



UNIVERSITY OF <sup>TM</sup>  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

# ACUTE PORPHYRIA

R J HIFT

SCHOOL OF CLINICAL MEDICINE  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES



EDGEWOOD CAMPUS



HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS



NELSON R MANDELA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

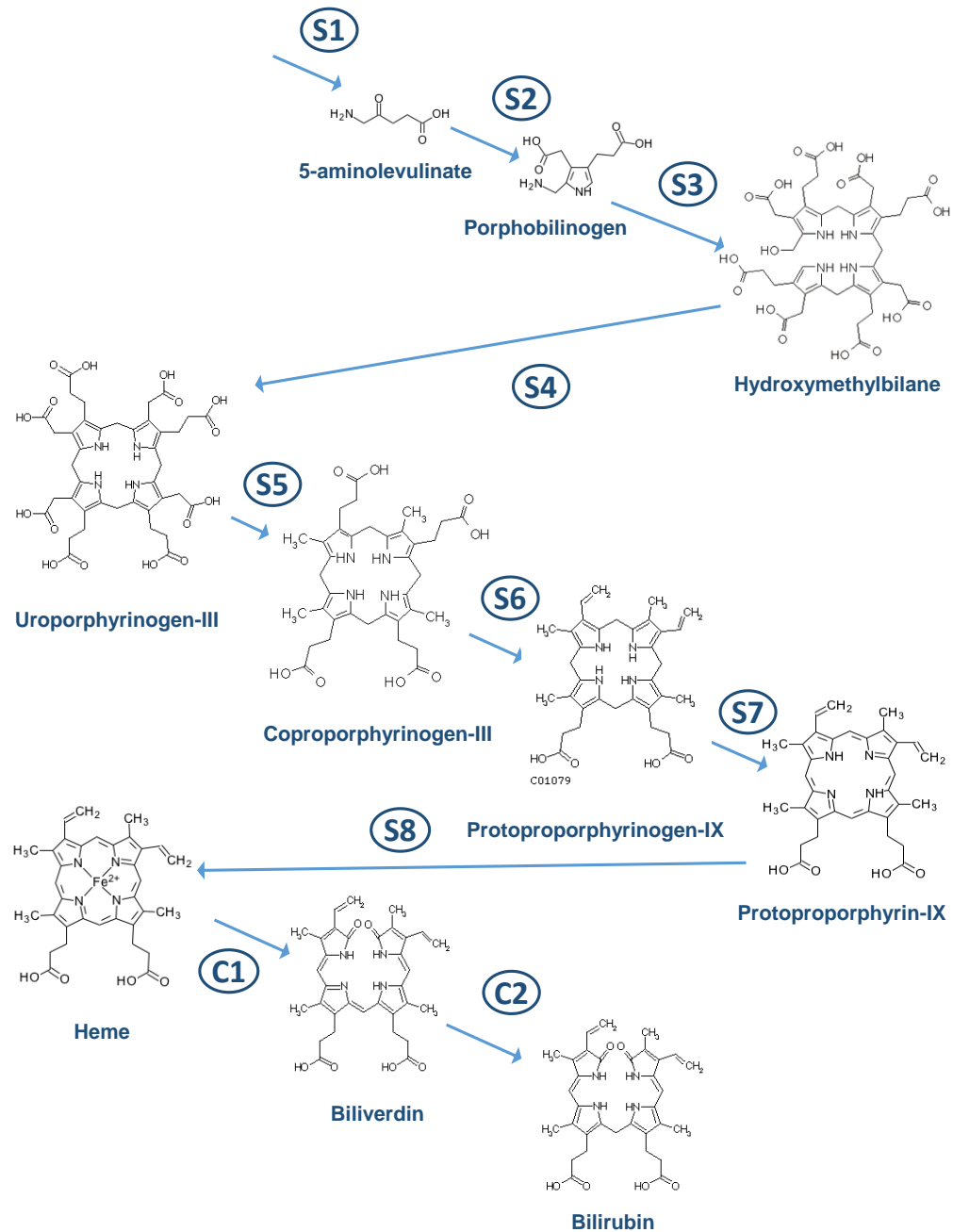


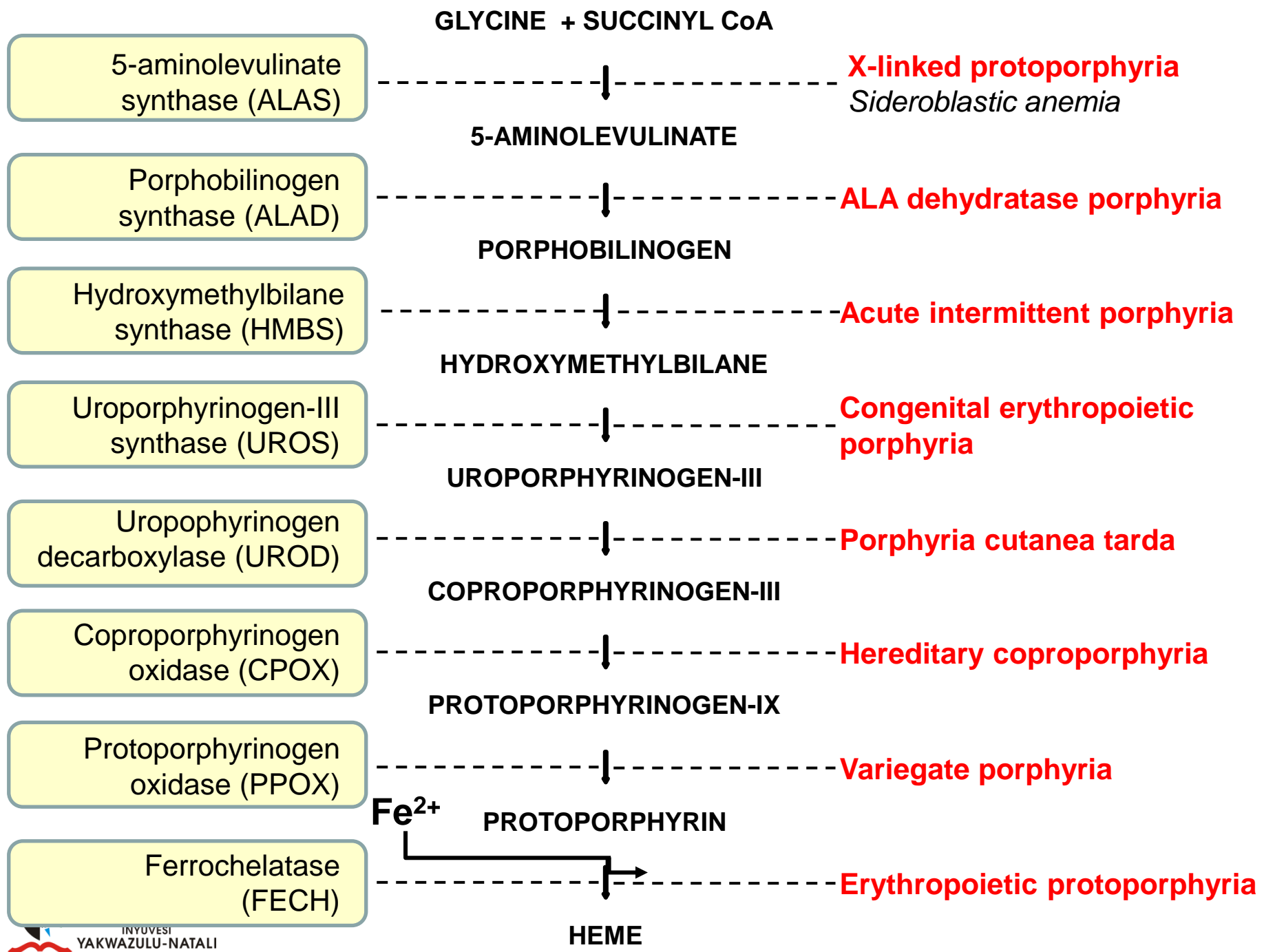
PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS



WESTVILLE CAMPUS

UKZN - INSPIRING GREATNESS





GLYCINE + SUCCINYL CoA

5-aminolevulinate  
synthase (ALAS)

**X-linked protoporphyria**  
*Sideroblastic anemia*

5-AMINOLEVULINATE

Porphobilinogen  
synthase (ALAD)

**ALA dehydratase porphyria**

PORPHOBILINOGEN

Hydroxymethylbilane  
synthase (HMBS)

**Acute intermittent porphyria**

HYDROXYMETHYLBILANE

Uroporphyrinogen-III  
synthase (UROS)

**Congenital erythropoietic  
porphyria**

UROPORPHYRINOGEN-III

Uroporphyrinogen  
decarboxylase (UROD)

**Porphyria cutanea tarda**

COPROPORPHYRINOGEN-III

Coproporphyrinogen  
oxidase (CPOX)

**Hereditary coproporphyria**

PROTOPORPHYRINOGEN-IX

Protoporphyrinogen  
oxidase (PPOX)

**Variegate porphyria**

$Fe^{2+}$  PROTOPORPHYRIN

Ferrochelatase  
(FECH)

**Erythropoietic protoporphyria**

HEME

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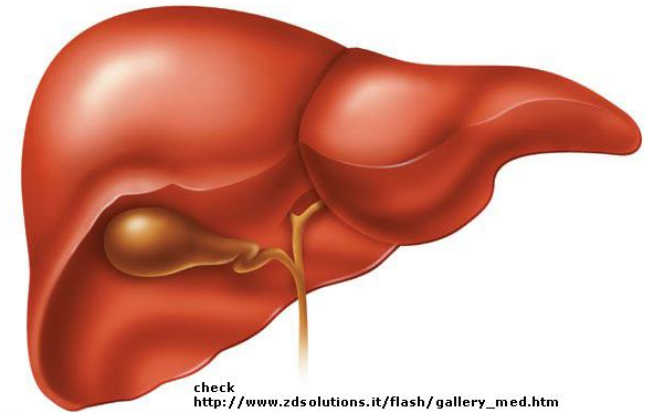
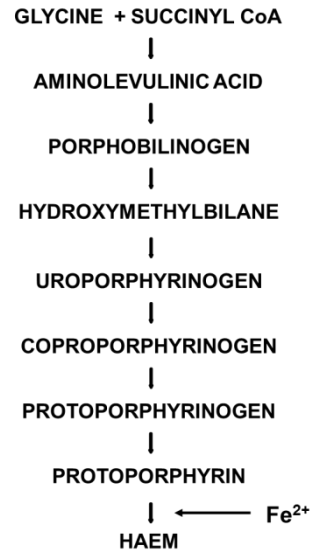
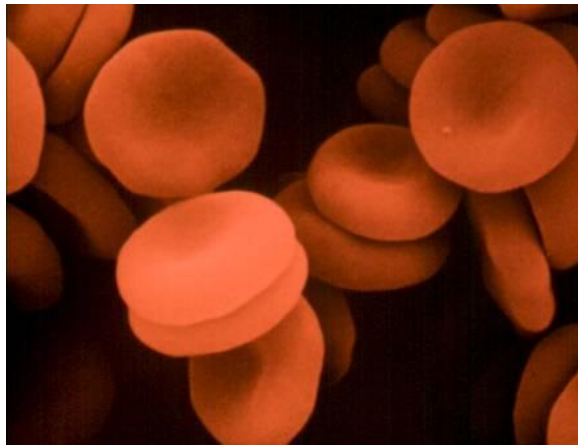
$Fe^{2+}$  PROTOPORPHYRIN

Ferrochelatase  
(FECH)

**Erythropoietic protoporphyria**

HEME

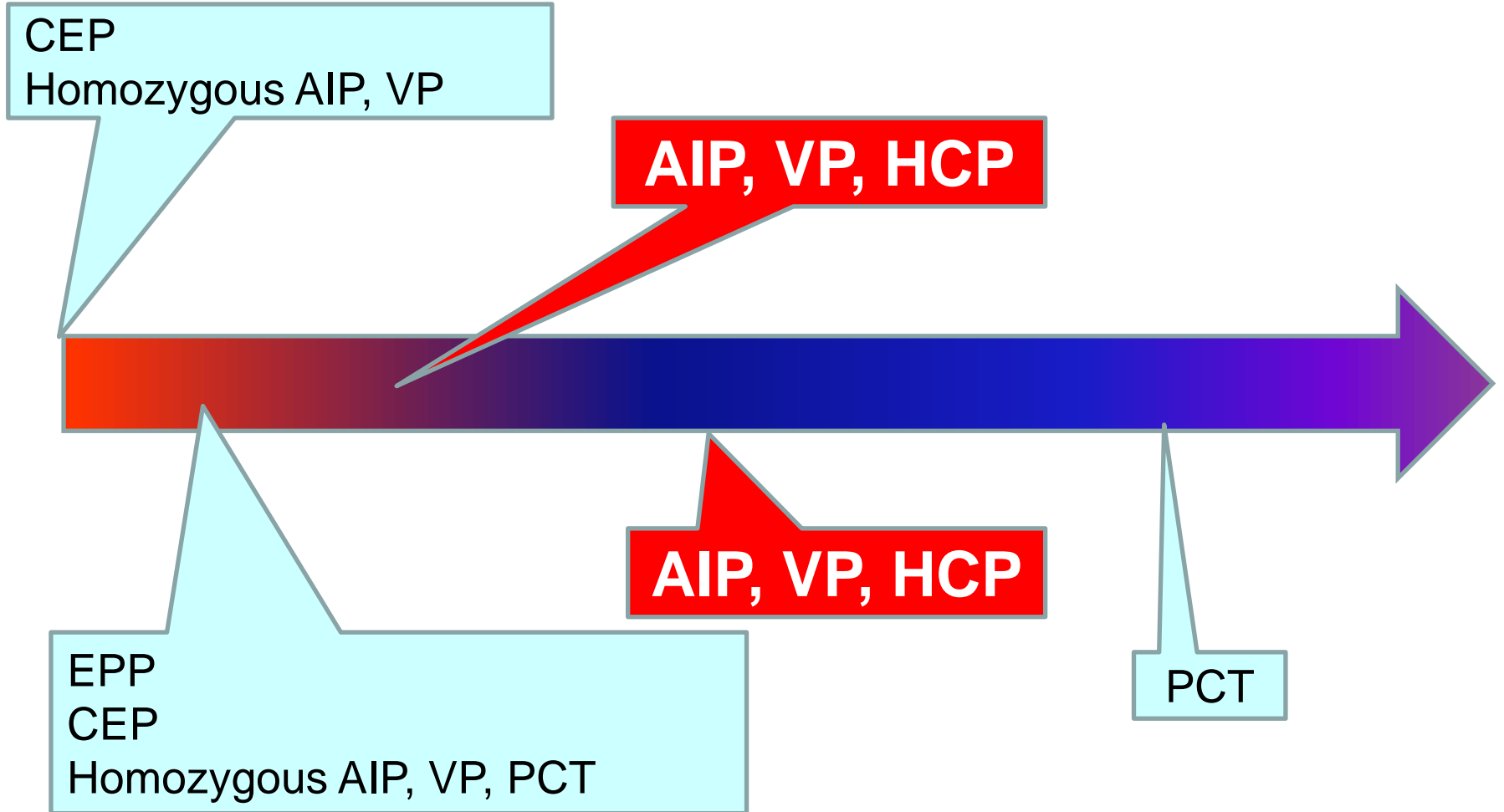
# Disposition of haem



**ERYTHROCYTE  
(80%)**

**LIVER  
(20%)**

# Age of onset



---

# ERYTHROPOIETIC PORPHYRIAS



**GLYCINE + SUCCINYL CoA**

**5-aminolevulinate  
synthase (ALAS)**

**X-linked protoporphyria**  
*Sideroblastic anemia*

**Delta-AMINOLEVULINATE**

Porphobilinogen  
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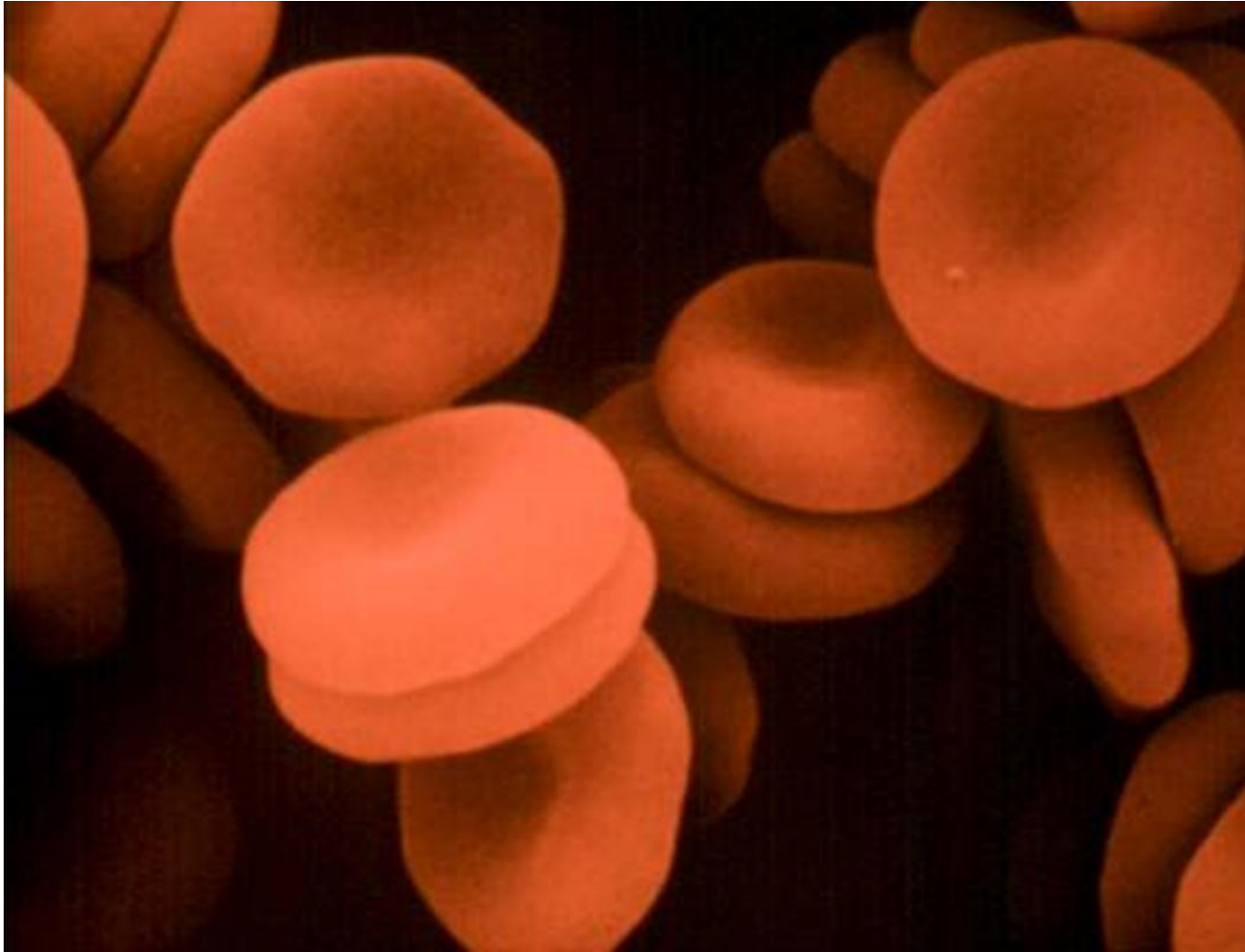
**PROTOPORPHYRIN**

**Ferrochelatase  
(FECH)**

**Erythropoietic protoporphyria**

**HEME**

# Fluorescence



# Congenital erythropoietic porphyria



# Hematological complications

---

- Associated with early-onset CEP
- Predictive of poor prognosis
- Features
  - Neonatal jaundice
  - Splenomegaly
  - Hemolytic anemia
    - May be transfusion-dependent
  - Thrombocytopenia

# Erythropoietic protoporphyria

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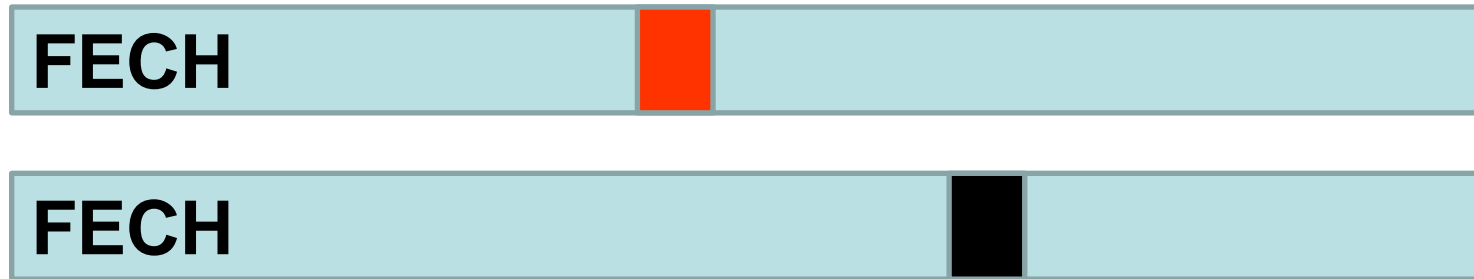
***Immediate  
photosensitivity***

***Early onset...***

***Late diagnosis***



# “Pseudodominant” inheritance of EPP



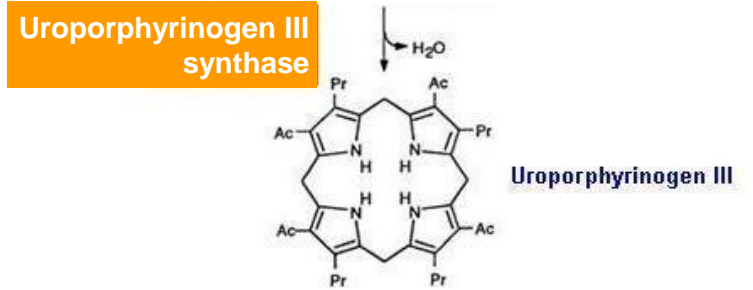
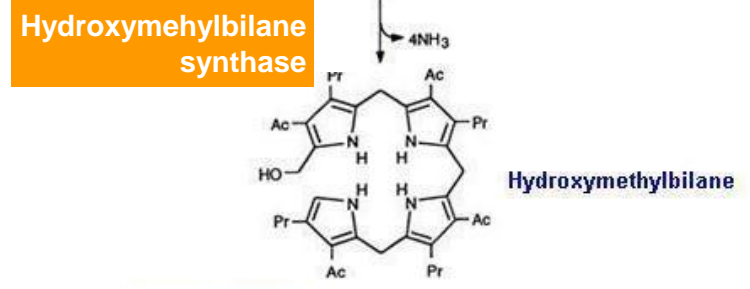
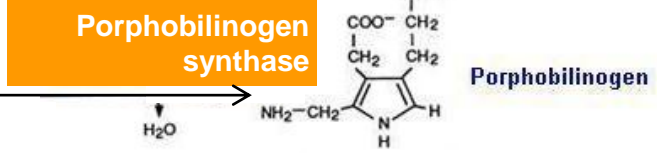
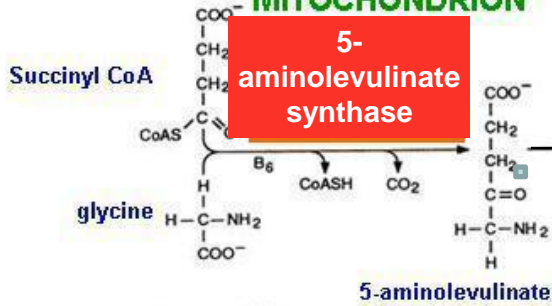
*Alternative splice site  
Polymorphism  
10% of European populations*

# HEPATIC PORPHYRIAS



**MITOCHONDRION**

**CYTOSOL**



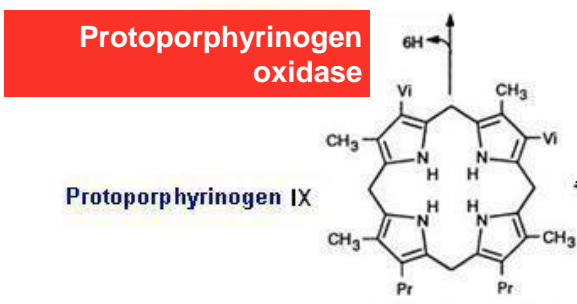
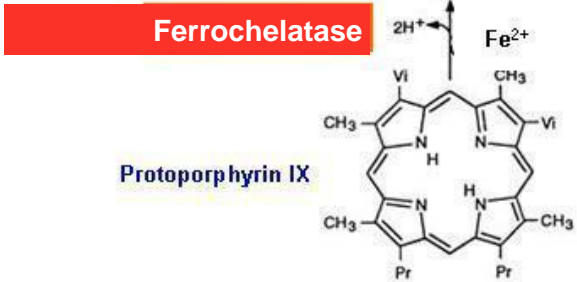
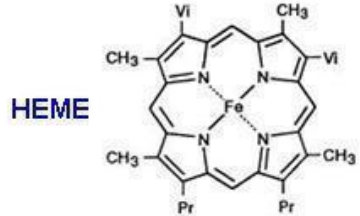
**Uroporphyrinogen III decarboxylase**

Coproporphyrinogen III

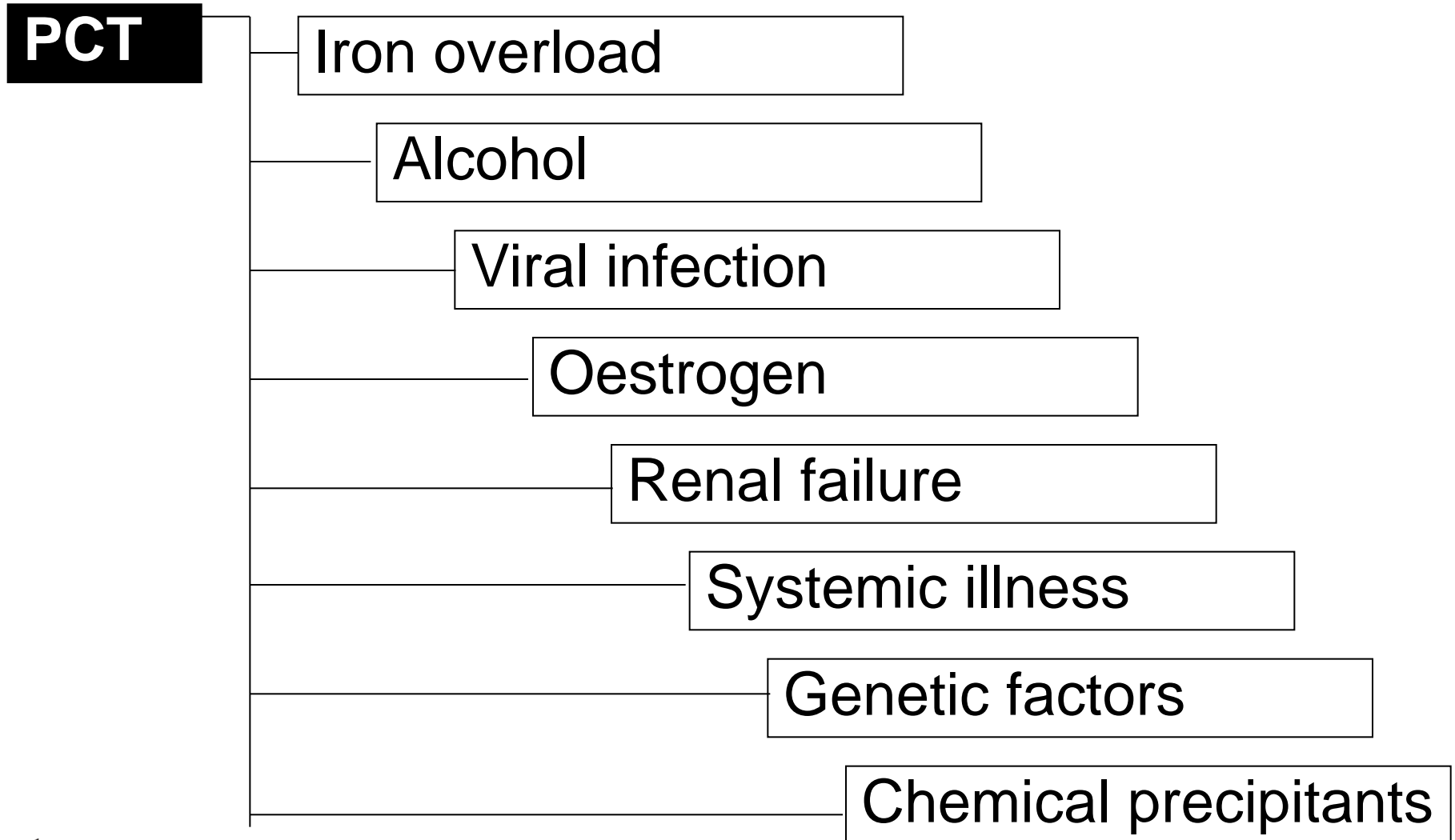
**PCT**

4H<sup>+</sup>

4CO<sub>2</sub>



# Precipitants of PCT



# Porphyria cutanea tarda (PCT)



# Infantile PCT



## THE TURKISH EPIDEMIC OF PORPHYRIA

GEOFFREY DEAN, M.D., M.R.C.P.

*Senior Physician, Provincial Hospital, Port Elizabeth*

In 1955 Dr. Cihad Cam, who is the Director of the skin clinic in Diyarbakir in Eastern Turkey, found that he was seeing a large number of children with sores and blisters on the face and on the back of their hands. These children had dark pigmented skins and great hairiness of their faces. The urine of the children was reddish-brown in colour and when Dr. Cam examined the urine in ultraviolet light, using a Wood's filter, it gave a brilliant red fluorescence. He realized these children had porphyria. He had not seen children with porphyria before 1955, but in that year and in each subsequent year he saw many hundreds of affected children<sup>1,2</sup> (Fig. 1).

This epidemic aroused great interest and concern in Turkey. Children were admitted for further study under the care of Dr. Joseph Wray to the Hacettepe Children's Hospital in Ankara and also to a hospital in Istanbul. Prof. Cecil Watson of Minneapolis, renowned for his porphyria research, sent one of his outstanding research assistants to assist in the biochemical investigation of the children, and Dr. Rudi Schmid, an American expert on porphyria, visited Turkey and made a report on the epidemic.<sup>3</sup>



# ACUTE HEPATIC PORPHYRIAS

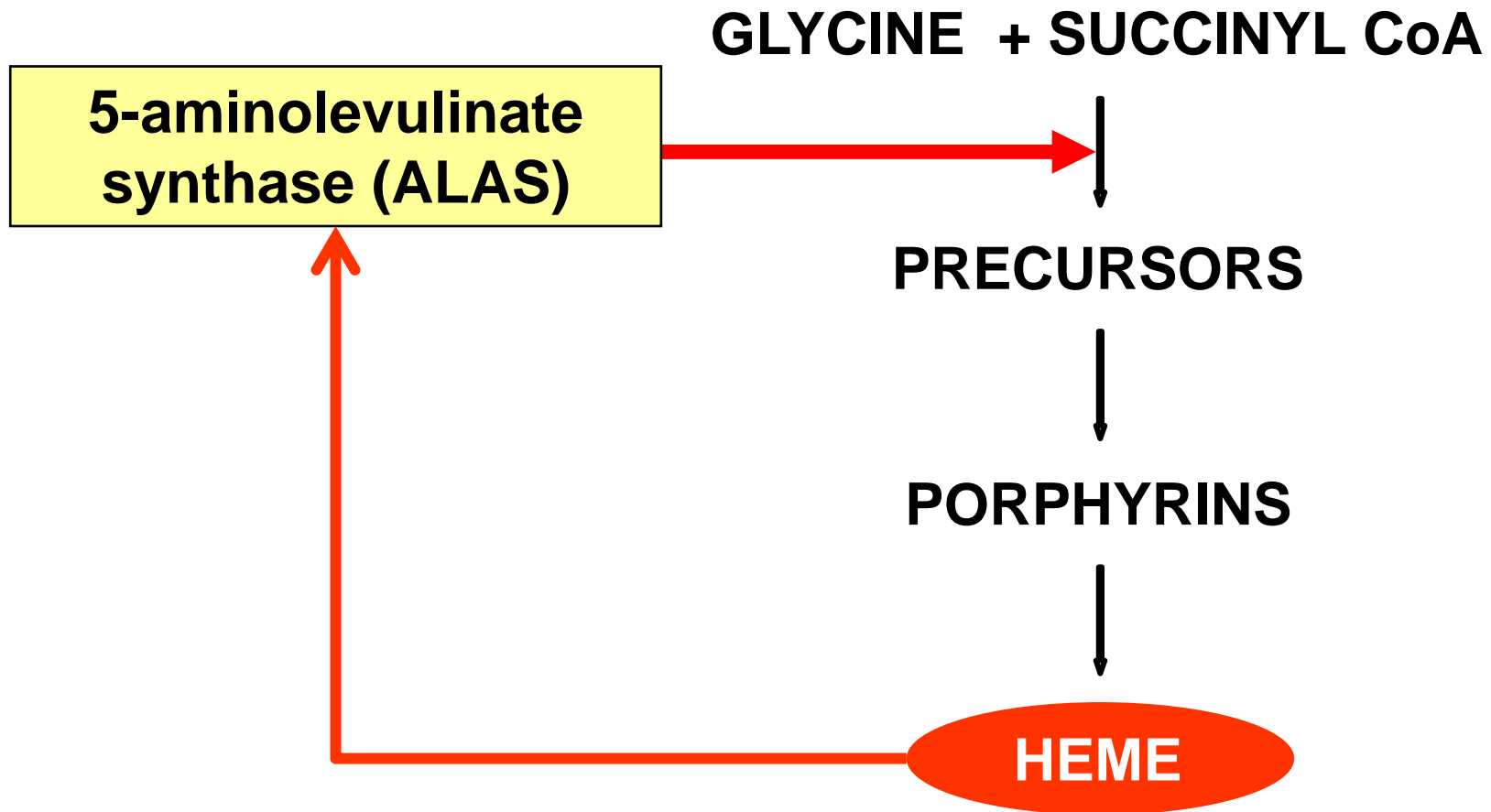
# Age of onset

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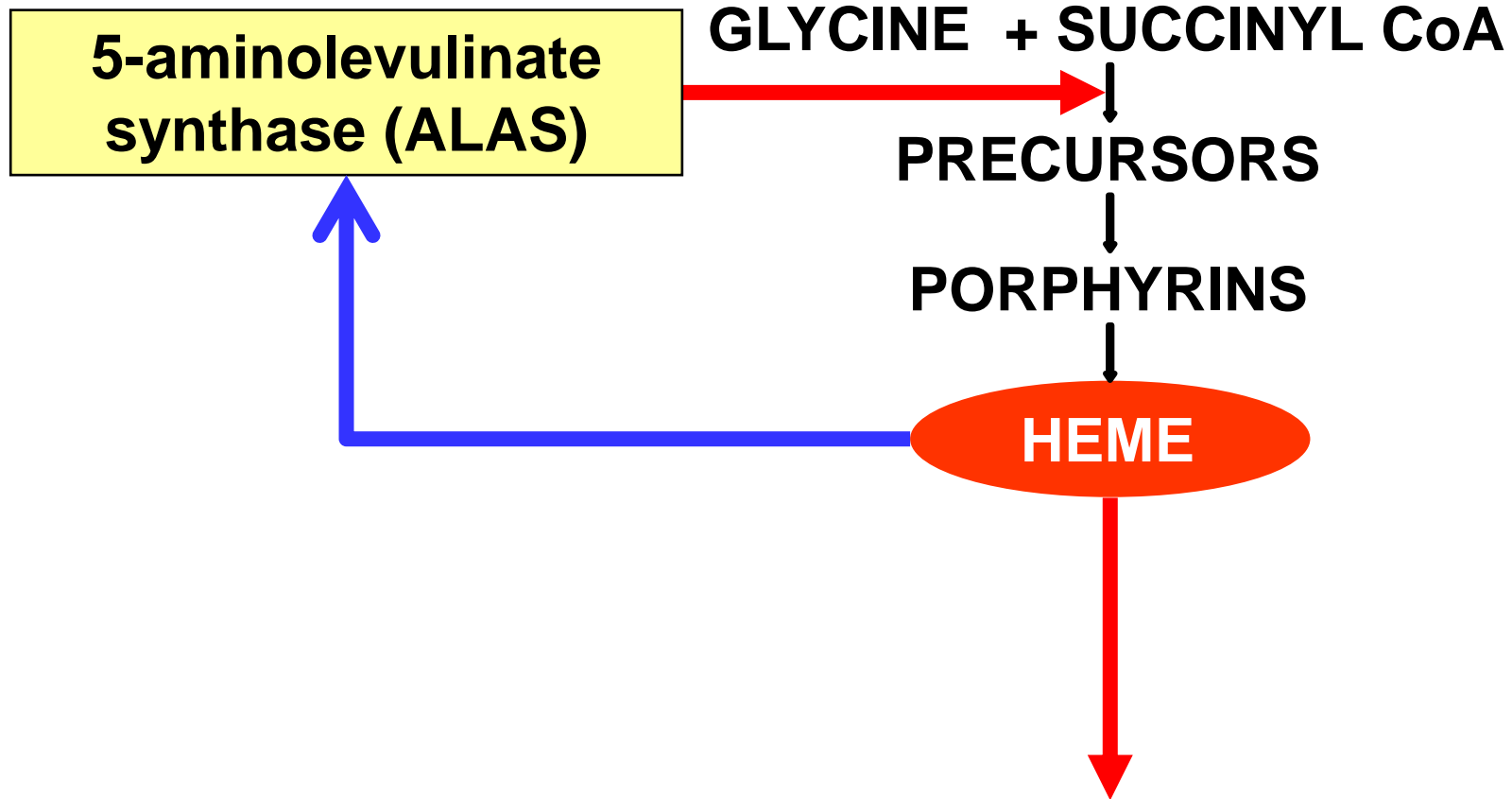
**AIP, VP, HCP**

# Control of heme biosynthesis

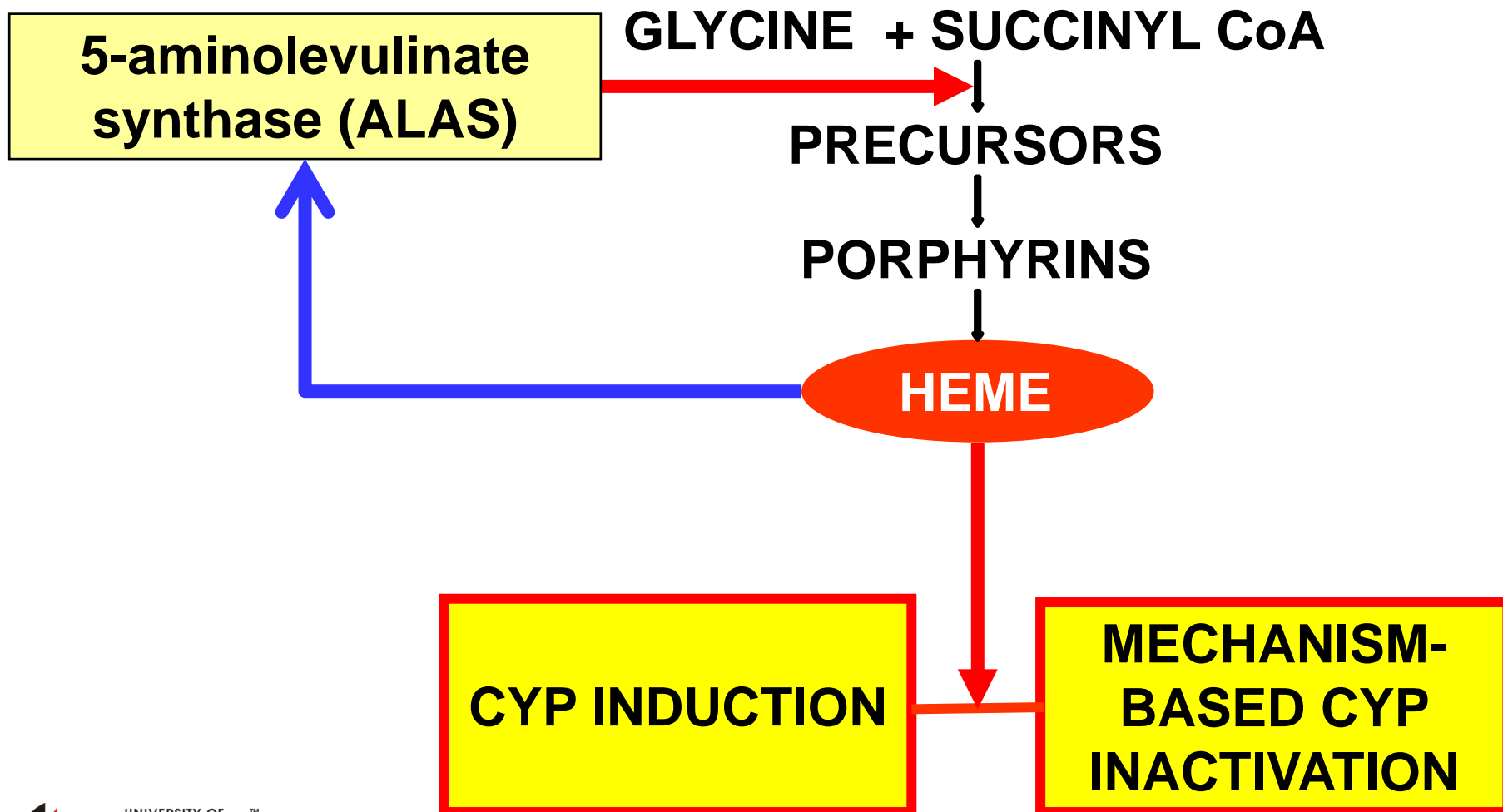




# Drug induction of the acute porphyrias



# Drug induction of the acute porphyrias



# Prediction of porphyrogenicity

Pharmacology & Therapeutics 132 (2011) 158–169



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Pharmacology & Therapeutics

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/pharmthera](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/pharmthera)



## Drugs in porphyria: From observation to a modern algorithm-based system for the prediction of porphyrogenicity

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<sup>a</sup> Division of Medicine, Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

<sup>b</sup> Porphyria Centre Sweden, Department of Laboratory Medicine, Karolinska Institute and Karolinska University Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden

<sup>c</sup> Norwegian Porphyria Centre, Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway

<sup>d</sup> Institute of Medicine, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Porphyria  
Porphyrogenicity  
Drug metabolism

### ABSTRACT

The acute porphyrias are a group of disorders which result from inherited defects in the enzymes of the heme biosynthetic pathway. Affected patients are prone to potentially fatal acute attacks. These attacks are frequently precipitated by exposure to commonly used drugs. Correctly identifying the safety or otherwise of drugs in porphyria is therefore important. In this review we describe how clinical experience and the findings of experimental systems using whole animal or cell culture models have been interpreted to determine porphyrogenicity, that is the potential of a drug to induce an acute attack in a patient carrying a gene for acute porphyria.

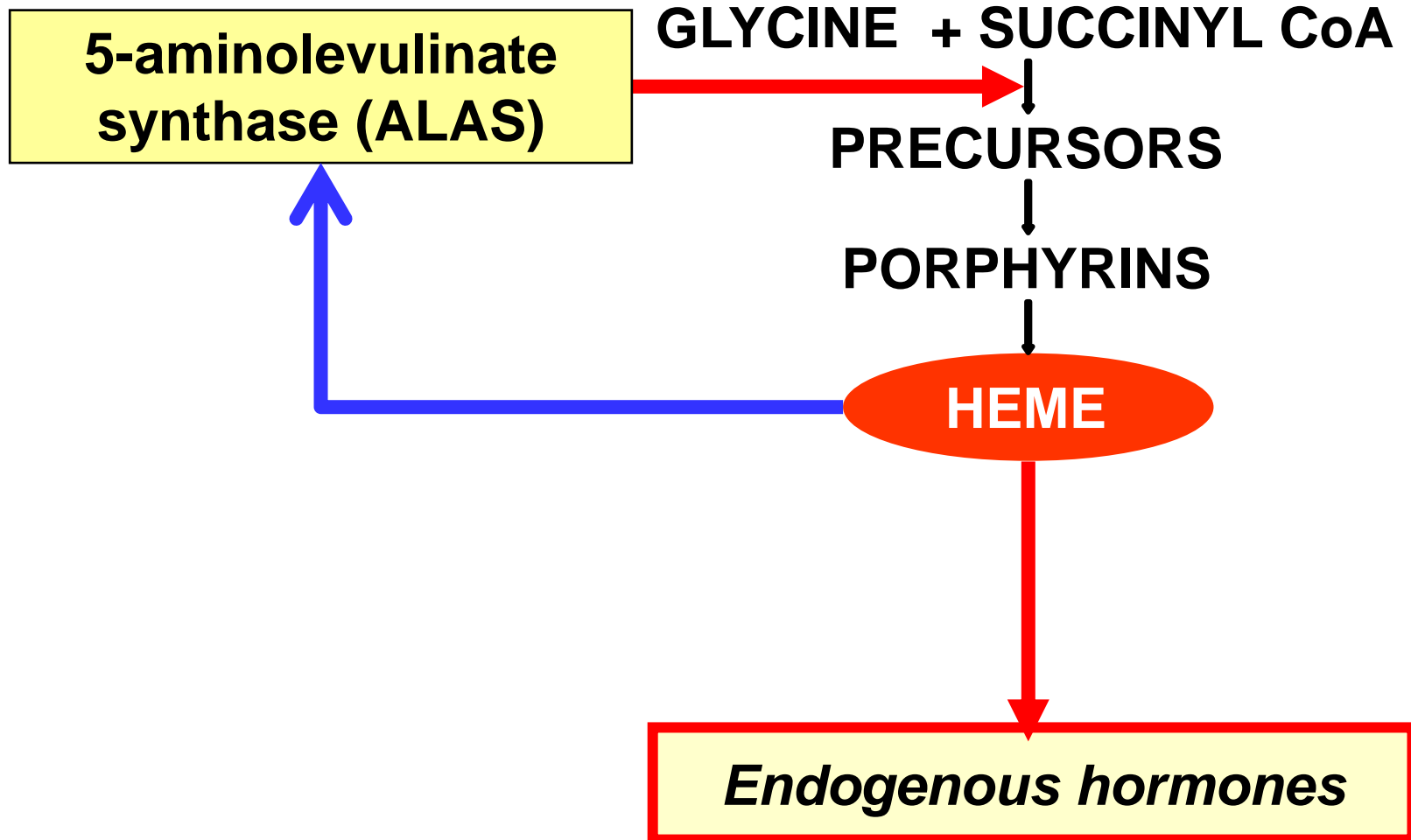
It is now well established that induction of delta-aminolevulinic acid synthase, the rate controlling enzyme of the heme biosynthetic pathway, is fundamental to porphyrogenicity, and that drug-induced hepatic heme depletion via induction or suicidal inactivation of cytochrome P450 is central to this process. The process is now sufficiently well understood that prediction of porphyrogenicity from structural and functional information alone would appear to be justified.

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# Induction of the acute porphyrias



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synthase (ALAS)

**X-linked protoporphyria**  
*Sideroblastic anemia*

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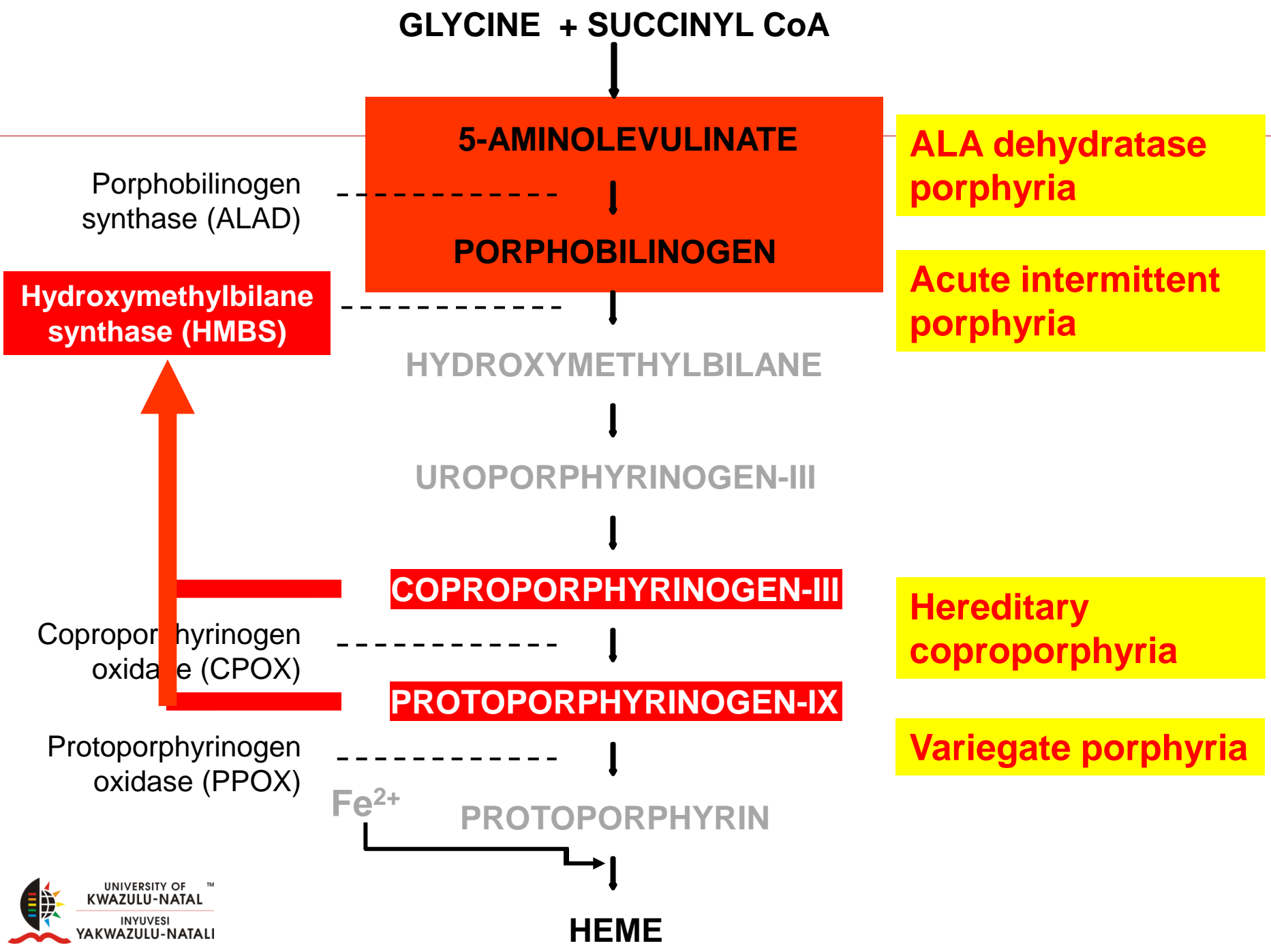
**Variegate porphyria**

$Fe^{2+}$  PROTOPORPHYRIN

Ferrochelatase  
(FECH)

**Erythropoietic protoporphyria**

HEME



# Steps in management

---

**RECOGNISE THE ATTACK**

**ARREST THE ATTACK**

**TRANSITION OUT OF THE  
ATTACK**

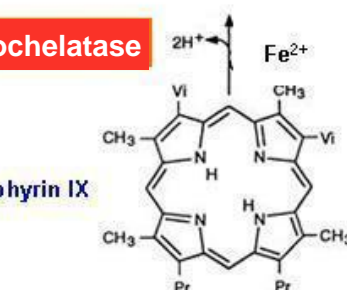
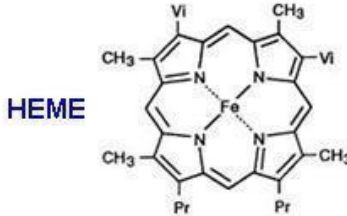
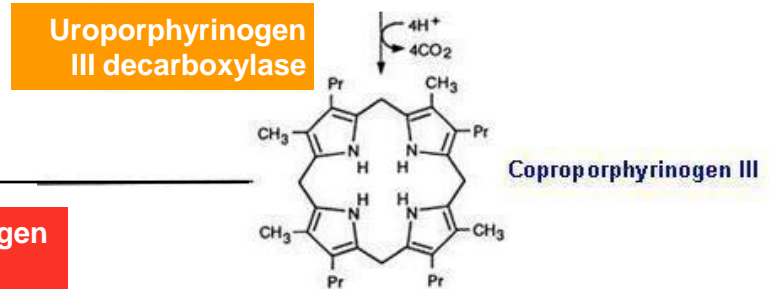
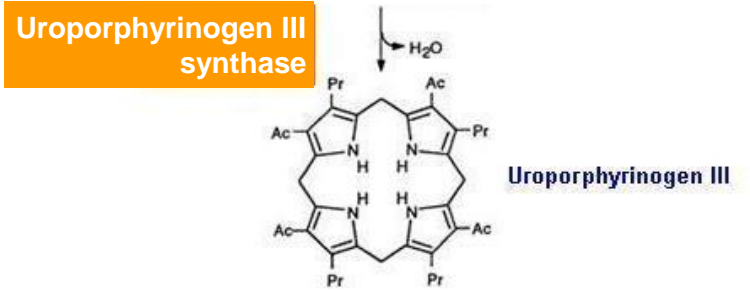
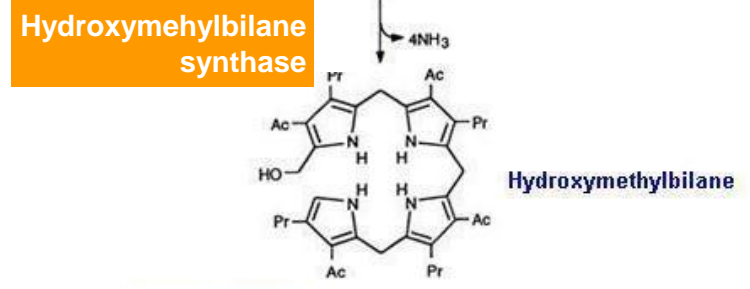
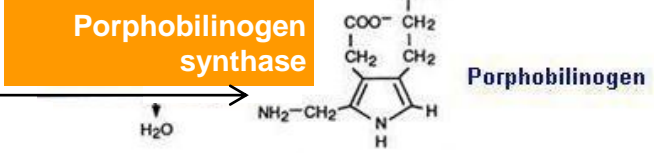
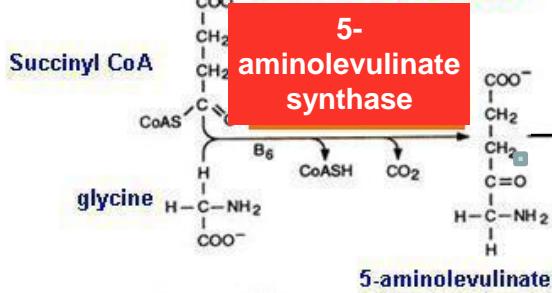
# Acute intermittent porphyria





**MITOCHONDRION**

**CYTOSOL**



**Protoporphyrinogen oxidase**

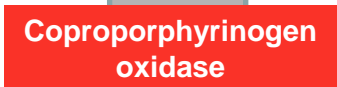
**VP**

Protoporphyrinogen IX

$6H^+$

$2CO_2$

$2H^+$



# Variegate porphyria

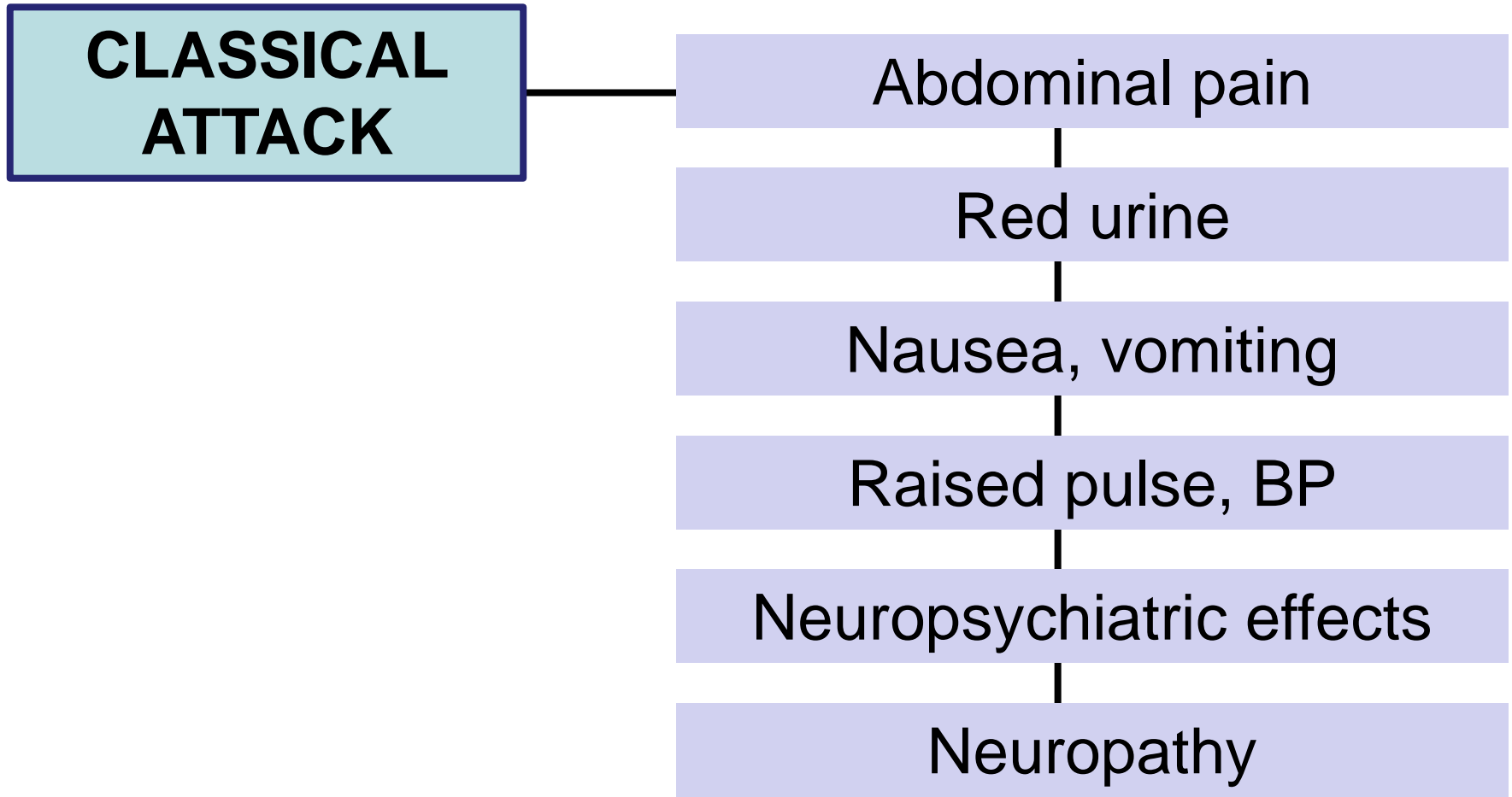


# Symptoms of the acute attack

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- The symptoms are mediated via an autonomic and, eventually motor, neuropathy

# Recognising an acute attack



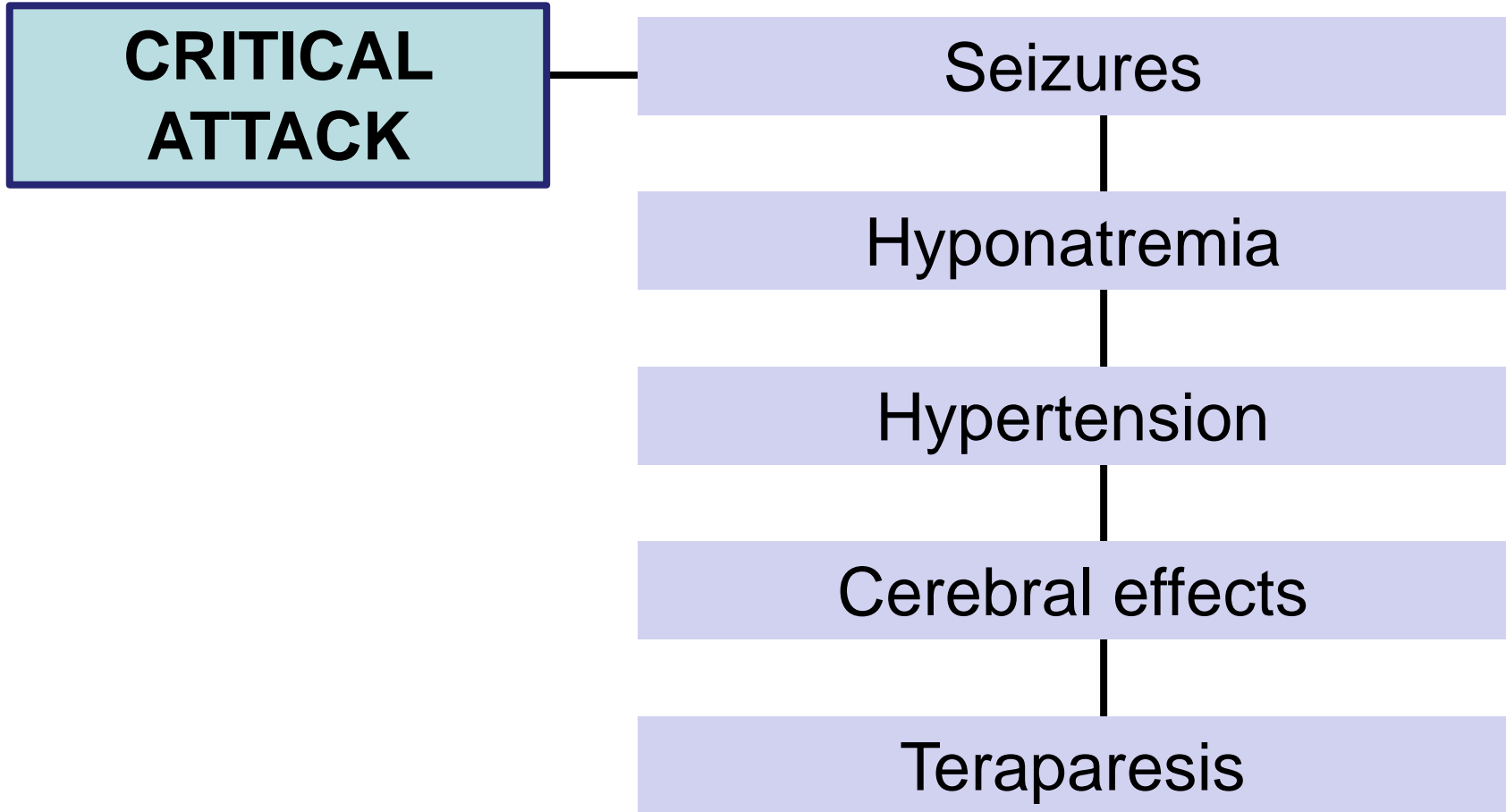
# Symptoms of the acute attack



# AIP



# Recognising an acute attack



# The acute attack



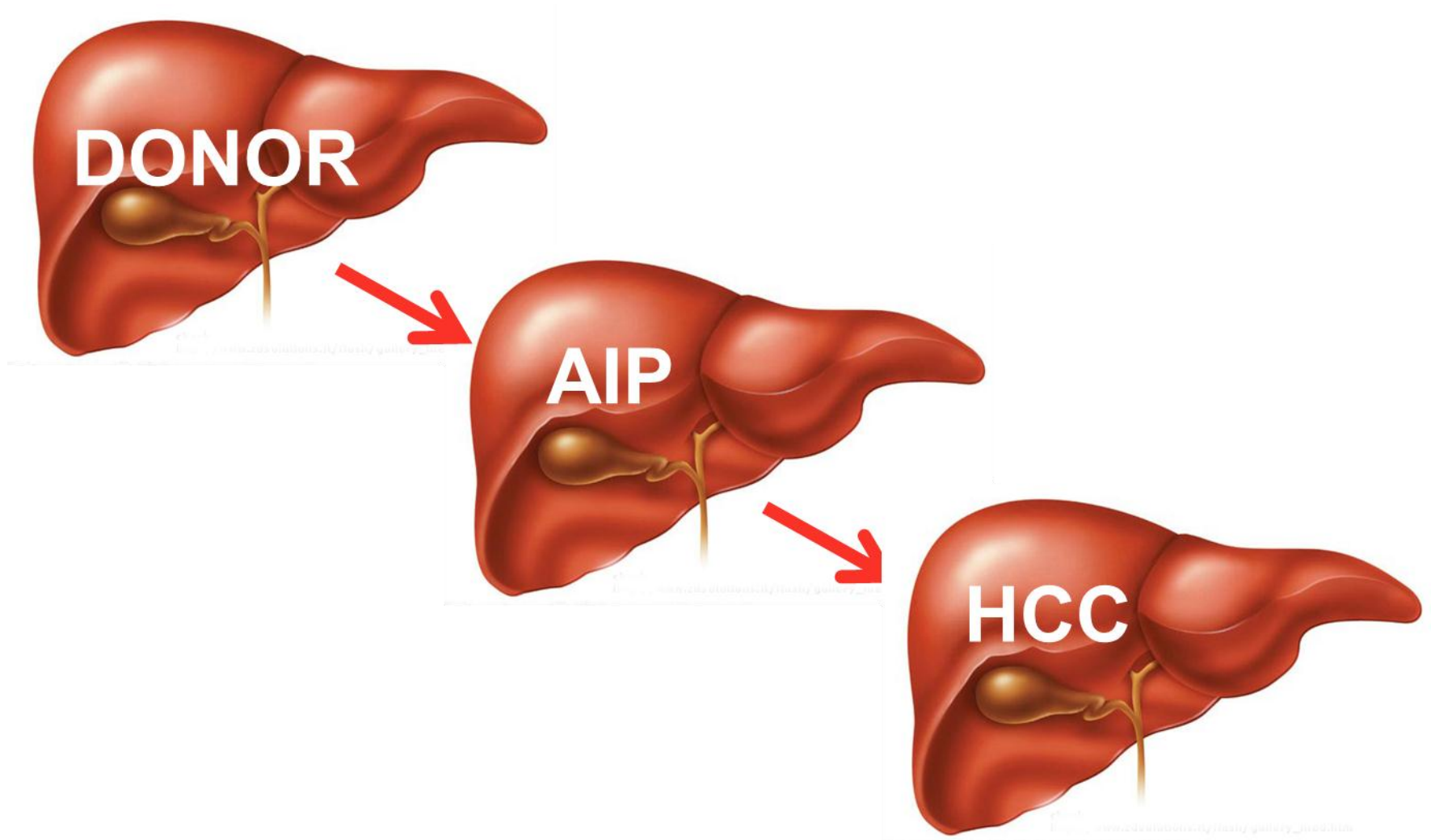


# Liver or nerve?

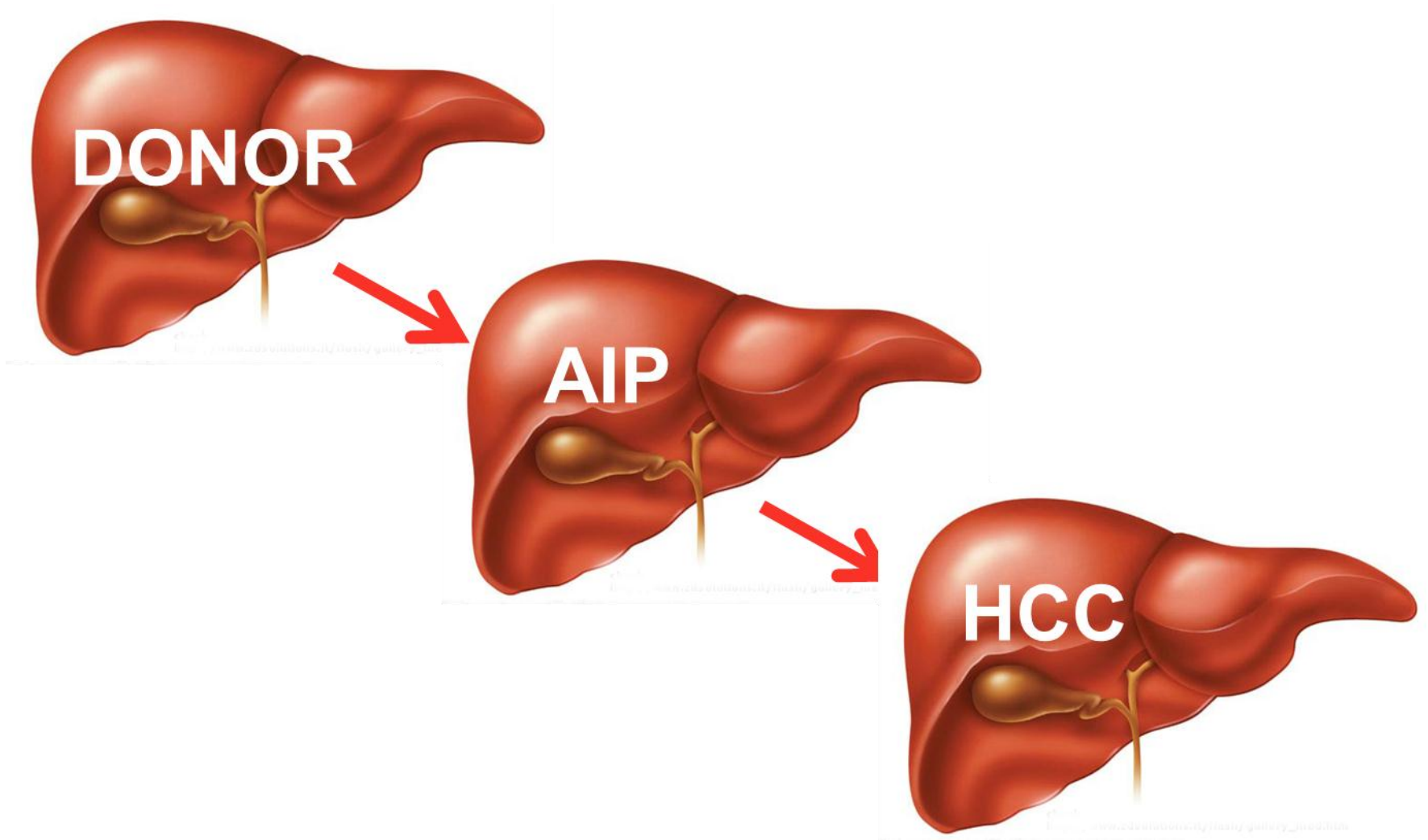
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- Liver
  - Site of overproduction
  - Potentially toxic precursors
- Nerve
  - Ultimate target of damage
  - Metabolically active, heme requiring
  - Heme-containing neurotransmitters

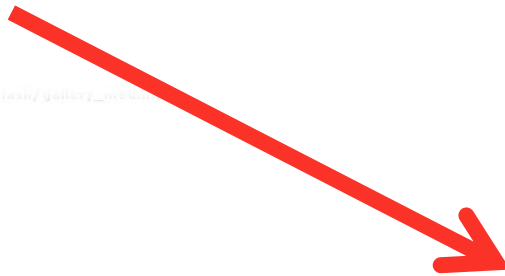
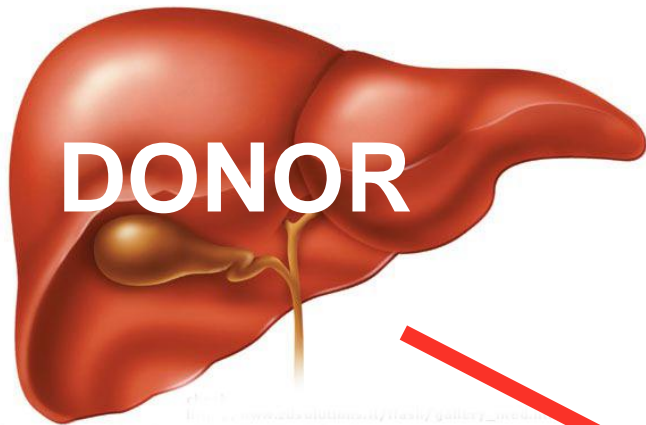
# Domino transplant for AIP



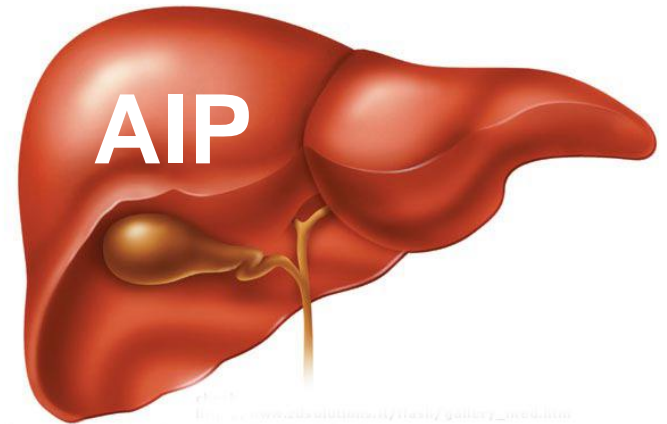
# Domino transplant for AIP



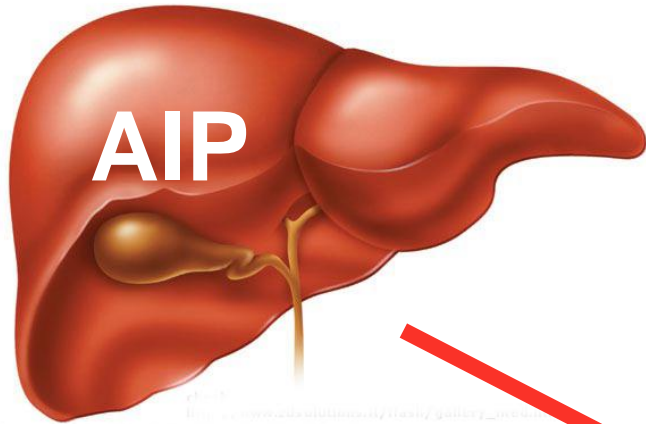
# Domino transplant for AIP



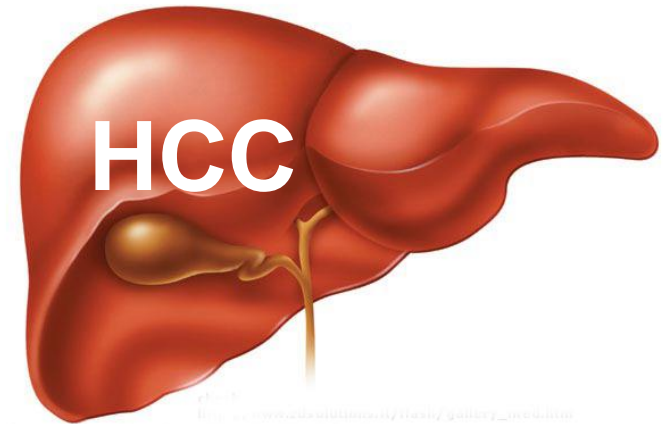
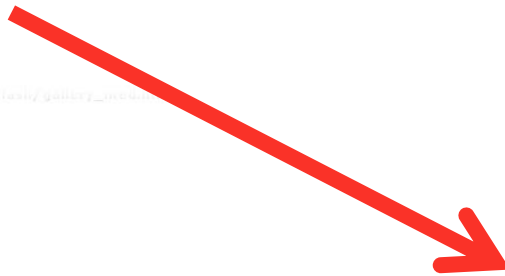
**CURED**



# Domino transplant for AIP

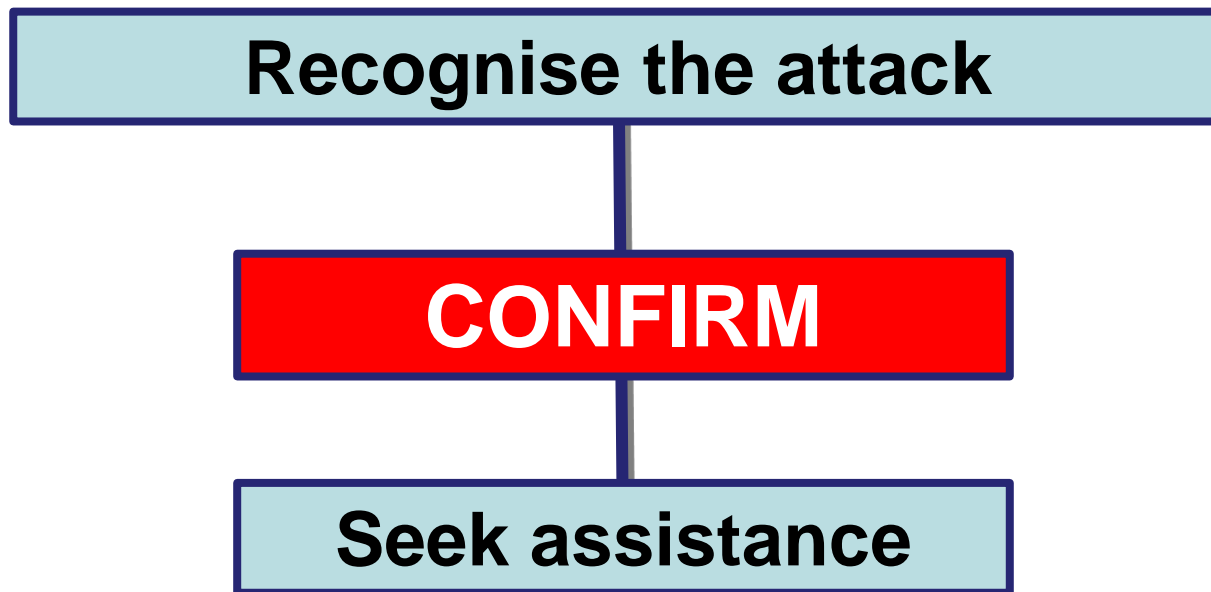


**SEVERELY  
SYMPTOMATIC  
PORPHYRIA**



# Steps in management

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# Confirm the presence of an acute attack

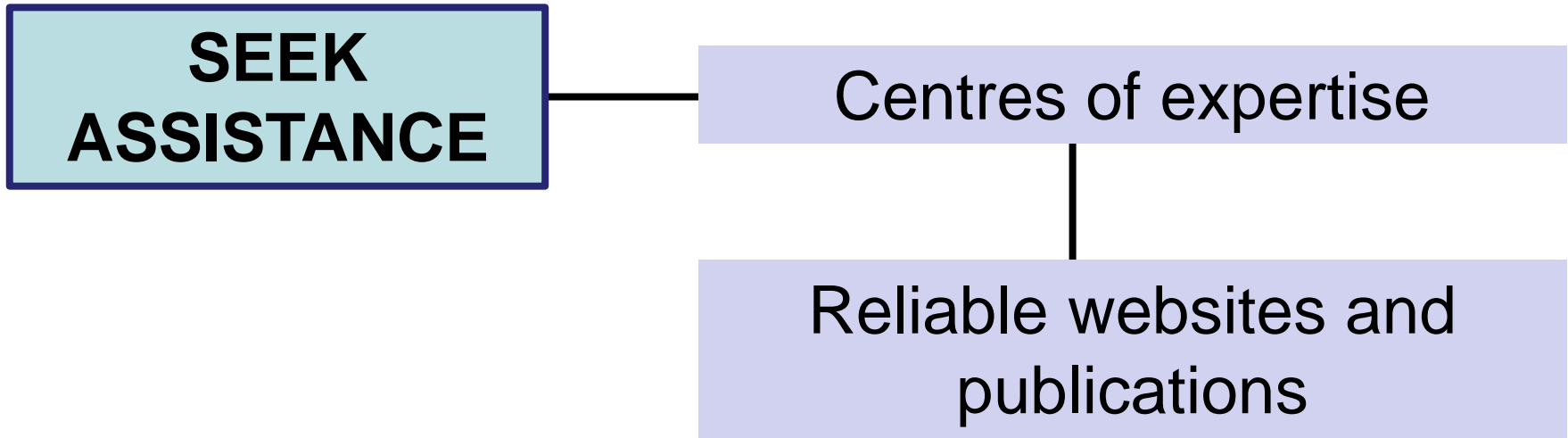


ALA, PBG in the urine





# Managing the acute attack



# Expert assistance

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## European Porphyria Network

- <http://www.porphyria-europe.org/>

## Porphyria South Africa

- <http://www.porphyria.uct.ac.za/>

# Incidence

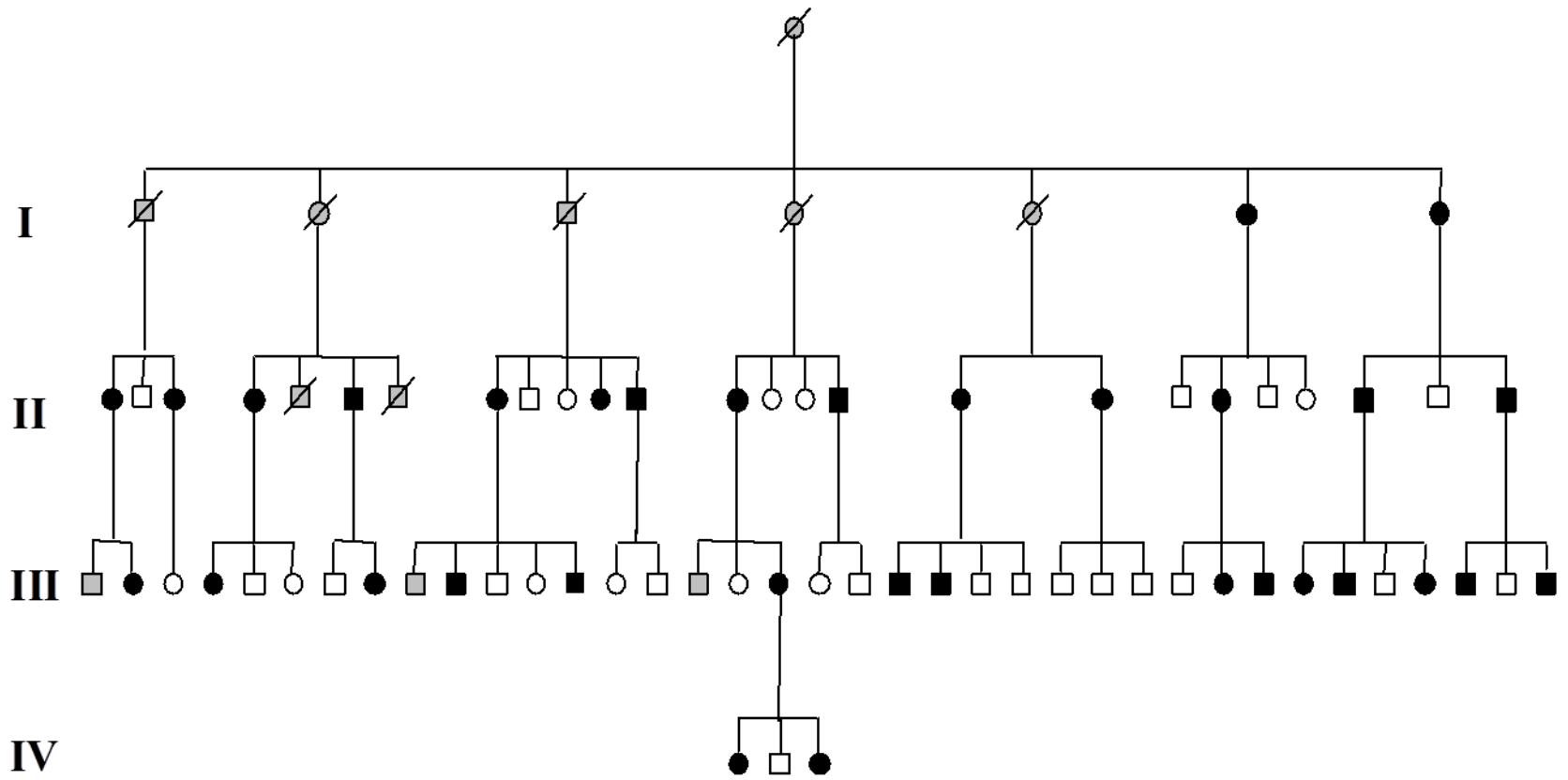
Country	Population (millions)	Incidence (new cases per year per million inhabitants)		
		AIP	VP	EPP
Finland	5.4	0.13 (0.02–0.45)	0.06 (0.002–0.35)	NCI
France	62.2	0.12 (0.07–0.18)	0.12 (0.08–0.19)	0.06 (0.03–0.11)
Irish Republic	4.2	NCI	0.16 (0.03–0.57)	0.08 (0.002–0.44)
Northern Italy	27	0.11 (0.05–0.21)	–	–
Italy	58.1	–	0.06 (0.03–0.11)	0.07 (0.04–0.12)
Netherlands	16.7	0.18 (0.08–0.34)	0.06 (0.01–0.24)	0.18 (0.08–0.37)
Norway	4.7	0.14 (0.02–0.51)	0.07 (0.002–0.39)	0.36 (0.11–0.83)
Poland	38.5	0.16 (0.08–0.27)	0.01 <sup>a</sup> (<0.001–0.05)	0.03 (0.003–0.09)
Spain	40.5	0.14 (0.08–0.22)	0.04 (0.01–0.10)	0.03 (0.01–0.07)
Sweden	9.1	0.51 (0.28–0.86)	0.11 (0.02–0.32)	0.18 (0.06–0.43)
Switzerland	7.6	0.22 (0.07–0.51)	0.26 (0.10–0.57)	0.35 (0.15–0.69)
UK	61.1	0.16 (0.11–0.23)	0.08 (0.04–0.13)	0.33 (0.24–0.39)
All countries	308.05	0.13 <sup>b</sup> (0.11–0.16)	0.08 (0.06–0.10)	0.12 (0.10–0.15)

# Prevalence

J Inherit Metab Dis

**Table 4** The calculated prevalence of patients with current or past symptoms of AIP, VP or EPP in European countries

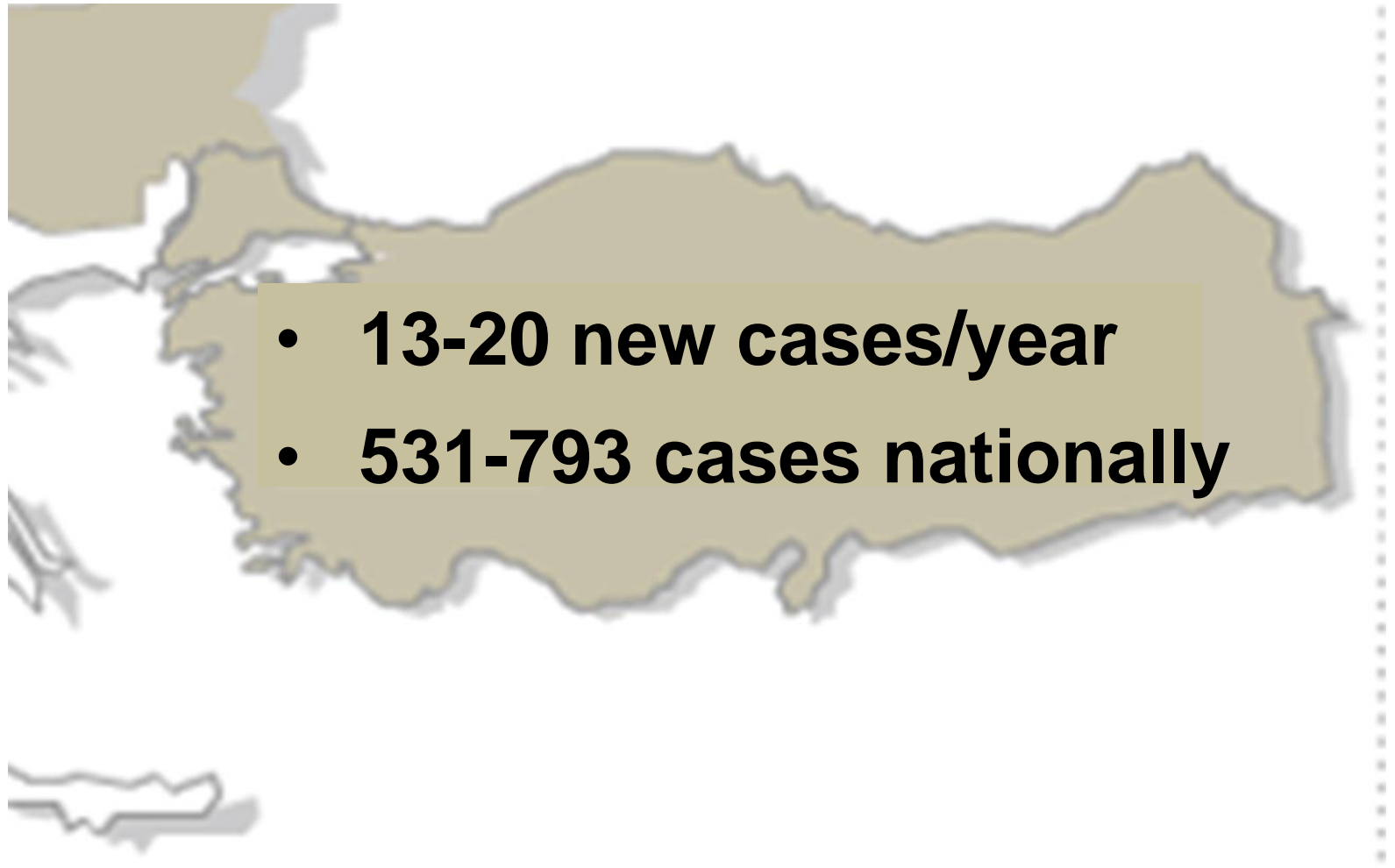
Country	Population (millions)	Prevalence (cases per million inhabitants) (calculated from incidence)			Total cases in each country (calculated from prevalence)		
		AIP	VP	EPP	AIP	VP	EPP
Finland	5.35	5.9 (0.9–20.3)	2.4 (0.08–14.0)	–	32 (6–109)	13 (1–75)	–
France	62.2	5.5 (3.2–8.1)	4.8 (3.2–7.6)	4.6 (2.3–8.5)	342 (119–504)	299 (199–473)	286 (143–529)
Irish Republic	4.2	–	6.4 (1.2–22.8)	6.2 (0.2–33.9)		27 (5–96)	26 (1–142)
Northern Italy	27	5.0 (2.3–9.5)	–	–	135 (62–257)		
Italy	58.1	–	2.4 (1.2–4.4)	5.4 (3.1–9.2)		139 (70–256)	314 (180–535)
Netherlands	16.7	8.1 (3.6–15.3)	2.4 (0.4–9.6)	13.9 (6.2–28.5)	135 (60–256)	40 (7–160)	232 (104–476)
Norway	4.7	6.3 (0.9–23.0)	2.8 (0.1–15.6)	27.7 (8.5–63.9)	30 (4–108)	13 (1–73)	130 (40–300)
Poland	38.5	7.2 (3.6–12.2)	0.40 <sup>a</sup> (<0.1–2.0)	1.5 (0.2–6.9)	277 (139–470)	15 <sup>a</sup> (1–77)	58 (8–266)
Spain	40.5	6.3 (3.6–9.9)	1.6 (0.4–4.0)	2.3 (0.8–5.4)	255 (146–401)	65 (16–162)	93 (32–219)
Sweden	9.1	23.0 (12.6–38.7)	4.4 (0.8–12.8)	13.9 (4.6–33.1)	209 (115–352)	40 (7–117)	127 (42–301)
Switzerland	7.6	9.9 (3.2–23.0)	10.4 (4.0–22.8)	27.0 (11.6–53.1)	75 (24–175)	79 (30–173)	205 (88–404)
UK	61.1	7.2 (5.0–10.4)	3.2 (1.6–5.2)	25.4 (18.5–30.0)	440 (306–635)	196 (98–318)	1552 (1130–1833)
All countries	308.05	5.9 <sup>b</sup> (5.0–7.2)	3.2 (2.4–4.0)	9.2 (7.7–11.6)			



# Turkey: Porphyria burden (95% CI)

	<b>AIP</b>	<b>VP</b>
New cases per year	8-12	5-8
Prevalence	347-485	185-300

# Turkey: Porphyria burden (95% CI)









# The spread of VP



# Durban, South Africa





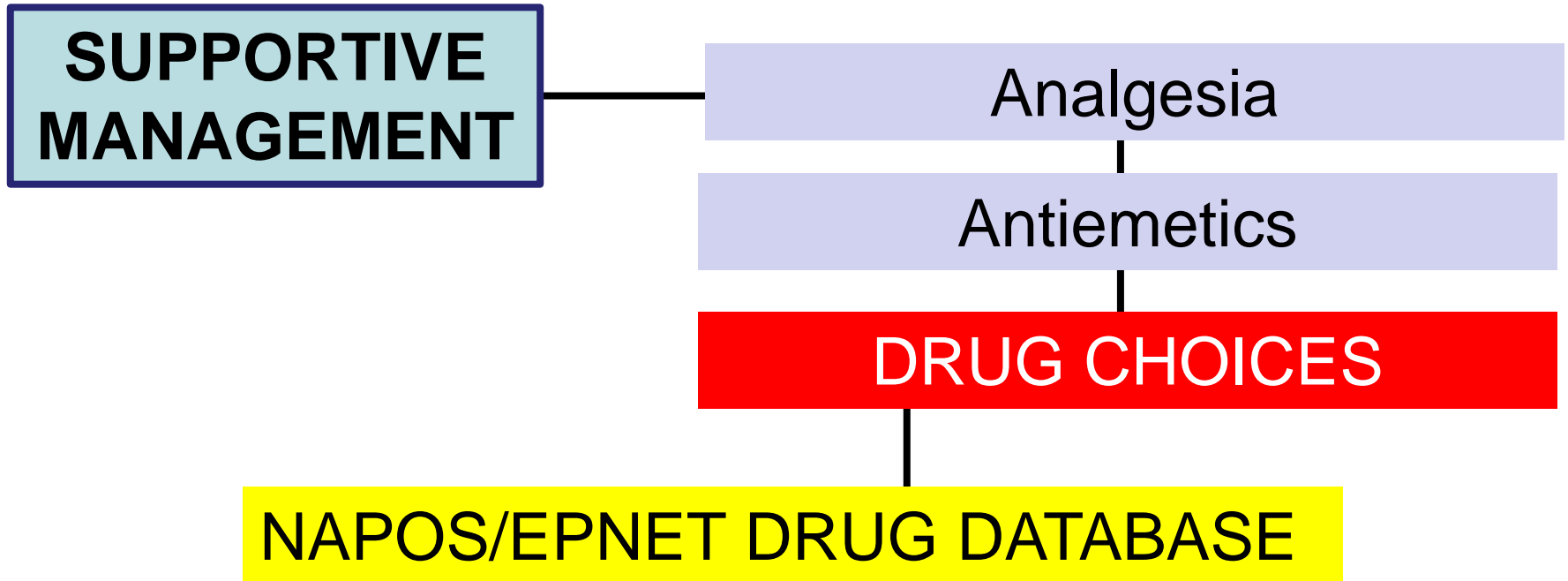
CRANSTON  
FINE ARTS





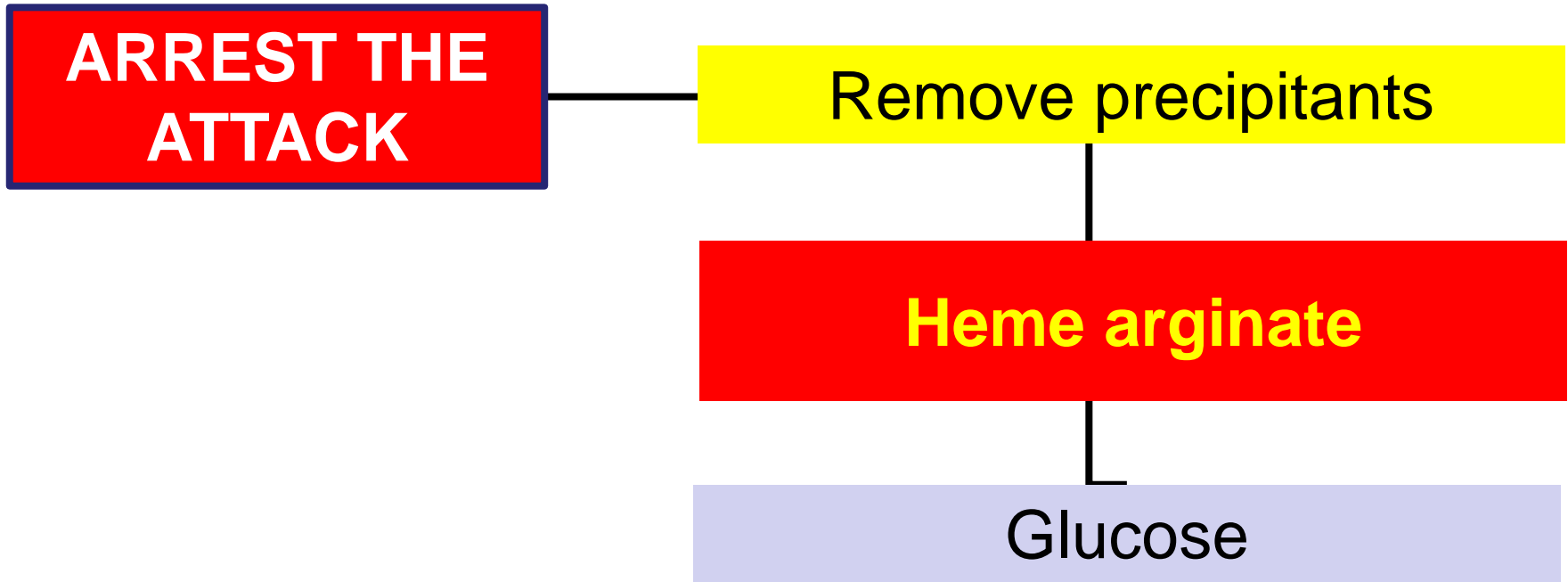


# Managing the acute attack





# Managing the acute attack

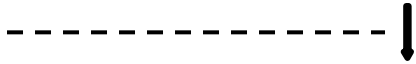


5-aminolevulinate synthase (ALAS)

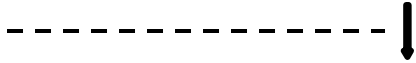


**HEME  
ARGINATE**

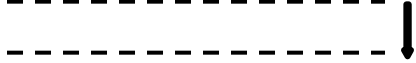
**GLYCINE + SUCCINYL CoA**



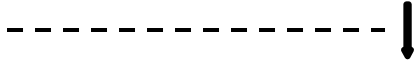
**5-AMINOLEVULINATE**



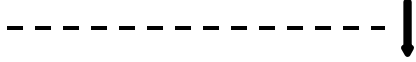
**PORPHOBILINOGEN**



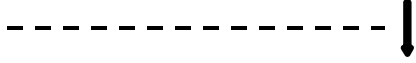
**UROPORPHYRINOGEN**



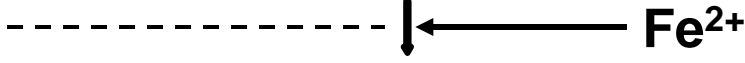
**COPROPORPHYRINOGEN**



**PROTOPORPHYRINOGEN**



**PROTOPORPHYRIN**



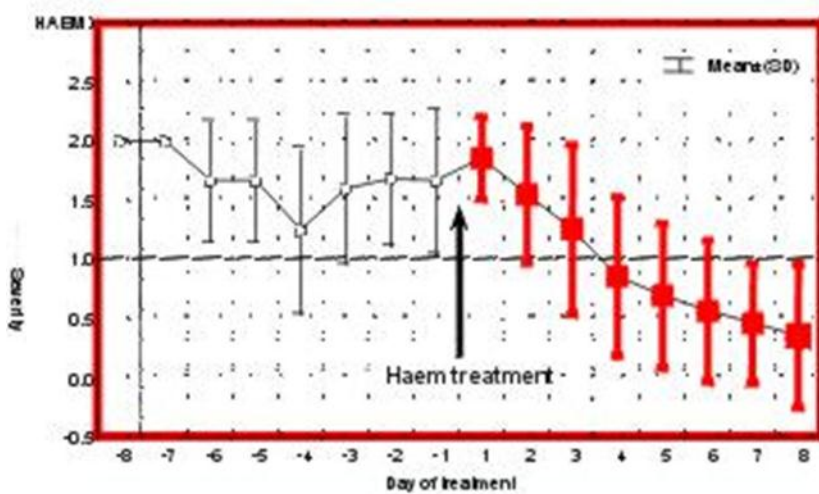
**HEME**

# Heme arginate

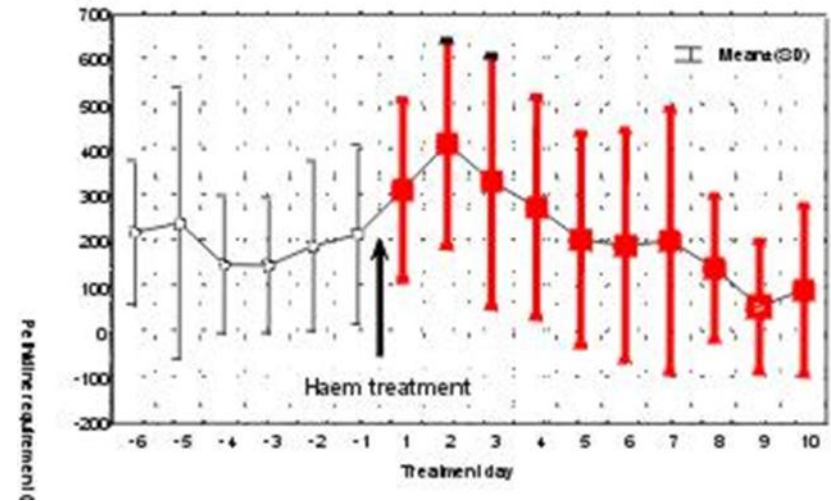


# Efficacy of heme arginate

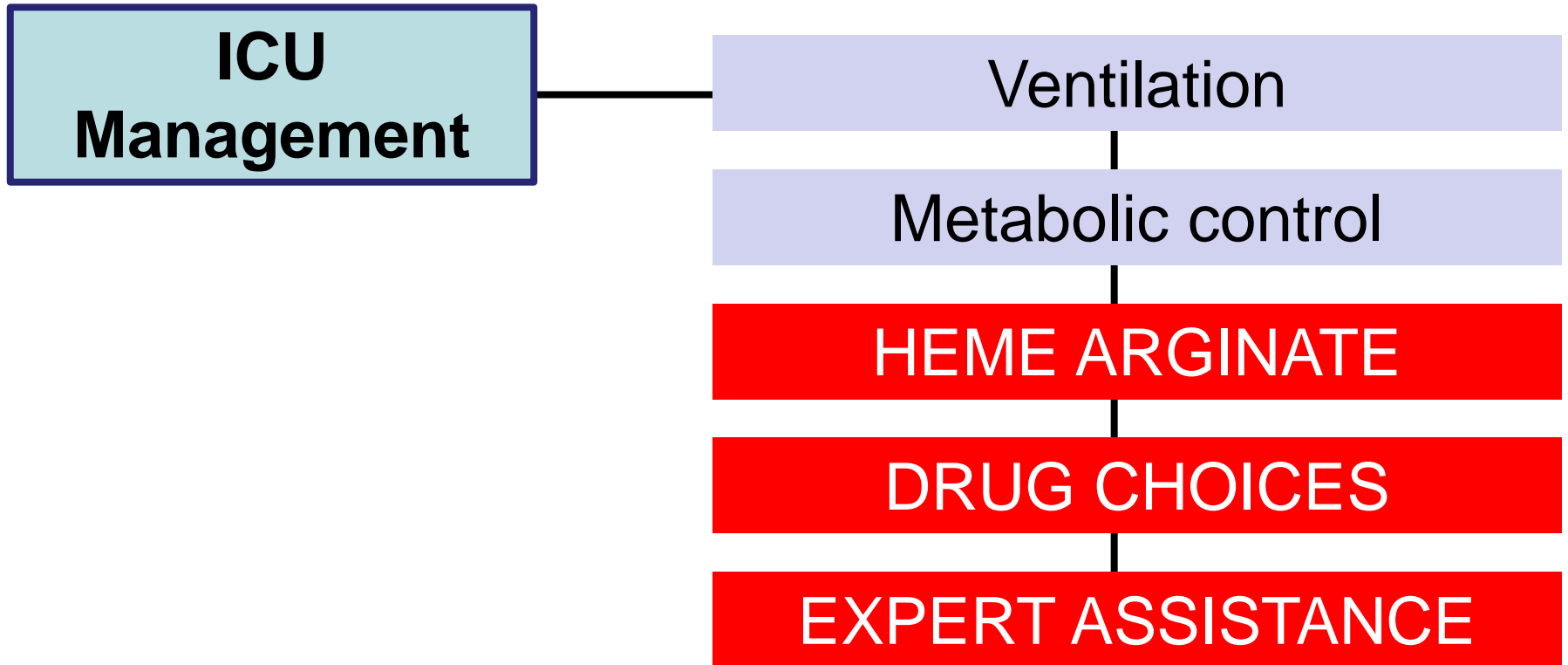
## Pain score



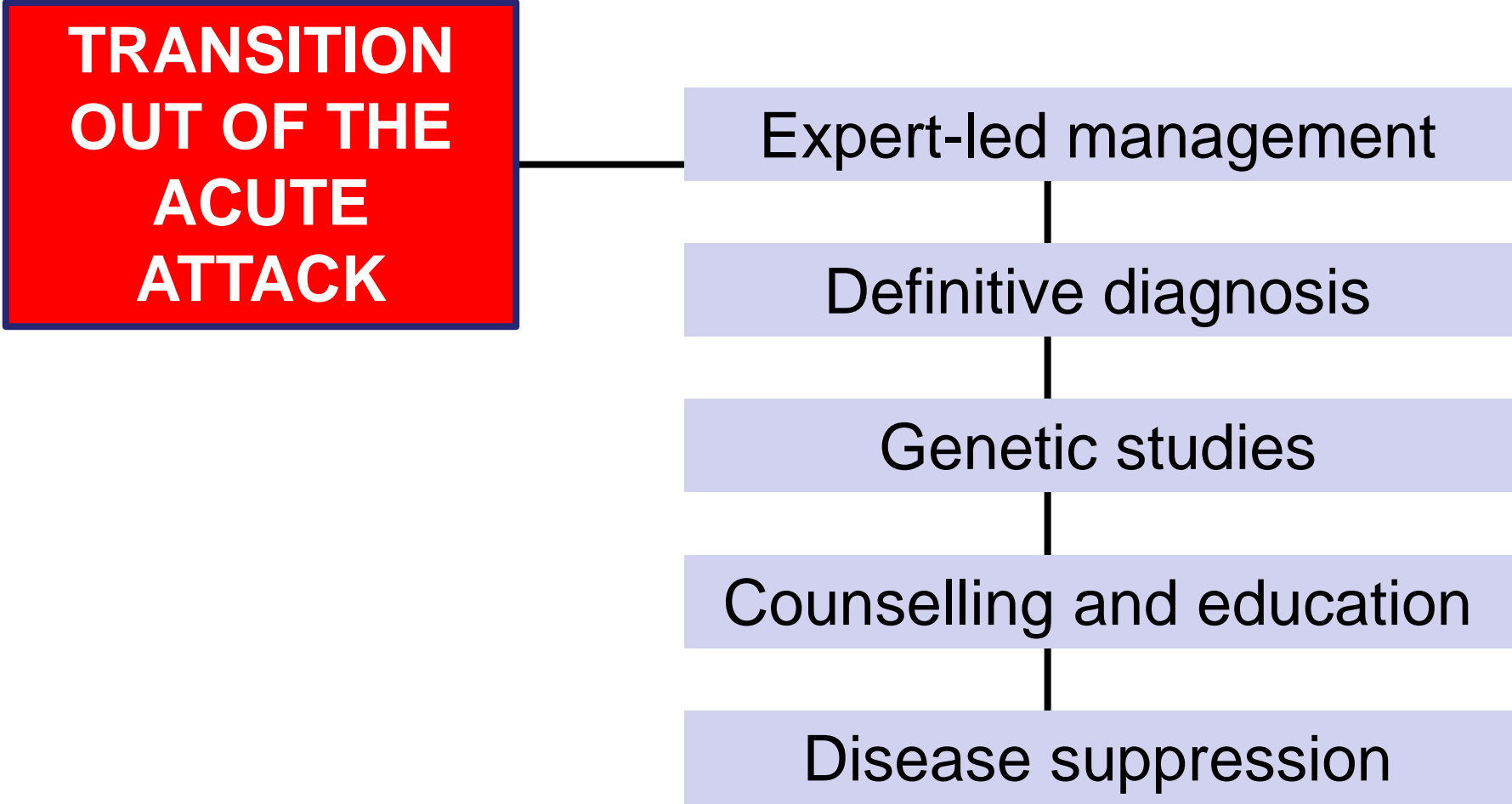
## Opiate requirement



# Managing the acute attack



# Preparing for a lifetime of uneventful porphyria



# Innovative therapies under study

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- Enzyme replacement
  - Recombinant hydroxymethylbilane synthase
- Hepatocyte transfer
  - Restores activity
- RNA interference
  - RNAi targeting ALAS-1

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# HOMOZYGOUS PORPHYRIAS



# Recessive presentations of porphyria

## AUTOSOMAL RECESSIVE

- ALA dehydratase porphyria
- Congenital erythropoietic porphyria
- Erythropoietic protoporphyria

## AUTOSOMAL DOMINANT

*(presenting with homozygosity)*

- Acute intermittent porphyria
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Hereditary coproporphyria
- Variegate porphyria







# “Homozygous” VP



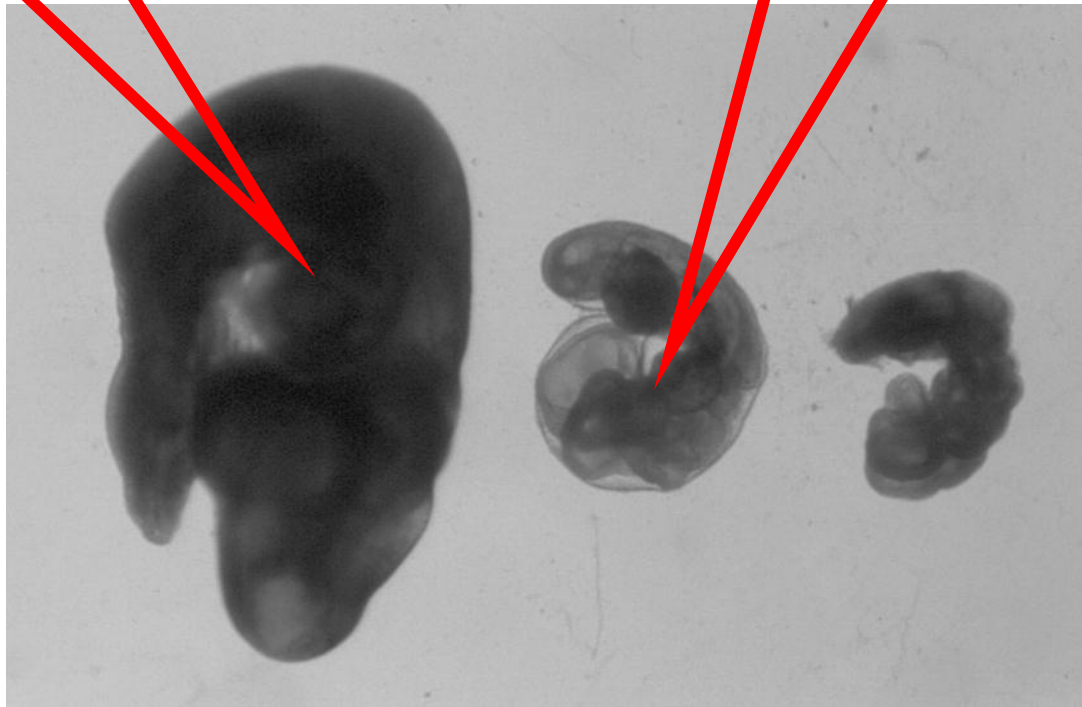
<b>I</b>	<b>R59W</b>	<b>RI68C</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>R59W</b>	<b>Y348C</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>R59W</b>	<b>R138P</b>

Meissner et al *Nature Genet* 1996  
Corrigall et al *Mol Genet Metab* 2000  
Palmer et al *Br J Dermatol* 2001

# Homozygosity for a potent mutation is lethal

R59W/WT pup

R59W/R59W pup



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**THANK YOU**