

## **HEPATITIS B VIRUS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (HBV SIG): ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19**

This annual report covers the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019.

### **Membership**

The BASL Committee appointed an initial SIG Lead to serve for one year, Dr Patrick Kennedy, Consultant Hepatologist and Gastroenterologist, Royal London Hospital. Dr Kennedy was subsequently elected as SIG lead for the period July 2019 to July 2021.

At the time of writing this report, there are 197 individuals included in the member database. 161 (82%) are BASL members and 36 (18%) are non-members.

### **Meetings**

Two meetings of the SIG were held during 2018-19:

- 31 January 2019, London, 35 participants
- 11 July 2019, London, 36 participants.

### **Key achievements**

The HBV SIG has already had notable success in bringing together investigators from a range of disciplines across the UK, to discuss and identify areas of greatest clinical and academic need. After the SIG meeting in early 2019, a full application to the MRC Partnership scheme to establish a UK HBV consortium was submitted in January. Unfortunately, this was not funded by the MRC, despite the wide range of support for the proposal to bring together clinicians, academics, industry and patient groups. Despite this disappointing outcome, the goals of the SIG remain the same and are as follows:

1. Define a strategic approach to recruit patients from centres across the UK encompassing the spectrum of HBV disease phases, to determine mechanisms underlying disease progression and treatment response, and to identify novel biomarkers in future hypothesis-driven research.
2. Document long-term clinical outcomes for the cohort, using both patient clinical records, and other linkable data sources, including routine laboratory surveillance, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre datasets, and death and cancer registries. This would provide critical data on disease burden, natural history and use of NHS resources, and identify areas for intervention.
3. Involve patient and public representatives in a meaningful way to support investigators on study design, development and implementation, to ensure effective Patient-Public Involvement and Engagement.
4. The SIG accepted that creating a biorepository of clinical samples (linked to metadata) that would support future studies of disease pathogenesis, natural history and treatment of HBV infection would be challenging without a substantial award from either MRC or The Wellcome

Trust. To this end, a full application has now been submitted to the Wellcome Trust collaborative award scheme. Should this be successful, the SIG will be ideally placed to facilitate and support this proposal.

The HBV SIG now has broad representation, from across the HBV community from clinicians, scientists and Public Health England (PHE), to the participation of patient groups (Liver4Life and the British Liver Trust). Representation from Industry is strong, with involvement from the following companies: Abbot, Gilead Sciences, Janssen, Roche and Immunocore. This wide spectrum of participants has allowed for fruitful discussion to take place amongst all stakeholders around expectations and potential barriers for future clinical trials in HBV. The latest discussions at the SIG revolved around imminent clinical trials in the UK as part of the HBV cure programme. Again there was discussion and acceptance that there is a need for better definition of UK cohorts with better patient characterisation to recruit into the many clinical trials expected over the next 2-3 years.

#### **Further information**

Please visit the SIG webpage at <https://www.basl.org.uk/index.cfm/content/page/cid/32>.