Population Health Research Institute
HEALTH THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

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WHAT CARDIOLOGY LEARNED LONG AGO: WHY COMPLEX DISEASES NEED MORE THAN ONE THERAPY

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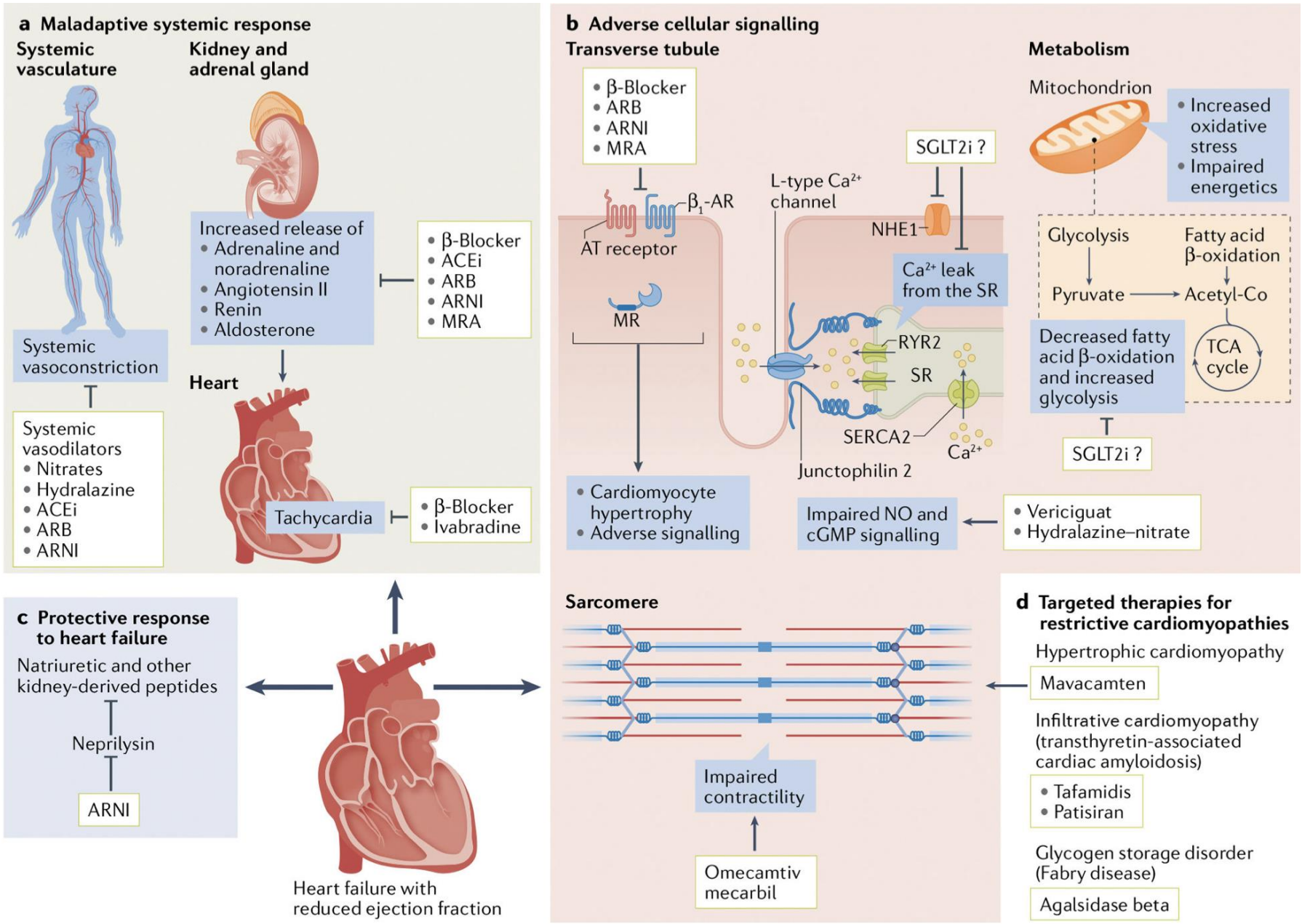
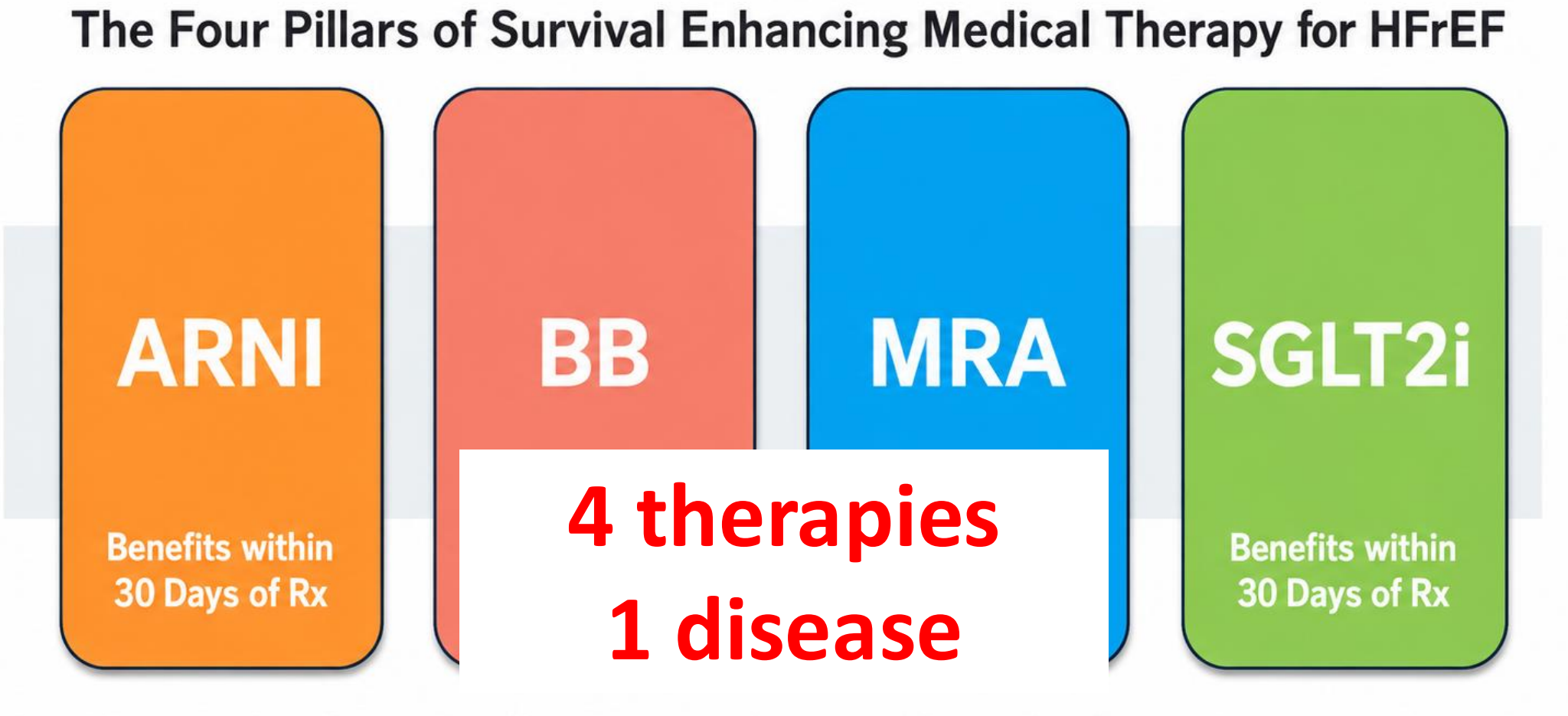
Nothing to disclose

Lesson 1: Complex diseases rarely have a single therapeutic target



Weldy et al. Nat Med 2021

Lesson 1: Complex diseases rarely have a single therapeutic target



Courtesy of GC Fonarow

Lesson 2: Combination therapy is not “failure”

Management of hypertension:

Lifestyle → ACEi/ARB → CCB → diuretic → additional Rx

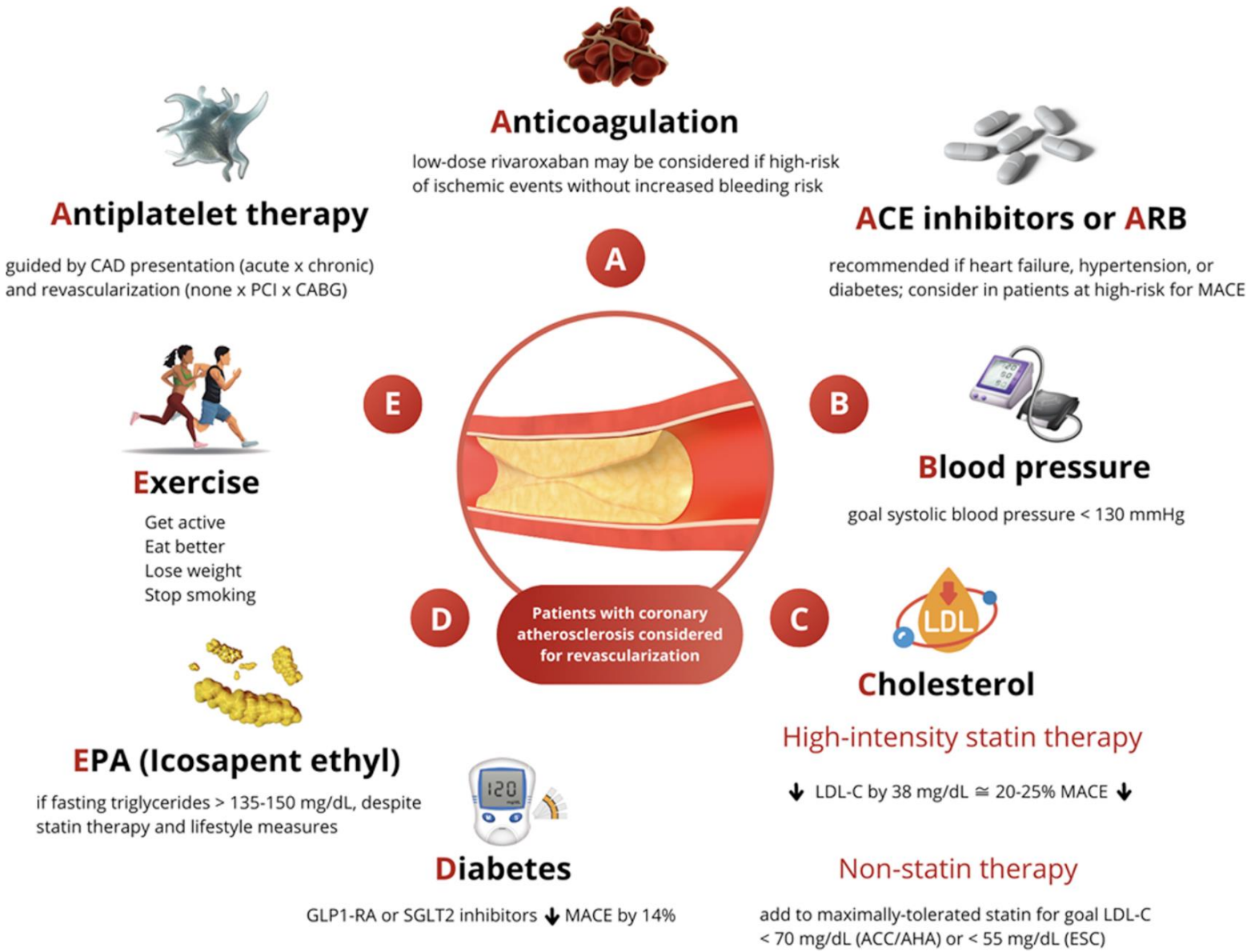
In obesity management:

Lifestyle vs [illegible] surgery

Why not:

Lifestyle ± pharmacotherapy ± surgery

Lesson 3: Procedures and medications are partners, not competitors



Why should metabolic surgery be different?

Why not:
MBS + pharmacotherapy when needed + nutritional care + physical activity + long-term follow-up

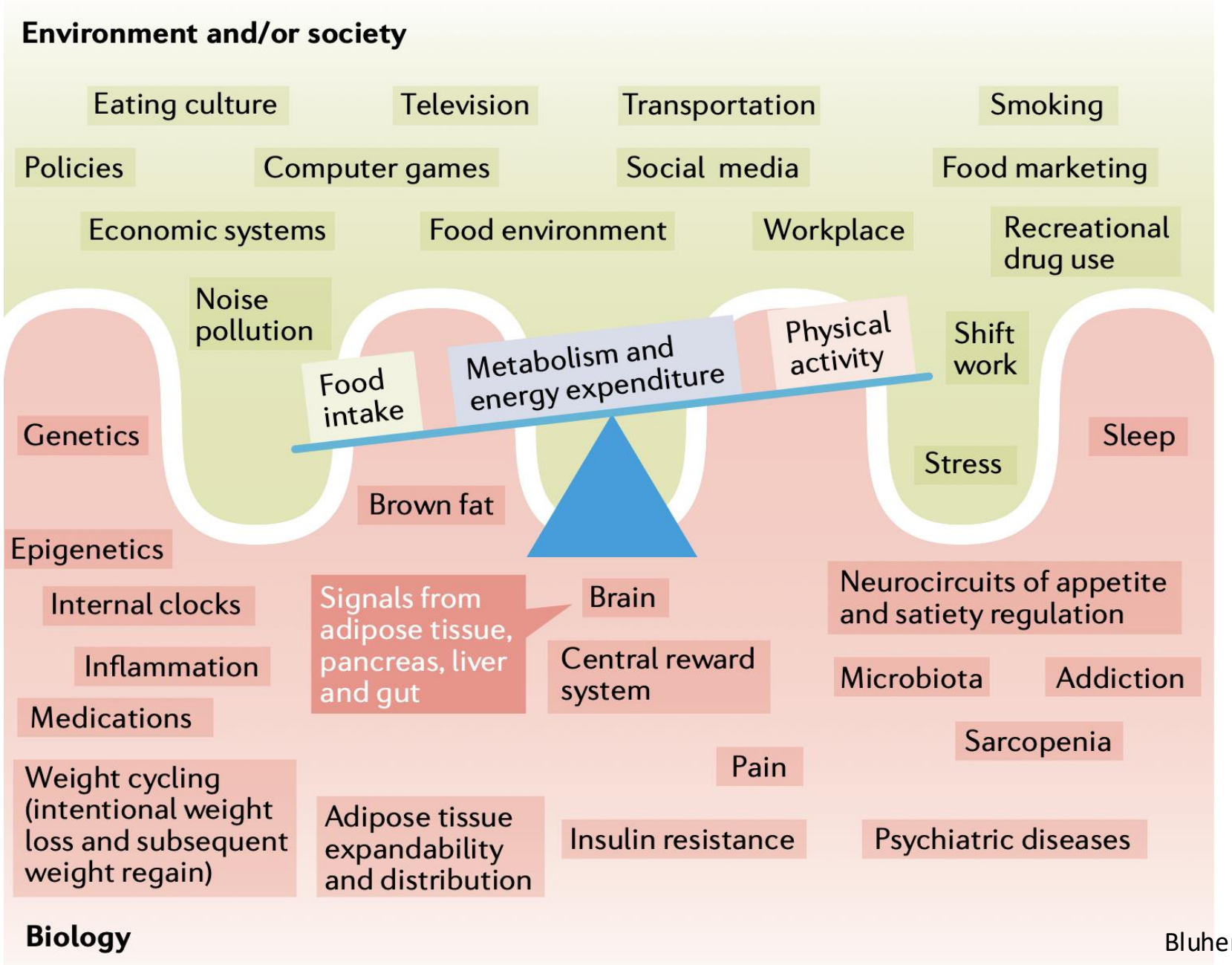
Cardoso et al. JACC Advances 2022

Lesson 4: Treatment is dynamic over a lifetime

Approach to cardiovascular disease:
Diagnosis → initial therapy → response → progression → intensification → event → secondary prevention

Why can’t we do the same for obesity:
Lifestyle → AOM → MBS → AOM after MBS → revisional treatment → maintenance

Obesity is no less biologically complex



Bluher et al. Nat Rev Endocrinol 2021

Are we asking the wrong question?

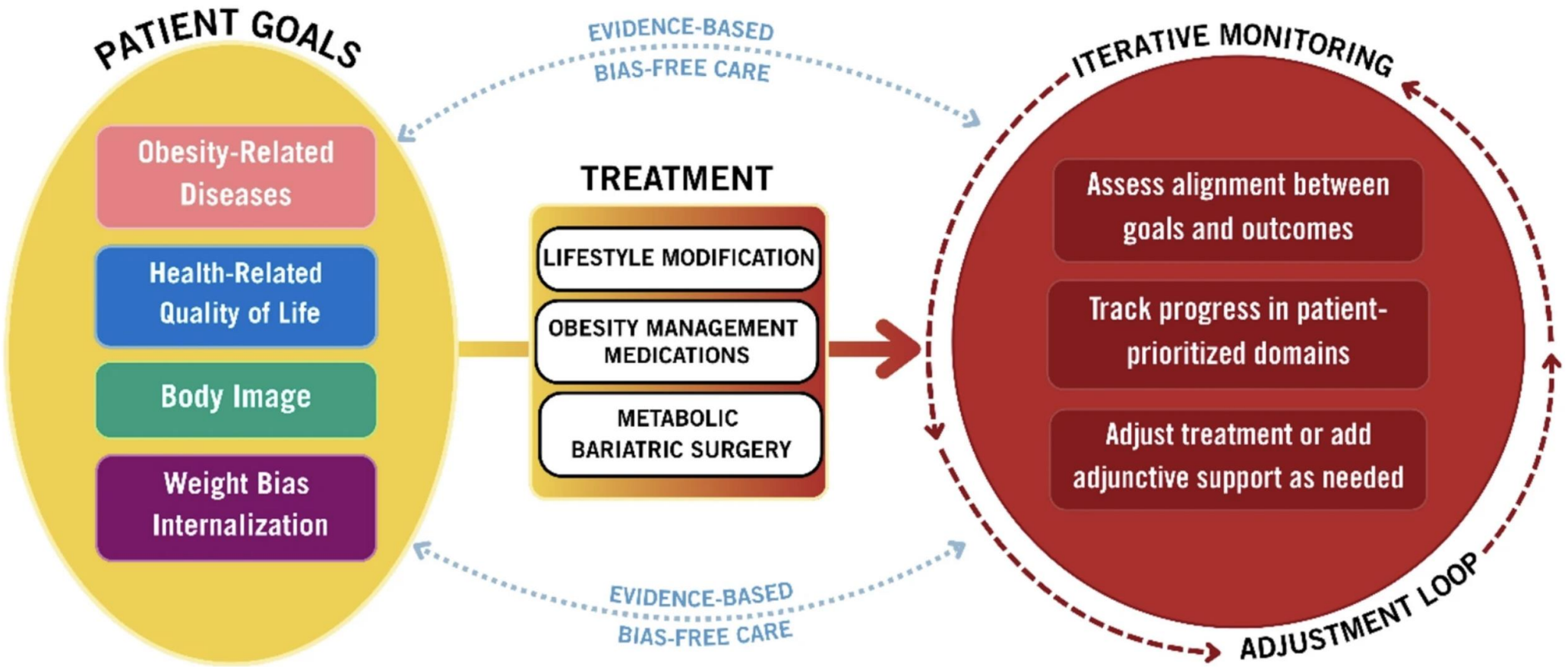
Now:

Metabolic Bariatric [redacted] medications?

Why not ask:

Which treatment strategy gives this patient the best long-term health?

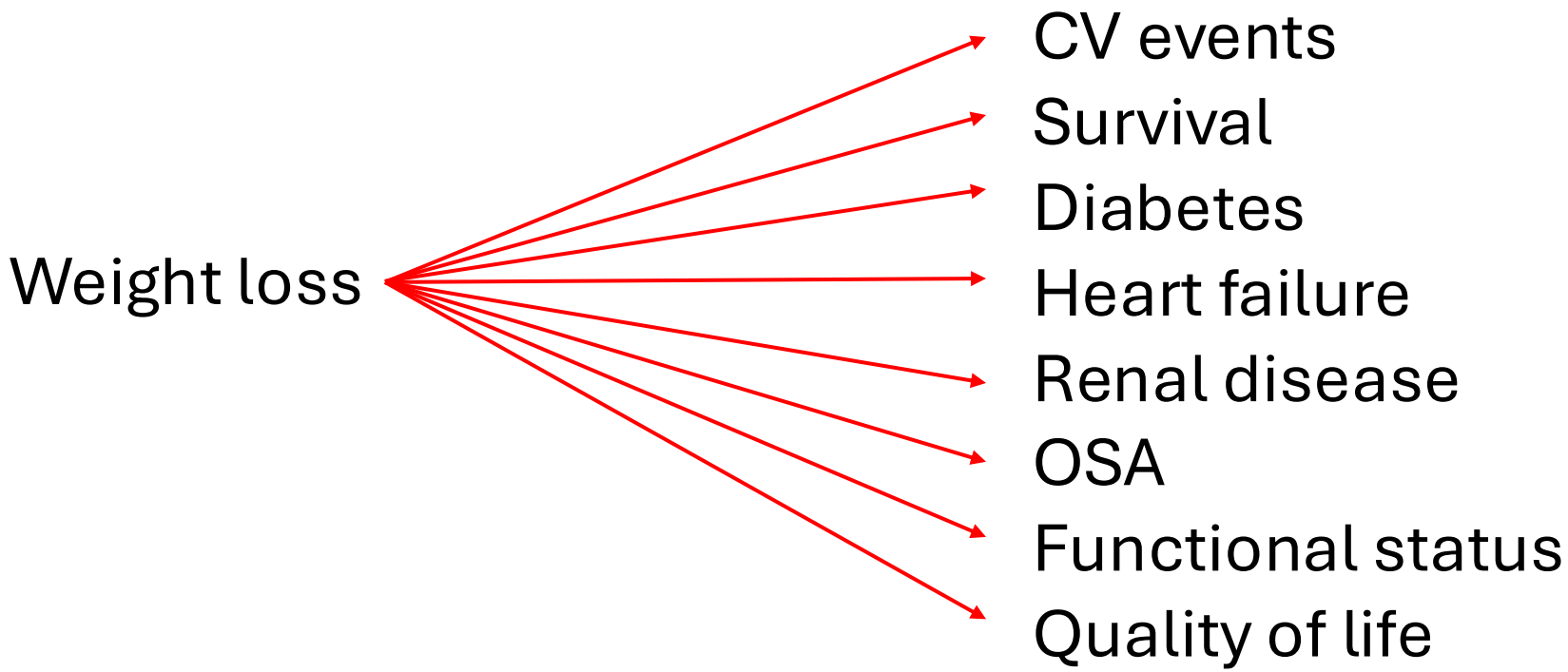
Lesson 5: Build the strategy around the patient



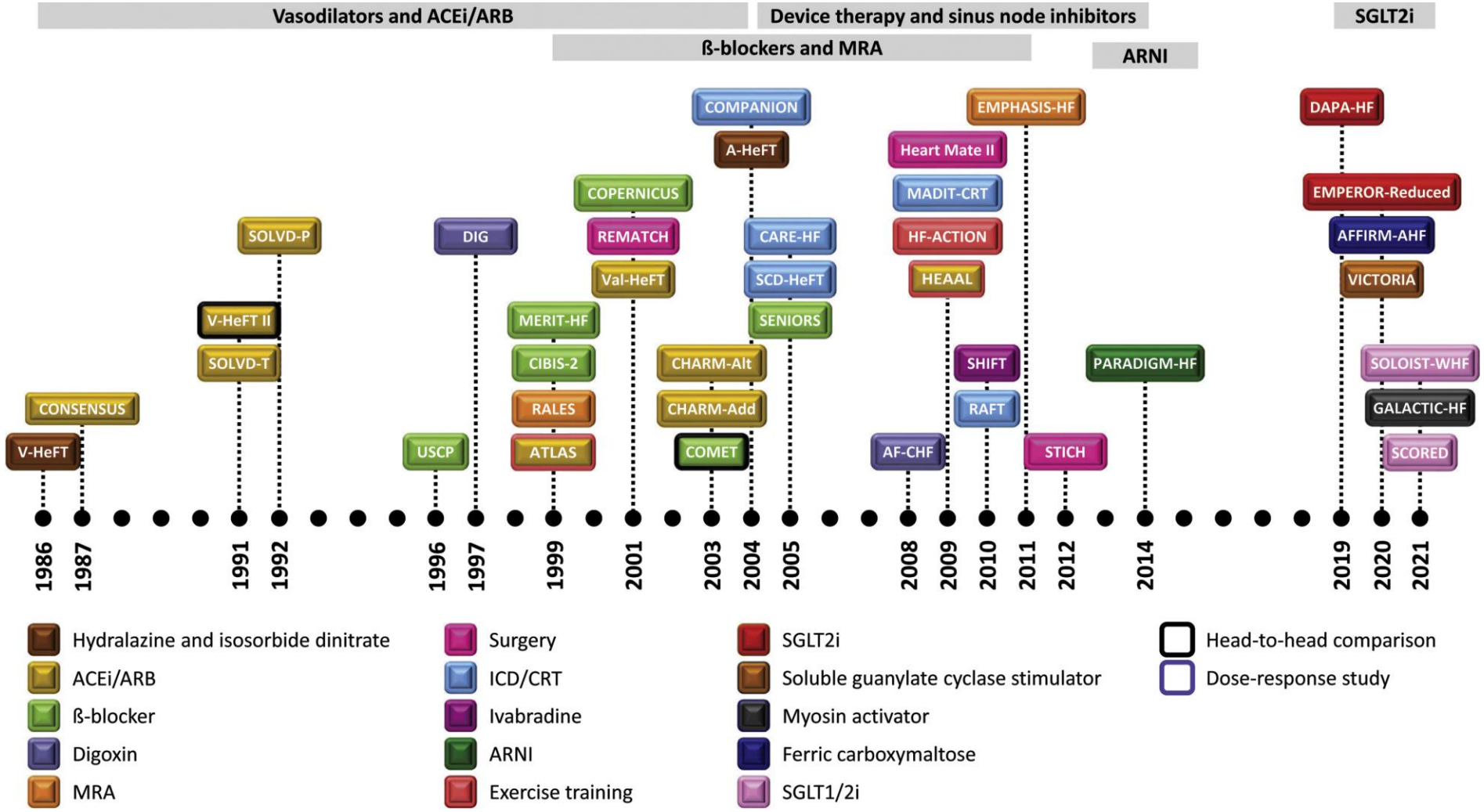
Schumacher et al. Curr Obes Rep 2026

The goal is health

Treatment delivery is not the goal. Health is the goal.



Test strategies, not individual treatments



Sharma A, et al. JACC Basic Transl Sci. 2022.

Which strategies?

- Obesity trials increasingly need to ask:
  - Surgery + medication?
  - Medication before surgery? Medication after surgery?
  - Who needs chronic combination therapy? who can de-escalate?
  - What do we do with partial response or recurrence?
  - which sequence maximizes long-term health?

Take home points

1. **Complex disease requires multiple biological targets**
2. **Adding therapy is not evidence of failure**
3. **Procedures and medications are complementary, not competitors**
4. **Treatments evolve across the patient's lifetime**
5. **Build the strategy around the patient**

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