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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE LIVER (EASL)

As the globe faces all-time high threat from liver cancer, the liver community fights back with robust action-plan

Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021: As the latest data suggests, liver cancer is now the third-most deadly cancer in the world, claiming nearly 1 million lives in 2020, the liver community takes robust action to tackle the burden posed by the disease.

4 February: Liver cancer has become an increasingly serious public health threat, and high-quality research and seminal developments into the disease are now more important than ever. According to the “Cancer Today” report published in December 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO),¹ liver cancer has risen to become the third-most deadly and sixth-most prevalent malignancy worldwide, with at least 830,180 people dying from the disease in 2020. Amongst patients with cirrhosis, liver cancer is the leading cause of death.

EASL has made it its mission to tackle this threat head on and champion the research, studies, education, and awareness behind life-saving treatments and cures critical to reducing this burden. By facilitating seminal meetings and communication among specialists across Europe, the organisation aims to ensure all those involved with treating liver disease can realise their full potential in curing and preventing it. EASL continues to act as a leading advisor to European health authorities and organisations concerning liver cancer, the provision of clinical services and advocating the need for greater research funding. As collaboration is key to optimising resources and knowledge, EASL is building strong relationships with patient associations and public health organisations, so that more lives can be saved and improved.

“With liver cancer posing an increasingly major burden on Europe, EASL is well placed to play a crucial role in turning the tide,” said Prof. Maria Reig of BCLC group from Hospital Clinic of Barcelona, Spain, and EASL Governing Board member. “We have established a clear strategy for driving novel advancements in the field of liver cancer and developed a comprehensive programme to accommodate this, helping to ensure everyone operating in the liver cancer community gets the support they need”.

Education is a central priority with EASL offering educational opportunities at every level, whether through dedicated schools or in-depth masterclasses, as well as open-access educational resources on liver cancer developed with leading experts across the globe. These diverse resources range from the online HCC management course, to clinical practice guidelines, and a collection of articles from the *Journal of Hepatology*.

EASL’s cancer strategy is more than ever focused on fostering partnerships across the globe with patient organisations and other stakeholders. Prof. Maria Buti, Professor of Medicine at the Internal Medicine and Hepatology Department, Hospital General Universitari Valle Hebron, Barcelona, and EASL EU Policy Councillor commented: “Science must focus on the individual, from prevention and early diagnosis to treatment and care. By working together with our partners, combining forces and focus, we can reduce suffering and improve quality of life for patients and survivors of liver cancer.”

Digital Liver Cancer Summit (LCS) 2021, which will take place on 5 and 6 February, spearheads research, development, and strategies for treating patients, in a dynamic, exciting, and interactive digital environment. The event offers delegates the latest on basic, translational, and clinical data – including on hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, and rare primary liver cancers. All new information will be presented to, and debated with, participants and as such, directly impact future clinical practice worldwide.

Prior to Digital LCS, EASL is holding a Patient Synergies Roundtable on 4 February 2021 – which also marks World Cancer Day – exploring the needs of liver cancer patients and their families. The discussion will focus on investing in a more joined-up approach to improve the life of patients with liver cancer.

Liver cancer has consistently been one of the most pivotal topics at EASL’s flagship event, the International Liver Congress™ (ILC). This event involves collaborations with the International Liver Cancer Association (ILCA) and the European Network for the Study of

Cholangiocarcinoma (ENS-CCA), alongside interactive activities such as think tanks, symposia, and meet the experts, as well as abstract sessions, oral sessions, and posters.

In 2020, the European Commission launched an open public consultation on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan of which the Action Plan is expected this year. EASL's strategy is aligned with the EU aims, working on prevention, cure, and quality of life. The implementation process of the EU Cancer Plan is expected to help facilitate partnerships and greater support of clinical research in liver cancer. At the EU level, EASL will continue to focus on prevention, advocating the Farm to Fork Strategy to promote healthy diets, as well as the role of tobacco and alcohol taxation. EASL is also committed to improving quality of life for patients and survivors, as well as avoiding discrimination.

EASL's prestigious journals – the *Journal of Hepatology* and the *Journal of Hepatology Reports (JHEP)* – have been instrumental in driving the liver cancer agenda. These publications provide a crucial platform to showcase outstanding research articles that directly contribute to the improvement of diagnostic tools, treatments and ultimately, patient lives.

In 2020, the *Journal of Hepatology* was awarded the highest-ever impact factor of 20.852, confirming its status as a top-tier journal. *JHEP Reports* was recently accepted for indexing by Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and a testament to the quality of the journal.

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About the EASL Patient Synergies Roundtable Discussion

EASL is holding a discussion aiming to identify the needs of liver cancer patients and their families, and the best ways to accompany them. EASL believes that patients can play a pivotal role in research, development, and strategies for treating patients with cancer. Furthermore, there is a need to make the lifecycle management of medicines more efficient and adapted to the evolving patient environment.

The Roundtable Discussion will be an open interaction between scientists and patient representatives on how to invest in a robust framework – a framework to facilitate better interconnectedness and thus improve the lives of patients with cancer, taking into account all types of diversity. Attendance at this session is open to the public. The Patient Synergies Roundtable is taking place via Zoom on Thursday, 4 February 2020, 2:00–4:00 pm CET.

For more information and to register for free, please visit: <https://easl.eu/event/easl-patient-synergies-roundtable-on-liver-cancer/>

About Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021

The two-day Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021, building on EASL's success of Digital International Liver Congress™ 2020, puts delegates at the forefront of research, development, and strategies for treating patients. In a dynamic, exciting, interactive, digital environment.

Join Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021 to get the absolute latest on basic, translational, and clinical data – including on hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, and rare primary liver cancers. The comprehensive updates offered at the summit will directly impact future clinical practice worldwide, because all the new data related to clinical trials will be presented to participants and discussed intensely. Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021 is taking place 5–6 February 2021.

For more information on attendance and registration, please visit <https://easl.eu/event/digital-liver-cancer-summit-2021/>

About the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)

EASL, the European Association for the Study of the Liver, founded in 1966, is a medical association dedicated to pursuing excellence in liver research, to the clinical practice of liver disorders, and to providing education to all those interested in hepatology. As of 2021, EASL serves more than 4,200 members.

EASL engages globally with all stakeholders in the field of hepatology, worldwide. Our aim is to spread knowledge and expertise in best practices and the latest scientific breakthroughs in this field. We advocate for the benefit of patients and advise European and national health authorities. EASL runs topical conferences, schools, and related educational meetings. Our journals, the *Journal of Hepatology* and *JHEP Reports*, provide an international forum for the publication of original articles, reviews, and letters to the Editor, describing the latest science in hepatology. Our eLearning hub, EASL Campus, offers more than 4,100 resources on hepatology and liver research. For more information, visit <https://easl.eu/>

EASL's vision involves effectively collaborating with like-minded and equally ambitious medical associations focusing on liver cancer. This will help create networks and educational opportunities worldwide, develop world-leading clinical and research guidelines, enhance expertise, and promote the development of multidisciplinary teams.

EASL's flagship event, the International Liver Congress™ is taking place over four days, 23–26 June 2021. Members of the press are invited to make contact. For more information visit <https://easl.eu/ilc2021>

Contact

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References

ⁱ Sung H, Ferlay J, Siegel RL, Laversanne M, Soerjomataram I, Jemal A, Bray F. Global Cancer Statistics 2020: GLOBOCAN estimates of incidence and mortality worldwide for 36 cancers in 185 countries. *CA Cancer J Clin*, submitted