



Press release

**The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)
Celebrates 40 Years of Achievements during its
Annual Meeting in Paris**

Paris, April 4th, 2005. The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) will be celebrating its 40th anniversary at the time of its Annual Meeting. This five-day encounter will be held in Paris at the Palais des Congrès on April 13 - 17, 2005.

EASL is an internationally renowned association of clinicians and scientists striving to promote liver research and improve the treatment of liver diseases worldwide. To celebrate four decades of achievements, it will bring together over 4,000 participants who will take stock of the most recent scientific and medical findings in the field of hepatology presented in State of the Art Lectures, Single Topic Symposia, Early Morning Workshops and a day-long Postgraduate Course on a "hot topic" in hepatology. The scientific program covers subjects ranging from very basic to highly clinical presentations.

The 2005 Annual Meeting will address a number of current and important topics related to the liver and liver diseases, which affect a growing number of patients in the industrialized world. International experts in liver diseases will present papers on increasingly common liver-related health concerns such as viral hepatitis C and B, alcoholic liver disease, NAFLD (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease), liver cancer, as well as novel treatments.

Liver disease is a growing health problem in the industrialized world. While the high prevalence of hepatitis C virus (approximately 1% of the French population is infected) is generally well-known, the prevalence of hepatitis B infection has been underestimated for many years. Factors such as an imbalanced diet that is overly rich in fats, changes in metabolism, and the rising number of obese individuals in Western Europe are responsible for the growing incidence of potentially serious liver conditions related to metabolic deregulations in the absence of heavy alcohol consumption, or NAFLD (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease). The incidence of liver cancer is growing following peaks of viral hepatitis transmission. Liver cancer, which is prevalent in Japan today, is expected to be a major health problem in Europe in the next decade.

Conference participants will also learn about new approaches to treating liver diseases, including:

- the development of new drugs and approaches for the treatment of viral hepatitis (such as antiviral molecules, therapeutic vaccines, and immunomodulators) that can increase the remission rate for hepatitis B and the cure rate for hepatitis C infections;
- improvements in the field of liver transplantation, the only therapeutic option for patients with end-stage liver disease and, in some cases, liver cancer;
- new drugs being developed to prevent, slow the progression of, or cure primary liver cancers.

In addition, high-sensitivity diagnostic approaches to allow early diagnosis and better therapeutic results will be presented.

Background on EASL

The European Association for the Study of the Liver was founded in Marburg, Germany in April, 1966, to promote liver research and improve the treatment of liver diseases throughout the world. Over the past four decades, its number of members has grown steadily. Efforts to involve young scientists and hepatologists and support their research have been instrumental to the association's success.

As an advisor to European and national health authorities, EASL works to raise public awareness about liver diseases and establish ties among hepatologists around the globe. This is accomplished primarily through its Annual Meeting and the organization of single topic conferences and research workshops on various subjects in basic and clinical hepatology. EASL also has an active educational program that includes the EASL School of Hepatology and the Sheila Sherlock Fellowships to support young scientists and doctors from Europe and developing countries.

EASL is involved in international clinical trials and research collaborations on liver diseases for the benefit of patients. Throughout its history, the association has helped raise awareness of liver disease and has been fortunate to enjoy the support of an ever-increasing number of experts and sponsors concerned about the health and well-being of patients worldwide.

The EASL Scientific Secretary, Professor Massimo Levrero (Italy), and the Administrative Secretary, Professor Jordi Bruix (Spain), will be present at the opening press conference on April 13th at 11:45 a.m. in room 232M, along with the members of the EASL Scientific Committee: Professor David Adams (UK), Professor Jean-François Dufour (Switzerland), Professor Frederik Nevens (Belgium), Professor Jean-Michel Pawlotsky (France), and Professor Christian Trautwein (Germany).

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