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Original Research

Patient-reported outcomes and tolerability in patients receiving ripretinib versus sunitinib after treatment with imatinib in INTRIGUE, a phase 3, open-label study¹



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Abstract Purpose: In the INTRIGUE trial, ripretinib showed no significant difference versus sunitinib in progression-free survival for patients with advanced gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST) previously treated with imatinib. We compared the impact of these treatments on health-related quality of life (HRQoL).

Patients and methods: Patients were randomised 1:1 to once-daily ripretinib 150 mg or once-daily sunitinib 50 mg (4 weeks on/2 weeks off). Patient-reported outcomes were assessed using the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire for Cancer-30 (EORTC QLQ-C30) questionnaire at day (D)1, and D29 of all cycles until treatment discontinuation. Change from baseline was calculated. Time without symptoms or toxicity (TWiST) was estimated as the mean number of days without progression, death, or grade ≥ 3 treatment-emergent adverse events per patient over 1 year of follow-up.

Results: Questionnaire completion at baseline was 88.1% (199/226) for ripretinib and 87.7% (199/227) for sunitinib and remained high for enrolled patients throughout treatment. Patients receiving sunitinib demonstrated within-cycle variation in self-reported HRQoL, corresponding to the on/off dosing regimen. Patients receiving ripretinib reported better HRQoL at D29 assessments than patients receiving sunitinib on all scales except constipation. HRQoL was similar between treatments at D1 assessments, following 2 weeks without treatment for sunitinib patients. TWiST was greater for ripretinib patients (173 versus 126 days).

Conclusion: Patients receiving ripretinib experienced better HRQoL than patients receiving sunitinib during the dosing period and similar HRQoL to patients who had not received sunitinib for 2 weeks for all QLQ-C30 domains except constipation. Ripretinib may provide clinically meaningful benefit to patients with advanced GIST previously treated with imatinib. © 2023 Deciphera Pharmaceuticals LLC. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST) is the most common sarcoma of the gastrointestinal tract [1–3]. About 90% of these cases are driven by gain-of-function mutations in *KIT* or platelet-derived growth factor α (*PDGFRA*) [3].

Tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKI) that target *KIT* and *PDGFRA* mutations are approved for the treatment of patients with GIST [3–5]. Initial disease control and tumour response is often achieved with first-line treatment with imatinib, a *KIT* and *PDGFRA* TKI, although about 50% of patients show resistance to imatinib after 2 years [3,4,6]. Sunitinib, a multitargeted TKI, is approved as the second-line treatment [7,8], and the third-line treatment consists of the multi-kinase inhibitor regorafenib [9]. The fourth-line treatment of patients with advanced GIST consists of ripretinib, a switch-control TKI with inhibition of *KIT* and *PDGFRA* activity [10–12].

While treatment options have extended the overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS) of patients with GIST, patients may experience side effects of treatment that impact their physical health and quality of life. Treatment tolerability and the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) of patients on treatment have therefore become increasingly relevant and should be considered when determining clinical benefit [13–18]. Recognition of these factors has grown among regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration [19], as well as within international societies and professional organisations [18,20].

Among available treatments for GIST, imatinib is generally well tolerated, but patients receiving sunitinib and regorafenib report a comparatively large decrease in HRQoL [9,14,15,21]. Patients receiving these treatments often require dose reductions and regimen changes to manage toxicity [21,22]. In the phase 3 INVICTUS trial, patients receiving ripretinib maintained HRQoL on

patient-reported outcome (PRO) measures compared with patients receiving placebo [10,23].

INTRIGUE, a phase 3, interventional, randomised, global, multicentre, open-label trial evaluated ripretinib versus sunitinib for the treatment of patients with advanced GIST who were previously treated with or intolerant to imatinib. Median PFS for ripretinib and sunitinib among the *KIT* exon 11 primary mutation group was 8.3 and 7.0 months, respectively (hazard ratio [HR]: 0.88; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.66, 1.16; $p = 0.36$). Among all patients in the intention-to-treat (ITT) population, PFS was 8.0 and 8.3 months for patients receiving ripretinib versus sunitinib, respectively (HR: 1.05; 95% CI: 0.82, 1.33; nominal $p = 0.72$) [24]. The INTRIGUE trial did not meet its primary endpoint of superiority in PFS of ripretinib over sunitinib in second-line patients with advanced GIST [24]. However, ripretinib had a more favourable safety and tolerability profile than sunitinib, with fewer grade 3 or 4 treatment-emergent adverse events (TEAEs; 41.3% versus 65.6%; nominal $p < 0.0001$) [24]. Due to these findings, the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) for GIST version 1.2023 now recommend the consideration of ripretinib for patients intolerant of second-line sunitinib treatment [25].

In this analysis of the INTRIGUE trial, we evaluated the impact of ripretinib and sunitinib on patient HRQoL in patients with advanced GIST using the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire for Cancer-30 (QLQ-C30), a commonly used PRO measure in this population [14,15,26].

The patient experience of treatment toxicity and efficacy can also be summarised through a time without symptoms or toxicity (TWiST) analysis, which divides time prior to progression into two health states, thereby evaluating the tradeoff between treatment toxicity and efficacy [27]. To further explore the tolerability benefit between the two arms, we performed a TWiST analysis for patients receiving ripretinib or sunitinib in the INTRIGUE trial.

2. Methods

2.1. Patients and study design

The study design for INTRIGUE (NCT03673501) has been described previously [24]. In brief, patients were stratified by primary mutational status and imatinib intolerance and were subsequently randomised 1:1 to continuous ripretinib 150 mg once daily (QD) or sunitinib 50 mg QD 4 weeks on/2 weeks off, ongoing in 6-week cycles until discontinuation. Dose modification was allowed per the package insert for patients receiving sunitinib or per protocol toxicity management guidelines for patients receiving ripretinib [24]. The primary endpoint of the INTRIGUE trial was PFS, and HRQoL was assessed as a secondary endpoint [24].

This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and Good Clinical Practice guidelines and was approved by an institutional review board or ethics committee at each site and by appropriate regulatory authorities. Patients provided written informed consent.

2.2. Study procedures and evaluations

Assessments for tumour response and adverse events have been previously described [24].

2.3. PRO assessments

The QLQ-C30 was used to assess the HRQoL of all patients in the ITT population [26,28]. HRQoL assessments were completed using an electronic PRO system at baseline, day (D) 15 and D29 (± 1 day) of cycle (C)1, as well as D1 and D29 (± 3 days) of every cycle thereafter, and within a week following end of treatment (Fig. 1). From C3 D29, patients completed PRO assessments at home.

2.4. Statistical analysis

QLQ-C30 scores were calculated according to the QLQ-C30 manual [29]. Patients in the ITT population with

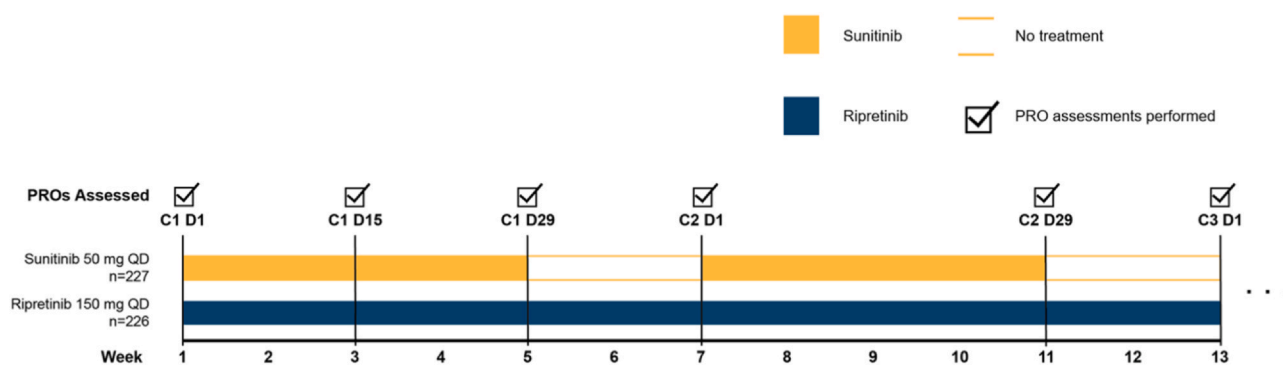


Fig. 1. Study design and PRO assessment schedule. C, cycle; D, day; PRO, patient-reported outcome; QD, once daily.

baseline and post-baseline values available were included. Summary statistics and confidence intervals are reported. Minimum clinically important differences (MCIDs) for most scales of the QLQ-C30 are not established in patients with advanced GIST. Accordingly, MCIDs for each multi-item or single-item scale were estimated using one half of a standard deviation of responses at baseline per the approach of Norman et al [30].

During the 365-day period used for the post-hoc TWiST analysis, time was partitioned into one of three states: toxicity (TOX), relapse (REL), and TWiST (Supplemental Fig. S1). Restricted mean survival time (RMST) was calculated as the area under the survival curve for each state. TOX was defined as days prior to progression with any grade ≥ 3 TEAE, regardless of relation to treatment, from randomisation to progression/censoring, calculated by subtracting the end date from the start date of the TEAE. Days with overlapping TEAEs were counted only once. If TOX was ongoing, the number of days was censored at the minimum of progression date, day 365, safety follow-up date, or last dose date plus 30 days. Sensitivity analyses were performed defining TOX as days with grade ≥ 2 TEAEs. REL was defined as the period after disease progression, including all days after the date of progression until death or censoring. Progression after day 365 was considered as censored at day 365. TWiST was therefore defined as the time spent alive, pre-progression, without grade ≥ 3 TEAEs, calculated by subtracting the mean days spent in TOX from the mean PFS [27]. A post-hoc quality-adjusted TWiST (Q-TWiST) analysis was also performed. Standardised weights of 0.5, 0.5, and 1, for TOX, REL, and TWiST, respectively, were used. Sensitivity analyses were performed [31].

3. Results

3.1. Patient disposition and baseline characteristics

Overall, 453 patients were randomly assigned to receive ripretinib 150 mg QD ($n = 226$) or sunitinib 50 mg QD on a 4 weeks on/2 weeks off schedule ($n = 227$; Supplemental Fig. S2). Baseline characteristics, which have been previously reported [24], and mean baseline patient HRQoL, as measured by QLQ-C30 scores (Table 1), were similar between the two treatment arms.

3.2. EORTC QLQ-C30

Completion of the QLQ-C30 questionnaire was high at baseline for patients in the ITT set in both the ripretinib arm (199/226; 88.1%) and the sunitinib arm (199/227; 87.7%) and remained high for enrolled patients throughout treatment across both arms (Supplemental Fig. S3). After C8 D1, fewer than 25% of randomised

Table 1
Mean baseline EORTC QLQ-C30 scores.

Baseline characteristic	Ripretinib (n = 199)	Sunitinib (n = 199)	MCID ^a
Global Health Status, ^b mean (SD)	74.9 (19.7)	73.5 (19.3)	9.8
<i>EORTC QLQ-C30 functioning scales,^b mean (SD)</i>			
Role functioning	86.9 (21.6)	88.4 (20.7)	10.6
Physical functioning	87.6 (16.4)	86.8 (15.9)	8.1
Emotional functioning	80.7 (19.2)	81.1 (18.4)	9.4
Social functioning	91.0 (18.1)	91.2 (16.9)	8.7
Cognitive functioning	90.1 (17.9)	92.5 (12.5)	7.6
<i>EORTC QLQ-C30 symptom scales,^c mean (SD)</i>			
Fatigue	24.2 (24.0)	23.6 (22.5)	11.6
Pain	18.3 (21.8)	17.8 (21.4)	10.8
Appetite loss	14.2 (21.5)	12.6 (22.3)	11.0
Nausea and vomiting	5.4 (12.7)	4.7 (10.7)	5.9
Diarrhoea	10.2 (20.1)	9.9 (17.3)	9.4
Constipation	10.6 (20.8)	11.9 (21.4)	10.6
Insomnia	18.3 (25.2)	20.1 (26.3)	12.9
Dyspnoea	9.7 (18.8)	10.4 (19.3)	9.5
Financial difficulties	9.9 (21.7)	6.9 (17.2)	9.7

EORTC QLQ-C30, European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire for Cancer-30; ITT, intention-to-treat; MCID, minimum clinically important difference; SD, standard deviation; QoL, quality of life.

^a MCIDs were calculated as one half of the mean standard deviation of the two treatment arms at baseline based on all patients in the ITT population with evaluable baseline data.

^b For functioning scales and global health status, scores are reported out of 100, and a high score represents a higher level of functioning, corresponding to higher QoL.

^c For symptom scales, a high score represents higher levels of symptomatology, corresponding to lower QoL.

patients were eligible to complete the questionnaires due to treatment discontinuation.

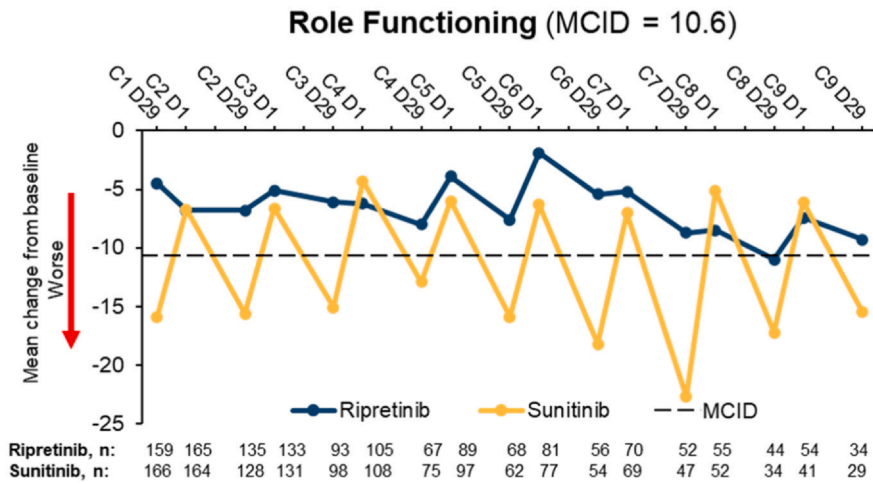
Across treatment cycles, patients receiving sunitinib reported cyclical variation on most PRO measures as indicated by QLQ-C30 scores. Patients receiving sunitinib reported less impact on functional domains and symptom domains on D1 assessments, which followed the 2-week period without daily sunitinib treatment, compared with D29 assessments, which followed 4 weeks of daily sunitinib treatment (Fig. 2A–C; Supplemental Fig. S4). Ripretinib QLQ-C30 scores did not demonstrate substantial cyclical variation.

3.2.1. Functional scales

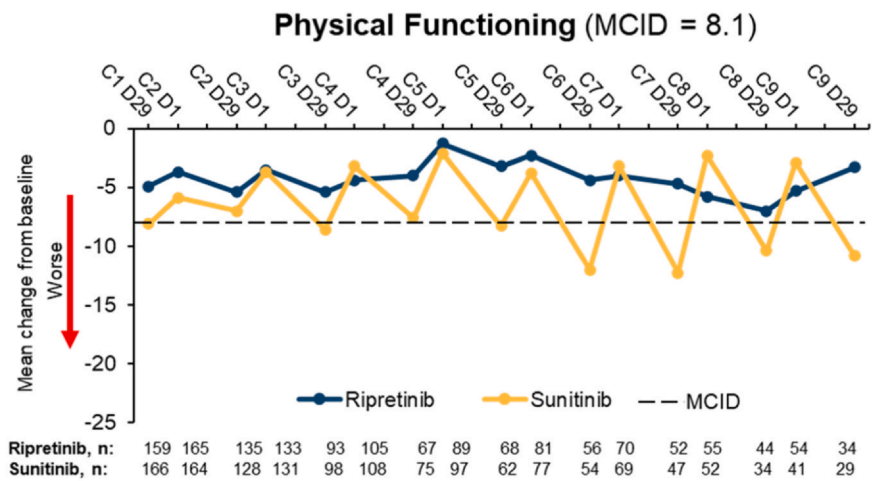
Patients receiving ripretinib generally reported better outcomes than patients receiving sunitinib across functional scales. At multiple assessments, patients receiving ripretinib reported significantly less decline from baseline in role functioning and physical functioning compared to patients receiving sunitinib (Fig. 3A; Supplemental Fig. S5A).

Average deterioration from baseline QLQ-C30 role functioning and physical functioning rarely exceeded the MCID for patients receiving ripretinib across the first nine cycles (54 weeks) of treatment for both D1 and D29 assessments. Patients receiving ripretinib and sunitinib generally experienced similar deterioration

A.



B.



C.

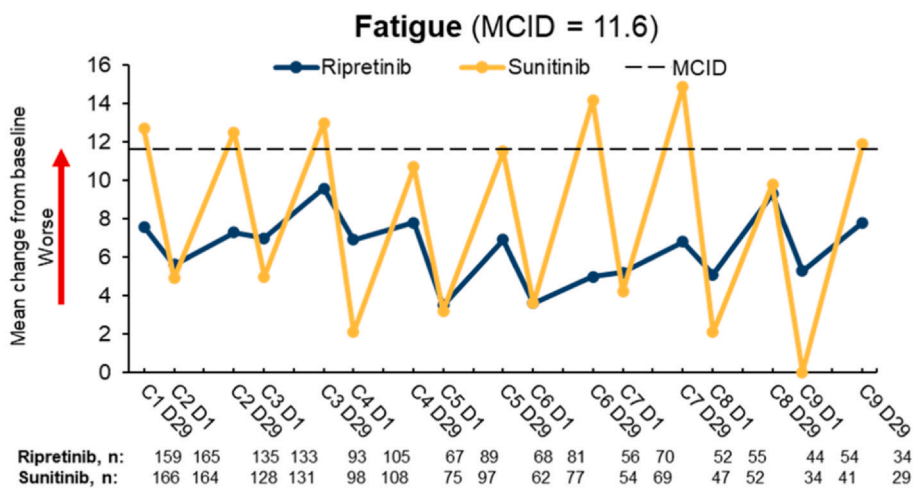


Fig. 2. Change from baseline EORTC QLQ-C30 score over time in (A) role functioning, (B) physical functioning, and (C) fatigue. MCIDs were calculated as one half of the mean standard deviation of the two treatment arms at baseline based on all patients in the ITT population with evaluable baseline data and are marked with a dashed line for each scale; results for all scales at all PRO assessments from C1D29–C9D29 are presented in the supplement. Scores are reported out of 100, and for functioning scales, a higher score represents a higher level of functioning, corresponding to higher QoL. For symptom scales, a higher score represents higher levels of symptomatology, corresponding to lower QoL. C, cycle; D, day; EORTC QLQ-C30, European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire for Cancer-30; ITT, intention-to-treat; MCID, minimum clinically important difference; PRO, patient-reported outcome; QoL, quality of life.

from baseline in QLQ-C30 functional scales on D1 assessments across cycles. However, on D29 assessments, patients receiving sunitinib generally experienced greater deterioration from baseline that exceeded the MCID in QLQ-C30 role functioning and physical functioning compared with ripretinib patients across cycles (Fig. 3A).

3.2.2. Symptom scales

Patients receiving ripretinib generally reported better outcomes than patients receiving sunitinib across all QLQ-C30 symptom scales except constipation. At multiple assessments, patients receiving ripretinib reported significantly less increase in symptoms from baseline across multiple symptom scales compared with patients receiving sunitinib (Fig. 3B).

Patients receiving ripretinib and sunitinib generally experienced similar change from baseline in QLQ-C30 symptom scales on D1 assessments across cycles, but on D29 assessments, patients receiving sunitinib generally experienced greater increase in symptoms from baseline in QLQ-C30 fatigue, pain, appetite loss, nausea and vomiting, and diarrhoea compared with ripretinib patients across multiple cycles (Fig. 3B).

3.3. TWiST analysis

While the RMST for OS in the first year was similar between the two arms (340 days for ripretinib versus 338 days for sunitinib), patients receiving ripretinib spent more days in the TWiST state (alive, pre-progression, and without grade ≥ 3 TEAEs) relative to the RMST of OS in the first year (173/340 days, 50.9%) compared to patients receiving sunitinib (126/338 days, 37.3%), a difference of 13.6 percentage points (Table 2; Fig. 4). Patients receiving ripretinib also spent 50 fewer days in TOX than patients receiving sunitinib (103 versus 53 days). The time span was limited to 365 days because median follow-up was approximately 1 year at the time of the data cutoff. Sensitivity analyses with alternative time restrictions showed similar results.

After applying standardised utility weights to each health state, patients receiving ripretinib had 24 days more Q-TWiST than patients receiving sunitinib (Supplemental Table S1). These differences in TWiST

and Q-TWiST were also observed in sensitivity analyses with TOX defined as days spent with grade ≥ 2 TEAEs (Supplemental Table S2, S3).

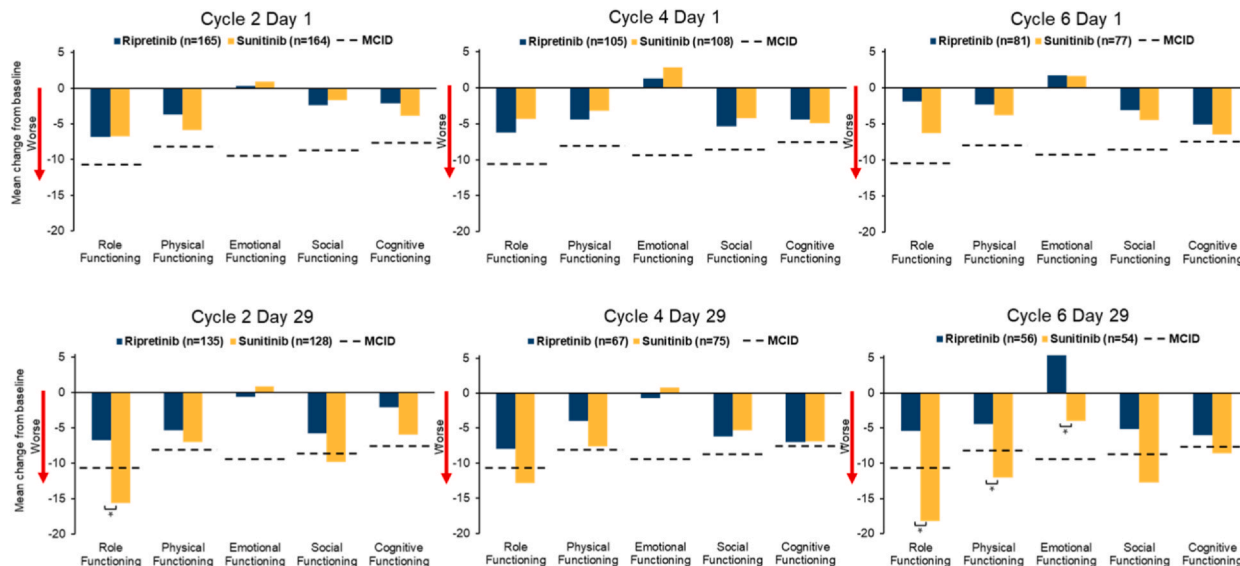
4. Discussion

In the INTRIGUE trial, there was no significant difference in PFS between ripretinib and sunitinib in adult patients with advanced GIST who progressed on, or were intolerant to, imatinib [24]. Ripretinib had a more favourable tolerability profile than sunitinib with more days of TWiST, greater Q-TWiST, and fewer days of toxicity. Patients receiving ripretinib reported significantly less decline in self-reported HRQoL. We found that patients receiving ripretinib experienced similar HRQoL to patients receiving sunitinib on D1 assessments. However, ripretinib patients experienced better HRQoL than patients receiving sunitinib at many D29 assessments, suggesting that ripretinib had a lesser impact on HRQoL compared with sunitinib following 4 weeks of treatment.

Constipation was the only item measured by the QLQ-C30 clearly less favourable for patients receiving ripretinib, with greater constipation reported among patients receiving ripretinib compared with patients receiving sunitinib at most PRO assessments. This result is consistent with the tolerability profile observed in the INTRIGUE trial [24]. Conversely, diarrhoea is commonly reported as a TEAE of sunitinib [14,32], and accordingly, patients receiving sunitinib reported substantially greater diarrhoea at a majority of assessments than patients receiving ripretinib.

Sunitinib treatment is commonly associated with a reduction in HRQoL [14]. To manage treatment toxicity, dose modifications are common in clinical practice. Sunitinib is often prescribed at a lower, continuous dose instead of the 4 weeks on/2 weeks off treatment regimen listed in the prescribing information [22,33]. For the purposes of the INTRIGUE study, sunitinib was administered per the prescribing information; however, about half of patients (111/221; 50.2%) had dose reductions, and 33/221 (14.9%) patients modified their sunitinib treatment regimen to continuous dosing at various levels [24]. Subgroup analyses were not performed due to the heterogeneity both in the timing of a

A. Functional scales



B. Symptom scales

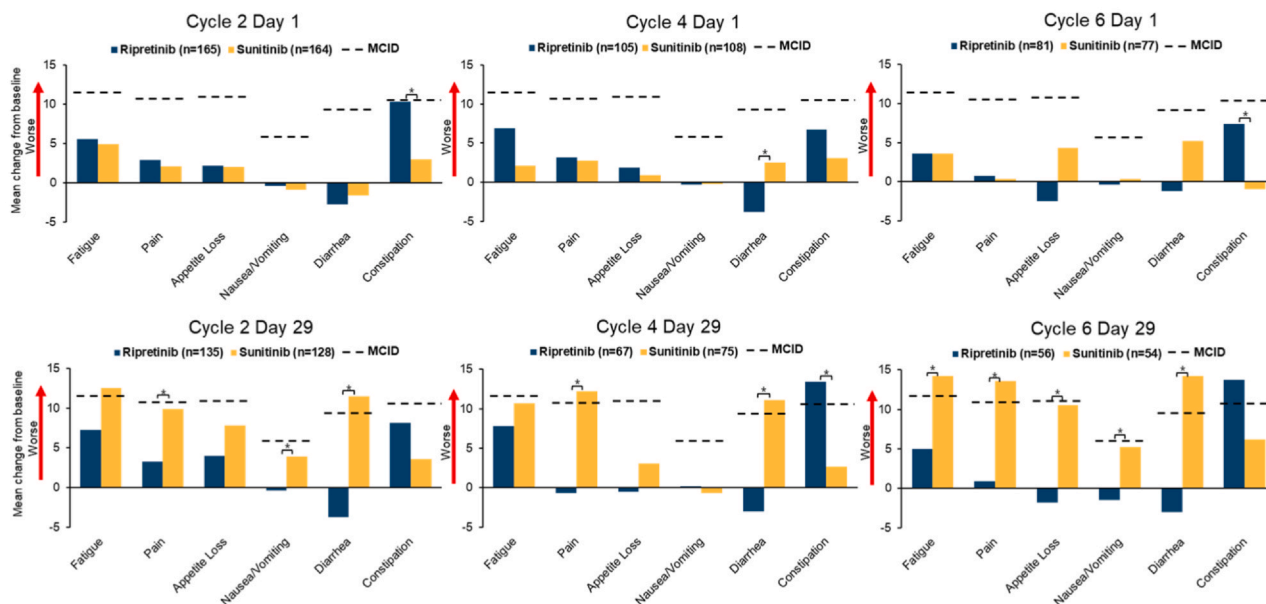


Fig. 3. Change from baseline EORTC QLQ-C30 score at day 1 versus day 29 for (A) functional scales and (B) symptom scales. MCIDs were calculated as one half of the mean standard deviation of the two treatment arms at baseline based on all patients in the ITT population with evaluable baseline data and are marked with a dashed line for each scale. The results for functional and symptom scales at all PRO assessments from C1D29–C9D29 are presented in the supplement; For functional scales, scores are reported out of 100, and a higher score represents a higher level of functioning, corresponding to higher QoL. For symptom scales, a higher score represents higher levels of symptomatology, corresponding to lower QoL; *indicates p < 0.05 between the ripretinib and sunitinib groups; no multiple hypothesis testing adjustment applied. C, cycle; D, day; EORTC QLQ-C30, European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire for Cancer-30; ITT, intention to treat; MCID, minimum clinically important difference; PRO, patient-reported outcomes; QoL, quality of life.

Table 2
TWiST analysis: restricted mean survival time by state in the first 365 days of follow-up, based on grade ≥ 3 TEAEs.

State	Ripretinib	Sunitinib	Difference
Mean days alive (OS)	340	338	2
Mean days of relapse (REL state)	114	109	5 (95% CI: -19, 30)
Mean days with grade ≥ 3 TEAEs (TOX state)	53	103	-50 (95% CI: -85, -9)
Mean days alive, pre-progression, without grade ≥ 3 TEAEs (TWiST state)	173	126	47 (95% CI: 11, 76)

CI, confidence interval; OS, overall survival; REL, relapse state; TEAE, treatment emergent adverse event; TOX, toxicity state; TWiST, time without symptoms and toxicity.

dosing regimen switch and in regimens among patients with a recorded switch, including post-switch dose increases and interruptions.

While a continuous lower dosing regimen may lessen treatment toxicity, it may also prolong treatment exposure. In an open-label treatment-use study, patients receiving altered dosing regimens of sunitinib remained on treatment longer but experienced similar rates of grade 3 and 4 TEAEs as patients receiving standard dosing, even after adjusting for treatment duration [34]. In the INTRIGUE trial, the daily dosing regimen was not modified for patients receiving ripretinib, but dose reductions were implemented in 44/223 patients (19.7%) [24]. Further research will be necessary to determine the relative HRQoL impact of ripretinib versus other TKIs.

The differences in dosing regimens between ripretinib and sunitinib were evident in the treatment impact on patient HRQoL. As expected with the 4 weeks on/2 weeks off dosing regimen for sunitinib [35], patients reported significant deterioration in HRQoL compared to baseline across multiple domains on D29 assessments after 4 weeks of continuous sunitinib treatment. D1 assessments, which occurred after 2 weeks without daily treatment, indicated a smaller decline from baseline HRQoL. For patients receiving ripretinib, patient-reported HRQoL was similar at D1 and D29 assessments. For all QLQ-C30 symptom scales except constipation, the patients receiving continuous ripretinib had similar HRQoL to sunitinib arm patients at D1 assessments, who had not received sunitinib for 2 weeks. Thus, patients receiving ripretinib are likely to experience stable, and, on average, better HRQoL throughout treatment.

The TWiST analysis is consistent with the PRO results, indicating that ripretinib has less toxicity and HRQoL impact compared with sunitinib. Despite similar OS and PFS for ripretinib and sunitinib, patients

receiving ripretinib experienced a 13.6% gain in TWiST relative to the RMST of OS in the first year compared to patients receiving sunitinib. Thus, patients receiving ripretinib experienced more time with good HRQoL than patients receiving sunitinib while receiving similar survival benefit.

While no single measure can capture the entire patient experience, TWiST and PRO results considered in tandem can provide a more complete picture [36]. These analyses indicate that patients receiving ripretinib generally experienced better HRQoL than patients receiving sunitinib. Some TEAEs were more common in patients receiving ripretinib than sunitinib in the INTRIGUE trial, including alopecia, myalgia, abdominal pain, muscle spasms, and pruritus [24]. However, all grade ≥ 2 TEAEs are reflected in TWiST sensitivity analyses, which are consistent with the primary analyses in demonstrating greater TWiST for patients receiving ripretinib versus sunitinib.

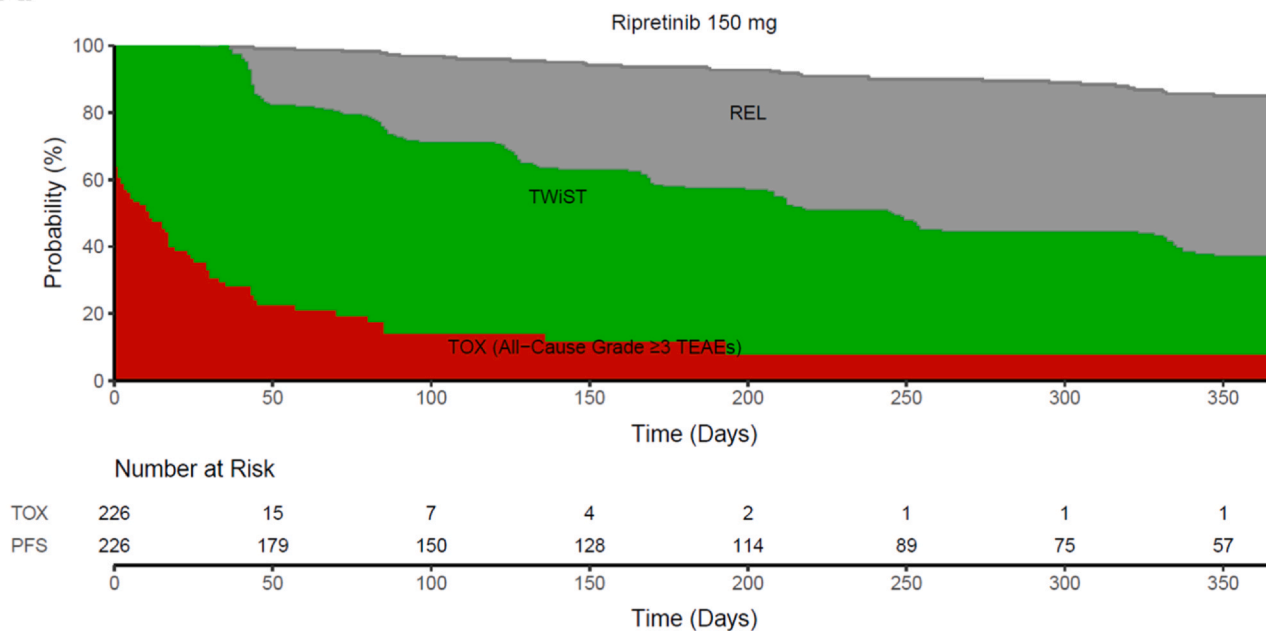
There is an increasing recognition that the assessment of treatment options should incorporate not only the objective impact on response rate, PFS, and OS, but also the impact a treatment has on the patient experience [17,18,20]. This analysis provides a novel benchmark of a HRQoL assessment for patients with GIST in a second-line setting for both the standard-of-care, sunitinib, as well as ripretinib. These findings should be considered when making an overall assessment of ripretinib as a treatment option for advanced GIST.

Despite not meeting the primary endpoint of superior PFS compared with sunitinib in INTRIGUE, patients receiving ripretinib experienced better HRQoL than patients receiving sunitinib during the dosing period, and experienced similar HRQoL to patients who had not received sunitinib for 2 weeks for all QLQ-C30 domains except constipation. The use of ripretinib may therefore provide meaningful clinical benefit from the patient perspective and a favourable safety profile to patients with advanced GIST previously treated with imatinib.

Data sharing statement

Qualified scientific and medical researchers can make requests for individual participant data that underlie the results reported in this article, after de-identification, at info@deciphera.com. Proposals for data will be evaluated and approved by Deciphera in its sole discretion. All approved researchers must sign a data access agreement before accessing the data. Data will be available as soon as possible but no later than within 1 year of the acceptance of the article for publication, and for 3 years after article publication. Deciphera will not share data from identified participants or a data dictionary.

A.



B.

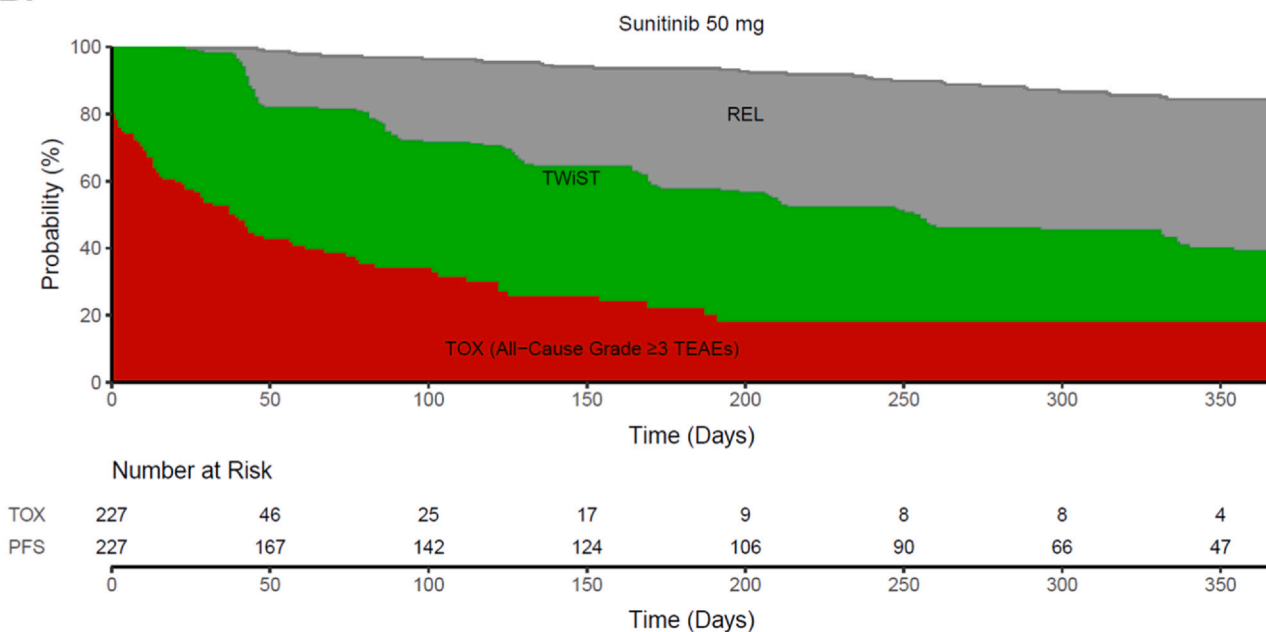


Fig. 4. Kaplan-Meier survival plots of REL, TWiST, and TOX states based on grade ≥ 3 all-cause TEAEs (ITT set). ITT, intention-to-treat; PFS, progression-free survival; REL, relapse state; TEAE, treatment-emergent adverse event; TOX, toxicity state; TWiST, time without symptoms and toxicity.

Prior presentation

This study was presented in part at the ASCO Annual Meeting 2022, June 3–7, 2022, Chicago, IL.

Author contributions

Substantial contributions to study conception and design: HG, RLJ, JYB, SG, MvM, JRZ, JT, SA, MLS,

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Appendix A. Supporting material

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