

# **The Question of Clinical Trials**

**Alice Shaw, MD PhD  
Director, Center for Thoracic Cancers  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
Harvard Medical School**

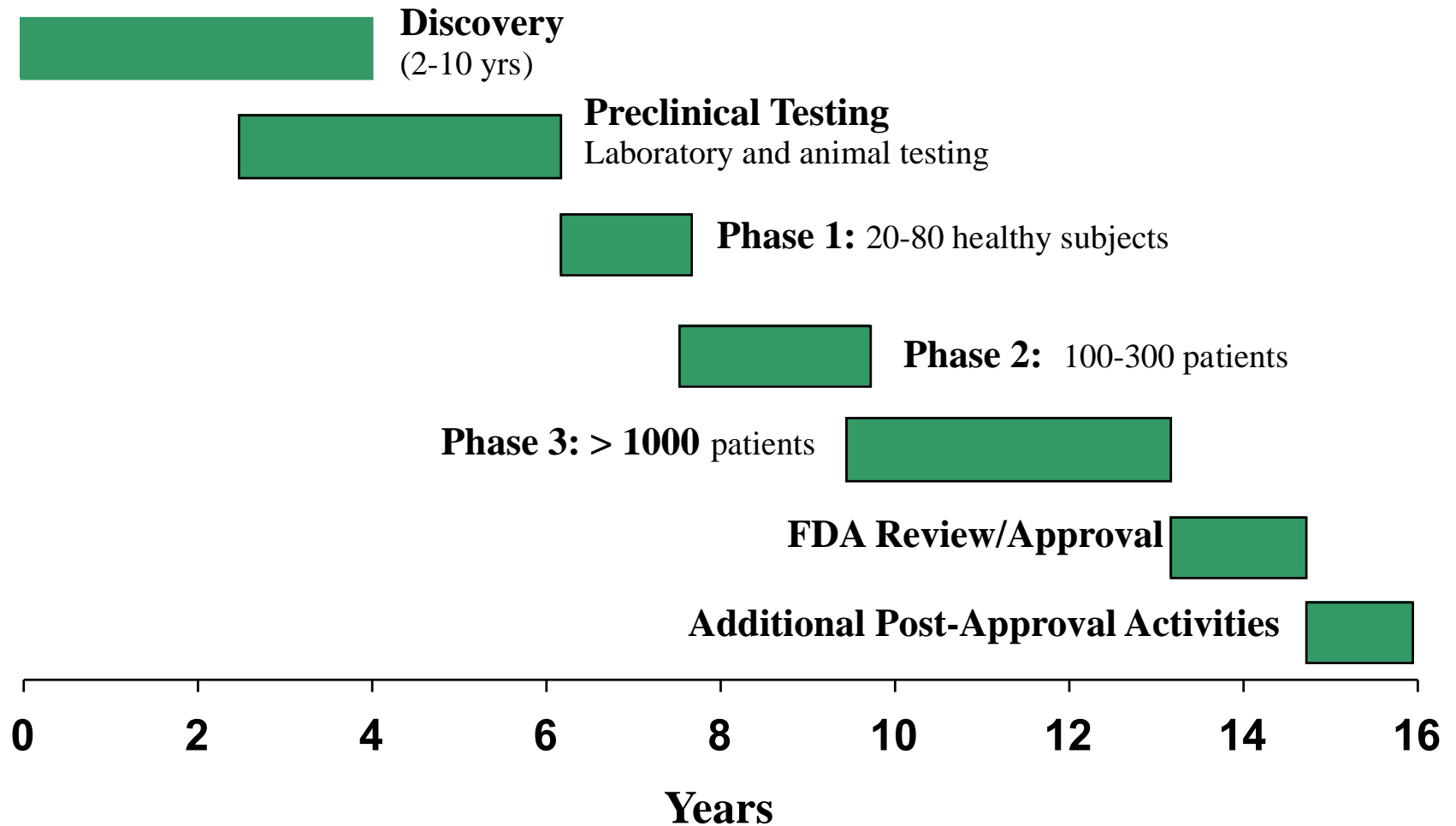
## Case – Patient J

- Patient J was first diagnosed with metastatic NSCLC in Jan 2013
- Molecular testing demonstrated an ALK rearrangement
- He was started on first-line crizotinib and responded for about 5 months
- He developed worsening disease, and we recommended the phase 1 study of ceritinib
- He refused to participate in a phase 1 study
- He opted for standard platinum/pemetrexed chemotherapy, followed by pemetrexed

## Case – Patient J

- He responded to chemotherapy for ~5 months
- When his disease progressed, we recommended the phase 1 study of alectinib
- He again refused to participate in a phase 1 study
- Instead he opted for a phase 3 study of ceritinib
- He was randomized to the control docetaxel arm
- He received 2 cycles of docetaxel and then discontinued due to toxicity
- When he progressed, he “crossed over” to the ceritinib arm
- He responded to ceritinib and has now been on for 3.5 years

# Traditional Drug Discovery and Development



Source: Center for the Study of Drug Development, Tufts University, 1995



# Clinical Trials

- **Definition: a prospectively planned experiment for the purpose of evaluating potentially beneficial therapies or treatments**
- **Clinical trials are conducted under *as many controlled conditions as possible* so that they provide definitive answers to pre-determined, well-defined questions**
- **Clinical trials are the most definitive method to establish the efficacy of a new treatment**
- **Clinical trials are also needed to determine the type/incidence of side effects and complications**

# Phase 1 Clinical Trials

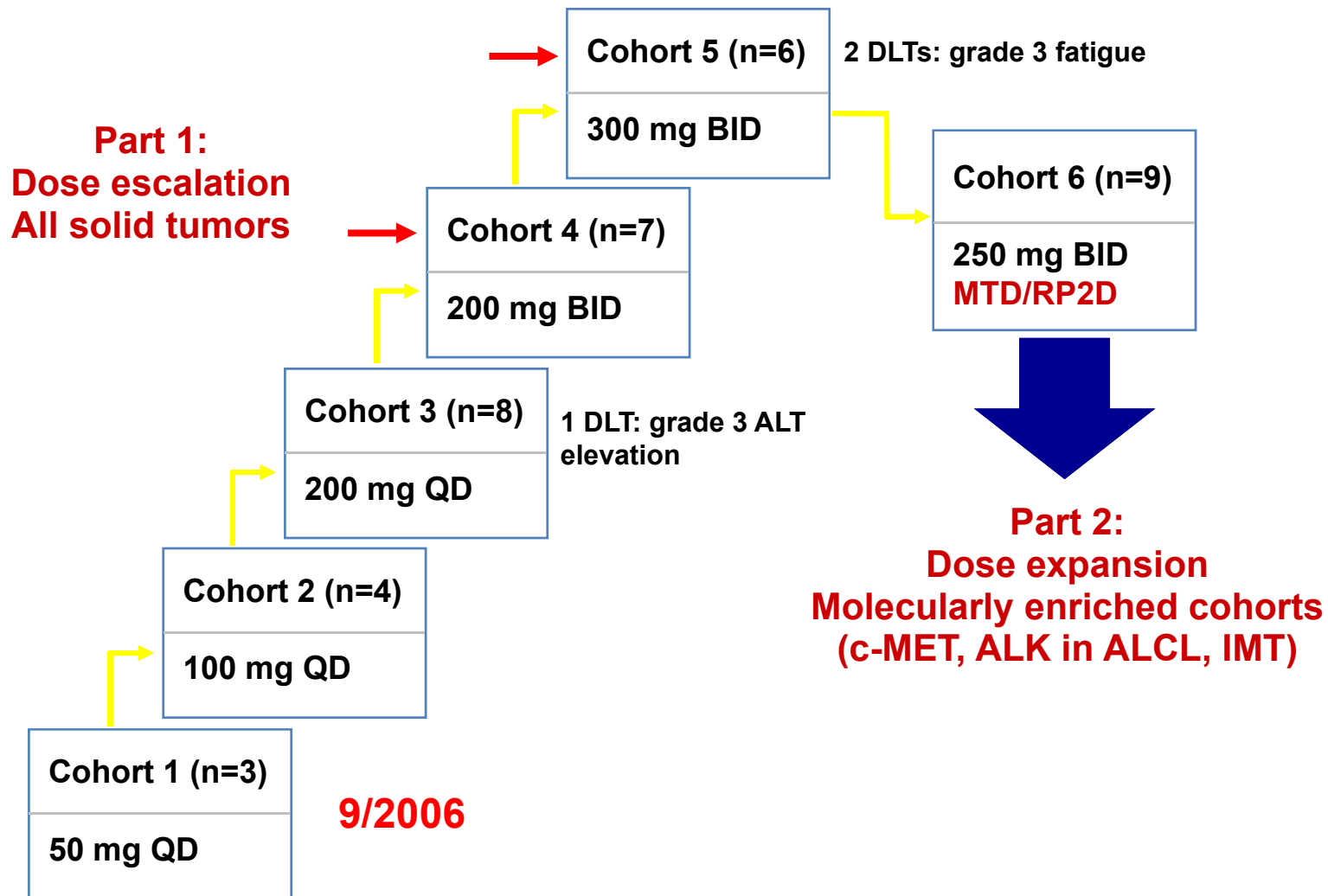
- **First-in-man studies**
- **Primary objective is typically to determine an acceptable range of dose(s) and schedule(s) for a new drug based on observed toxicities**
- **Secondary objectives usually include pharmacokinetics (what the body does to the drug), pharmacodynamics (what the drug does to the body), and antitumor activity**
- **Most phase 1 studies seek to establish the maximum tolerated dose and the recommended phase 2 dose**

# Dose Escalation Schemes – One Example

1. Enter 3 patients at a given dose
2. If no toxicity, go to next dosage and repeat Step 1
3.
  - a. If 1 patient has serious toxicity, add 3 more patients at that dose (go to Step 4)
  - b. If 1/6 have serious toxicity, consider MTD
4.
  - a. If 2 or more of 6 patients have toxicity, drop down 1 dose to confirm safety
  - b. If 1 of 6 has toxicity, increase dose and go back to step 1



# Study Design of Phase 1 Trial of Crizotinib

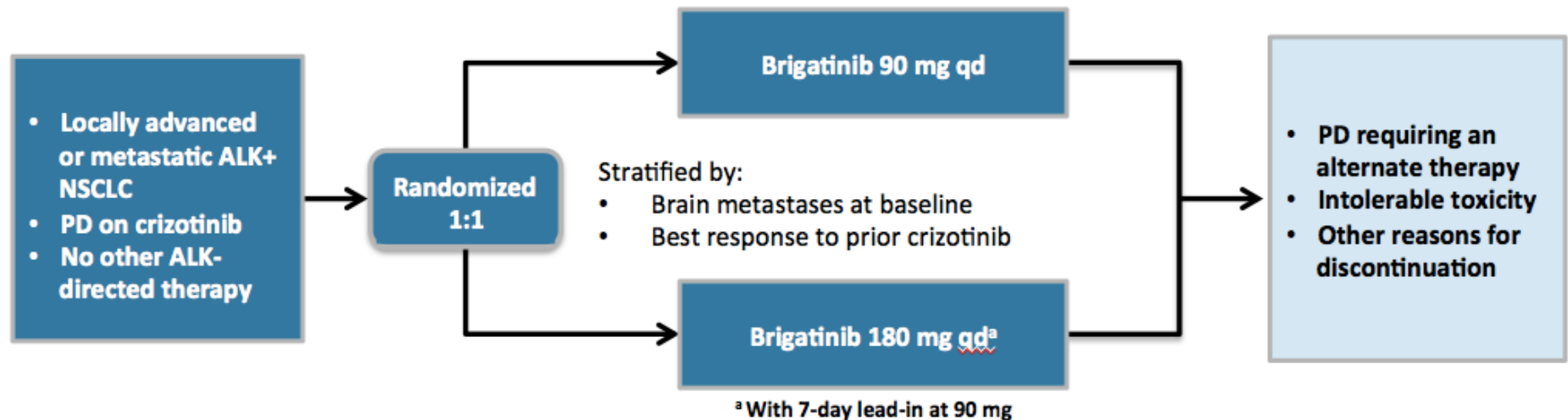


## Phase 2 Clinical Trials

- Overall objective is to establish the clinical efficacy of a new drug
- Phase 2 studies are usually conducted in the patient population for whom the drug is most likely to be effective
- Phase 2 studies also provide more data on safety and tolerability
- Phase 2 studies are often single-arm (all patients receive the same dose of the same treatment), but can be randomized (for example to different doses or schedules of the same drug)

# Phase 2 Trial of Brigatinib (ALTA)

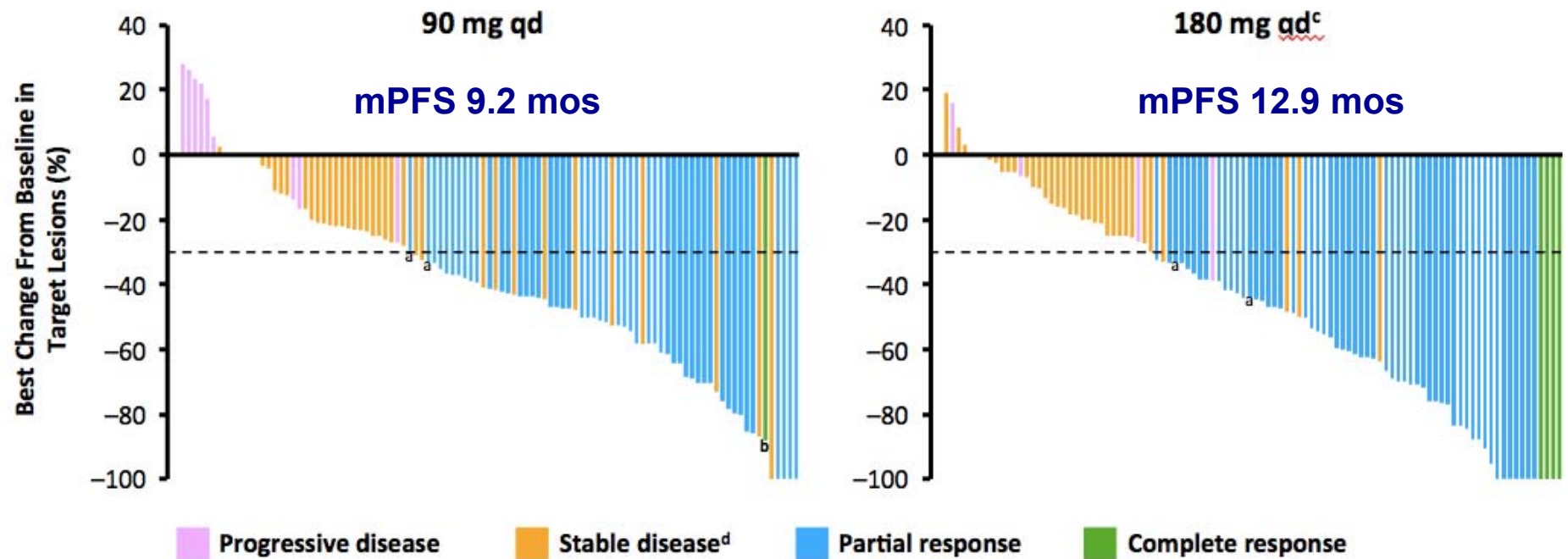
A phase 2, open-label, multicenter, international study (NCT02094573)



**Primary Endpoint:** Confirmed ORR per RECIST v1.1 (assessed by investigator)

**Key Secondary Endpoints:** Confirmed ORR (assessed by an IRC), CNS response (IRC-assessed intracranial ORR and PFS in patients with active brain metastases<sup>b</sup>), duration of response, PFS, OS, safety, and tolerability

# Phase 2 Trial of Brigatinib (ALTA)



Dotted line at -30% indicates threshold for partial response per RECIST v1.1

<sup>a</sup> Single response awaiting confirmation

<sup>b</sup> Patient had a lymph node target lesion which resolved to <10 mm shortest diameter (CR per RECIST v1.1)

<sup>c</sup> 180 mg qd with 7-day lead-in at 90 mg

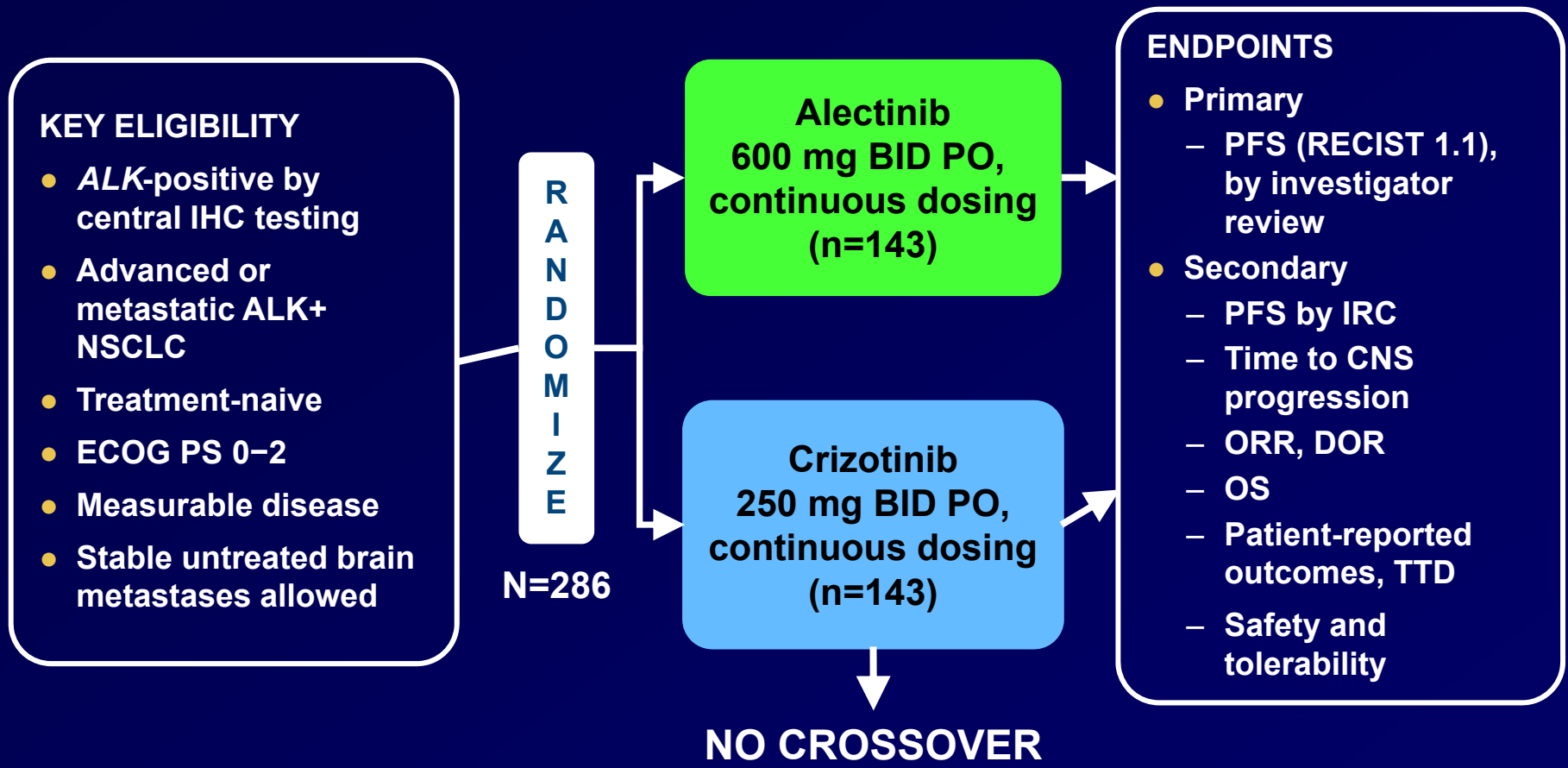
<sup>d</sup> Category includes single responses that were not confirmed

Data as of February 29, 2016

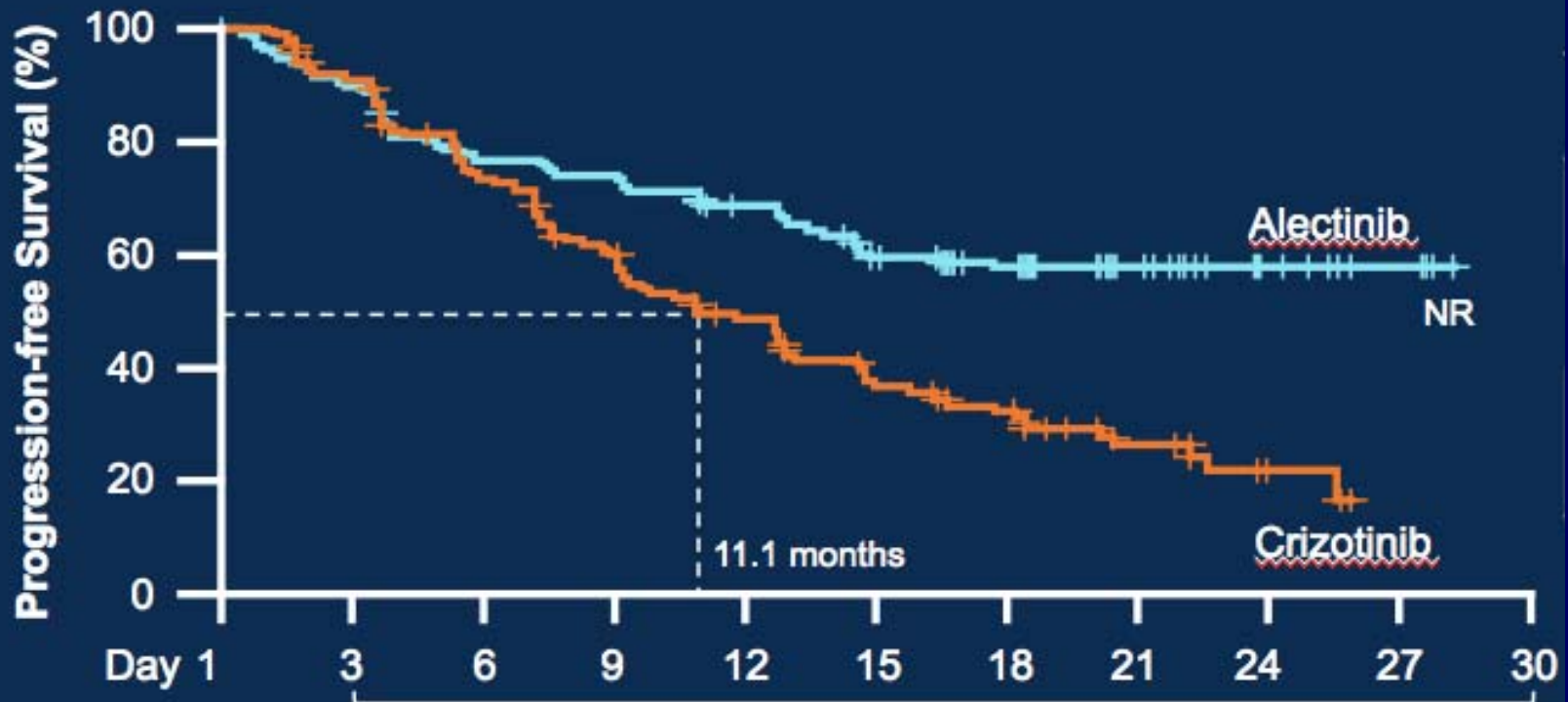
## Phase 3 Clinical Trials

- Overall objective is to compare experimental therapies with standard of care therapy
- Phase 3 studies – typically *randomized control trials* – are usually required by the FDA for full approval
- The experimental and control groups should be alike in all important aspects and only differ in the treatments administered
- The control group usually receives standard of care treatment and not a “placebo”

# ALEX: Global Phase 3 Randomized First-Line Study of Alectinib vs Crizotinib



# ALEX: Global Phase 3 Randomized First-Line Study of Alectinib vs Crizotinib



No. at Risk	Months										
<u>Crizotinib</u>	151	132	104	84	65	46	35	16	5		
<u>Alectinib</u>	152	135	113	109	97	81	67	35	15	3	

# Summary

- Clinical trials are essential to cancer drug development
- Phase 1 (first-in-man) studies: establish safety, dosing, pharmacokinetics, and preliminary antitumor activity
- Phase 2 studies: focus on efficacy, but also obtain additional safety data and correlative studies
- Phase 3 studies: establish benefit over standard of care treatment, compare safety profiles



*Only 3% of patients with cancer participate  
in clinical trials*