

BACKGROUND MEDIA INFORMATION

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL): Promoting liver research and education across Europe since 1966

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL), The Home of Hepatology, is Europe's leading organisation dedicated to advancing the scientific, medical and public understanding of the liver and liver disease. Since its foundation in 1966, EASL has evolved into a driving force by supporting the education of healthcare professionals, promoting research in the field of liver disease and fostering policy changes to support liver health.

EASL – a not-for-profit organisation – is an ever-growing global liver community with around 4,000 members from all over the world. EASL provides an annual platform, The International Liver Congress™, for more than 10,000 liver experts to meet and share best practices, research, new data and ideas for the future of hepatology. EASL's members include many of the world's leading hepatologists. The society has given rise to many international clinical trials and research collaborations in liver disease, to the benefit of patients all over the world.

Liver disease: The scale of the problem

- In Europe alone, liver cirrhosis accounts for 170,000 deaths per year, equating to approximately 2% of all deaths in most European countries¹
- Liver cancer is the second most common cause of death from cancer worldwide, responsible for nearly 746,000 deaths annually²
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) affects up to 44% of the population in Europe (including obese children)¹
- 350,000 to 500,000 people die each year from Hepatitis C related liver diseases³

EASL's mission is to ensure that all those who are involved with liver disease can realise their full potential to cure and prevent it. To achieve this mission, EASL has six key priorities, all of which contribute to the aim of achieving better liver health across the world:

1. Promoting research into the science of liver disease
2. Providing state-of-the-art education for healthcare professionals and scientists
3. Improving public awareness of liver disease, diagnosis and management
4. Advising European health authorities on liver conditions
5. Facilitating scientific exchange and fostering European multi-centre controlled trials
6. Supporting young investigators to ensure that the liver remains at the forefront of research

The International Liver Congress™

The annual congress is the biggest event in the EASL calendar, attracting scientific and medical experts from around the world to learn more about the latest in liver research. Specialists share research studies and findings and discuss prominent topics related to liver disease.

In 2015, EASL and the hepatology community celebrated the 50th annual meeting, attracting over 10,000 delegates and 250 media representatives from all corners of the globe.

**The International Liver Congress™ 2016 takes place 13-17 April, at the Fira
Barcelona Gran Via, Barcelona, Spain.**

Supporting research

Through its annual scientific meetings, official journal (the *Journal of Hepatology*), young investigator fellowships and support of multi-centre clinical trials, as well as the provision of funding, EASL promotes research into the liver and liver disease and supports wide dissemination of vital research findings.

Promoting education

Education is a priority for EASL and the association provides CME-accredited learning opportunities at every level from clinical fellow to professor. EASL runs a vast educational programme including a range of residential courses known as the EASL Schools of Hepatology, which are offered in formats suitable for both basic researchers and clinicians. EASL also provides Specialist and Monothematic Conferences which focus on key topics in liver disease, research and management. Further educational opportunities for investigators at the start of their careers are available through the EASL Masterclass Programme. Find out more about EASL's educational programme and upcoming events at: <http://www.easl.eu/discover/events/calendar/2016>.

EASL also offers online and mobile-led education to its members:

- Liver Tree™, designed with healthcare professionals in mind, provides a comprehensive educational e-learning portal collating all EASL educational materials. It provides an online destination for up-to-date research and materials in the field of hepatology, recent and historical webcast presentations, abstracts, ePosters and learning quizzes
- iLiver, an interactive and dynamic app designed for professional use, delivers instant medical information and clinical recommendations to hepatologists, gastroenterologists and internal medicine specialists. The app contains rigorously reviewed and regularly updated information specifically related to liver disease management. The app is free and available on iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

To further advocate research and education EASL funds a range of fellowships aimed at all levels, from medical students starting out in hepatology to physician scientists and postdoctoral researchers, and funds Registry Grants to support consortia groups.

Information about EASL fellowships is available at:

<http://www.easl.eu/research/support/easl-fellowship>.

EASL also provides dedicated mentorship programmes to support investigators during the first stages of their careers. The events and opportunities offered by EASL expose attendees to some of the most important opinion leaders in hepatology, giving them invaluable time for scientific exchange and conversations with senior hepatologists with many years of experience. Information about the EASL mentorship programme is available at: <http://www.easl.eu/research/support/mentorship-programme>.

Providing clinical guidance

In addition, EASL develops and disseminates Clinical Practice Guidelines to assist physicians and other healthcare providers in the clinical decision-making process to help ensure optimal care across various aspects of liver disease. EASL has developed Clinical Practice Guidelines on managing the following conditions:

- HCV recommendations
- Autoimmune hepatitis
- Vascular liver disease
- Liver transplantation
- Gallstones
- Benign liver tumours
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

The Clinical Practice Guidelines can be accessed at: www.easl.eu/clinical-practice-guideline.

Informing public policy

EASL is involved in a wide range of public policy initiatives aimed at raising awareness among EU decision makers regarding the need to address liver disease in a comprehensive manner. Recent examples include:

- In May 2015, EASL held an event in the European Parliament to re-launch the MEP Friends of the Liver Interest Group. The event highlighted the importance of the MEP group in light of the high burden of liver disease in Europe and advocated evidence-based policy measures that address alcohol and obesity-related liver conditions
- In April 2015, EASL, working with other partners, helped secure a European Parliament Resolution on alcohol
- In November 2015, EASL participated in the 3rd Awareness Week on Alcohol-Related Harm, an annual event that it co-organises yearly with the European Liver Patients Association (ELPA) and several other NGOs
- Last year, EASL joined over 100 leading researchers as a co-signatory of a letter published in *The Times* calling for the overturn of proposed European Parliament amendments in the draft EU regulation on data protection that could have restricted clinical trial research
- In 2015, the first proposals from EASL members were issued under the new EU research framework, Horizon 2020. EASL supported the three projects (EPoS, Carbalive and HEPCAR), which were all successful in their funding bids

**For more information about EASL and its activities,
please visit: www.easl.eu**

References

- 1 The burden of liver disease in Europe a review of available epidemiological data. EASL 2013. Available from: http://www.easl.eu/medias/EASLimg/Discover/EU/54ae845caec619f_file.pdf. Last accessed: March 2016.
- 2 Globocan 2012. Estimated Cancer Incidence, Mortality and Prevalence Worldwide in 2012. Available from: http://globocan.iarc.fr/Pages/fact_sheets_cancer.aspx. Last accessed: March 2016.
- 3 World Health Organization. Hepatitis C. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs164/en/>. Last accessed: March 2016.