

# BASL Portal Hypertension SIG Steering Committee Meeting

## Minutes

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020  
Zoom Video Conference  
14:00 – 15:00

### Participants:

D Tripathi (DT, Chair), Jonathan Fallowfield (JF), Raj Mookerjee (RM), Adrian Stanley (AS) Peter Hayes (PH), Emmanouil Tsochatzis (ET) Jo Leithead (JL), David Patch (DP).

### Apologies:

Abhi Chauhan (AC), Vikram Sharma (VS).

1. The minutes from the last SIG steering committee meeting on Thursday 19th September 2019 at BASL annual meeting were reviewed and approved.
2. The report of the SIG 2nd meeting at the University of Birmingham on 1<sup>st</sup> May was discussed. There was good participation and discussion about the key clinical trials. Details are discussed in the agenda.
3. Impact of COVID19 was discussed. All agreed on the profound impact on clinical services and all non-COVID19 related trials. All have been paused and R&D departments are only starting to consider opening resuming trials following publication of the NHIR framework document.

### 4. Research agenda

#### a. Clinical trials

##### i. CALIBRE

CALIBRE recruitment was paused in March 2020 due to COVID19. At the time 57 sites were open and plan was for more sites to be opened. Participants in the banding arm could cross over to the carvedilol arm due to suspension of endoscopy. Recruitment was below the target (207) after the pilot, but it was hoped that with additional sites opening, targets would be met.

A Webinar is planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> June to promote constructive discussion on resuming CALIBRE.

##### ii. BOPPP

BOPPP recruitment was also paused at a similar time to CALIBRE. BOPPP has resumed at KCH and recruitment stands at 95.

Some comments from the group with relevance to CALIBRE and BOPPP:

- a) It is unlikely that surveillance endoscopy will resume in many sites for some months. At present BSG does not recommend variceal

surveillance. Of the CALIBRE sites, only 2 are ready for recruitment, although others may be ready shortly.

- b) Variceal band ligation is limited by the availability of endoscopy slots in greatly reduced lists. The priority is secondary prophylaxis as recommended by BSG
- c) Alternative strategies include a bespoke COVID19 algorithm which is based on Baveno 6 criteria to select patients for NSBB therapy without need for endoscopy. This is presently available on the BSG website. Clearly this will have an impact on both BOPPP and CALIBRE, but is an option in sites where variceal surveillance has not resumed.
- d) There was much discussion about NSBB and the optimum time to start treatment in light of emerging data suggesting improved survival when started at an earlier stage. Further study is necessary to determine whether starting prior to development of varices is beneficial. At this time there is an unmet need to identify surrogate non-invasive markers to predict high risk groups who can benefit from NSBB.
- e) All agreed that resuming both trials requires careful thought. The risk is poor recruitment and falling further behind target. An option is to wait a few more months and reassess. Resumption of “normal” endoscopy is key.

ii. **Liver HOPE**

This has been affected by the pandemic with extension beyond October 2020.

iii. **Early TIPSS trial**

The important trial has been published in AP&T and has attracted much interest.

iv. **Vascular liver disease:**

DP, JL et al have published the stepwise management of acute PVT with intestinal ischaemia. It is hoped this will encourage further research.

v. **ASEPTIC**

This is paused but there are plans to resume. JF informed the groups that inclusion of patient with potassium up to 5.5 has been an issue with renal physicians since the IMP can increase potassium further.

b. **Translational/mechanistic studies**

i. **BOPPP & CALIBRE sub studies**

RM informed that group that the grant application for a mechanistic sub-study for BOPPP was not successful. However, KCH was pursuing biobanking samples at the lead site. All agreed on the need to investigate mechanistic aspects, and RM discussed the option of collaborating in with other studies and suggesting discussion with Vish Patel

**Action: DT & RM**

c. **NIHR Liver Themed cross platform call – research proposals**

REACT-AVB has been shortlisted for second stage application. Deadline extended to September 2020 due to COVID19.

**5. Clinical guidelines**

- a. TIPSS (BSG/BASL/BSIR) – D Patch/ D Tripathi. Published now with good feedback.
- b. Ascites (BSG) – G Aithal. In the process of peer review with Gut.

**6. Service development**

- a) Alfapump – no further updates.
- b) Fontan service – DP discussed the challenges of following up patients with regards to logistics and suggested that a one stop clinic model would be ideal. This already exists for rare diseases.

**7. AOB**

RM informed the group of a UK study funded by Innovate UK on COVID19 patients with cirrhosis which involves remote monitoring of physiological parameters using smart devices.

**8. Next SIG steering committee meeting** – proposed for September 2020. To add agenda item relating to understanding surrogate makers guiding clinician on NSBB therapy.

**9. Next SIG annual meeting** – proposed for November 2020. To be discussed further at next steering committee meeting.