

# Liver Disease and Liver Research: What Does The Future Offer?

Organised by the National Institute for Health Research  
Birmingham Liver Biomedical Research Unit

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

University Hospital Birmingham   
NHS Foundation Trust

## Chaired by Professor David Adams

Professor of Hepatology  
Director of the NIHR Birmingham Liver Biomedical Research Unit  
Head of the Centre for Liver Research  
Head of the School of Immunity & Infection

## Studies being presented:

### LEAN study by Dr Matthew Armstrong

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is now the most common cause of liver disease in the western world. It occurs as a consequence of obesity and diabetes when fat deposited in the liver stimulates a harmful response termed steatohepatitis. There are currently no safe and effective drug therapies available for patients with the more severe forms of this disease. LEAN is a study which investigates a new anti-diabetes drug, called Liraglutide, which was developed by the pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk. It has been modified to mimic a naturally occurring hormone that is produced in humans after eating food.

### iTherX study by Dr Ian Rowe

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection can cause the liver to fail and also can cause the development of liver cancer. This is a reason why some patients need a liver transplant. It is known however that after liver transplant, the virus infects the transplanted liver and indeed infection occurs in the first two days after the operation. There is currently no treatment available to prevent this re-infection although some patients are offered antiviral treatment drugs to eliminate the virus at some stage after transplantation. This treatment is more difficult after transplantation than in patients who have not had a transplant and it is frequently ineffective.

### REALISTIC study by Dr Chris Corbett

Cirrhosis is scarring of the liver for which there are many different causes. Often there is a reduction in liver function, and for this the most effective treatment is liver transplant. However, as demand for liver transplants outstrips the number of available organs, patients are dying on the waiting list. In this clinical trial, which is the largest of its kind, we are looking to see if using the patient's own bone marrow derived stem cells can help improve liver function. Stem cells will be isolated from the bone marrow and infused on three occasions via a peripheral vein. The study will recruit 81 patients, and is run from Birmingham as well as Edinburgh and Nottingham.

## Do you want to find out more about liver disease and liver research?

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