decision should obviously take into account, case by case, the initial response to immunotherapy.

**Financial support**
The authors received no financial support to produce this manuscript.

**Conflict of interest**
The authors declare no conflicts of interest that pertain to this work.

Please refer to the accompanying ICMJE disclosure forms for further details.

**Authors’ contributions**
Guarantor of the article: Isabelle Ollivier-Hourmand. Isabelle Ollivier-Hourmand drafted the manuscript. Manon Allaire contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript. Jean Paul Cervoni contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript.

**Acknowledgements**
Governing Board members of the “Club Francophone pour l’Etude de l’Hypertension Portale”.

Delphine Weil, Violaine Ozenne, Pierre Emmanuel Rautou, Charlotte Bouzbib, Sabrina Sidali, Frédéric Oberti, Maeva Guillamaue, Paul Castellani, Paul Calame, Sandrine Barge, and Christophe Bureau.

**Supplementary data**
Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2022.02.004.

**References**


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Reply to: ‘Management of portal hypertension in patients treated with atezolizumab and bevacizumab for hepatocellular carcinoma’

To the Editor:
We read with interest the comments of Drs. Ollivier-Hourmand, Alaïre and Cervoni, who wrote a letter on behalf of the ‘Club Francophone pour l’Etude de l’Hypertension Portale’ commenting on the management of portal hypertension in the specific group of patients with hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) treated with atezolizumab and bevacizumab (Ate/Beva).1

Underlying cirrhosis is present in over 90% of patients with HCC2 and thus, the issue of management of portal hypertension (PH) in patients with cirrhosis and HCC is very relevant. To date, there are no studies evaluating whether patients with cirrhosis and HCC require different clinical strategies for screening, treatment, and follow-up of PH-related complications compared to those without HCC. Therefore, we strongly suggest following Baveno VII recommendations3 in patients with cirrhosis and HCC. Importantly, it has been shown that, in patients with HCC who experienced variceal bleeding, survival was improved in those who undergo secondary prophylaxis...
apply to the specific group of patients with cirrhosis and HCC who are candidates for systemic treatment with Ate/Beva and have who have not bled from varices. That is, screening for PH should be performed, and in the presence of clinically significant portal hypertension (CSPH), treatment with NSBBs is recommended,3 since this not only prevents variceal bleeding but also non-bleeding decompensation.9

Therefore, we consider that Baveno VII recommendations also apply to the specific group of patients with cirrhosis and HCC who are candidates for systemic treatment with Ate/Beva, we agree with the authors that special attention should be paid to variceal rebleeding in patients with HCC receiving Ate/Beva, we acknowledge that non-invasive criteria may not be able to predict the presence of liver stiffness, and the clinician may have to decide (based on HCC characteristics) whether non-invasive methods can provide helpful information or if an endoscopy is necessary. Since patients with HCC typically undergo cross-sectional imaging, awareness should be raised for the evaluation of signs of CSPH such as presence of portosystemic collaterals or splenomegaly.

Regarding the management of varices and prevention of variceal rebleeding in patients with HCC receiving Ate/Beva, we agree with the authors that special attention should be paid to adequate PH treatment, however, there is little data regarding the optimal strategy for secondary bleeding prophylaxis in this particular setting. We look forward to providing more answers to this clinically relevant question and other issues in Baveno VIII.

Financial support
The authors received no financial support to produce this manuscript.

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest that pertain to this work.

Please refer to the accompanying ICMJE disclosure forms for further details.

Authors’ contributions
All of the authors contributed equally to the writing of this letter.

References

[9] Villanueva C, Albillos A, Genescà J, Garcia-Pagan JC, Calleja JL, Aracil C, et al. Tyrosine kinase inhibitor that targets VEGF receptors.8 These data suggest that anti-VEGF therapy, such as Beva may also have beneficial effects on PH.

The authors rightly discuss that non-invasive criteria may not be applicable in patients with HCC, which applies mostly to uncertain effects of the tumor on liver stiffness. In addition, patients with HCC may also develop (malignant) portal vein thrombosis with pre-hepatic PH, and such patients should undergo screening with endoscopy.3 In patients without portal vein thrombosis, the clinician may have to decide (based on HCC characteristics) whether non-invasive methods can provide helpful information or if an endoscopy is necessary. Since patients with HCC typically undergo cross-sectional imaging, awareness should be raised for the evaluation of signs of CSPH such as presence of portosystemic collaterals or splenomegaly.

With respect to variceal bleeding, the authors mention that the effects of sorafenib on portal hypertensive rats. J Hepatol 2005;43:98–103.


The authors likewise state that Baveno VII recommendations also apply to the specific group of patients with cirrhosis and HCC who are candidates for systemic treatment with Ate/Beva, we agree with the authors that special attention should be paid to adequate PH treatment, however, there is little data regarding the optimal strategy for secondary bleeding prophylaxis in this particular setting. We look forward to providing more answers to this clinically relevant question and other issues in Baveno VIII.

Financial support
The authors received no financial support to produce this manuscript.

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest that pertain to this work.

Please refer to the accompanying ICMJE disclosure forms for further details.

Authors’ contributions
All of the authors contributed equally to the writing of this letter.

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