curves of Overall Survival in the (A) ITT Population and (B) Subgroup
494	with Visceral Disease. CI, confidence interval; ITT, intent-to-treat; NSAI, nonsteroidal aromatase
495	inhibitor.
496	Figure 3. Subgroup Analysis of Overall Survival. CI, confidence interval; HR, hazard ratio;
497	ECOG PS, Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status.
498	Figure 4. Kaplan-Meier Curve of Chemotherapy-Free Survival in the ITT Population. CI,
499	confidence interval; ITT, intent-to-treat; NSAI, nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor.
500	Figure 5. Kaplan-Meier Curve of Updated Progression-Free Survival in the ITT Population.
501	*The difference in median progression-free survival may differ due to rounding. ITT, intent-to-
502	treat; NSAI, nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor.

1

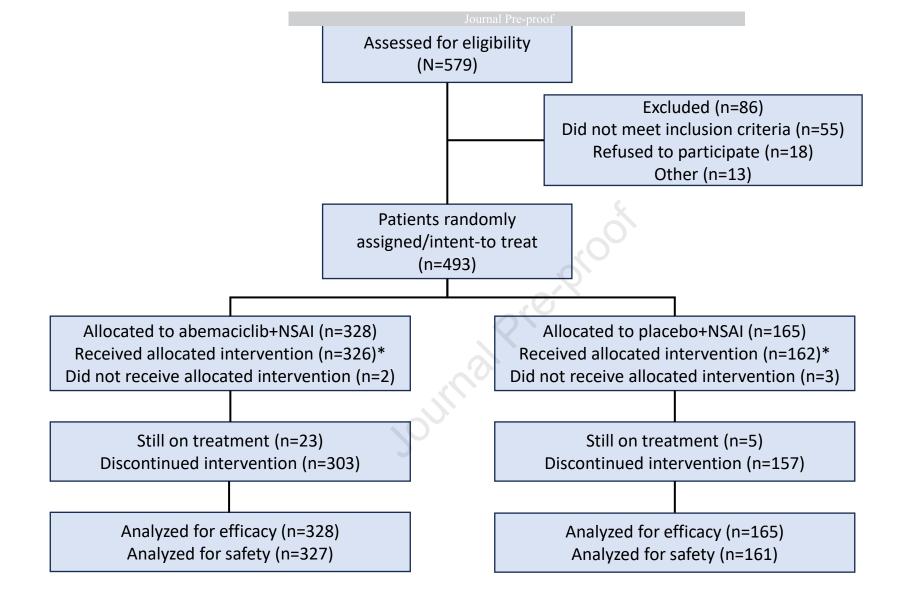
Г

Table 1. Post-Discontinuation Therapy				
Parameter , <i>n</i> (%)*	Abemaciclib + NSAI	Placebo + NSAI		
	(<i>N</i> = 328)	(<i>N</i> = 165)		
Patients who received subsequent systemic therapy	234 (71.3)	142 (86.1)		
Endocrine therapy	196 (59.8)	121 (73.3)		
Chemotherapy	136 (41.5)	102 (61.8)		
Targeted agent therapy	94 (28.7)	80 (48.5)		
Other	39 (11.9)	29 (17.6)		
Patients who received a CDK4/6 inhibitor in any subsequent line	38 (11.6)	52 (31.5)		
Palbociclib	25 (7.6)	41 (24.8)		
Abemaciclib	10 (3.0)	7 (4.2)		
Palbociclib + abemaciclib	2 (0.6)	2 (1.2)		
Ribociclib	1 (0.3)	2 (1.2)		

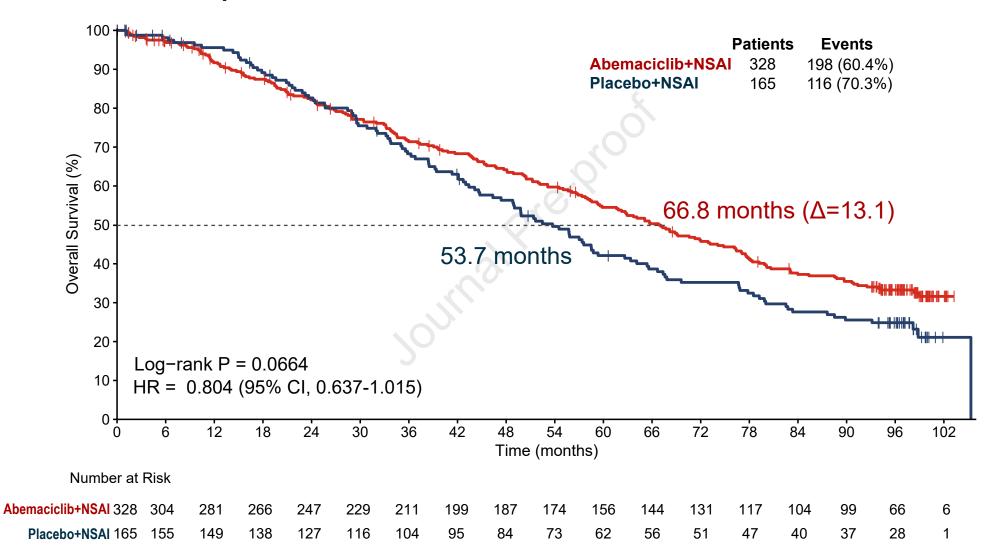
*Denominator used to calculate % corresponds to ITT population. 284 (86.6%) in the abemaciclib arm and

154 (93.3%) in the placebo arm entered the post-treatment discontinuation follow-up. CDK, cyclin-

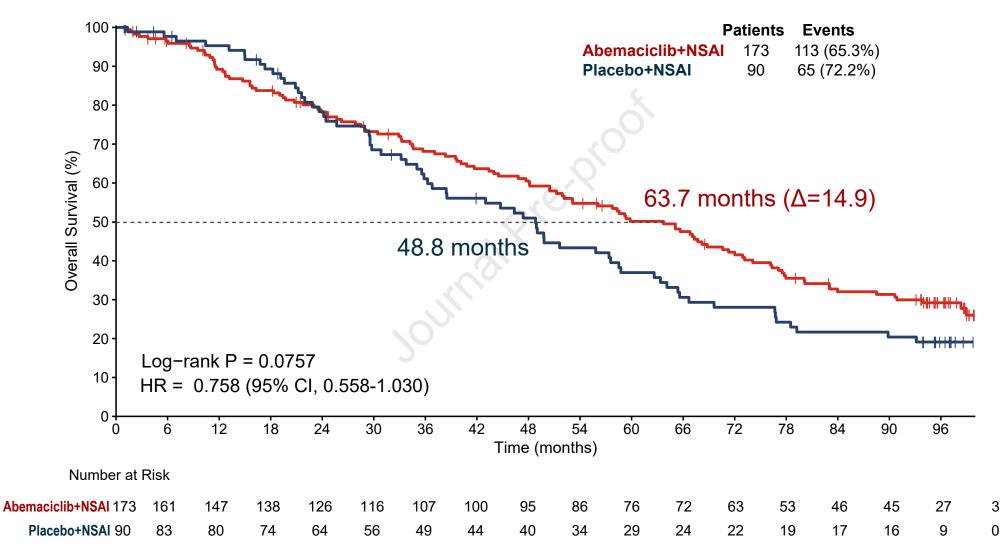
dependent kinase; ITT, intent-to-treat; NSAI, nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor.



A. ITT Population



B. Subgroup with Visceral Disease



	N	Events		HR (95% CI)	Interaction p-value
Nature of Disease					0.298
Visceral	263	178	r∳i	0.755 (0.556, 1.026)	
Bone only	109	62	⊢	0.596 (0.360, 0.987)	
Other	121	74		1.042 (0.633, 1.716)	
Endocrine Therapy					0.205
Prior aromatase inhibitor therapy	135	88	⊢ ∔₁	0.565 (0.370, 0.863)	
Other prior endcorine therapy	96	62		0.942 (0.548, 1.619)	
No prior endocrine therapy	262	164	¦ ♦ -¹ ()	0.873 (0.634, 1.202)	
Disease Setting					0.811
De novo metastatic disease	196	124	⊢ ♦ ↓	0.747 (0.517, 1.079)	
Metastatic recurrent disease	281	182		0.791 (0.585, 1.069)	
Number of Organs at Baseline					0.436
3+	229	161	⊢ I⊕ −I	0.857 (0.620, 1.186)	
2	119	72		0.856 (0.531, 1.380)	
1	142	80		0.608 (0.388, 0.952)	
Age					0.737
<65	271	167		0.813 (0.592, 1.118)	
>=65	222	147	┝━╋┿	0.751 (0.539, 1.049)	
Race					0.444
Caucasian	288	195	⊢ ⊷∳-∔•	0.840 (0.629, 1.122)	
Asian	148	79		0.678 (0.426, 1.080)	
Progesterone Receptor Status			<u> </u>		0.033
Negative	106	75	⊢	0.498 (0.314, 0.788)	
Positive	383	236		0.886 (0.678, 1.159)	
Baseline ECOG PS					0.656
1	197	138	r∳∳	0.721 (0.507, 1.026)	
0	296	176	⊢ ∳+	0.801 (0.591, 1.086)	
		0.25	0.5 0.75 1		
		Favors	Abemaciclib Favors	Placebo	

_

