
Design Specifications for Virtual Patient Twins in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies

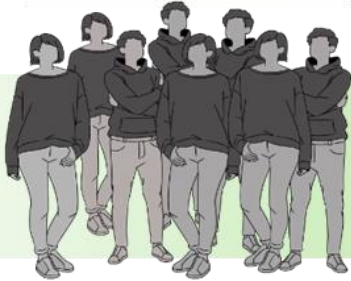
Kristin Reiche, Head of Department of Medical Bioinformatics
Fraunhofer Institute for Cell Therapy and Immunology – IZI, Leipzig, Germany

26/09/2025, INSERM Webinar

The Era of Precision Medicine

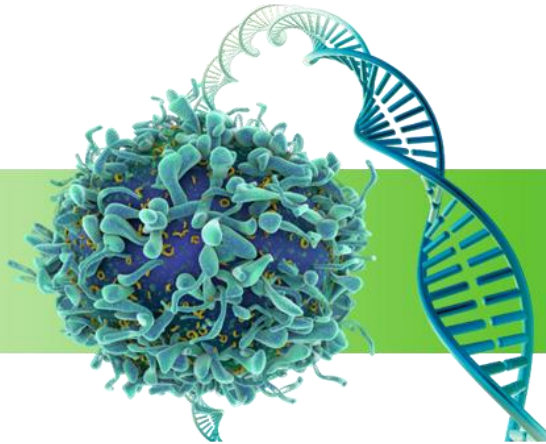
LIVING DRUGS

One-fits-all solution



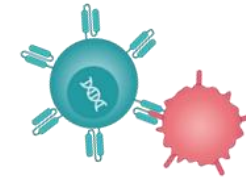
- Chemical substances
- Regular intake
- Relief of symptoms

Cell and Gene Therapies (CGTs)



Game changer

Tailored treatment

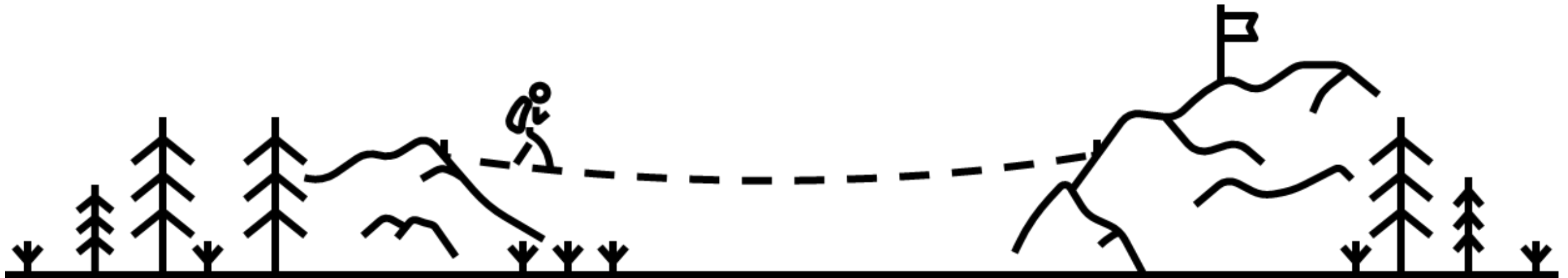


- One-off treatment
- Elimination of the cause
- Long-lasting effect



What treatments provide the longest, deepest, most durable response and with acceptable side effects to my specific type of disease?

Precision Medicine



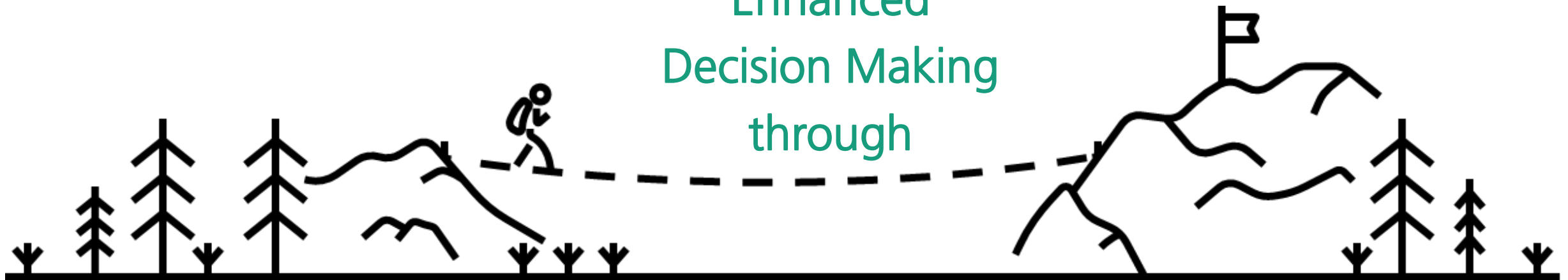


What treatments provide the longest, deepest, most durable response and with acceptable side effects to my specific type of disease?

Precision Medicine

Enhanced
Decision Making
through

Virtual Patient Twins?



Outline



**Engineered Adoptive Cellular
Immunotherapies**

**Design Specifications for Virtual
Patient Twins in Engineered
Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies**



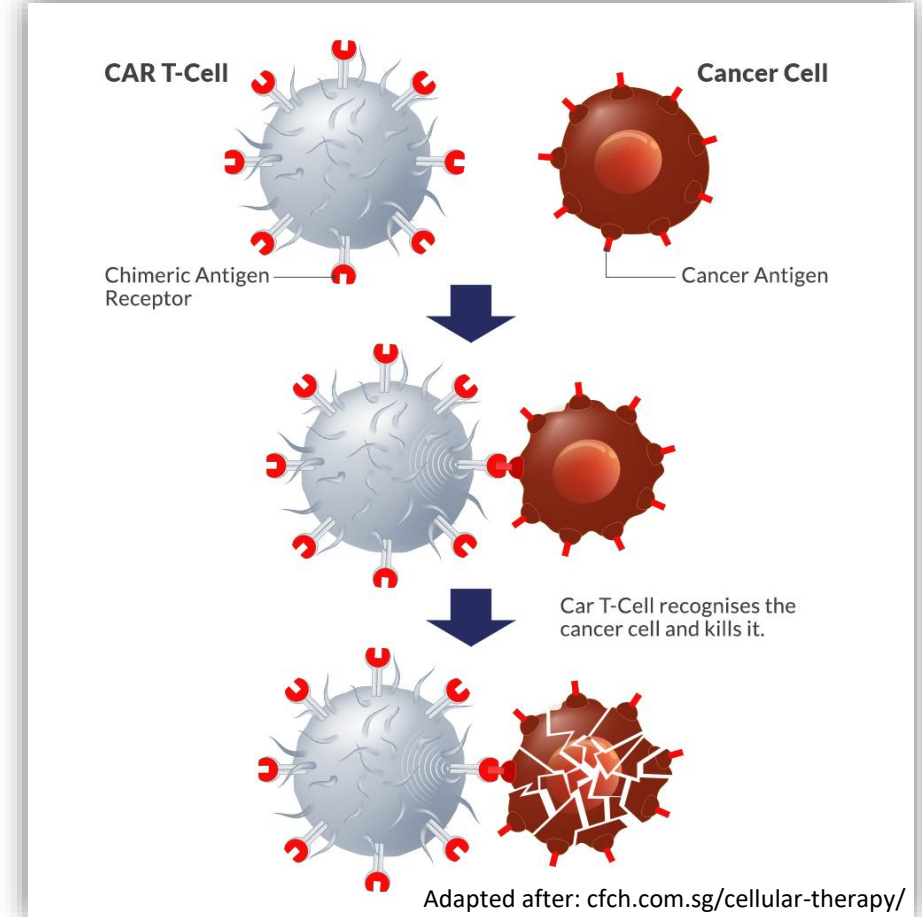
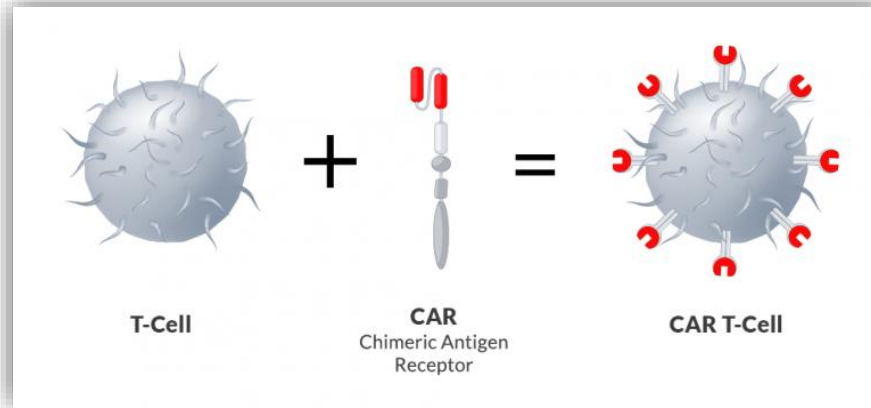
**Towards a VT for Multiple Myeloma patients eligible for CAR T cell
treatment**

Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies

CAR-T cells – Revolution of immunotherapy

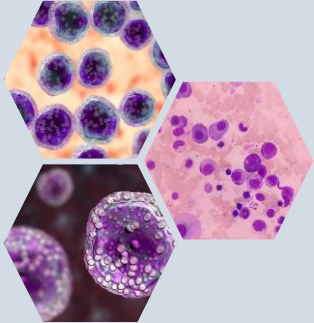


© Emily Whitehead Foundation, 2022



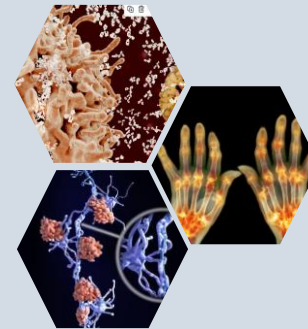
The Future

Indications



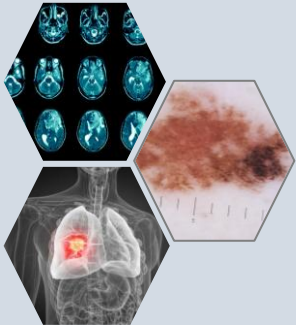
Hematological malignancies

- Move to earlier lines of treatment
- Increase time to relapse (MM)
- Other types of blood cancer, e.g., T cell lymphoma



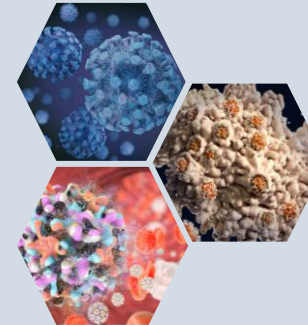
Autoimmune disease

- esp. when associated with autoreactive B cells; in clinical trials
- E.g., systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, dermatomyositis



Solid tumors

- Overcome immunosuppressive tumor environment
- Increase accessibility of tumor tissue
- Tackle inter- and intra-tumor heterogeneity



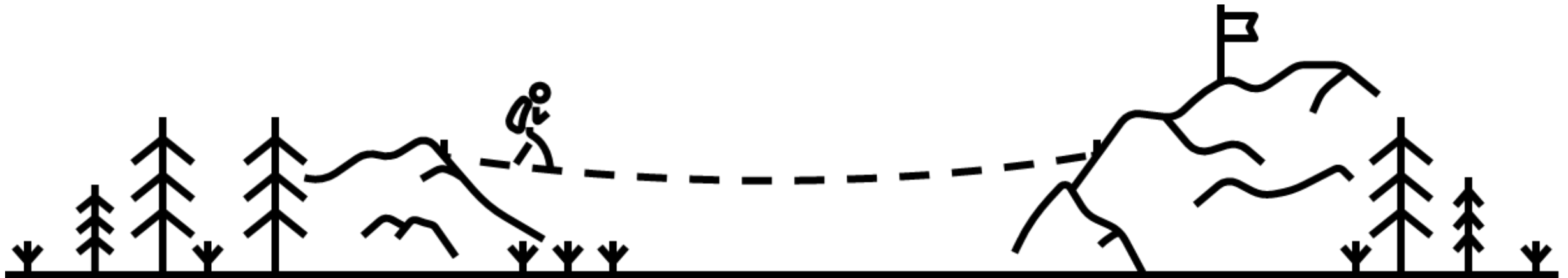
Infectious disease

- Primarily for viral infections; in clinical trials
- E.g., HIV, SIV, HBV, HCV, SARS-CoV-2, EBV

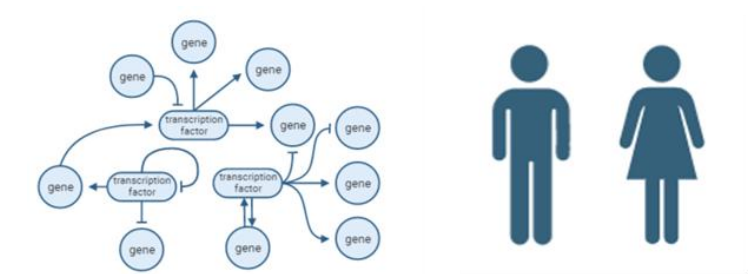


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Precision Medicine



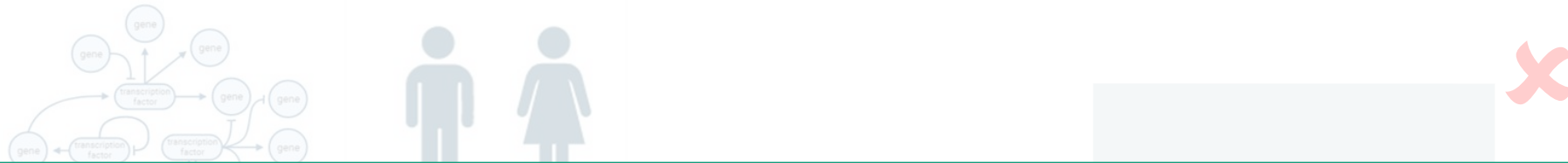
It is well accepted that studying (single) cells in different disease and health status of a patient advances precision medicine



Description of Status & Response to Cell Therapy
Genetics (e.g. genotoxicity)
Intra-Cellular / Molecular / Surfaceome
Inter-Cellular / Cell-cell communication
Tissue
Organ
Body



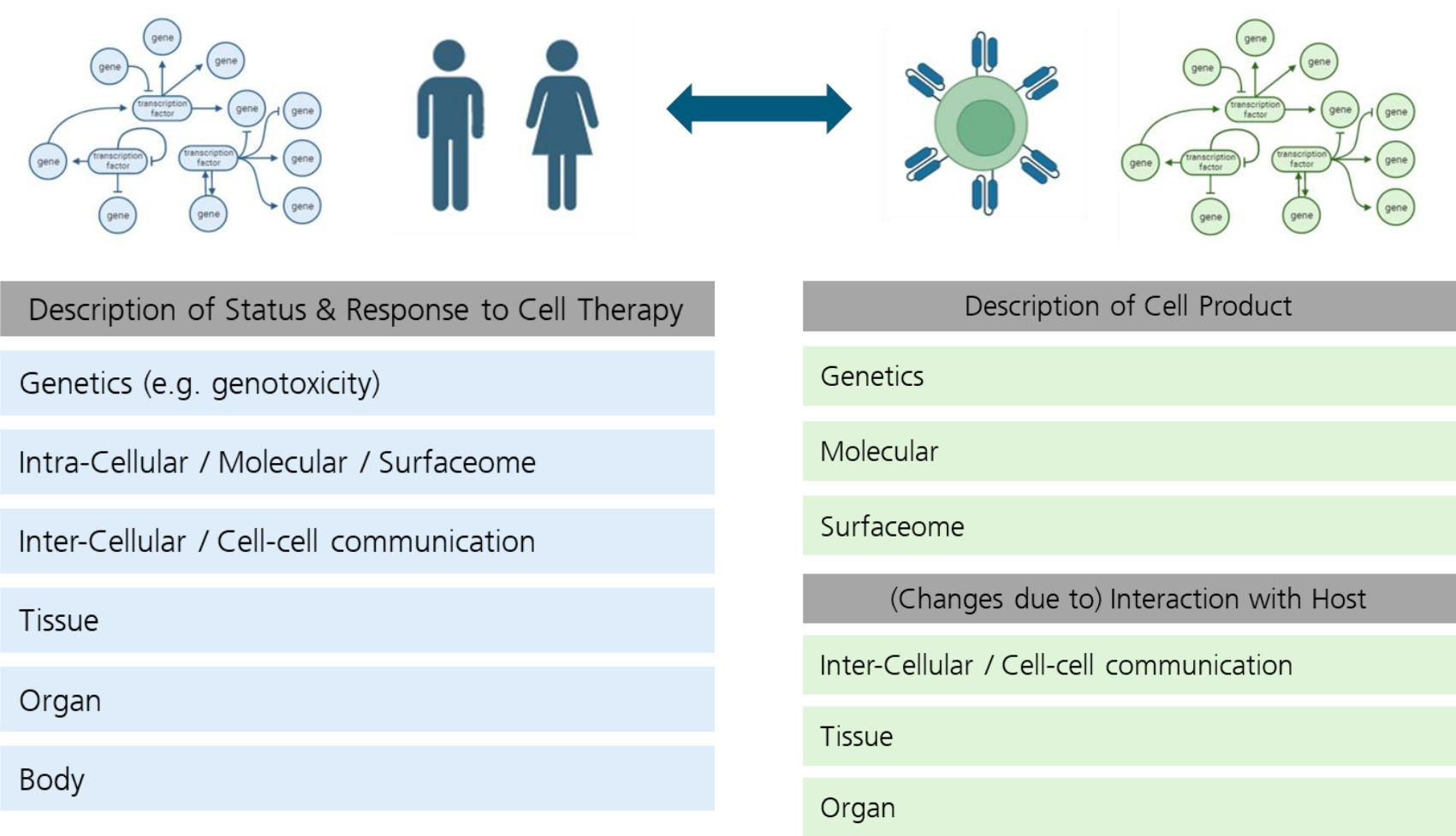
It is well accepted that studying (single) cells in different disease and health status of a patient advances precision medicine



For Cell and Gene Therapies (Living Drugs) this picture is incomplete!



Studying the cells used as therapy is an essential requirement for advanced patient-specific models in Living Drugs



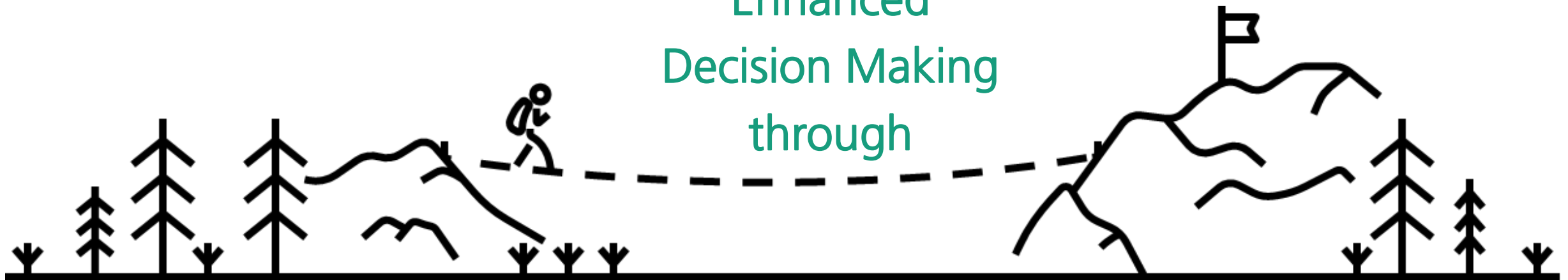


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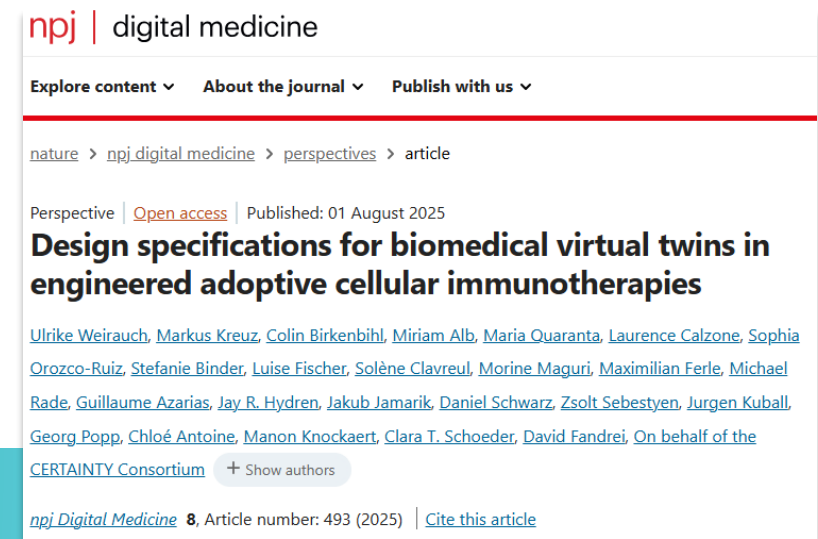
Precision Medicine

Enhanced
Decision Making
through

Virtual Patient Twins?



Design Specifications for Virtual Patient Twins in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies (Living Drugs)



Weirauch et al. Biomedical Virtual Twins for Living Drugs: Design Specifications for Virtual Twins in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies. NPJ Digital Medicine. 2025.

Digital Twin vs. Virtual Twin

Digital Twin

A digital representation of a real-world object qualifies as a Digital Twin (DT) if it includes:

- (i) a **computational model of the object**,
- (ii) a **dataset describing changes in the object**,
- (iii) and **methods for continuously updating the computational model with data derived from its real-world counterpart**

→ A DT is expected to evolve in parallel with its real-world counterpart.

[1] Viceconti, M., Vos, M., de, Mellone, S. & Geris, L. Position paper From the digital twins in healthcare to the Virtual Human Twin: a moon-shot project for digital health research. *IEEE J. Biomed. Health Inform.* **28**, 491–501 (2023)

[2] Wright, L. & Davidson, S. How to tell the difference between a model and a digital twin. *Adv. Model. and Simul. Eng. Sci.* **7**, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40323-020-00147-4> (2020)..

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Virtual Twin

A Virtual Twin (VT) in healthcare as an application-specific in silico system covering:

- (i) **at least two single(-organ) DTs** from the same patient **to simulate multi-organ biomedical interplay**.

→ **This makes VTs particularly well-suited for use in patients eligible for Living Drugs!**

[1] Viceconti, M., Vos, M., de, Mellone, S. & Geris, L. Position paper From the digital twins in healthcare to the Virtual Human Twin: a moon-shot project for digital health research. *IEEE J. Biomed. Health Inform.* **28**, 491–501 (2023)

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**Real
world**

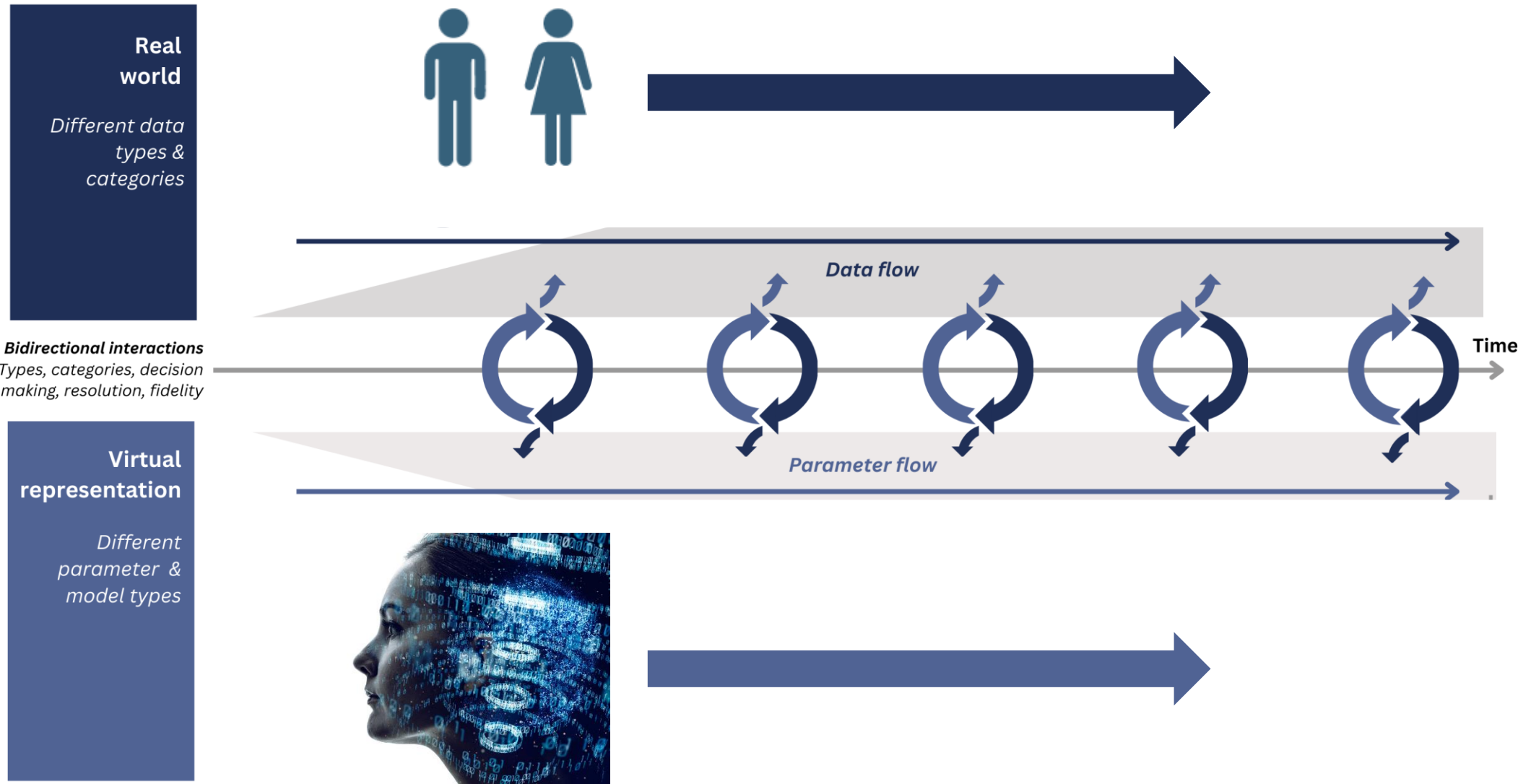
*Different data
types &
categories*

**Real
world**

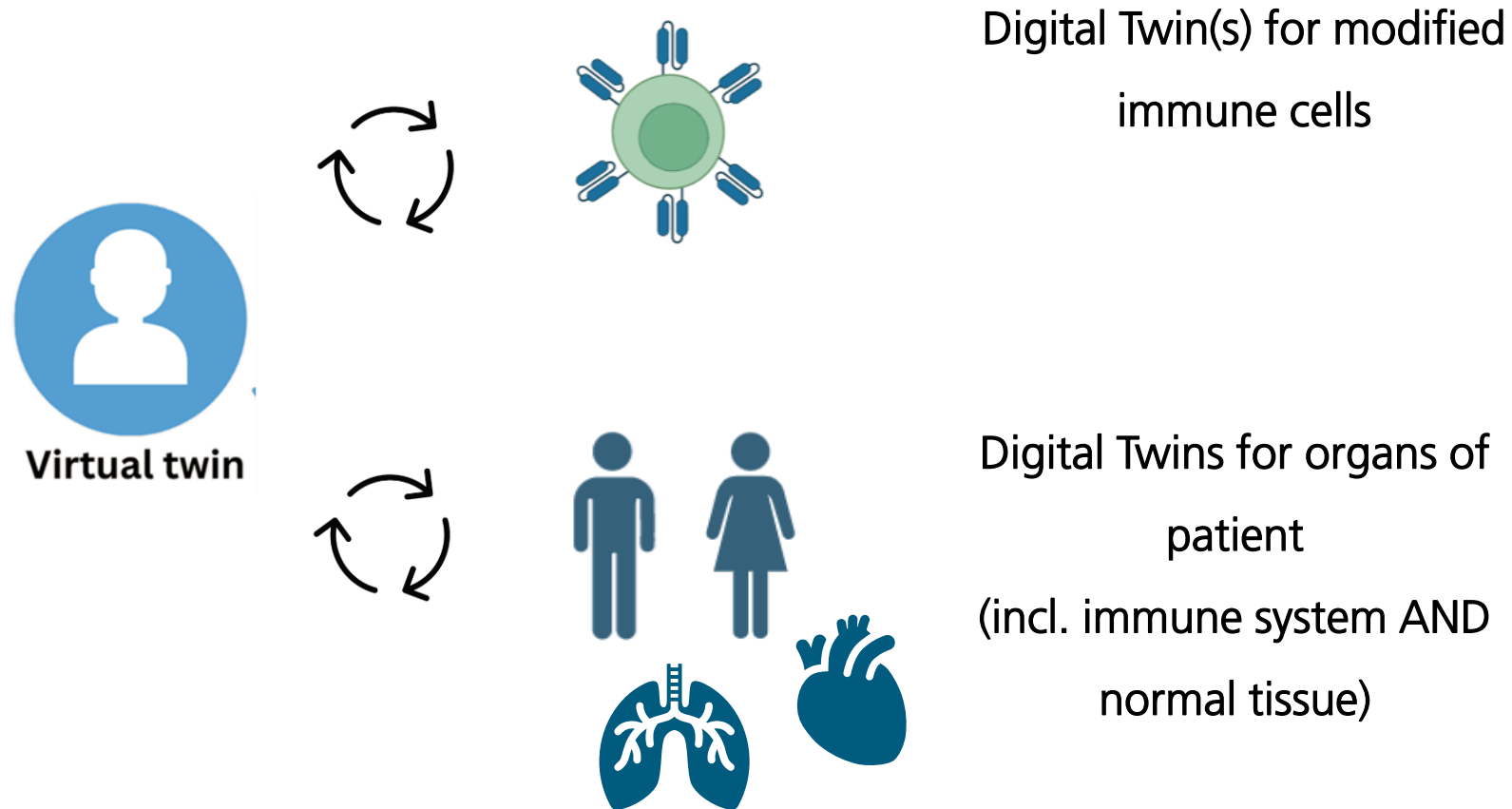
*Different data
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categories*

**Virtual
representation**

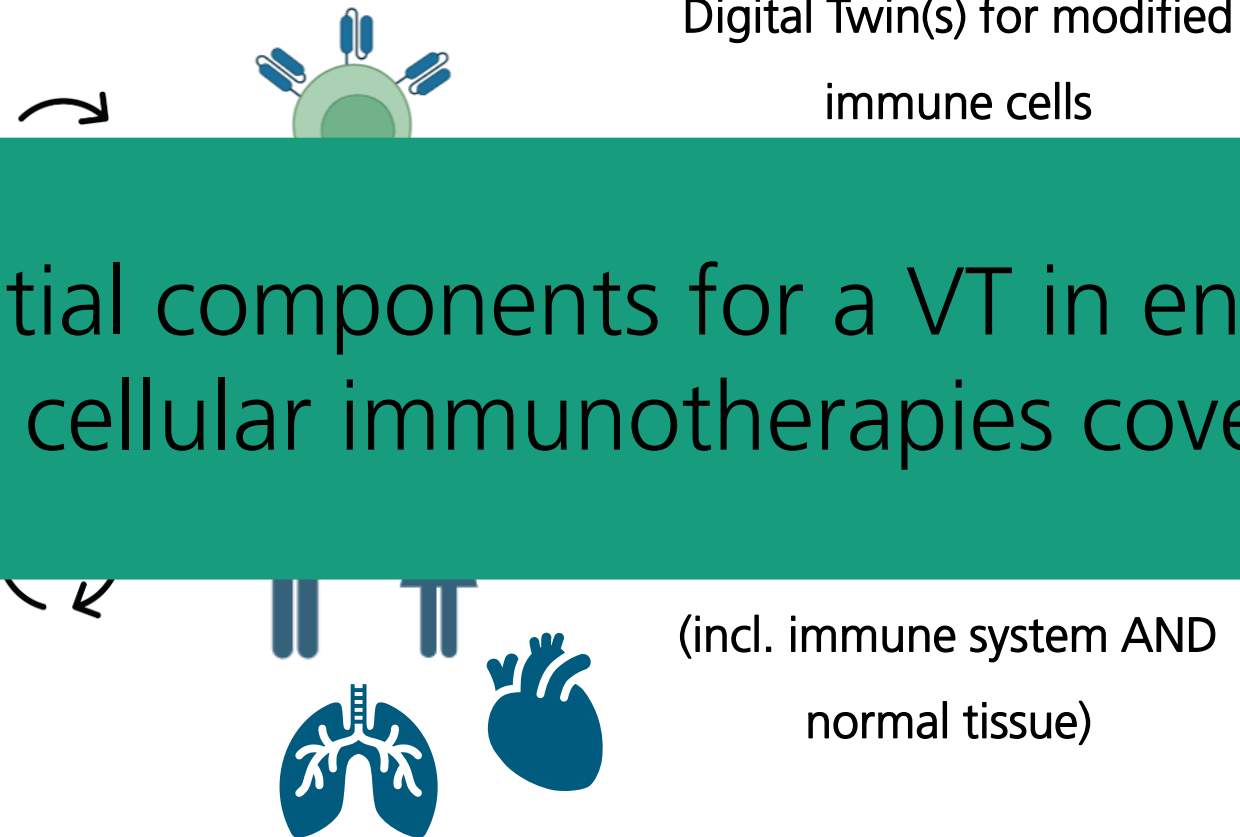
*Different
parameter &
model types*



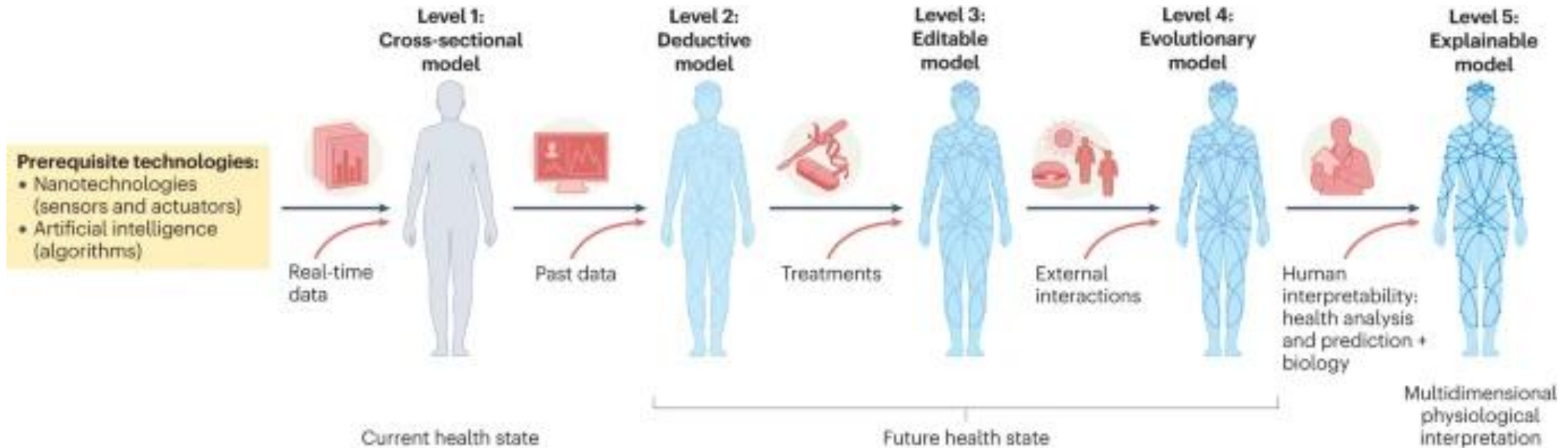
Virtual Twin in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies



Virtual Twin in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies

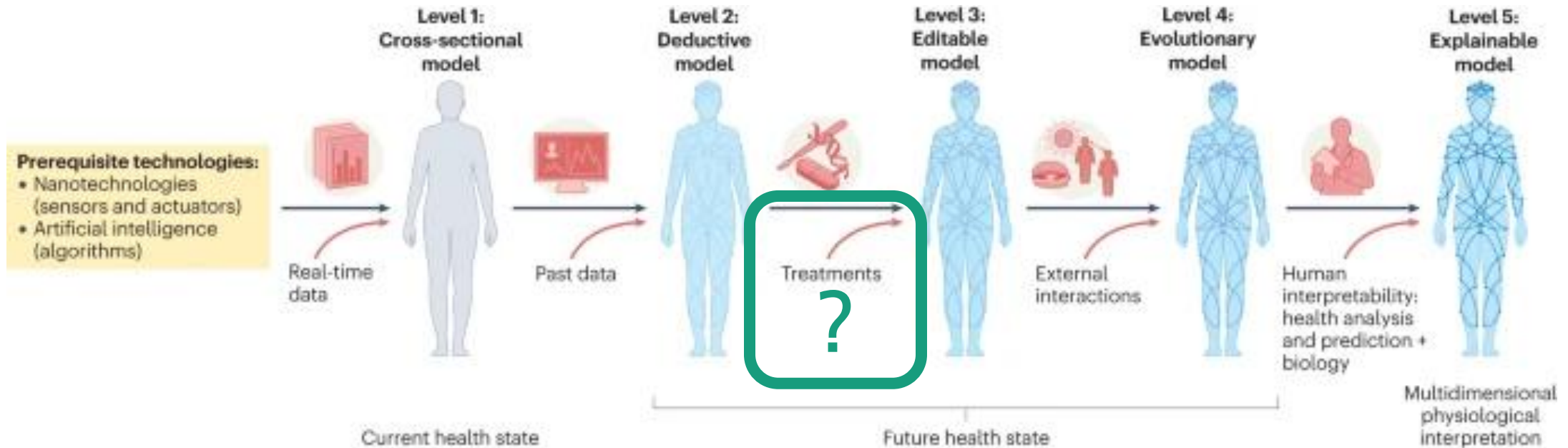


Whole Body Virtual Twins for Humans



A roadmap for the development of human body digital twins. Chenyu Tang, Wentian Yi, Edoardo Occhipinti, Yanning Dai, Shuo Gao & Luigi G. Occhipinti. Nature Reviews Electrical Engineering volume 1, pages199–207 (2024)

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Living Drugs compared to Conventional Drugs

Conventional Drugs



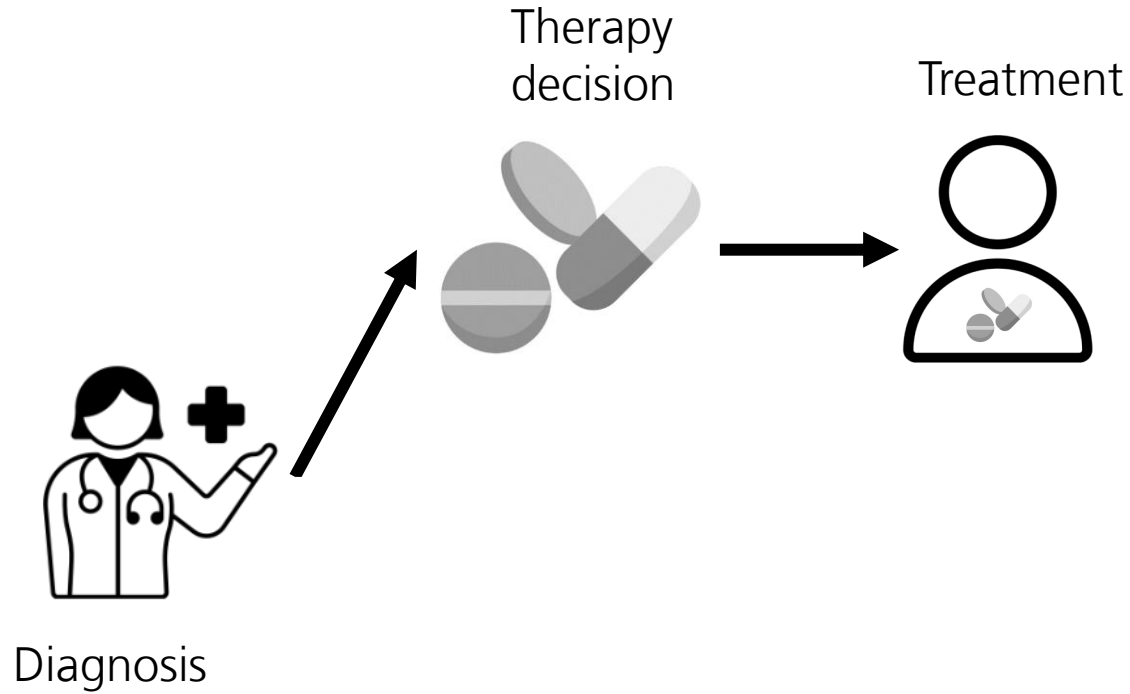
Diagnosis

Adoptive Cellular
Immunotherapies

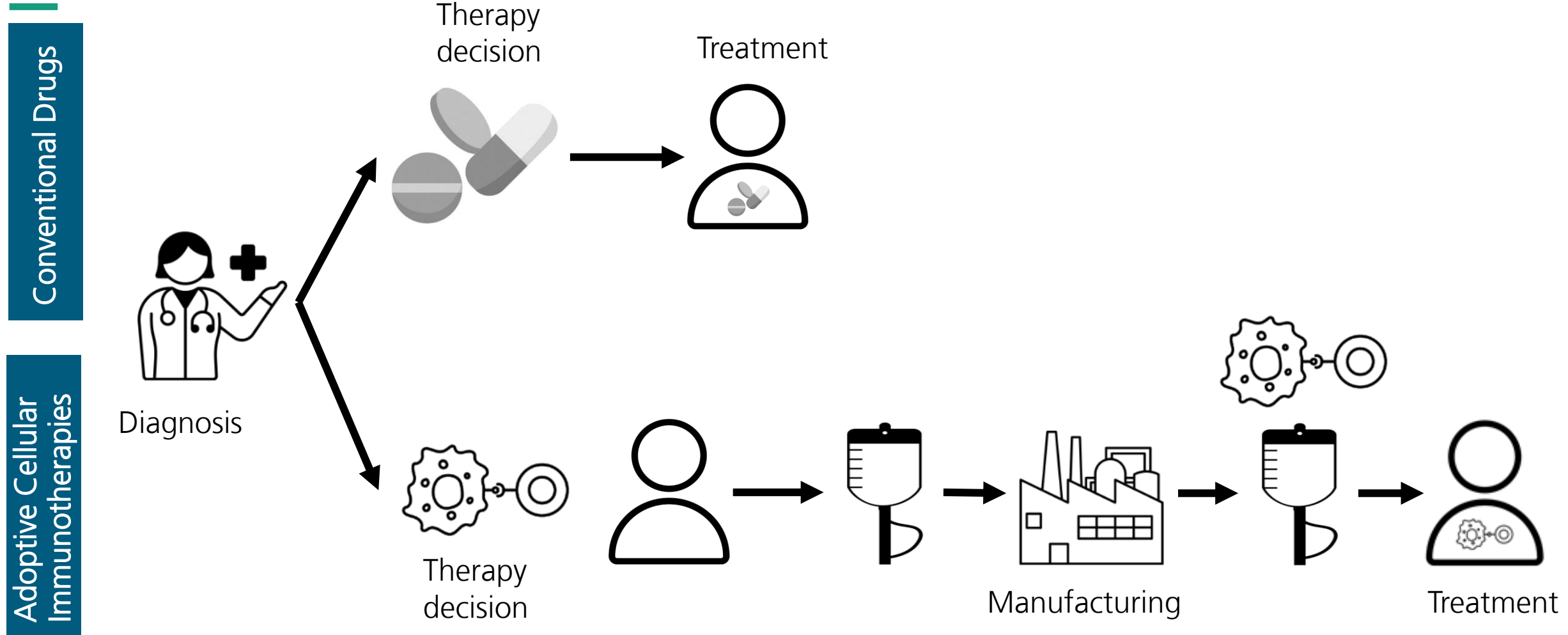
Living Drugs compared to Conventional Drugs

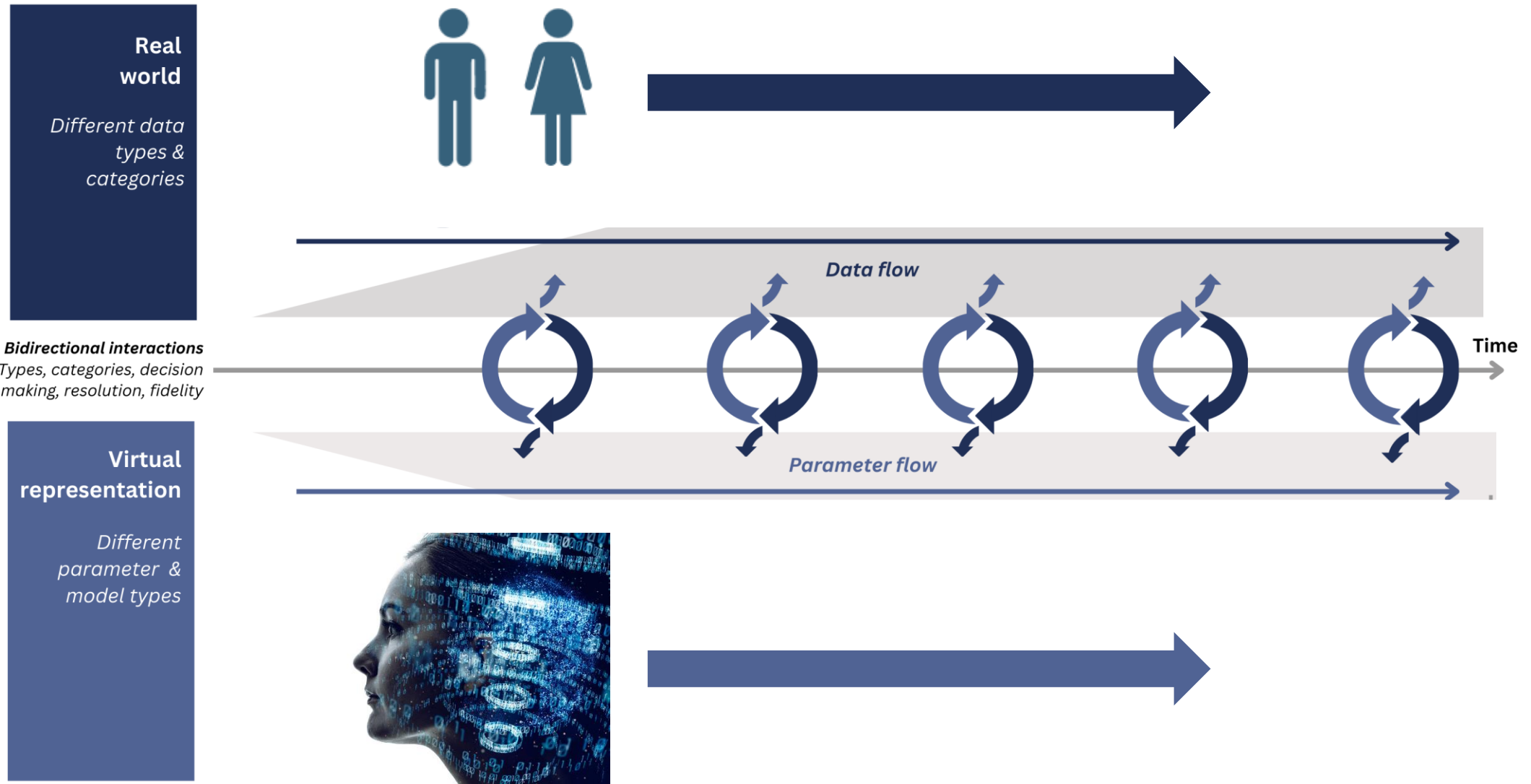
Conventional Drugs

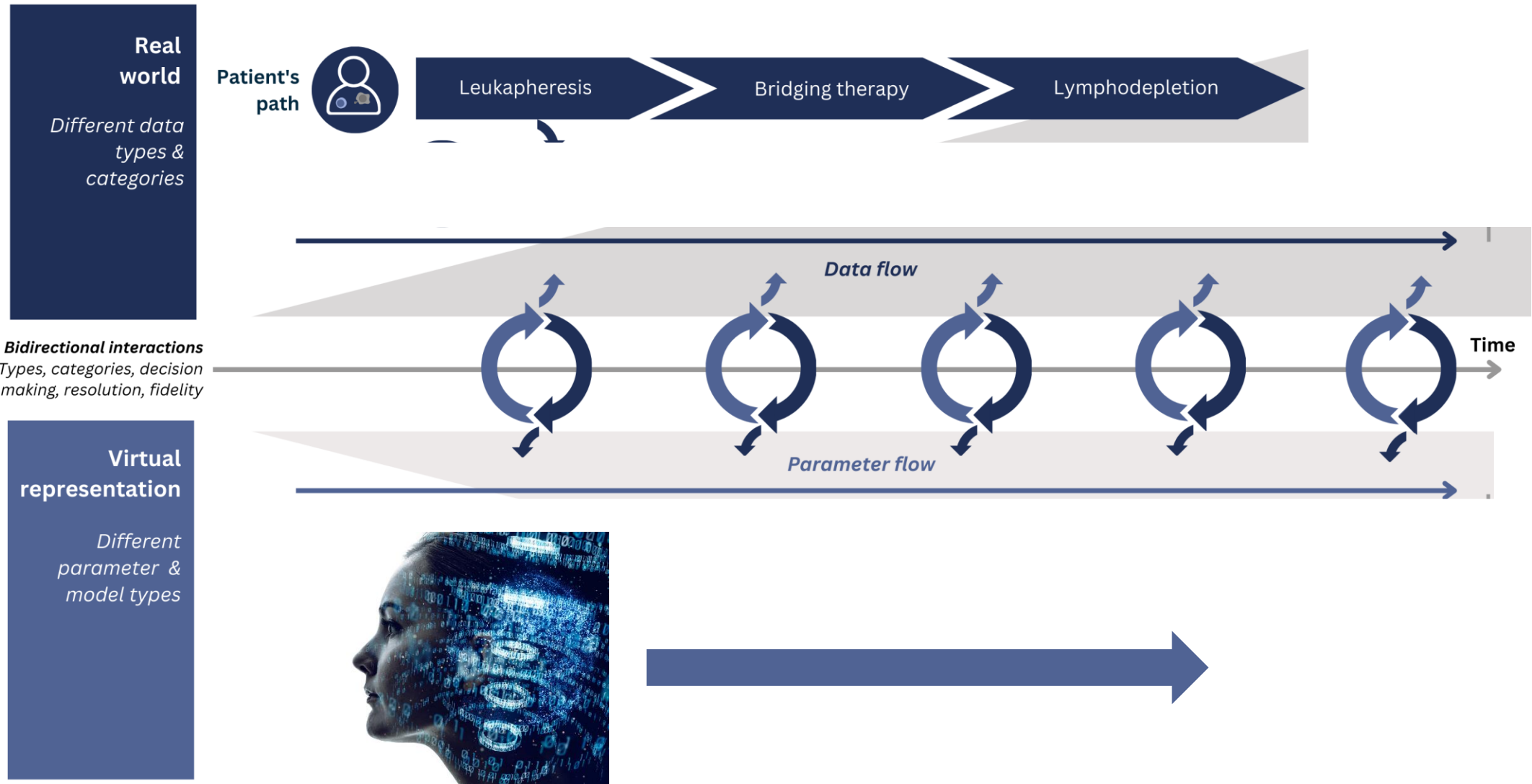
Adoptive Cellular
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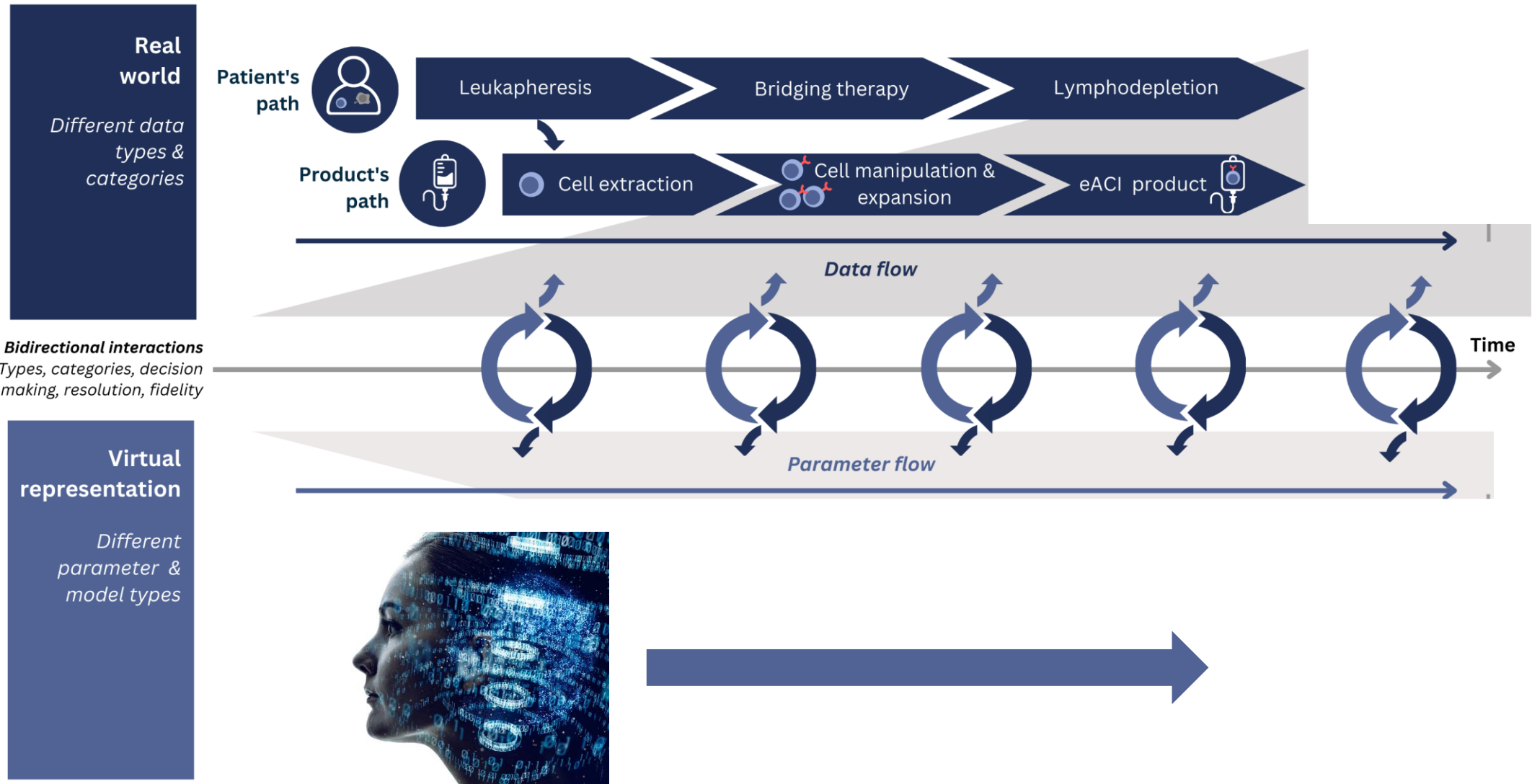


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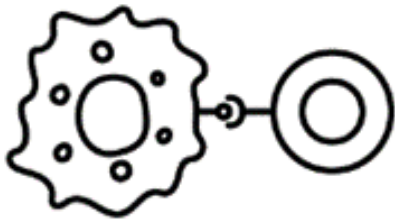






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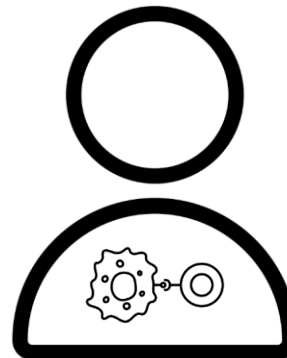
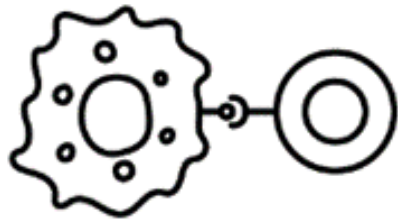
CAR T cells are living therapies with the unique feature of being a biological system.



Living Drugs compared to Conventional Drugs

CAR T cells are living therapies with the unique feature of being a biological system.

CAR T cells interact with a living system, that is the patient.

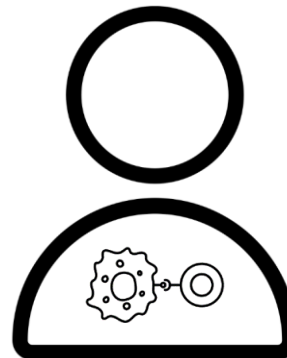
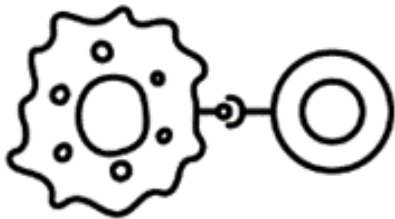


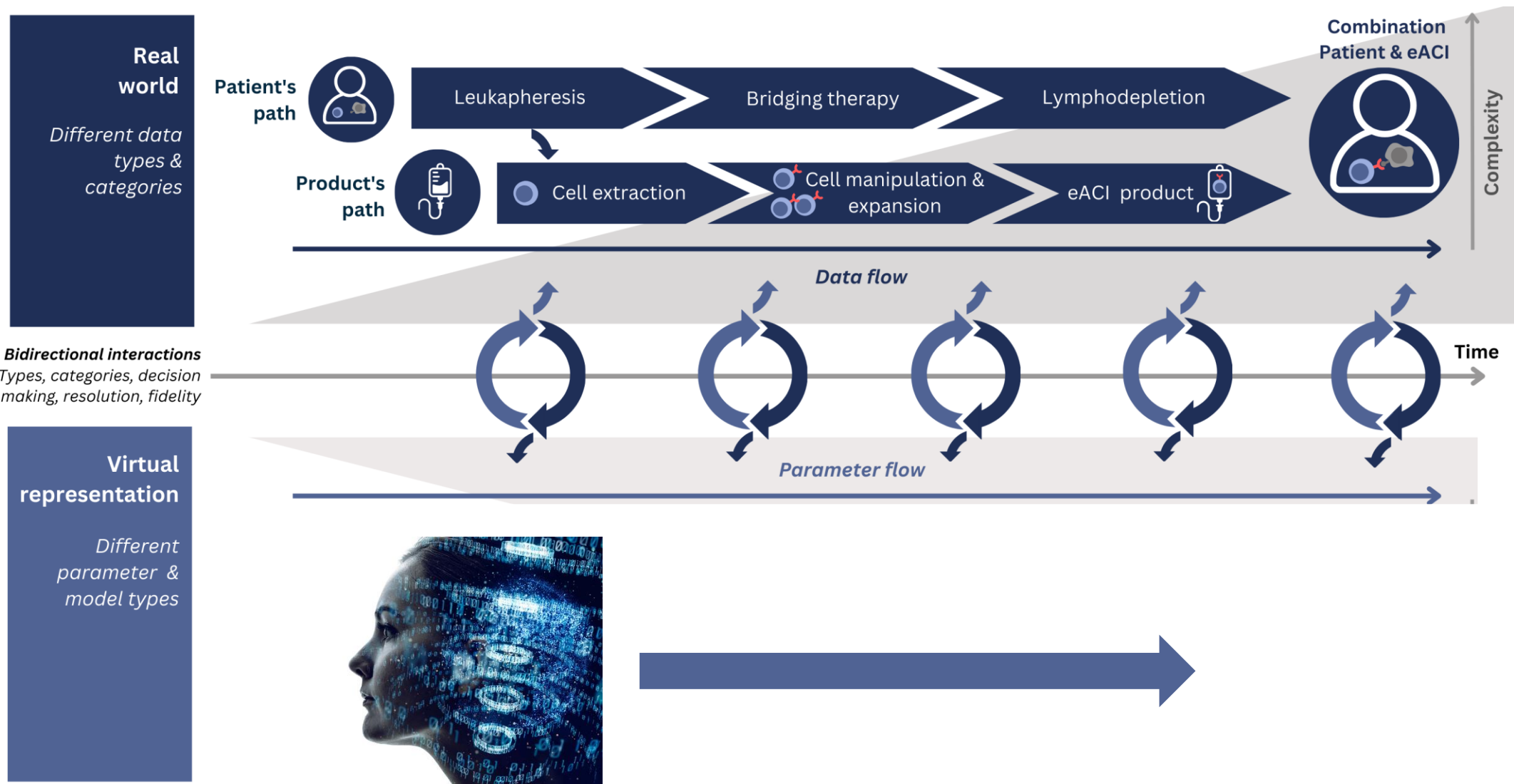
Living Drugs compared to Conventional Drugs

CAR T cells are living therapies with the unique feature of being a biological system.

CAR T cells interact with a living system, that is the patient.

Life-long monitoring required?





Minimum data categories required in observations of the real-world instance

First, **longitudinal multiomics at the single-cell** level are needed to **measure intra- and intercellular processes** influencing, for example, T cell activation, expansion, exhaustion, genotoxicity, on-target/off-tumor binding, immunosuppressive environment, or imbalances in (CAR) T cell clones.

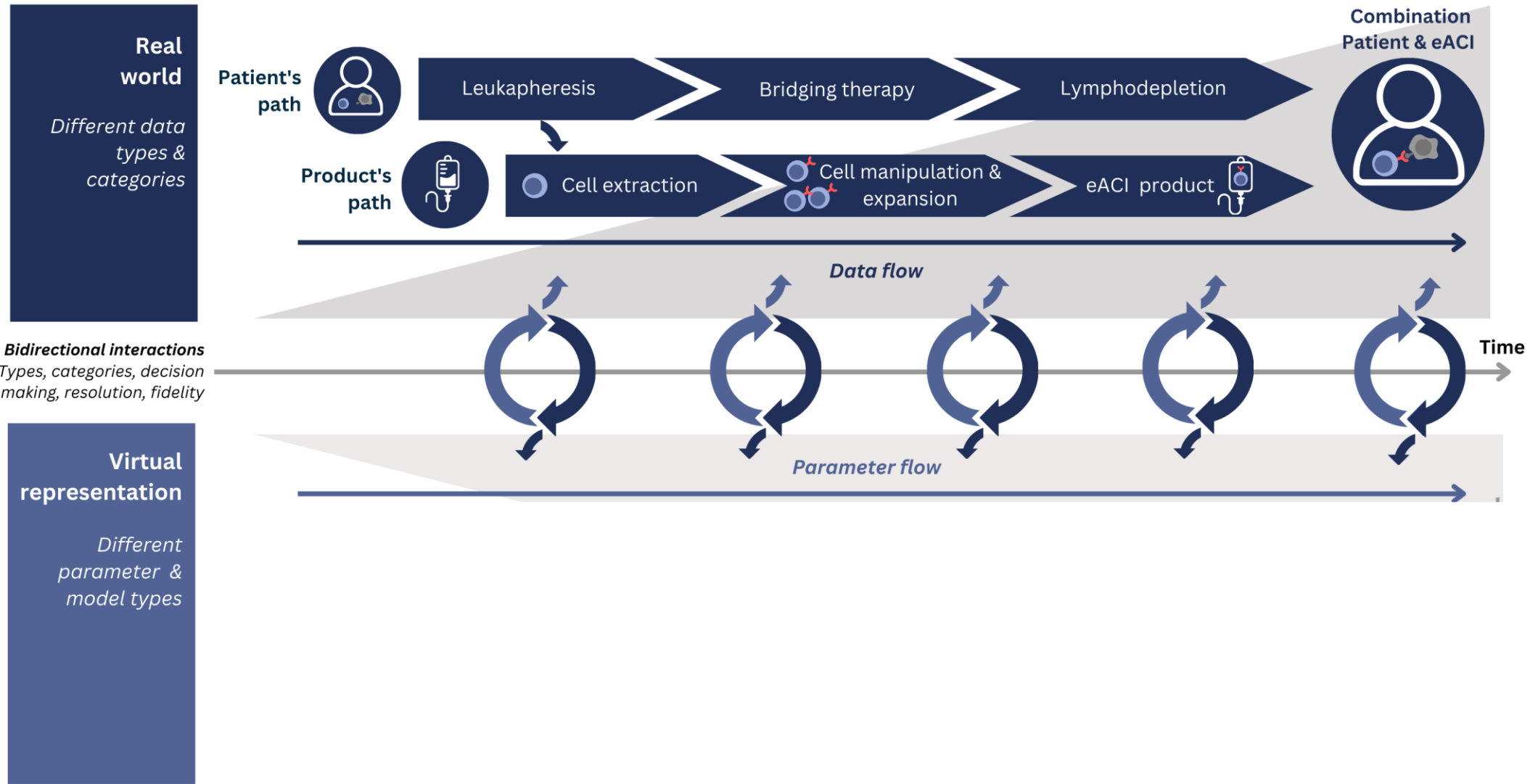
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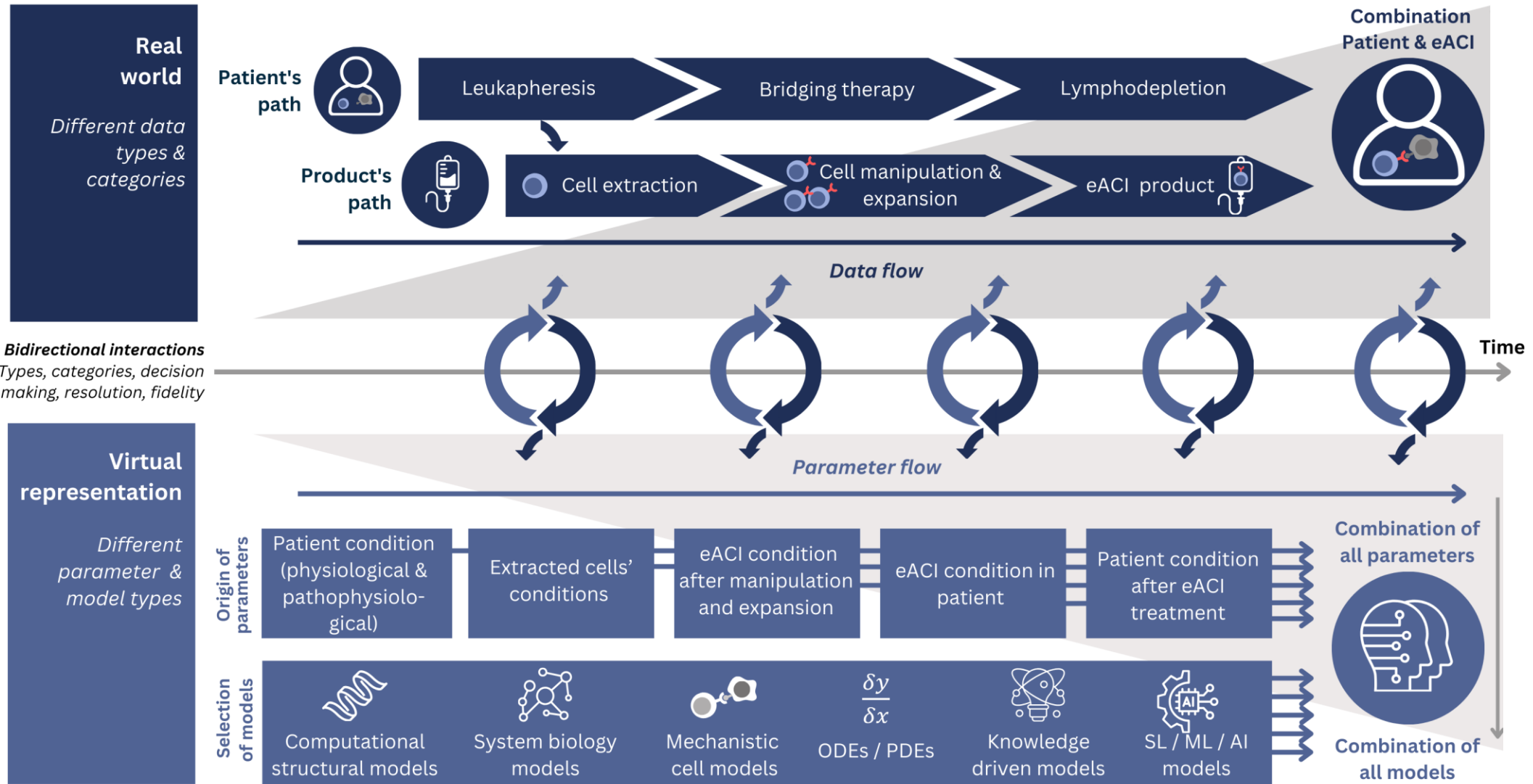
2

Second, **longitudinal observations along the organ and body scale**, such as CAR T cell expansion and persistence, response to treatment, comorbidities, and side effects, are required.

Third, **integration of patient-reported outcomes in combination with socio-economic factors** like gender, income, education, and geographic location enhances eACI-VT simulations and validation, prevents bias, and increases predictive accuracy.

3





Multi-scale VTs are essential in CAR T cell therapies

Devices for data collection

- IOT** Internet of Things
- CPS** Cyber-Physical System
- Electronic health records
- (Genomic) lab test data (incl. single-cell multiomics)
- Wearables
- Digital health application

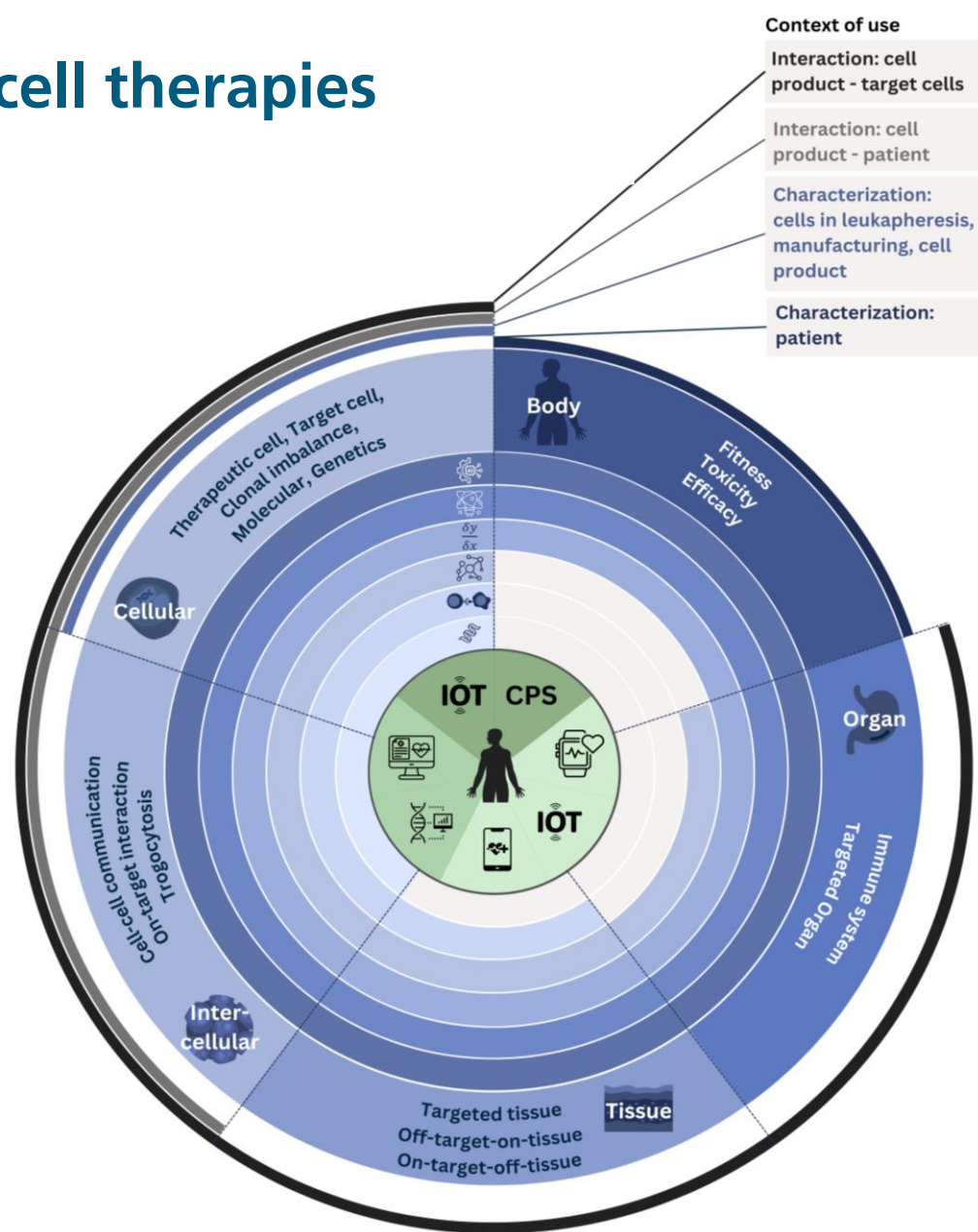
Type of model

- SL / ML / AI
- Knowledge driven models
- Systems biology models
- Mechanistic cell models
- ODE, PDE
- Computational structural biology

Devices during manufacturing

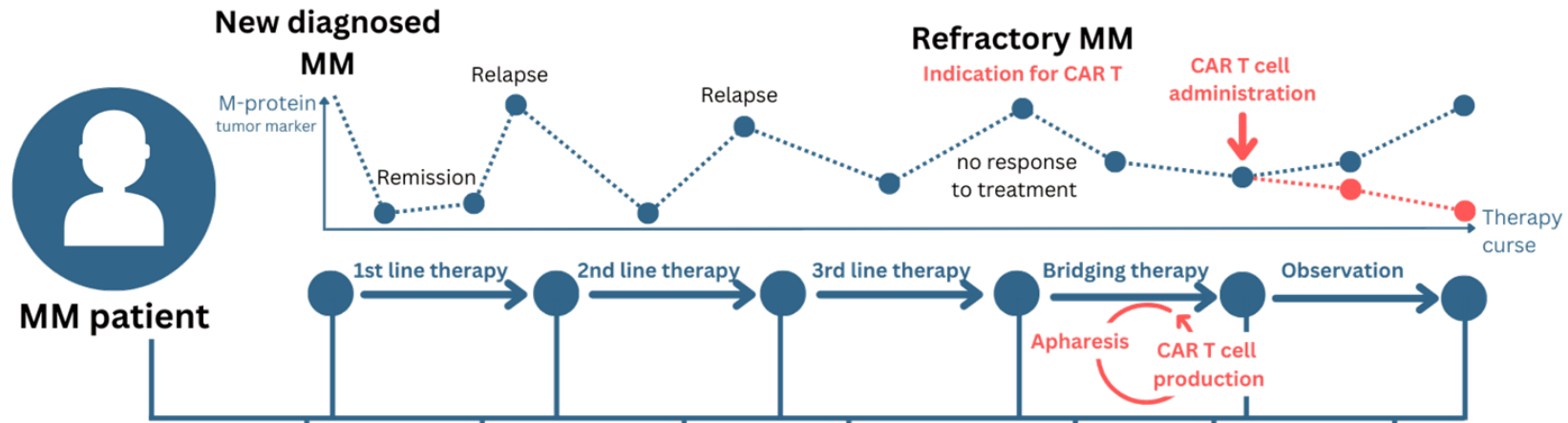
Devices during inpatient care

Smart devices during outpatient care

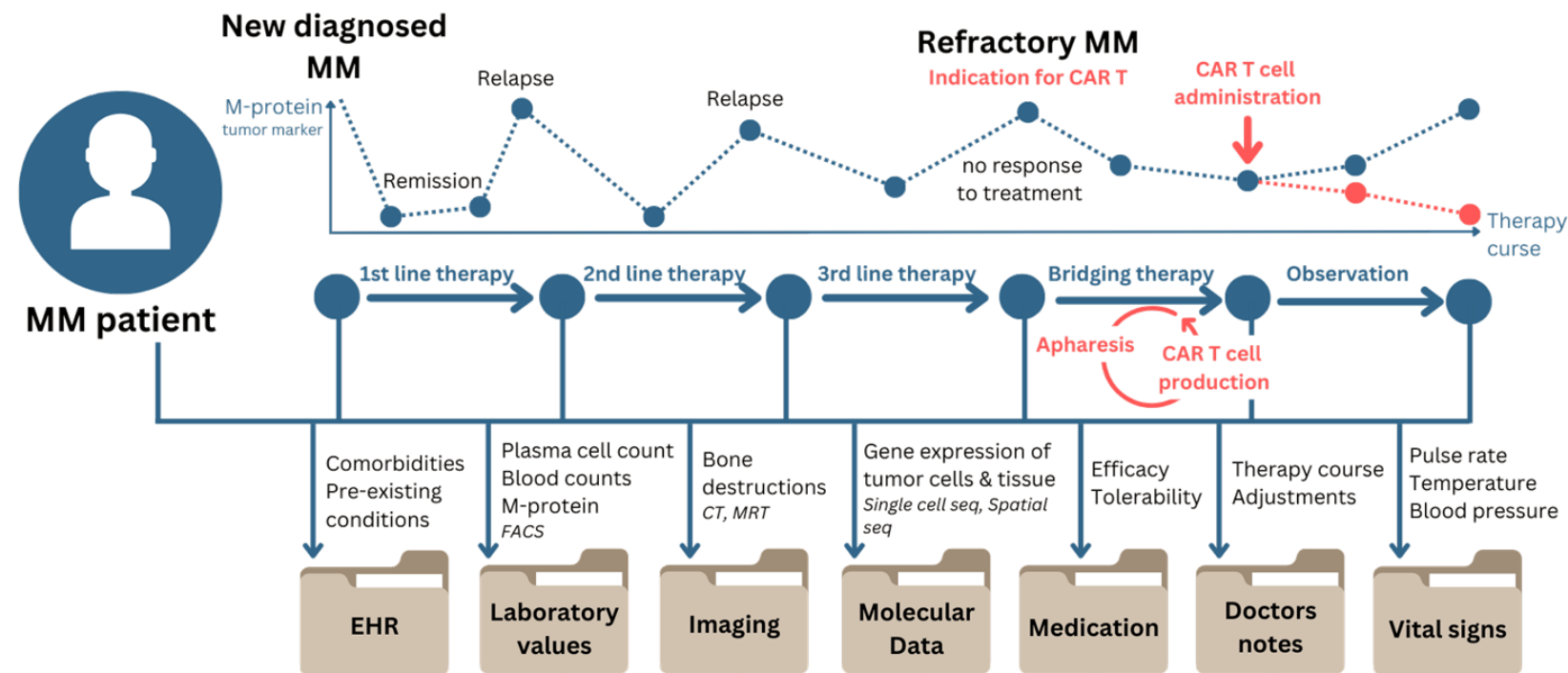


**Towards a VT for Multiple
Myeloma patients eligible
for CAR T cell treatment**

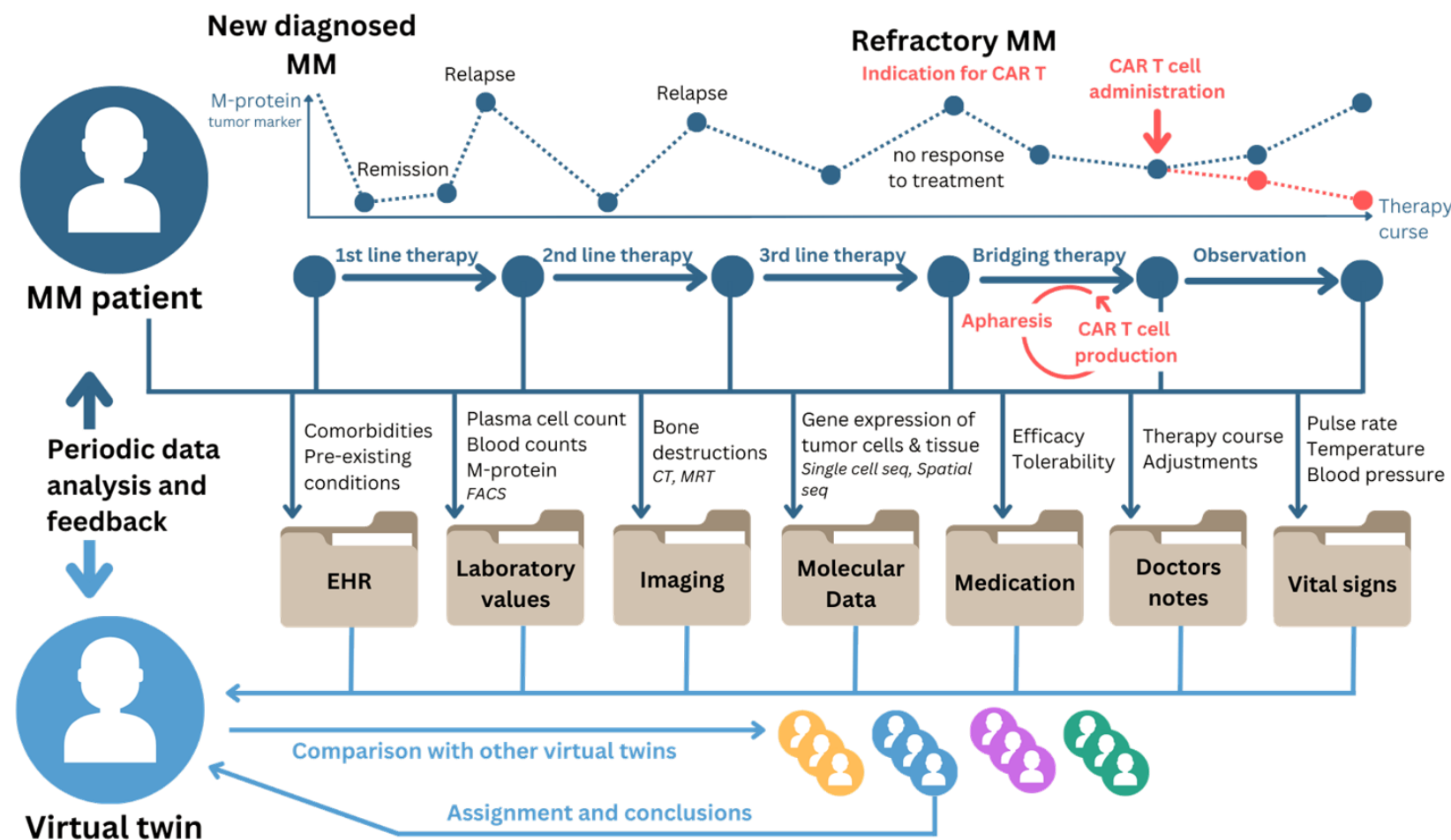
Multiple Myeloma



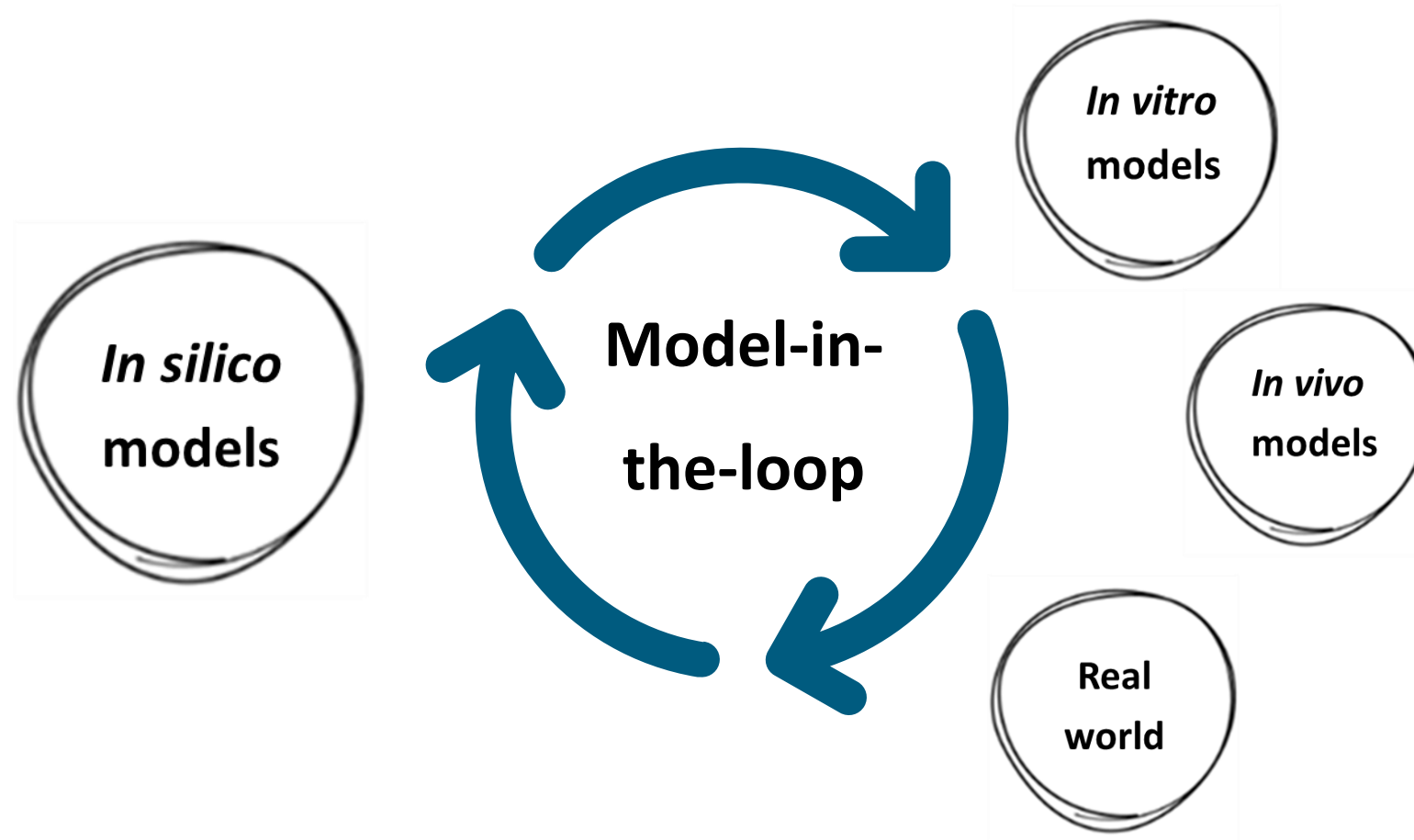
Multiple Myeloma



Multiple Myeloma



Approach to implementation



Weirauch et al. Design Specifications for Biomedical Virtual Twins in Engineered Adoptive Cellular Immunotherapies. npj Digital Medicine 2025.

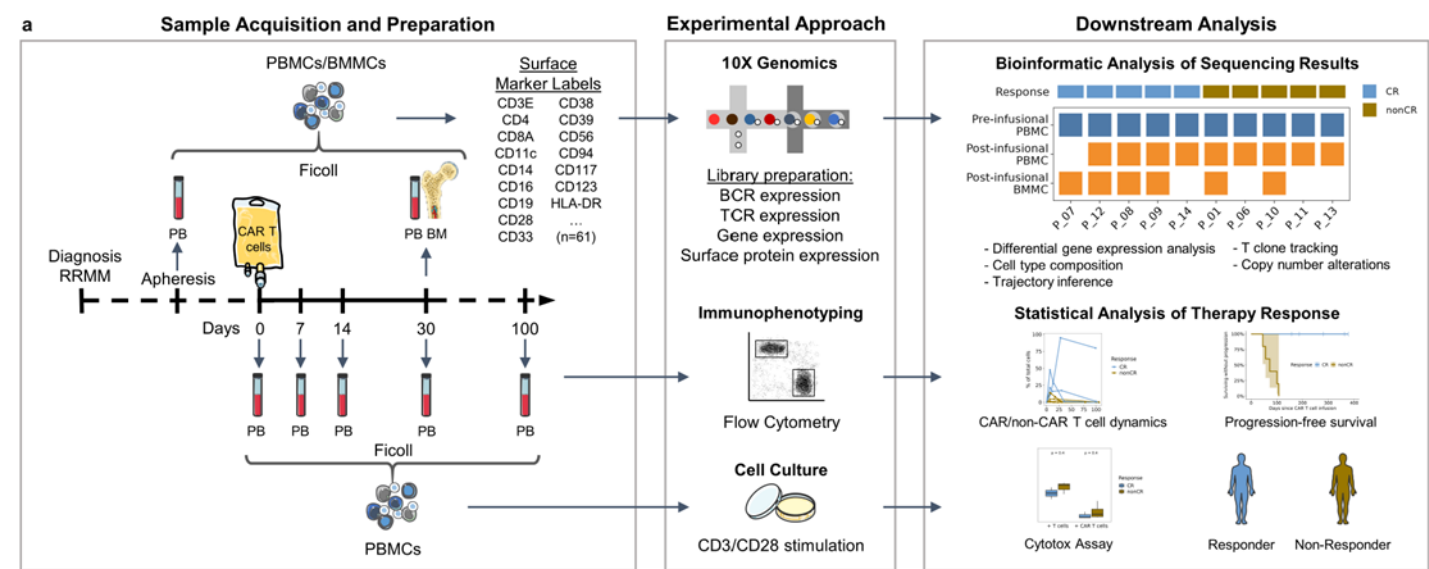
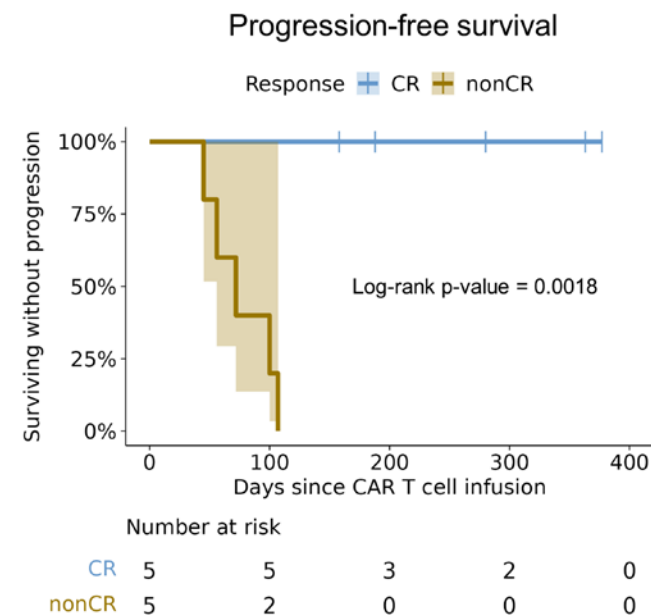
In vitro models include NAMs (new approach methodologies)

Results – RWE



RWE = Real-world evidence

In search for biomarkers using multi-omics: Multiple Myeloma, anti-BCMA CAR-T

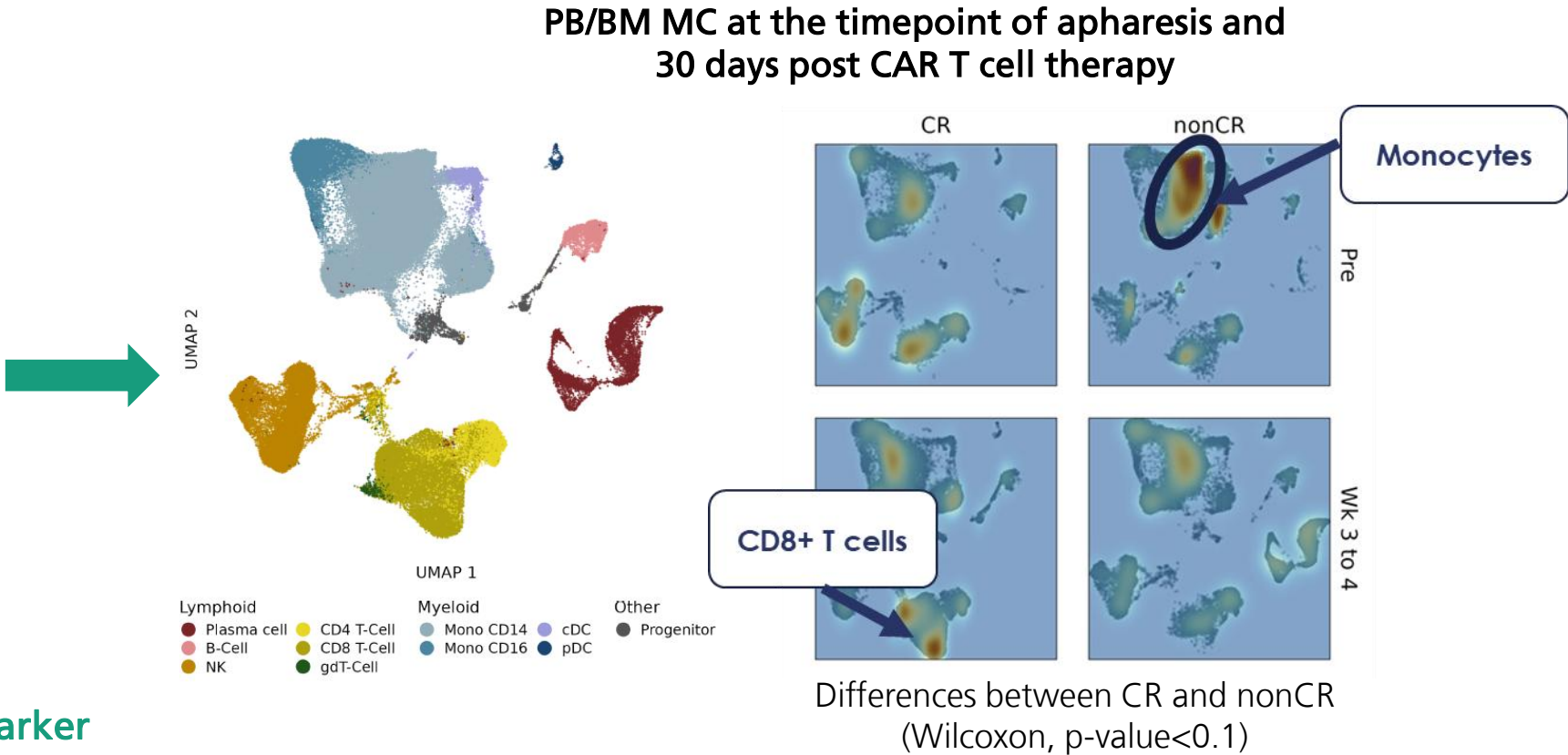
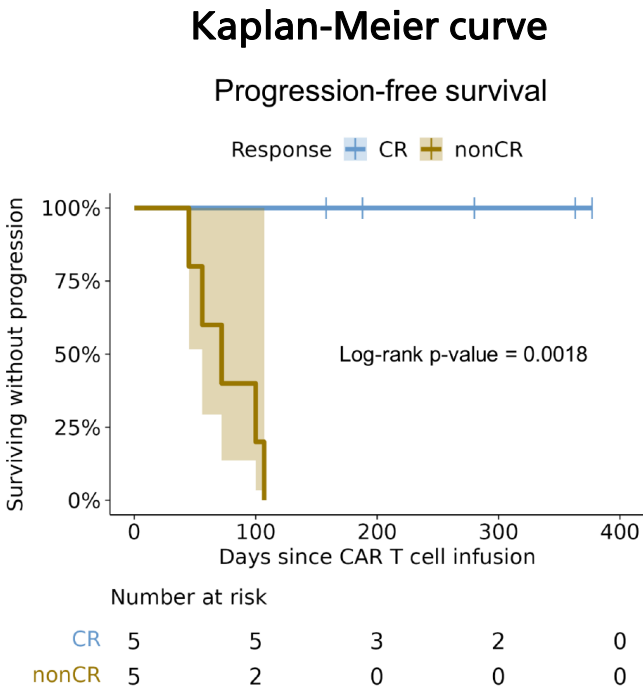


Missing predictive markers

Rade M, ... Koehl U, ... Reiche K*, Vucinic V* and Merz M*. Nature Cancer. 2024

Predictive markers for treatment response

N = 10 anti-BCMA CAR T patients with RRMM (n=2 cilta-cel, n=8 ide-cel)



To date, still missing predictive marker

➡ Differences between CR and nonCR could already be identified at the time of leukapheresis

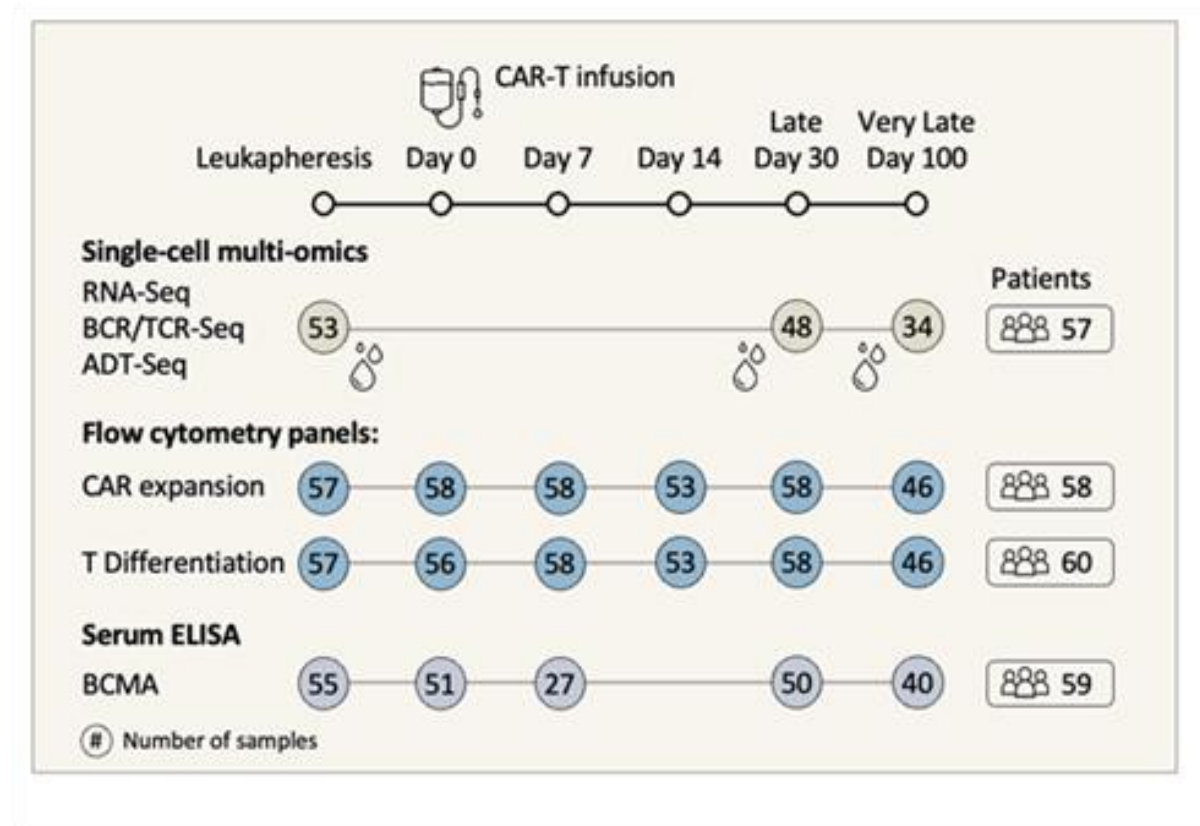
CR = Complete response
nonCR = non Complete response

PB/KBM MC = Mononuclear cells from peripheral blood or bone marrow

Extension to larger cohort



- Longitudinal single cell landscape of patients treated with anti-BCMA CAR T cells :
Single-cell multiomics of 123 PBMC samples across 57 MM patients and 3 time points

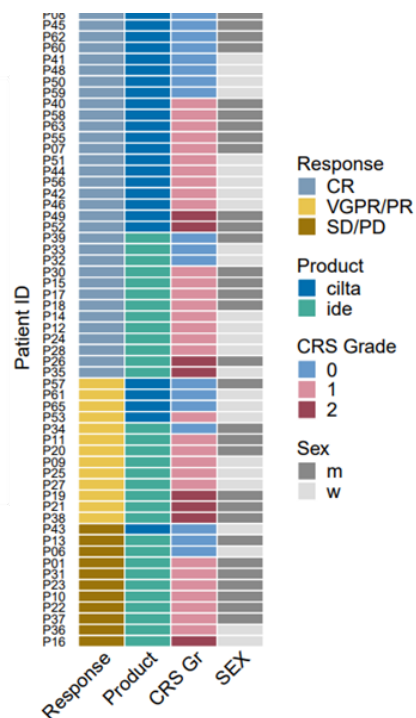
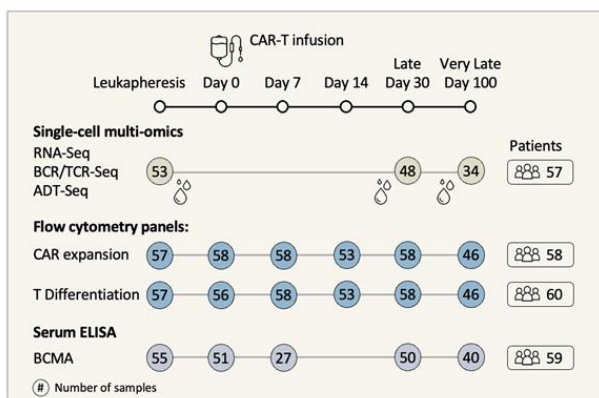


Extension to larger cohort

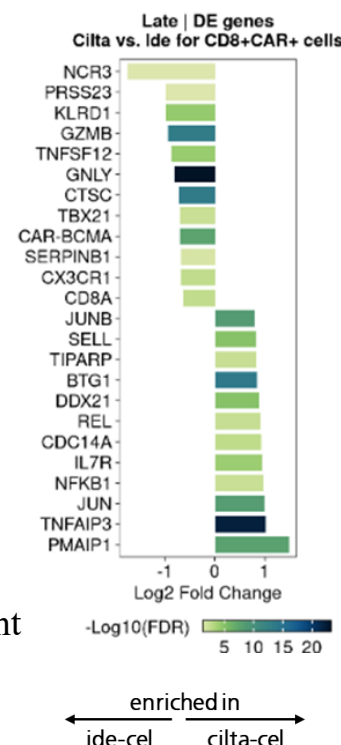
Real
world

Longitudinal single cell landscape of patients treated with anti-BCMA CAR T cells :
Single-cell multiomics of 123 PBMC samples **across 57 MM patients and 3 time points**

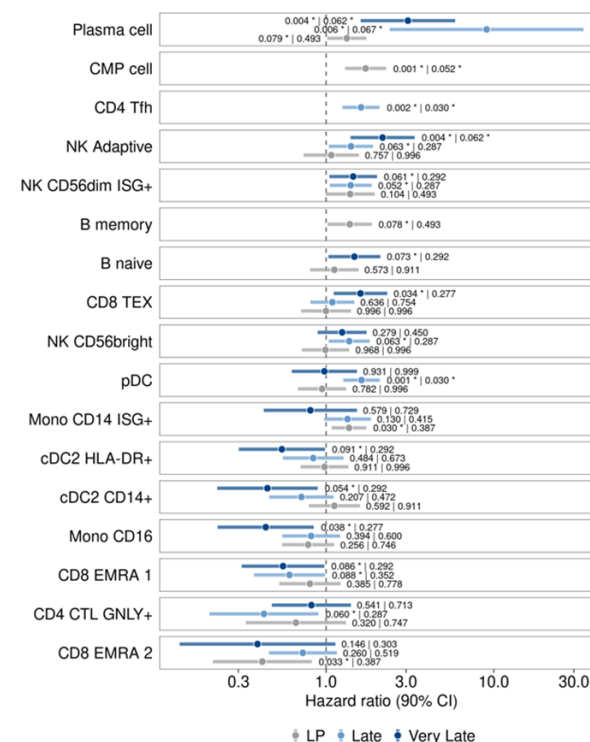
Experimental design and patient cohort



CAR T cell phenotype



Cell subtype proportion vs. treatment response



Rade et al. A longitudinal single-cell atlas to predict outcome and toxicity after BCMA-directed CAR T cell therapy in multiple myeloma. In review.

Please do not post! See preprint: [A longitudinal single-cell atlas to predict outcome and toxicity after BCMA-directed CAR T cell therapy in multiple myeloma](#) | Research Square

CERTAINTY – Predicting Progression Events in Multiple Myeloma from Routine Blood Work



NN Model

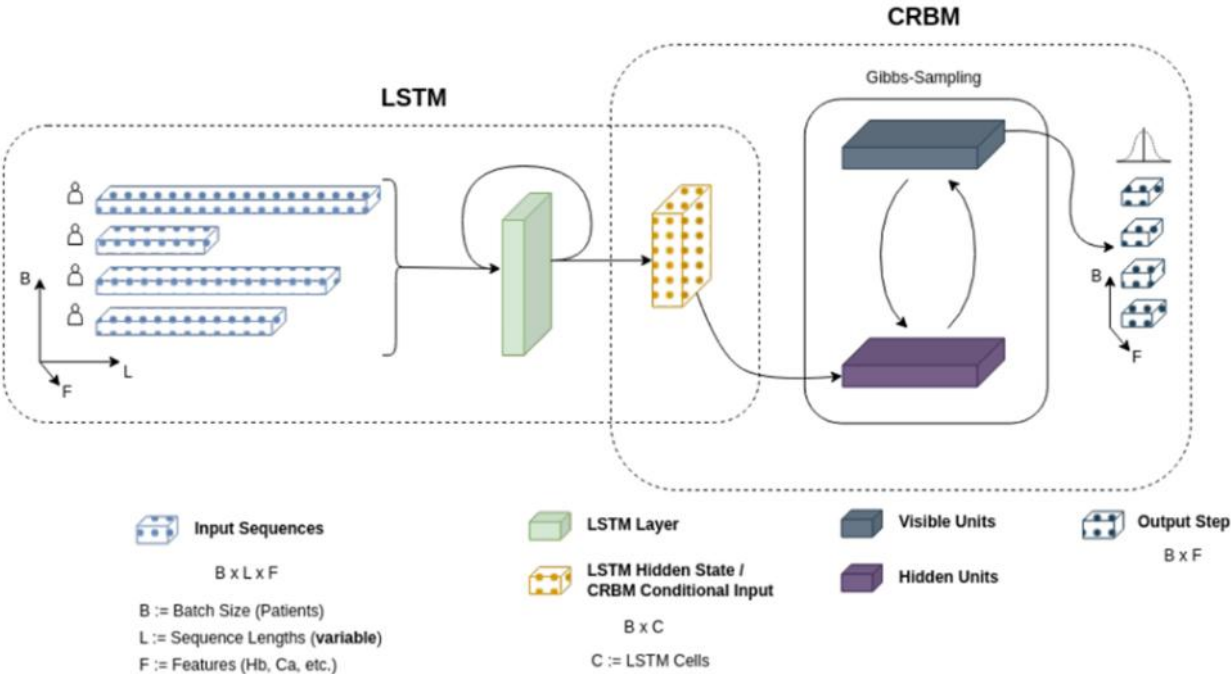


Figure 7: Architecture diagram of the forecasting model. The LSTM summarizes all observations of a patient's sequential blood work within its internal state. The CRBM then generates probabilities of possible outcomes conditioned on the patient history encoded by the LSTM through a Gibbs-sampling algorithm.

Individual predictions for patients

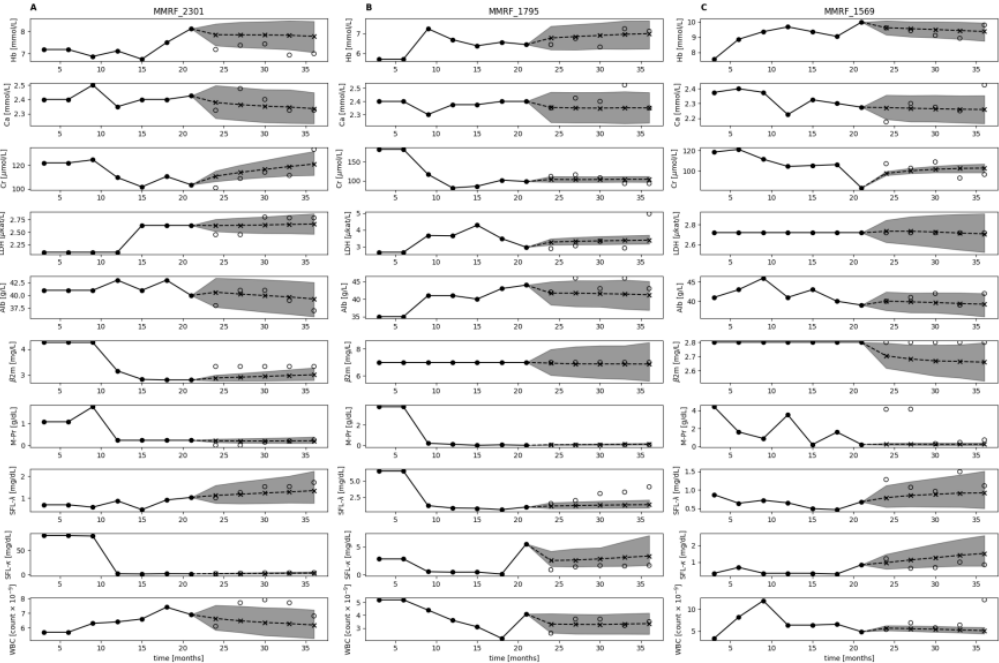
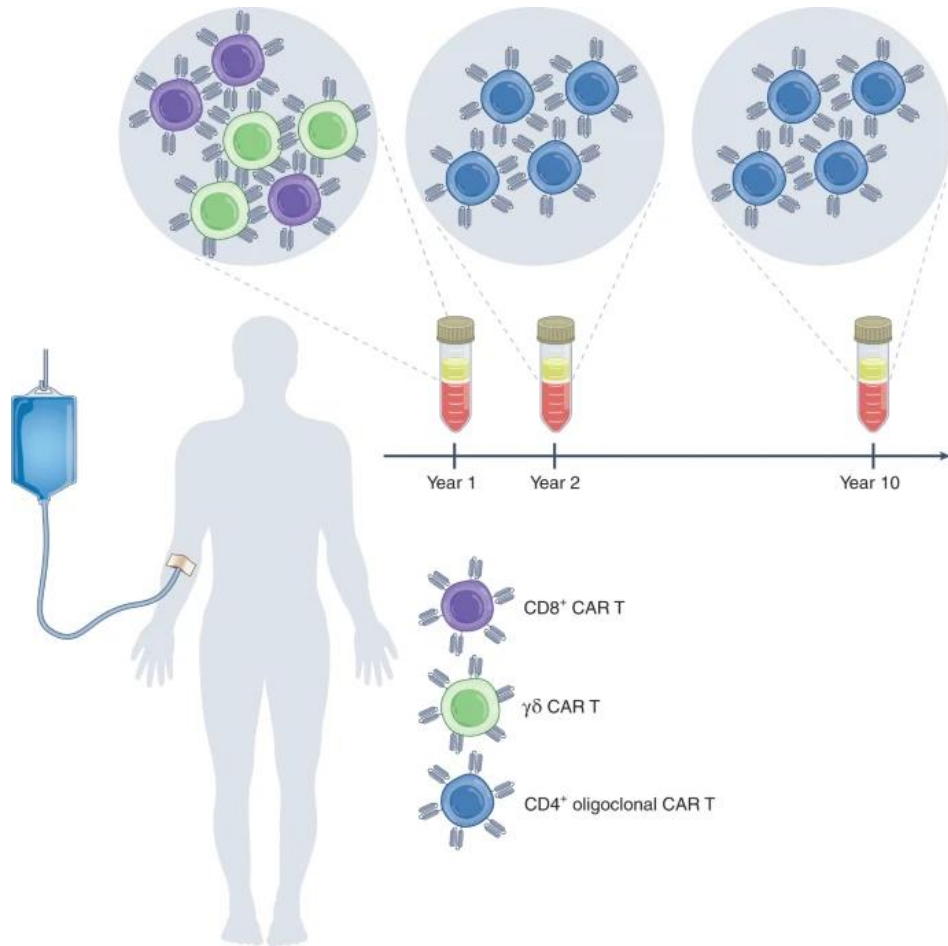


Figure 2: Forecasted patient trajectories of three individual patients undergoing Bortezomib- (A), Carfilzomib- (B) and IMiDs-based (C) treatments. The forecasting model was provided with the initial seven follow-ups, corresponding to 21 months of clinical data, to forecast the subsequent five follow-ups, covering an additional 15 months. Dashed lines and crosses show forecasts, circles show actual observations. Grey sleeves indicate the 95% confidence interval of the distribution of forecasted trajectories.

CAR T Cell Therapies

Long term persistence of CD4+ CAR T cell clones



Anti-CD19, n=2, Melenhorst et al.

Decade long persistence of CD4+ CAR T cell clones with cytotoxic, proliferating and metabolically active phenotypes

→ Long term response **AND** side effects?



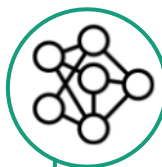
Annual report 2024 (EMA): Important new safety advice issued in 2024 included: CAR T-cell medicines, recommendation on the need for life-long monitoring of secondary malignancies in patients treated with these medicines.

https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/annual-report/2024-annual-report-european-medicines-agency_en.pdf

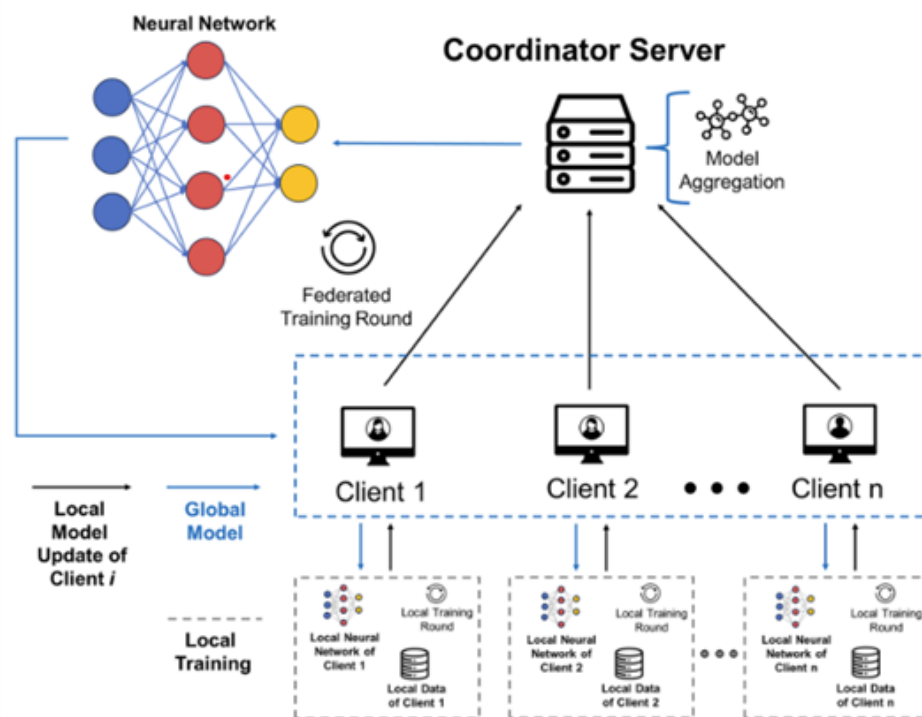
Basis for Sample and Data Access

Optimized contracting process with Fraunhofer

Real
world



Federated Learning Network for RWD in CAR T cell treatment

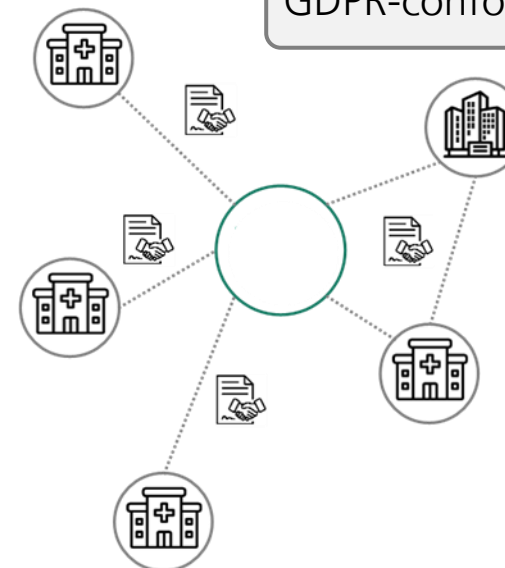


Flexible and goal-oriented legal contract management



Data management plans

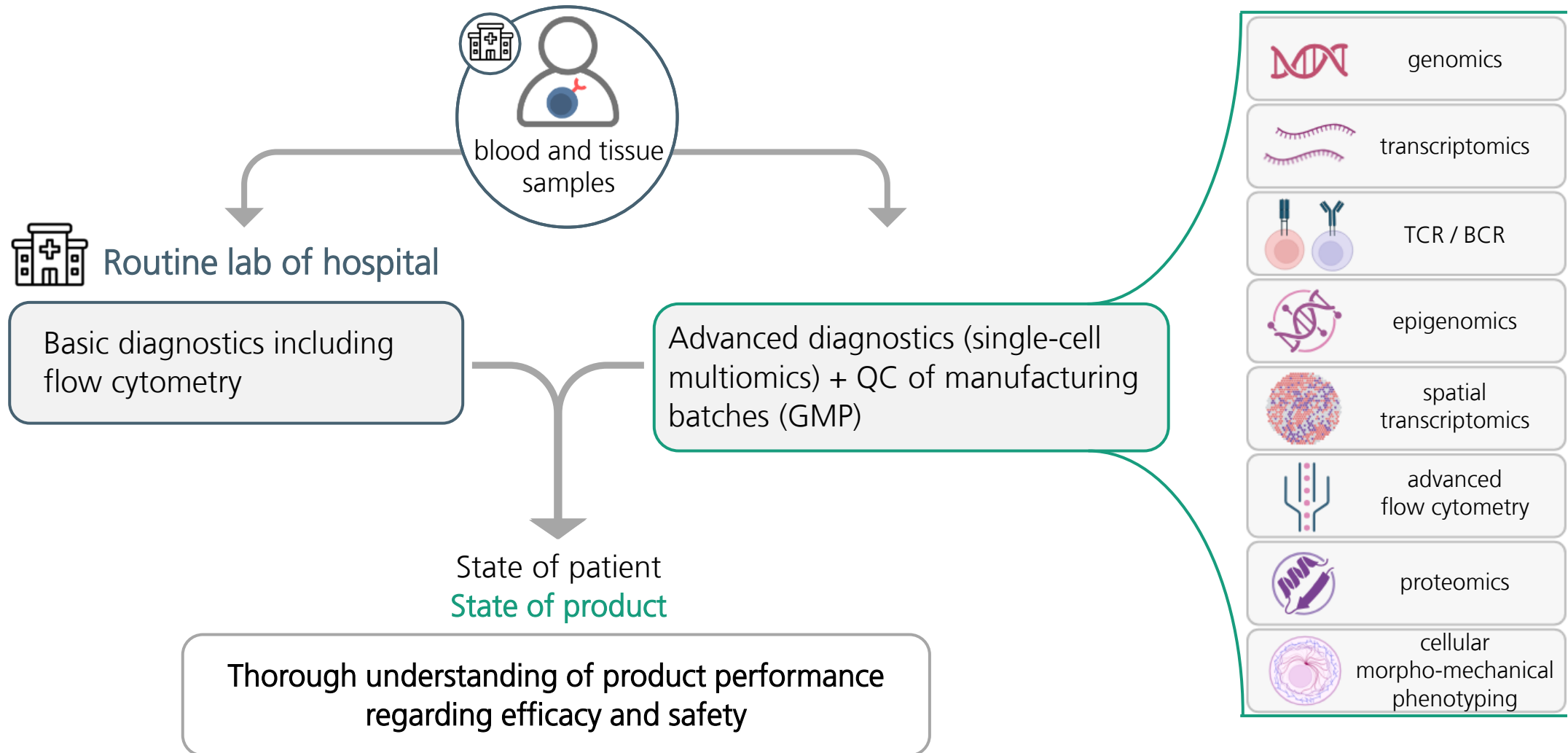
GDPR-conform processing



Workflow for Enhanced Diagnostics in CAR T cell treatment

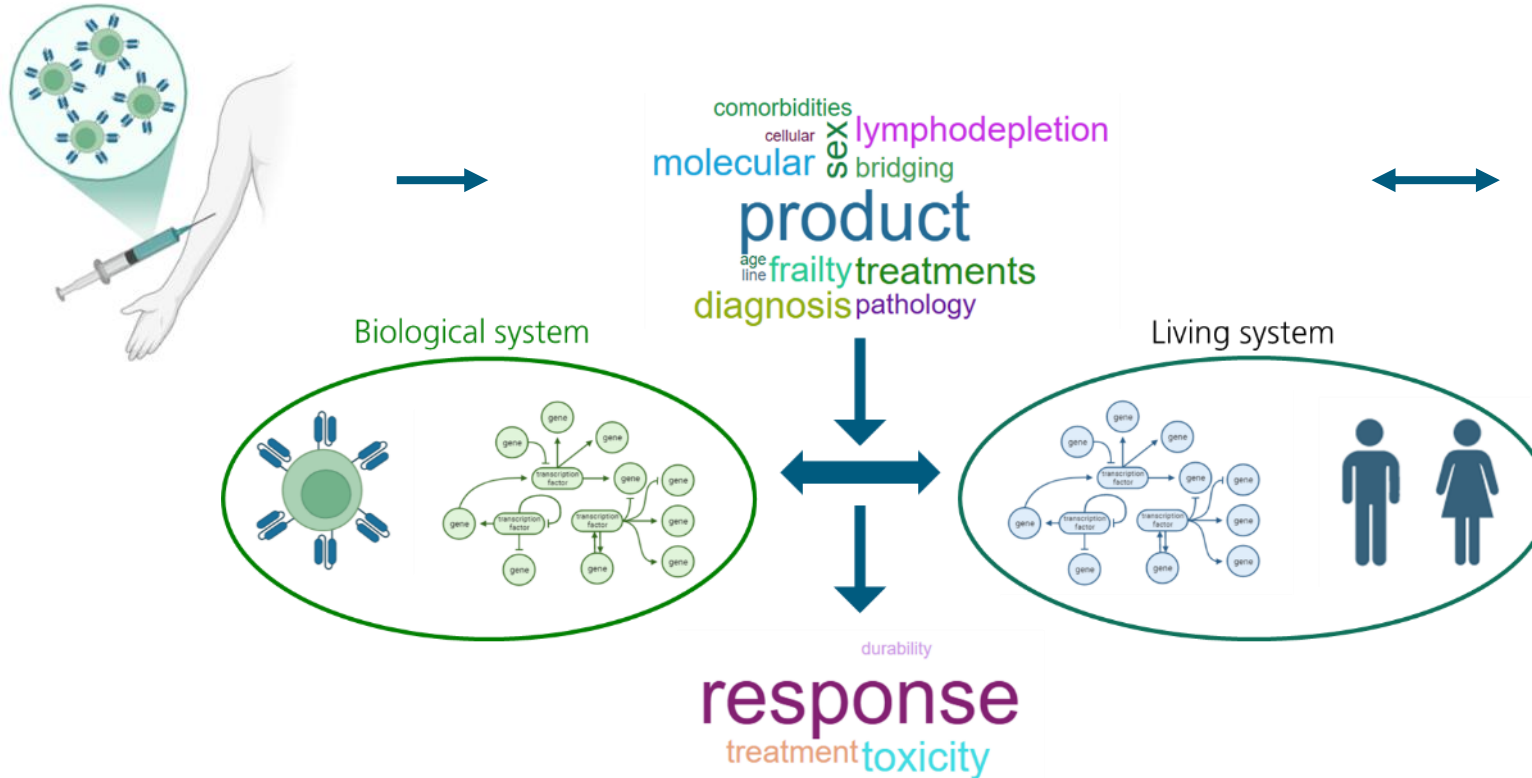
Characterization of patients and products in clinical routine or in clinical studies

Real
world

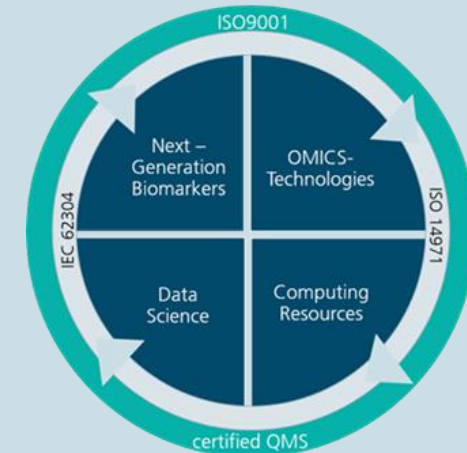
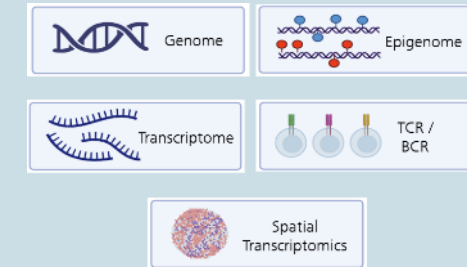


TCR: T cell receptor | BCR: B cell receptor

Workflow for Enhanced Diagnostics in CAR T cell treatment

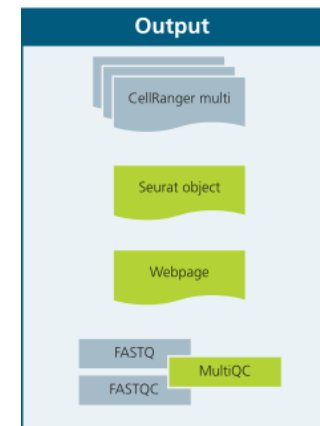
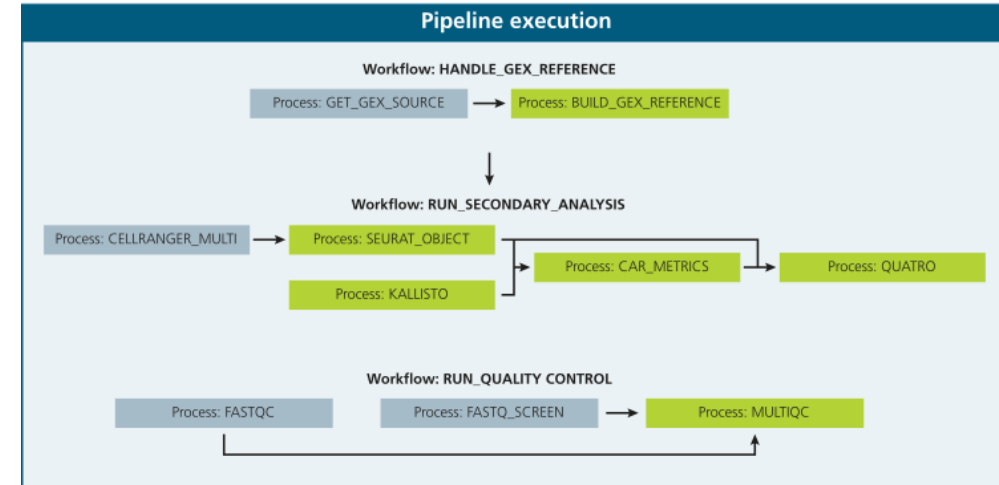
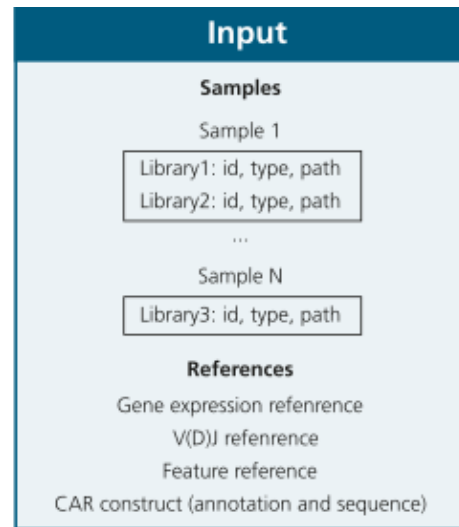
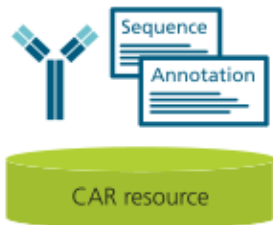
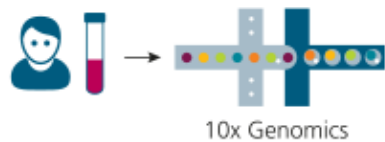


Trusted Single-cell Multiomics

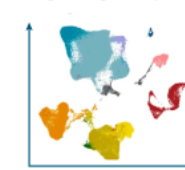


Biomedical AI and Software Engineering

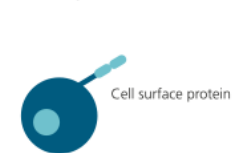
CERTOMICS is a Nextflow-based pipeline offering enhanced CERTainty in immunophenotyping and data interpretation, tailored for single-cell multiOMICS profiling of adoptive cellular immunotherapies



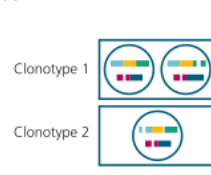
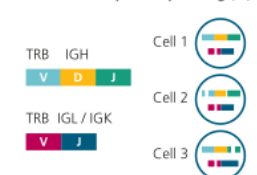
Single-cell gene expression (GEX)



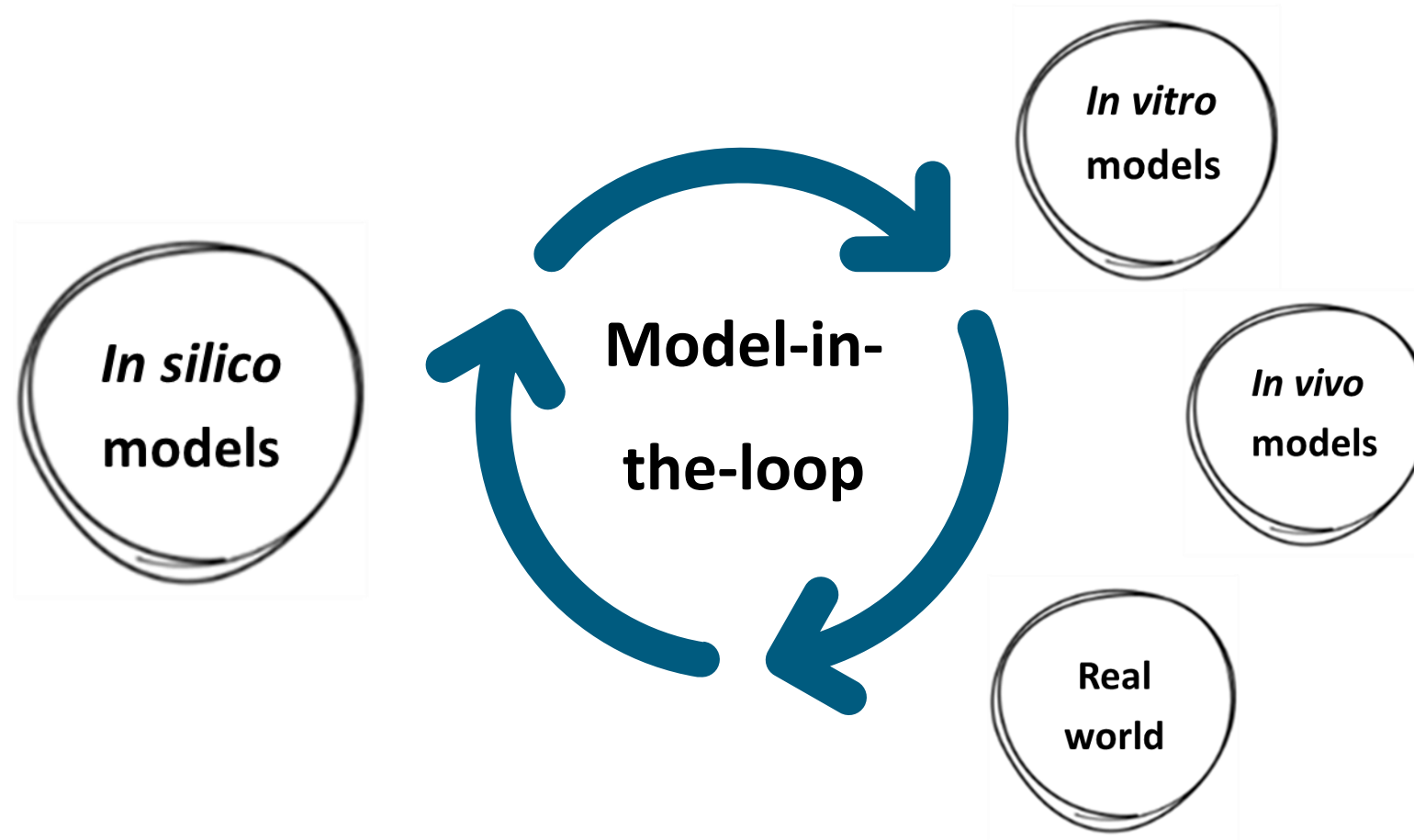
Surface protein detection (ADT)



T / B cell receptor sequencing (V(D)J)



Approach to implementation



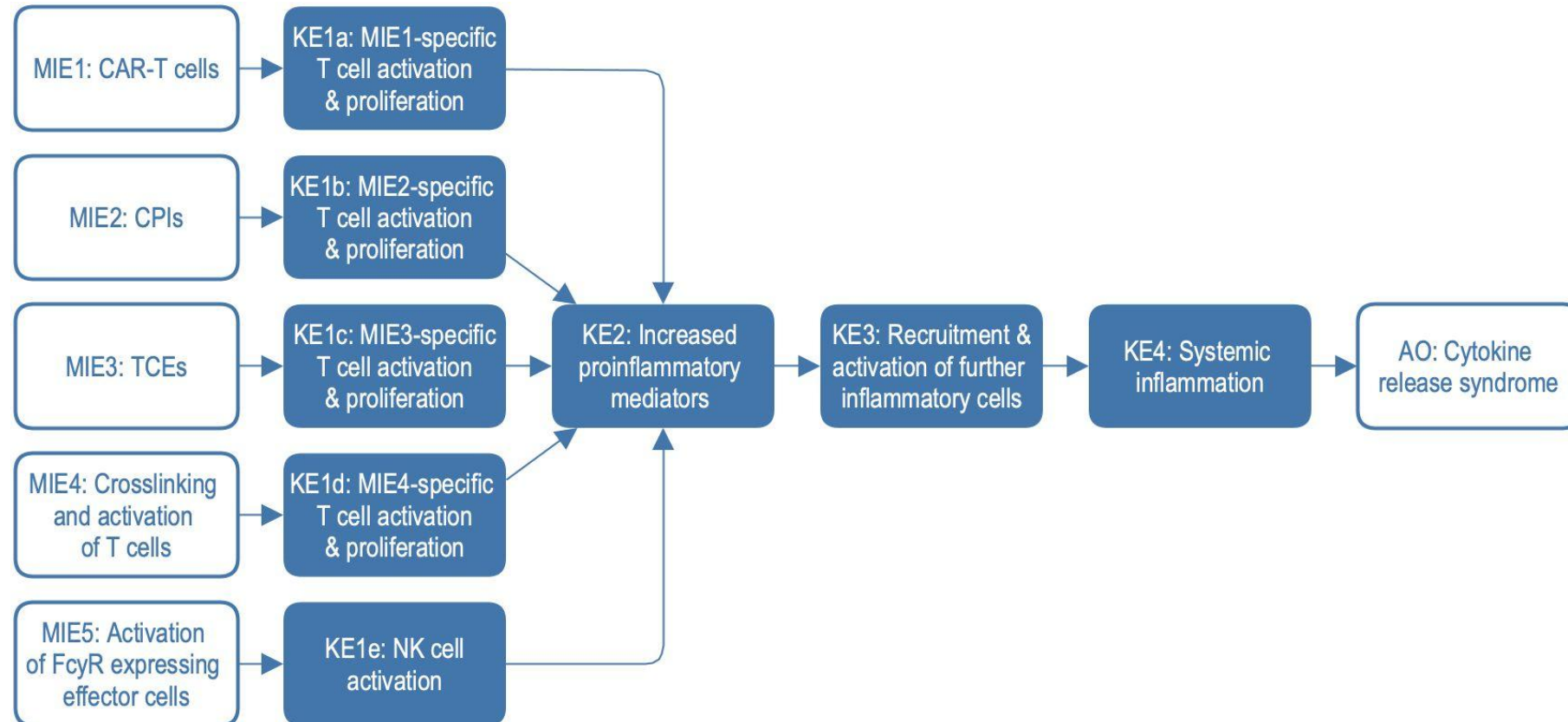
In vitro models include NAMs (new approach methodologies)

Results – Models for predicting toxicity of CAR T cells (AOPs)



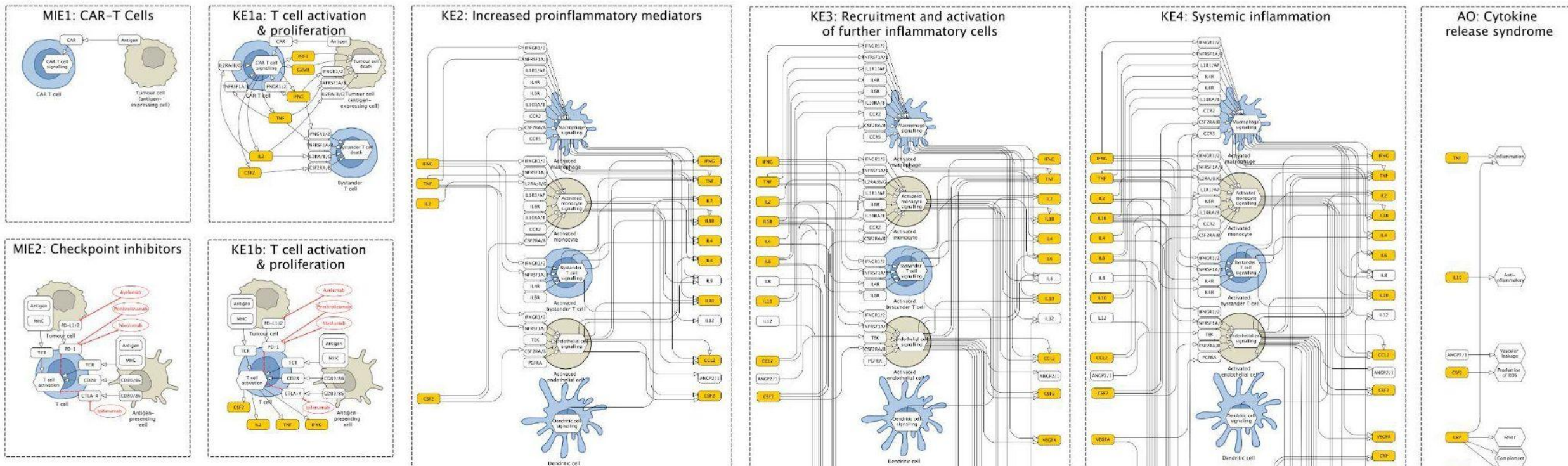
RWE = Real-world evidence | AOP = Adverse Outcome Pathways

Results – Models for predicting toxicity of CAR T cells (AOPs)



RWE = Real-world evidence | AOP = Adverse Outcome Pathways

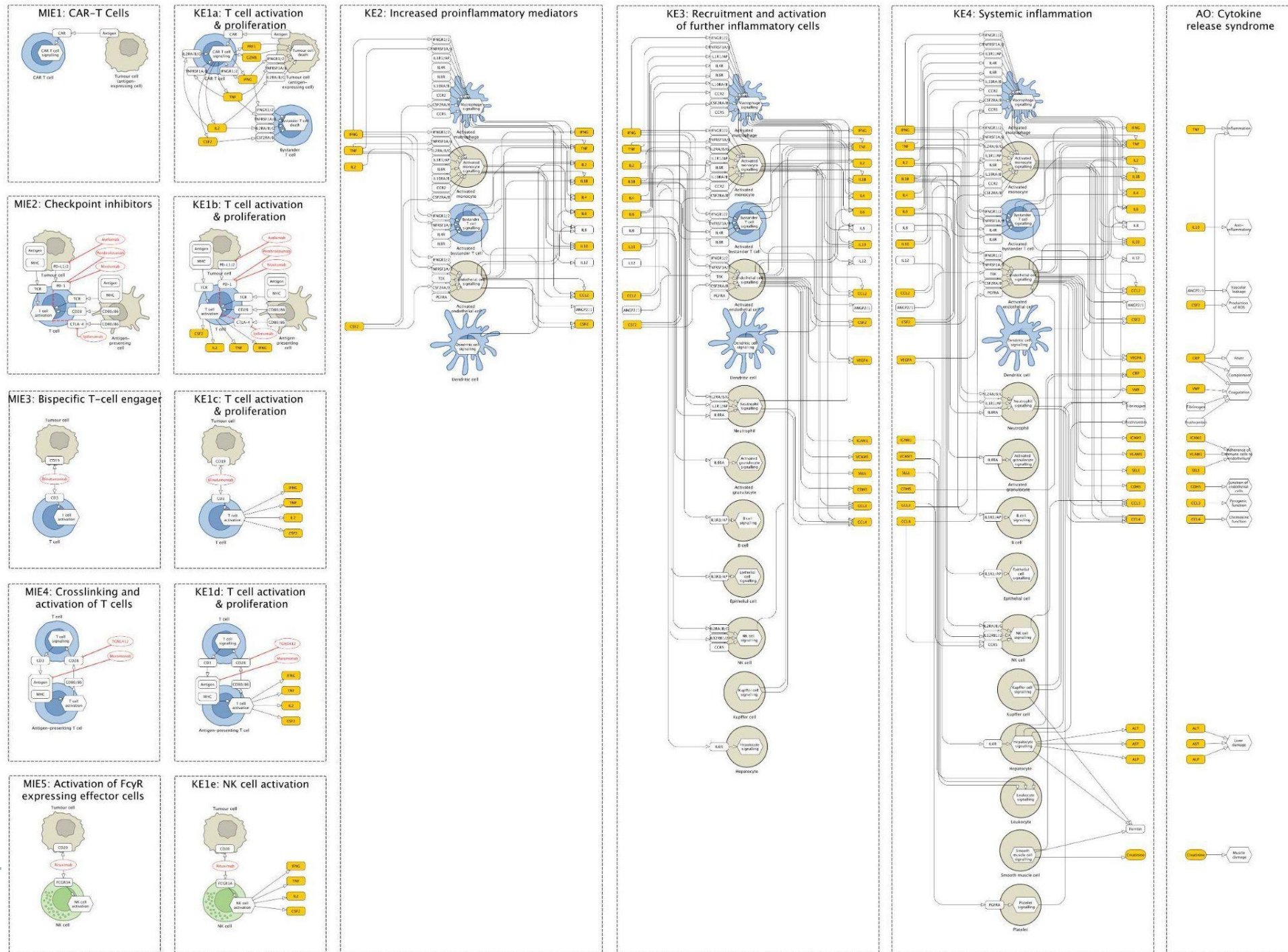
An explorable model of an adverse outcome pathway of cytokine release syndrome



Alb, Reiche et al. Novel strategies to assess cytokine release mediated by chimeric antigen receptor T cells based on the adverse outcome pathway concept. Journal of Immunotoxicology. 2024.

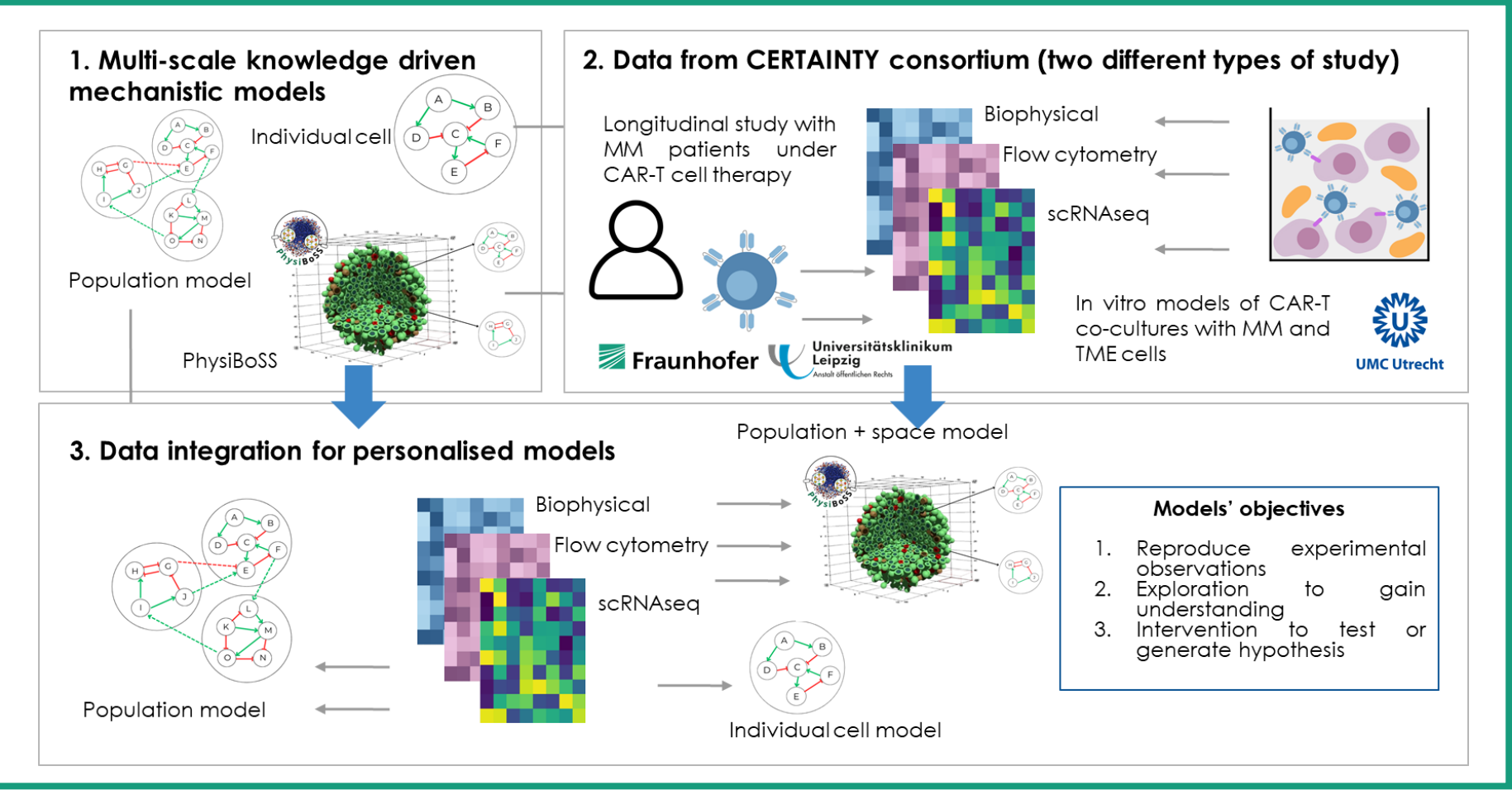
Mazein et al Using interactive platforms to encode, manage and explore immune-related adverse outcome pathways. Journal of Immunotoxicology 2024

Mazein et al. An explorable model of an adverse outcome pathway of cytokine release syndrome related to the administration of immunomodulatory biotherapeutics and cellular therapies. Front Immunol. 2025.

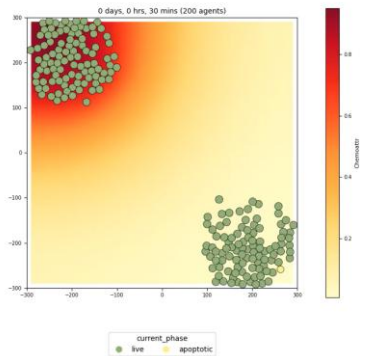


Mazein et al. *An explorable model of an adverse outcome pathway of cytokine release syndrome related to the administration of immunomodulatory biotherapeutics and cellular therapies.*

Front Immunol. 2025.



Prof. Laurence Calzone & Sophia Orozco Ruiz (Institut Curie)



Summary

Federated virtual twin: Completely integrated and interoperable clinical decision support system available for patients who meet the criteria for cellular immunotherapies.



Agent-based cell models: Enhanced models that combine multiple levels of omics data and allow for the simulation of cell population dynamics of (modified) immune cells.

Multi-modal single-cell and spatial transcriptomics: Improved companion diagnostic tools for CAR T cell therapies.



Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of the virtual twin: Perspectives from stakeholders as well as social and socio-economic factors taken into consideration in the implementation process.



<https://youtu.be/jlEGdrS3Rzs>



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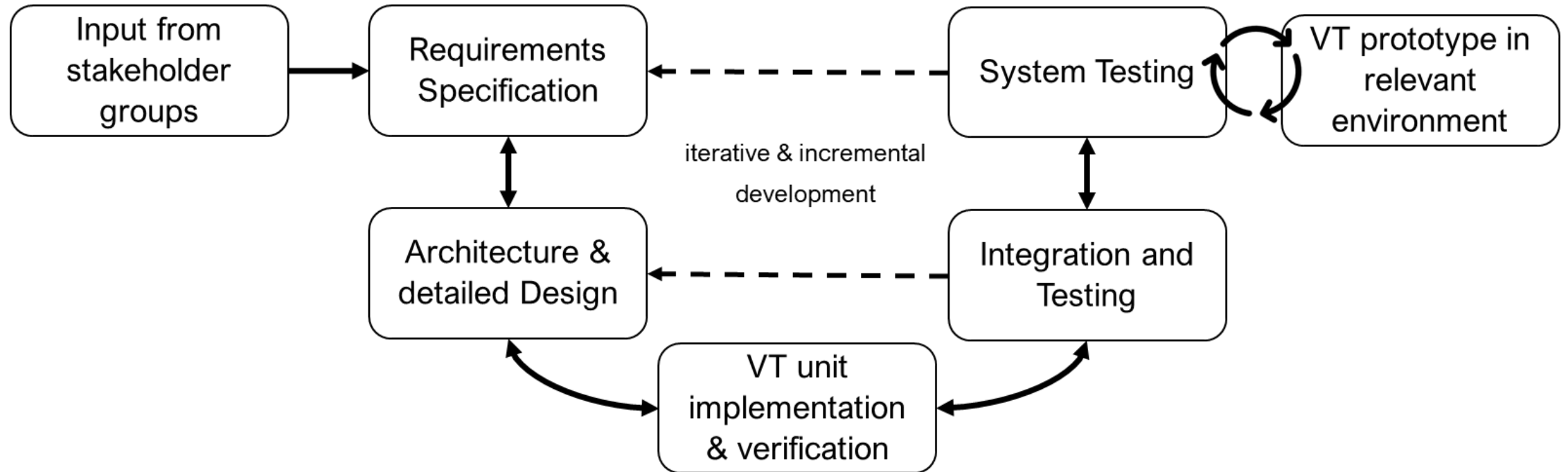
Prof. Laurence Calzone
Sophia Orozco-Ruiz

RDA IDT Working group

Prof. Anna Niarakis
Athina Papadopoulou

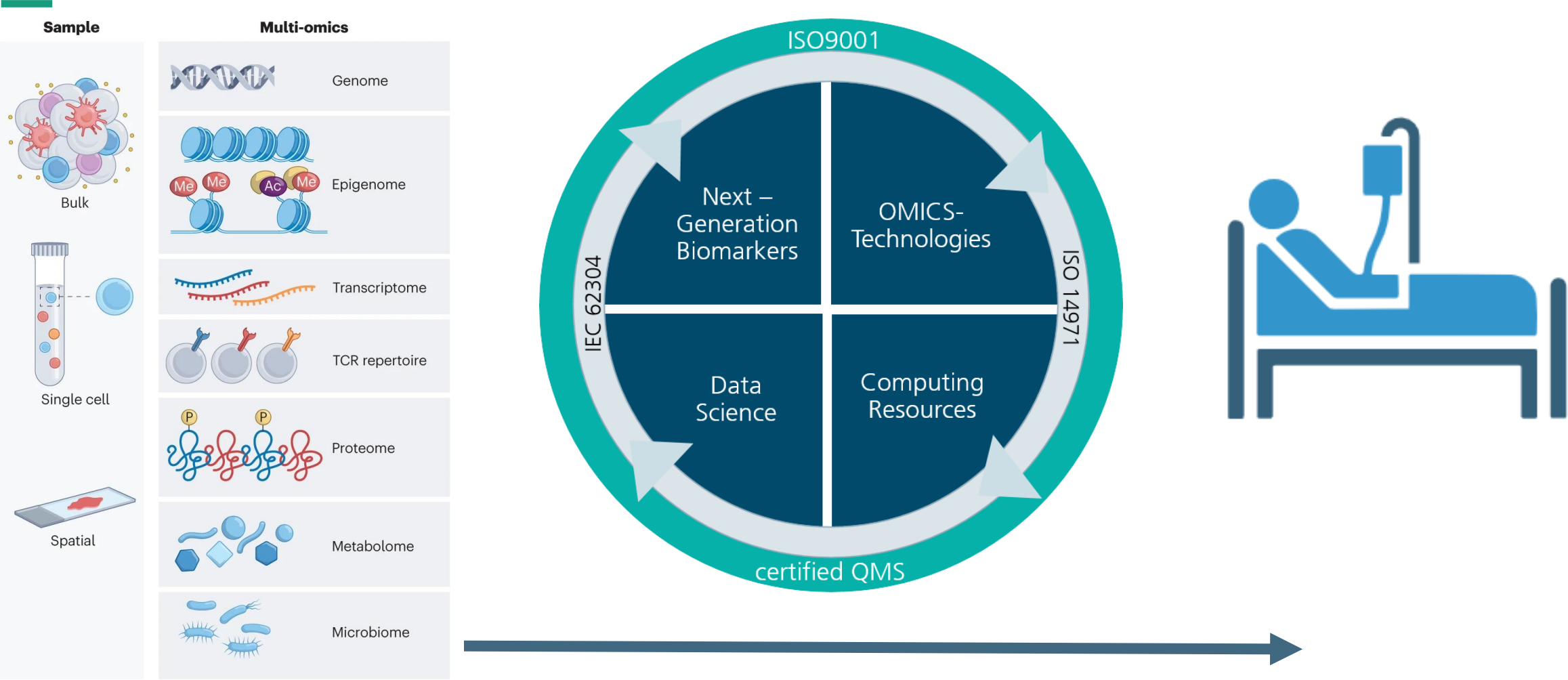
... and many others





.... ensuring co-creation, rapid prototyping to receive fast feedback from feasibility studies.

Our Approach towards Enhanced Diagnostics for Cell and Gene Therapies

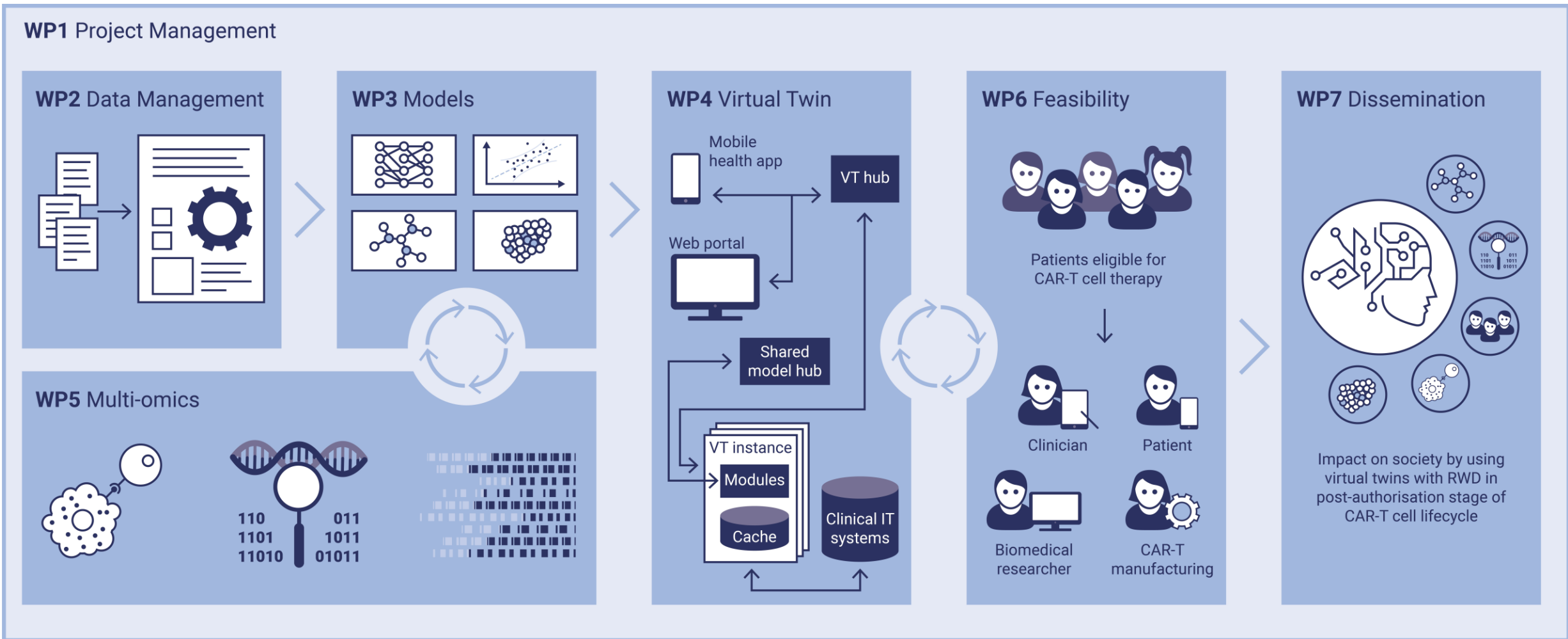


Yang et al. Advancing CAR T cell therapy through the use of multidimensional omics data. Nat. Rev. Clin. Oncol, 2023.

Public

MolDx = Molecular Diagnostics
IVD = In-vitro diagnostics

How we will make the Virtual Twin



Collaborations we build on

