

Liver and Drugs

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Liver and drugs

- Direct damage
- Indirect damage – the viruses
- Opiates in cirrhosis

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Illicit drugs that rot the liver

- All drugs can cause liver damage
- Some do it often, some do it rarely
- The illegal drugs are no worse

Ecstasy and Liver Failure

Rare but...

- Ecstasy the second most common cause of liver injury in patients under the age of 25 years (20%)
- Patients had severe liver disease of acute onset, with jaundice, high peak of serum transaminases activity, hypoglycemia and low prothrombin activity, but no hepatic encephalopathy.
- Hyperpyrexia is common

J Hepatol 1998;29:394-397

Other drugs

- Antidepressants (unusual with the new drugs)
- Antibiotics (cholestasis with Augmentin)

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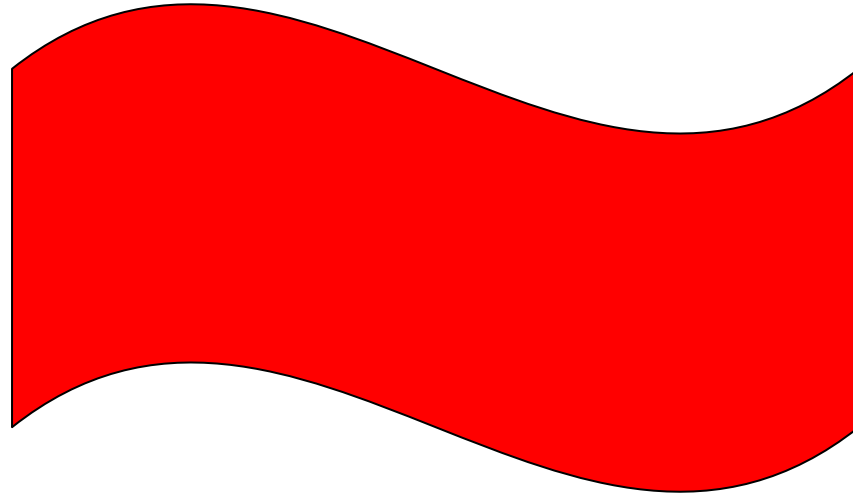
The viruses in injectors

- HBV
- HCV

HBV

- Acute HBV - unforgivable

Acute HBV When to worry....



Abnormal INR
Get on the phone

Acute HBV

- 42 year old man went to Thailand
- Drank a lot

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- **Bed bound, difficulty moving**

Acute HBV

- 42 year old man went to Thailand
- Drank a lot
- Came home unwell
- Admitted to local hospital with ALT 1200
- Diagnosis – alcohol abuse
- Bed bound, difficulty moving
- Referred to RLH with increasing creatinine

Acute HBV

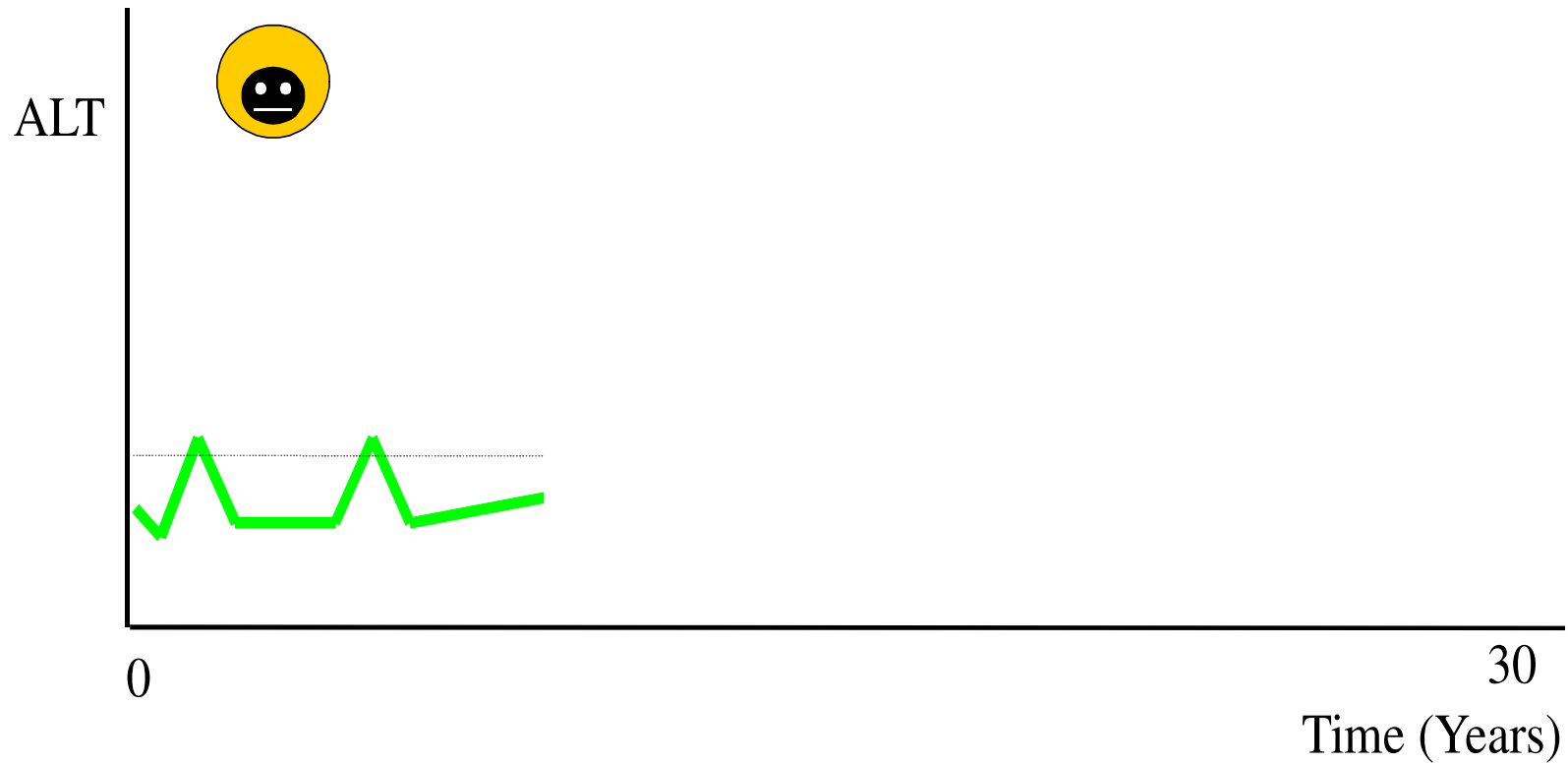
BEWARE –

VACCINATE, VACCINATE, VACCINATE

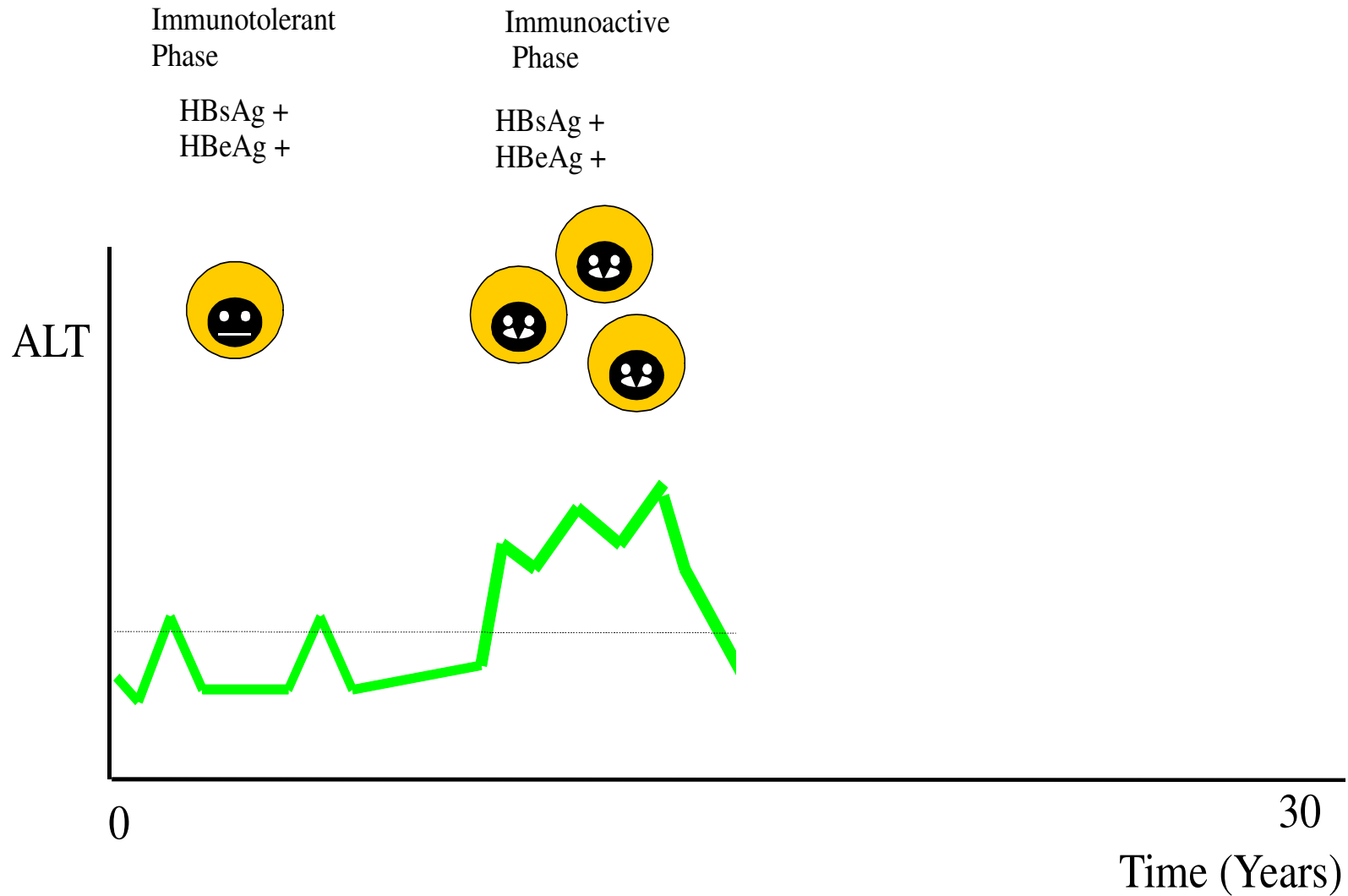
HBV – The Disease

Immunotolerant
Phase

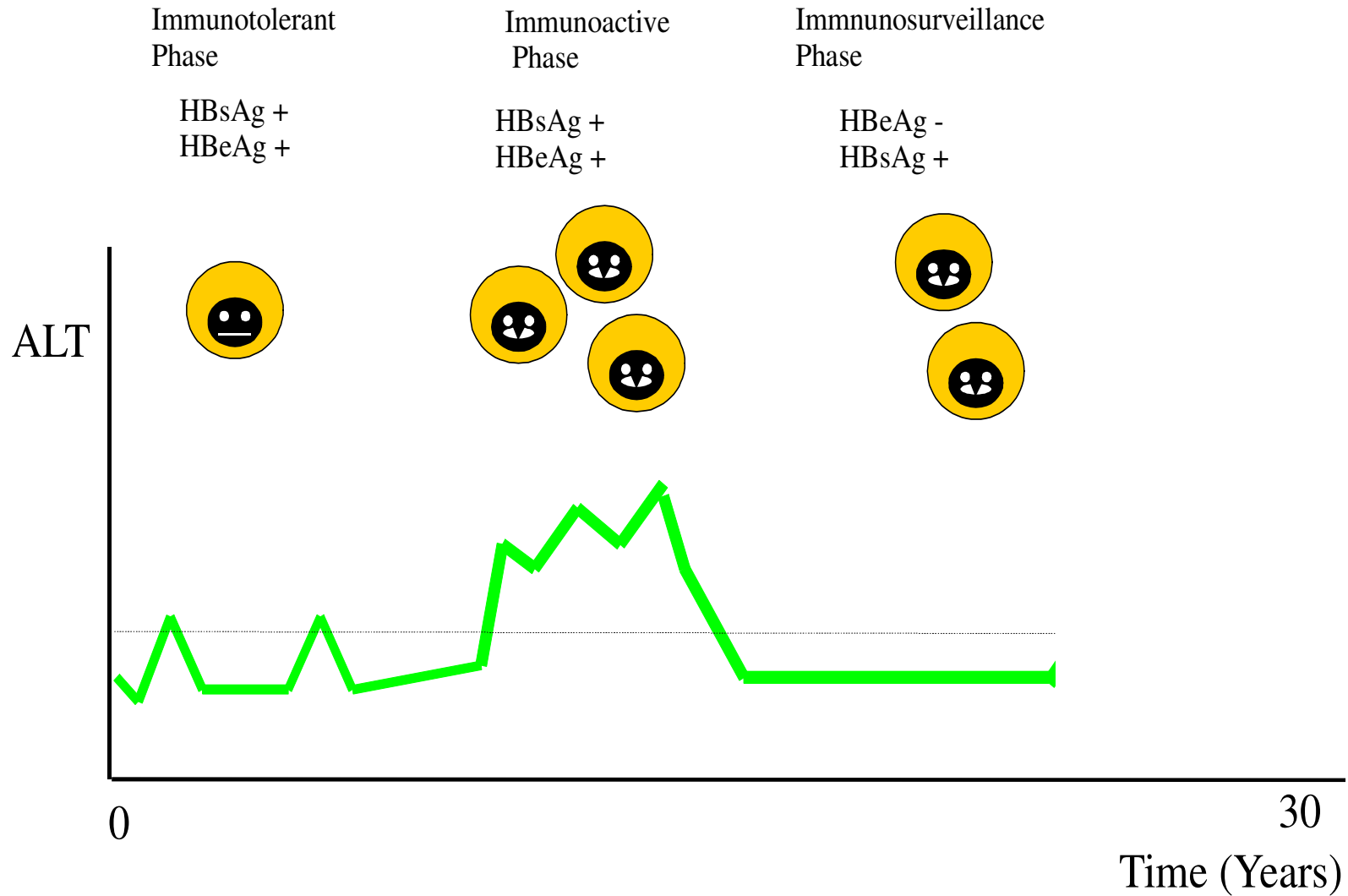
HBsAg +
HBeAg +



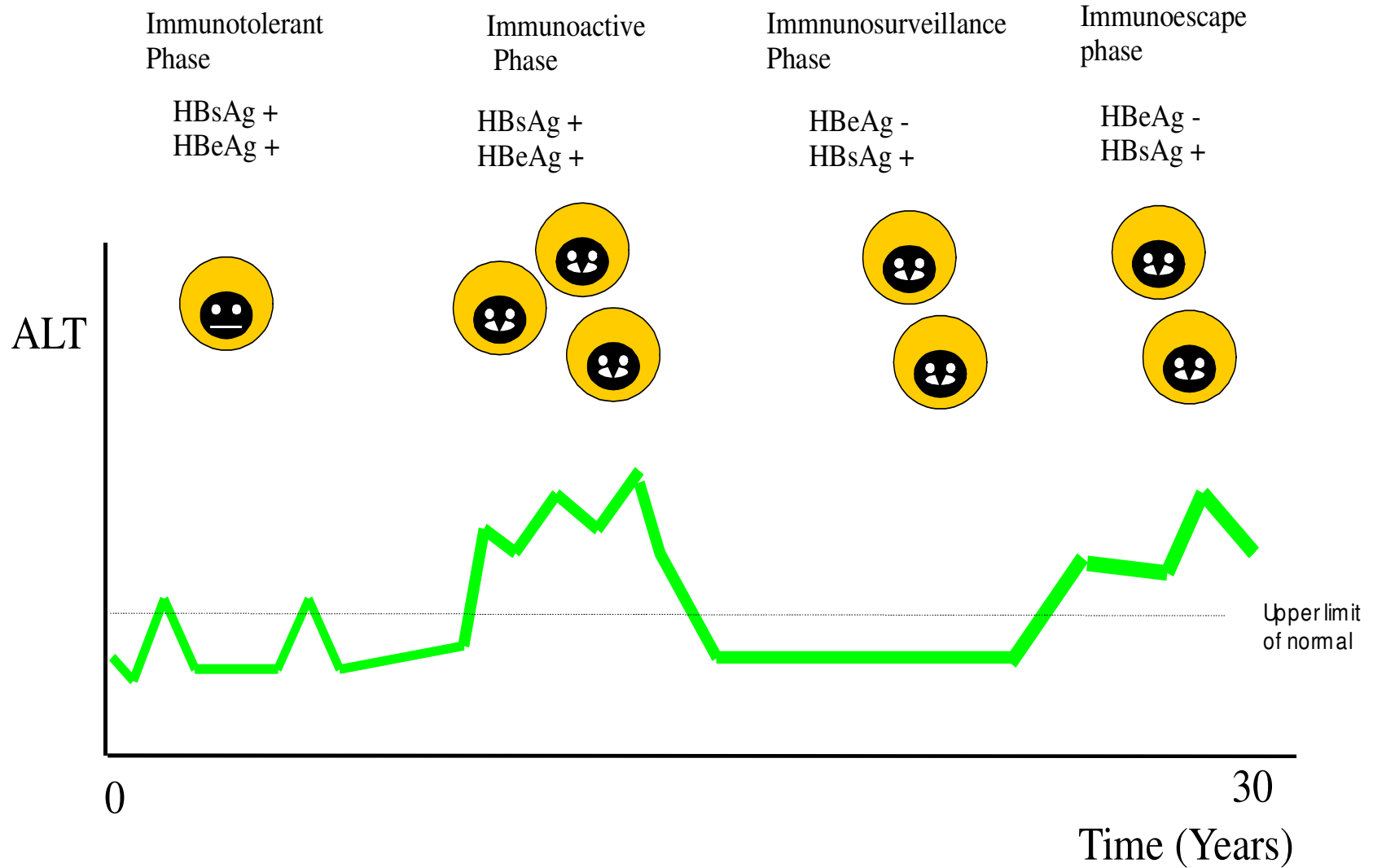
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HBV – The Disease



Chronic HBV

This virus kills people

This virus lasts for many years

This virus is easy to transmit

The viruses in injectors

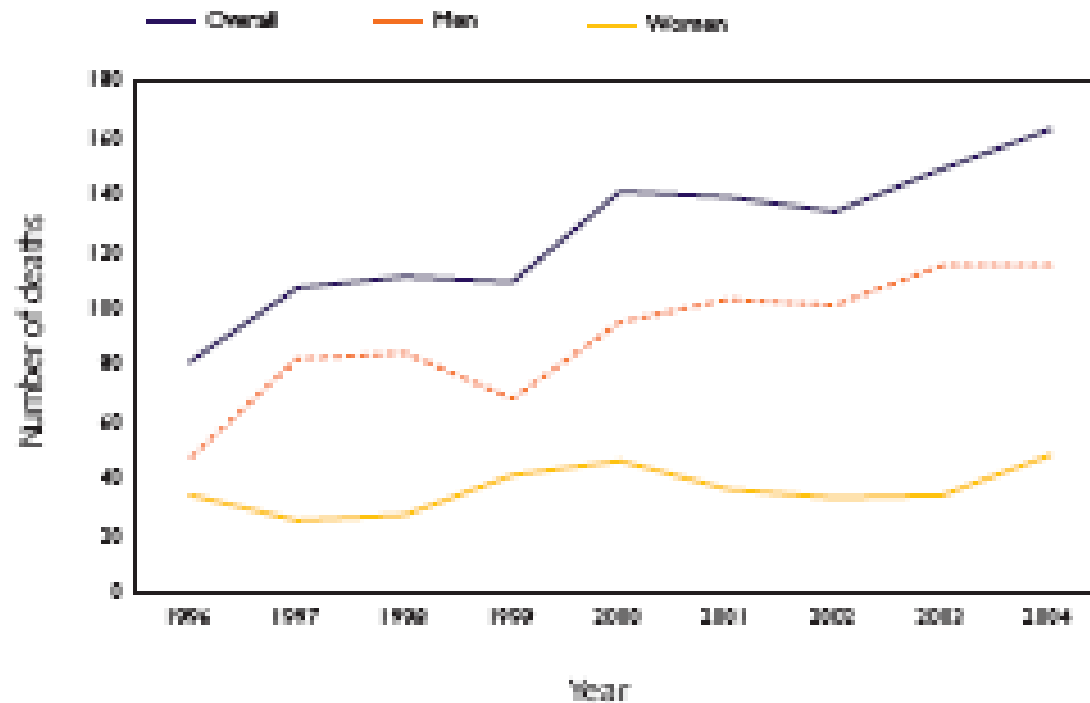
- HBV
- HCV

Hepatitis C: The Basics

- Blood borne virus
- Common in injecting drug users
- Causes very slowly progressive liver disease (30% have cirrhosis after 30 years)

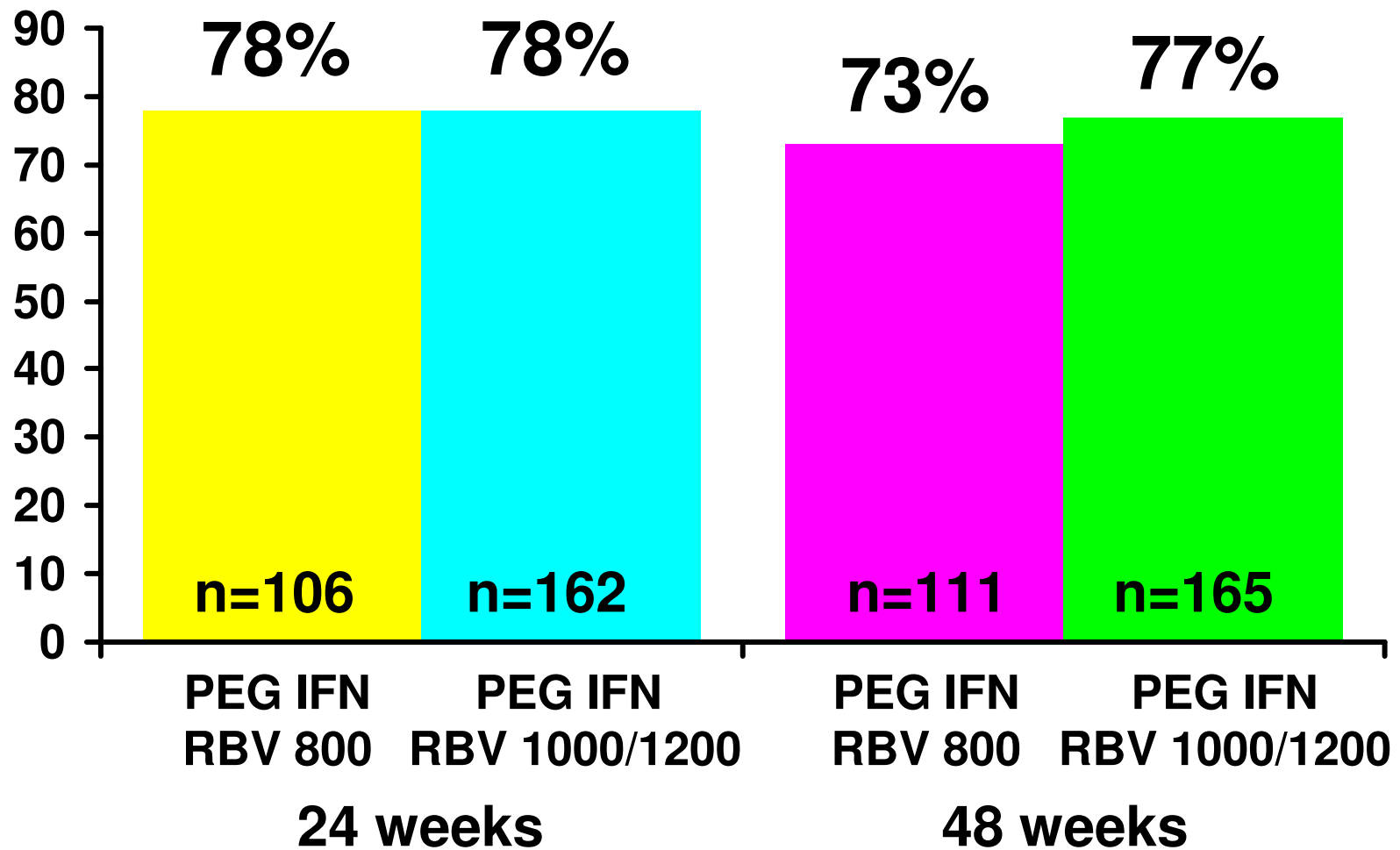
Hepatitis C – what does it do ?

Figure 4.2: Deaths from end-stage liver disease, or hepatocellular carcinoma, in hepatitis C infected people in England: 1996 to 2004.

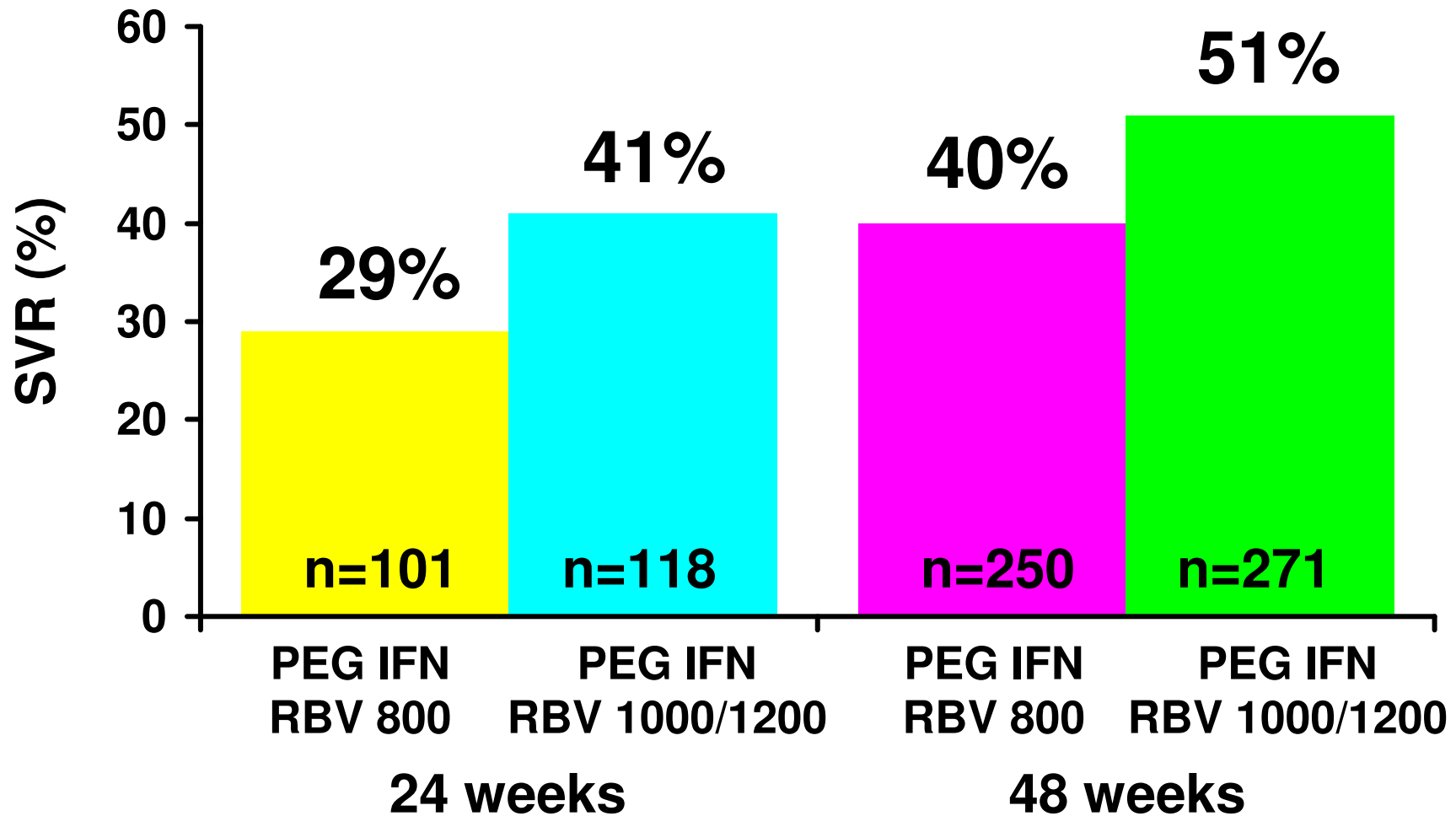


Data source: Office for National Statistics.

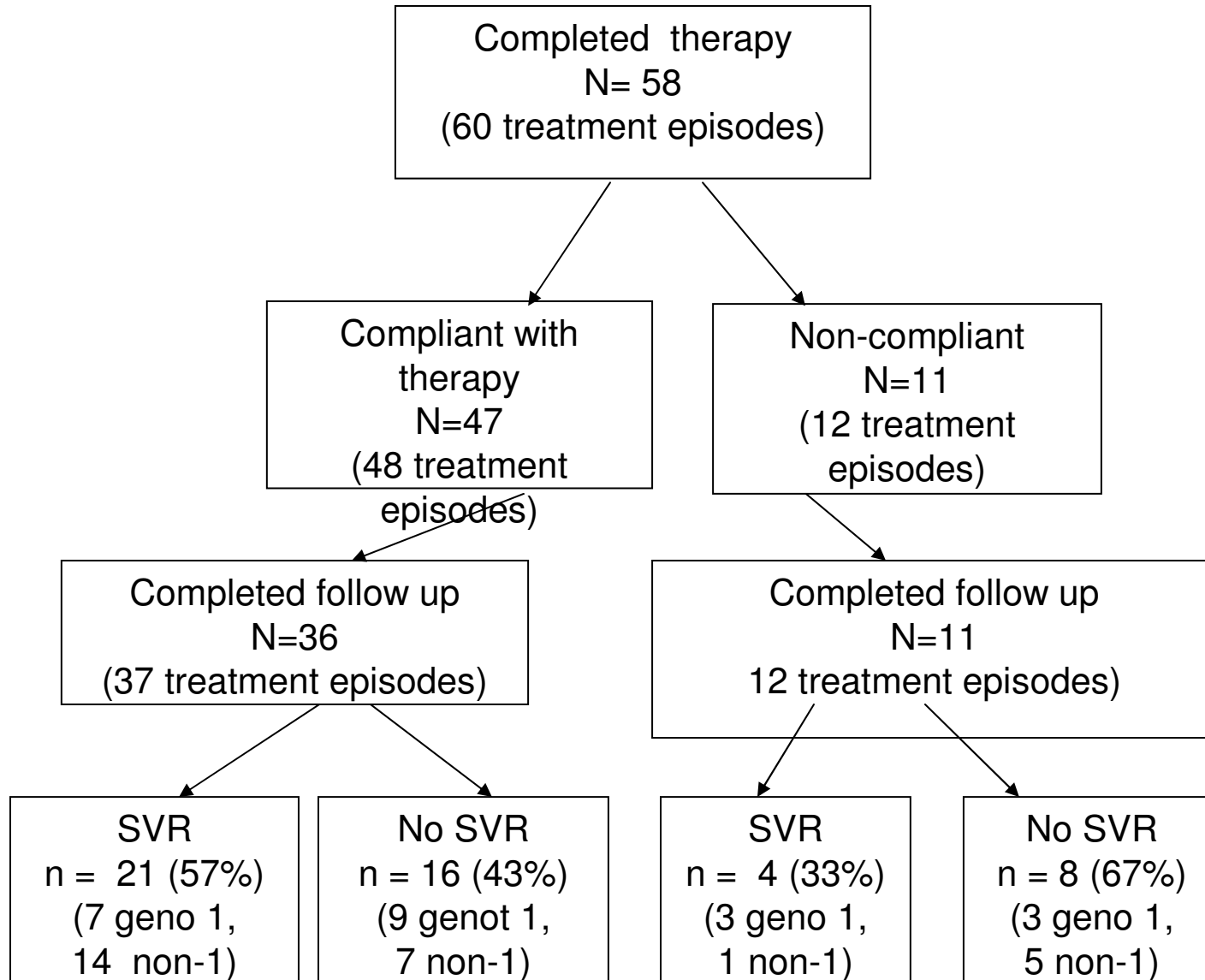
Treating HCV overall
Genotype non 1 – 40 KD PEG IFN α 2a + Ribavirin



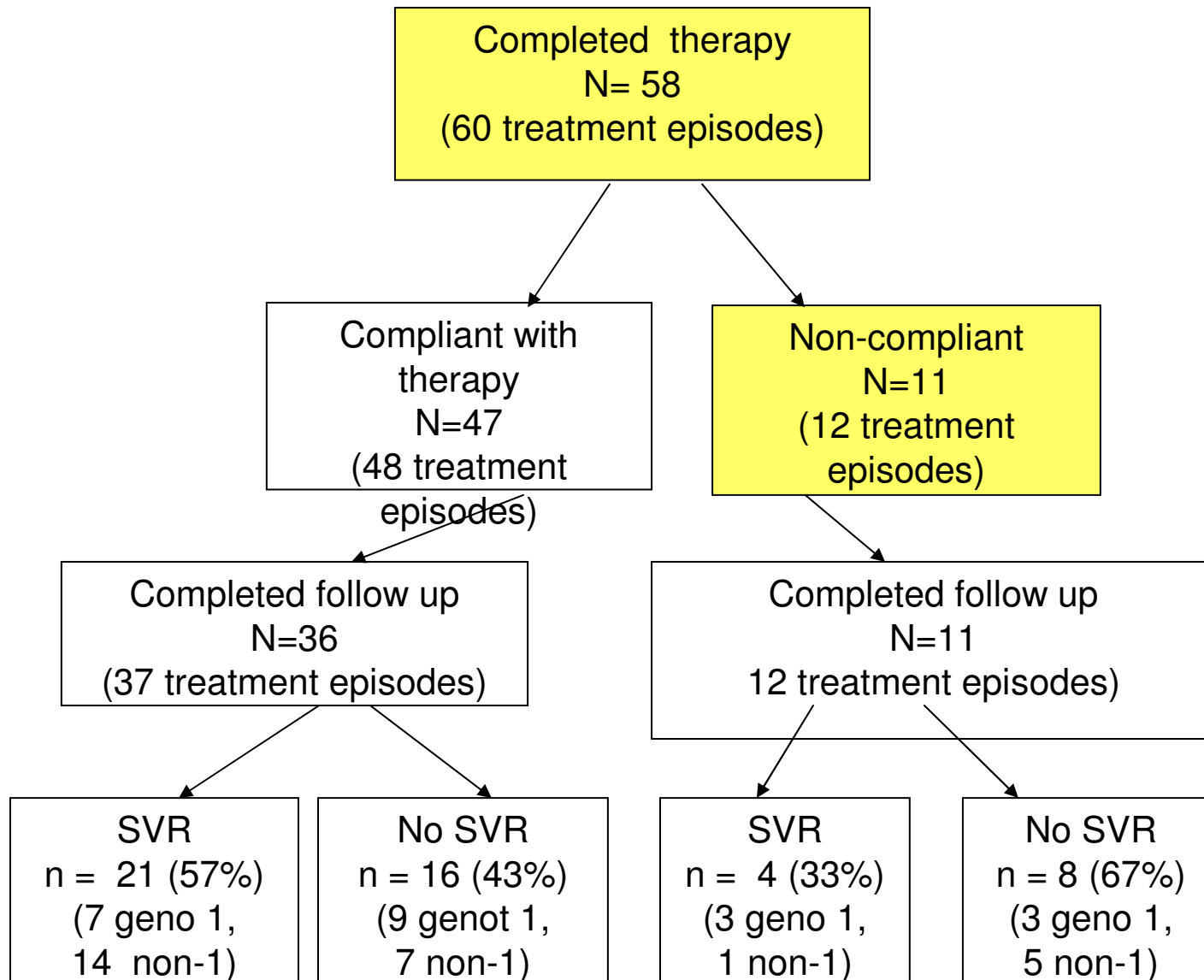
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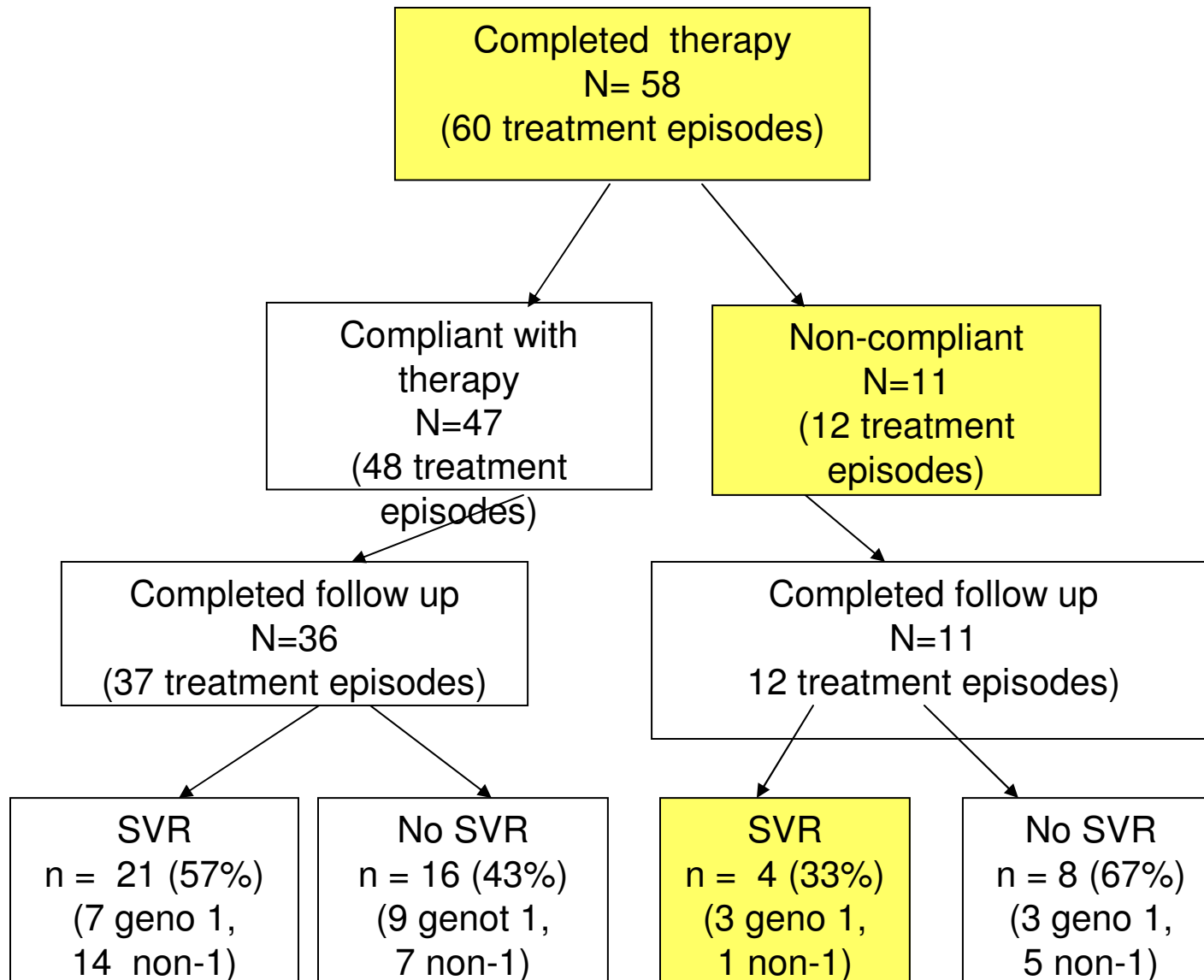
Treating Injectors - Response



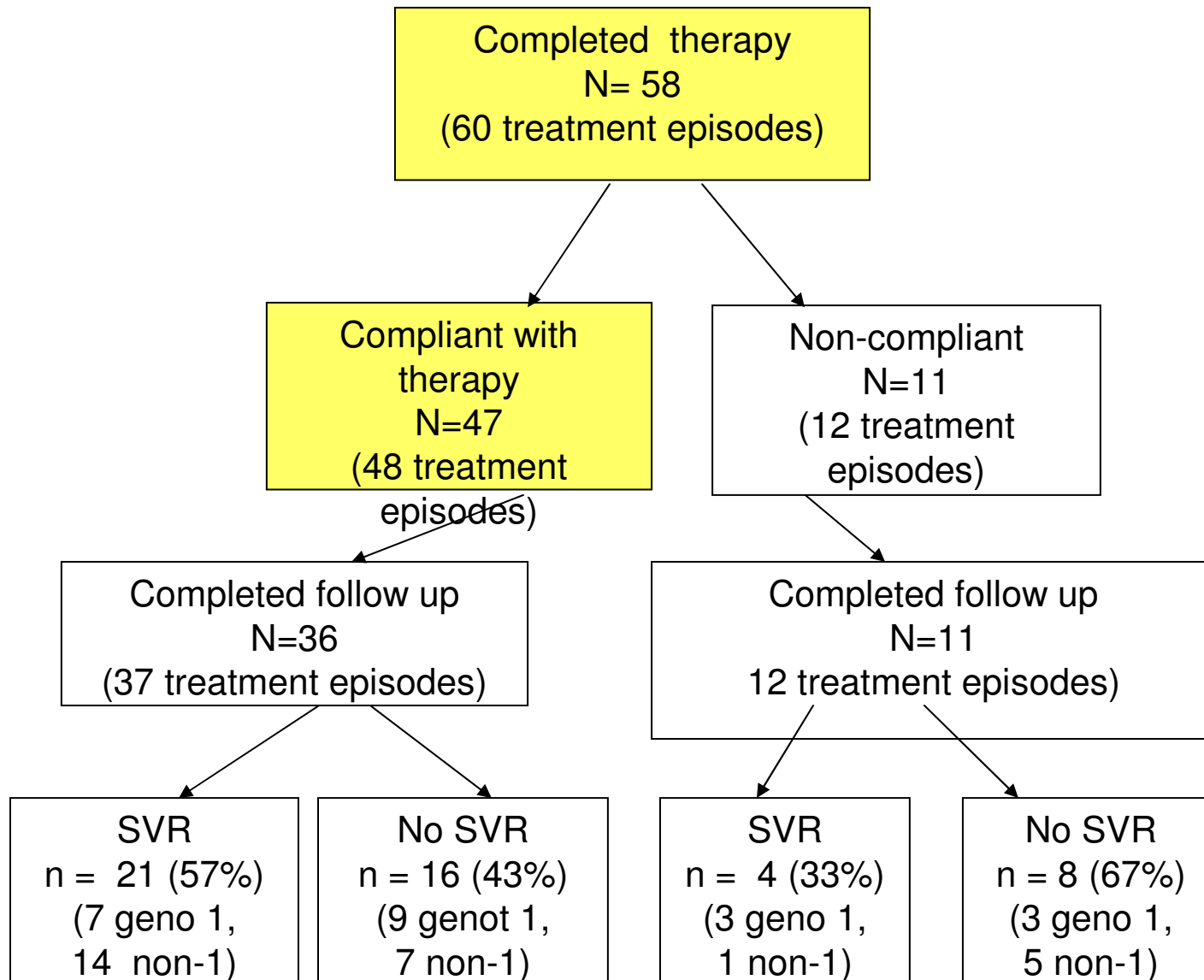
Treating Injectors - Response



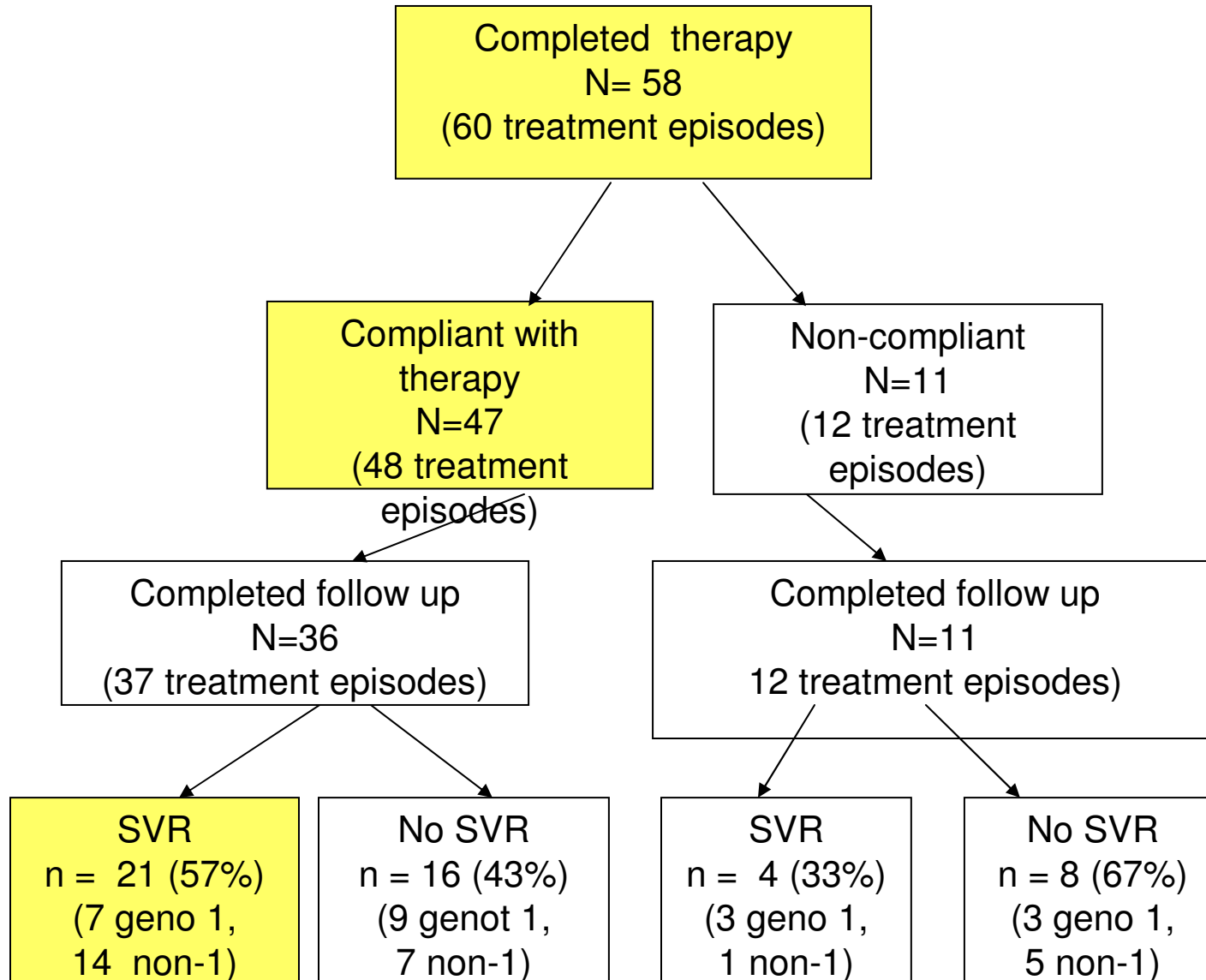
Treating Injectors - Response



Treating Injectors - Response



Treating Injectors - Response



HCV in Drug Users

- Common
- Treatable

Liver and drugs

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- **Opiates in cirrhosis**

Should we reduce opiates in cirrhosis?

YES

- We know they exacerbate encephalopathy
- We know they are metabolised poorly

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NO

- Patients withdraw and take street gear, which is worse

Should we reduce opiates in cirrhosis?

What I do

- Talk to the patient
- Reduce slowly – with the patients approval
- Maintain a low dose of methadone

Liver and Drugs Summary

- Direct drug damage is rare
- Viral hepatitis is the big issue
- Stop HBV with a vaccine, treat HCV
- Modify opiate intake