



## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Foundation for Liver Research is an independent charity funding research into various aspects of liver disease within a purpose-built research facility, the Institute of Hepatology, in central London. We are a truly international organisation, with links to many great academic institutions around the world and we are affiliated to Birkbeck, University of London.

You are receiving this Newsletter as you have previously made a donation to the Foundation. Many of our donors have made contact with us after they have lost someone to liver disease, in the hope that our research may contribute to better diagnosis and treatment for liver patients.

**1 in 10 people will have a problem with their liver at some point in their life.**

**Our vision is that through scientific research new and improved treatments can be developed for those whose lives are affected by liver disease.**

Sadly liver disease is becoming ever more prevalent and the importance of our work could not be greater. Within the Institute we have a dedicated team of scientists and our aim is to provide them with world class laboratory facilities and the support they need to produce research which will help shape the fight against liver disease.



Professor Roger Williams, a world leader in the field of liver care, leads our research team at the Institute of Hepatology

PROFESSOR ROGER WILLIAMS, CBE

Liver disease is the only major cause of death in the UK still increasing year-on-year, with mortality rates rising faster than diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke and respiratory disease. Twice as many people now die from liver disease as in 1991. It is estimated that deaths from liver disease will double over the next 20 years.

### RESEARCH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Liver transplant survival for patients 5yrs post transplant is now at 70%
- ✓ Acute liver failure survival rates have increased from 30% to 60%
- ✓ Primary liver cancer survival with early diagnosis is now 50% at 5yrs
- ✓ Chronic hepatitis C can be cured in up to 80% of patients
- ✓ Hepatitis B can be controlled in 90% of patients

## RESEARCH AT THE INSTITUTE OF HEPATOLOGY

Research in the Institute is organised around major research projects within the common overall theme of ***Liver Cell Injury and Repair***. Cell injury whether due to viral hepatitis, therapeutic drug hepatotoxicity, autoimmunity or the major lifestyle issues of alcohol consumption and obesity, involves common mechanisms of cell death. Similarly, when common processes of cell repair are dis-regulated, this forms the basis of progression to cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. Identification of the specific cellular pathways involved will allow development of new therapeutic agents for use in the early stages where complete recovery is an option, and in the more chronic phases for halting progression of liver damage.

### A 'magic bullet' to treat liver cancer

Dr Marco Della Peruta has worked for the Foundation for 3yrs and together with colleagues at UCL he is developing a strategy to deliver therapeutic genes directly to the liver. One of the most remarkable features of the liver is its ability to self-repair by producing replacement liver cells, or hepatocytes. In patients with hepatocellular carcinoma, the liver's ability to produce these healthy hepatocytes becomes impaired and cancerous cells begin to proliferate. Marco's strategy is to introduce a therapeutic gene which will travel directly to the liver and target and destroy cancer cells. This 'magic bullet' will be carried to the liver by a viral vector and will be administered to the patient through a single injection. Marco's work is now at the stage where pre-clinical models have shown very promising results and the aim is to move into trials with patients within the next 12 months.

If you would like further information about the Foundation please contact: Natalie Day [n.day@researchinliver.org.uk](mailto:n.day@researchinliver.org.uk) or telephone us on 020 7255 9832

If you would like to receive further newsletters by email please send an email to us at: [n.day@researchinliver.org.uk](mailto:n.day@researchinliver.org.uk) simply typing 'email newsletter' in the tagline and we will do the rest.



Dr Marco Della Peruta

The Foundation's expenditure on research at the Institute of Hepatology for the 12 month period ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 amounted to **£1,769,985** or **£4,849 per day**

Investment and legacy income covers approximately 50% of that total  
***This year we need to raise £750,000 through donations and grants to keep our scientists at work***

***Help us fight liver disease***

