

## BACKGROUND MEDIA INFORMATION

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

EASL is Europe's foremost organisation dedicated to advancing scientific, medical, and public understanding of the liver and liver disease. Since its foundation in 1966, EASL has established itself as a driving force in promoting research in the field of liver disease, supporting the education of healthcare professionals and scientists, and fostering policy change to support liver health and research.

EASL – which is a not-for-profit organisation – is an ever-growing society with over 4,000 members from more than 100 countries around the world. EASL's members include many of the leading hepatologists in Europe and beyond. The society has paved the way for many international clinical trials and research collaborations in liver disease for the benefit of patients all over the world.

#### Liver disease: The scale of the problem

- Globally, liver cirrhosis was estimated to be responsible for over **one million deaths** in 2010, equating to approximately 2% of all deaths worldwide.<sup>1</sup>
- Worldwide, liver cancer is the sixth most common cancer.<sup>2</sup>
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) affects more than 20% of the population worldwide.<sup>3</sup>
- 350,000-500,000 people die each year from hepatitis C-related liver diseases.<sup>4</sup>

EASL has six key priorities, all of which contribute to the aim of achieving better liver health across Europe and beyond:

- Promoting research concerning the liver.
- Promoting state-of-the-art education of physicians and scientists.
- Fostering public awareness of liver diseases and their management.
- Advising European health authorities on liver conditions.
- Facilitating scientific exchange and fostering European multi-centre controlled trials.
- Supporting the participation of young investigators in the field.

#### 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 the wide dissemination of research findings.

#### The International Liver Congress™

This annual congress is the biggest event in the EASL calendar, attracting scientific and medical experts from around the world to learn about the latest in liver research. Specialists share research studies and findings, and discuss the hottest topics related to liver disease. In 2014, the congress attracted almost 11,000 delegates and 250 media representatives from all corners of the globe.

2015 is a very special year for EASL and the hepatology community as they will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. The International Liver Congress™ 2015 takes place April 22-26, 2015, at the Reed Messe Congress Center, Vienna, Austria.

EASL runs a vast educational programme including a range of residential courses known as the EASL *Schools of Hepatology*, as well as special conferences and monothematic conferences focusing on key topics in liver disease research and management. Find out more about EASL's educational programme and upcoming events at: [www.easl.eu/\\_events/upcoming](http://www.easl.eu/_events/upcoming).

EASL also offers online and mobile education to its members:

- [Liver Tree](#) – a one stop educational e-learning portal collating all EASL educational materials. It offers a wide range of educational content, including webcasts of selected EASL courses and conferences, accredited courses, eSeries, case studies, learning quizzes, video podcasts and congress materials
- [iLiver](#) – an interactive app delivering instant medical information and clinical recommendations to hepatologists, gastro-enterologists and internal medicine specialists. Information on liver diseases is rigorously reviewed and updated regularly. The app is free and available on iPhone, iPad and Android

The association funds a range of fellowships aimed at all levels, from students starting out in hepatology to physician scientists and postdoctoral researchers. It also runs dedicated mentorship and masterclass programmes to support investigators at the start of their careers.

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

- Hepatic Encephalopathy in Chronic Liver Disease
- Alcoholic Liver Disease
- Chronic Hepatitis B
- Hepatocellular Carcinoma
- Wilson's Disease
- Hepatitis C Virus Infection
- Ascites, Spontaneous Bacterial Peritonitis, and Hepatorenal Syndrome in Cirrhosis
- HFE Hemochromatosis
- Cholestatic Liver Diseases

The Clinical Practice Guidelines can be accessed at: [www.easl.eu/clinical-practice-guideline](http://www.easl.eu/clinical-practice-guideline).

### **Informing public policy**

EASL is involved in a wide range of public affairs initiatives aimed at raising awareness amongst EU decision makers about the need to tackle liver disease in a comprehensive manner. Recent examples include:

- November 2014, EASL took part in the second *Awareness Week on Alcohol-Related Harm*, which brought together leading European medical and patient organisations to identify policy gaps relating to alcohol at both EU and national levels.
- December 2014, EASL launched [HEPAMAP: A Roadmap for Hepatology Research in Europe](#) at a European Parliament event. HEPAMAP, developed for policymakers, stresses the need for further research on liver disease and calls on policymakers to step up their efforts and to recognise the links between liver disease, lifestyle and other diseases such as cardiovascular conditions and cancer.

**For more information about EASL and its activities,  
please visit: [www.easl.eu](http://www.easl.eu)**

## References

<sup>1</sup> Mokdad A. Liver cirrhosis mortality in 187 countries between 1980 and 2010: a systematic analysis. BMC Medicine 2014, 12:145. Available at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/12/145> Last accessed: March 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Cancer Research UK. Risks and causes of liver cancer. Available at: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/type/liver-cancer/about/risks-and-causes-of-liver-cancer> Last viewed: February 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Satar N et al. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. BMJ 2014;349:g4596. Available at: <http://www.bmj.com/content/349/bmj.g4596> Last accessed: March 2015.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. Hepatitis C. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs164/en/> Last viewed: February 2015.