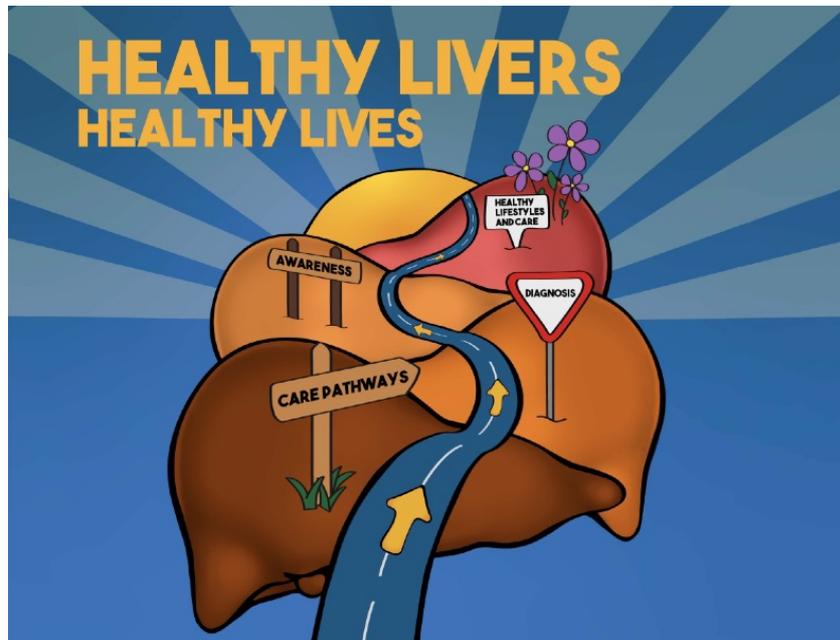




Wilton Park



Report

Developing a research and action roadmap for fatty liver disease

Monday 17 – Wednesday 19 October 2022 | WP1957

In association with:





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In partnership with the European Association for the Study of Liver Disease

Despite affecting an estimated 2 billion people globally, NAFLD and NASH (fatty liver diseases) have received little attention from policymakers, practitioners, and key stakeholders from the national to the global level.

Like many non-communicable diseases (NCDs), NAFLD requires comprehensive and coordinated responses that span across sectors and disciplines. In recent years, there has been greater traction with a range of organisations and individuals across medicine, academia, public health, and policy coming together to consider the various actions needed to address this issue. This includes over 200 experts from 98 countries and territories who contributed to a [NAFLD public health consensus statement](#) in 2021.

Since December 2020, Wilton Park has [convened a series of virtual dialogues](#) aimed at supporting the advancement of a public health and policy agenda for fatty liver disease. In the first dialogue 50 experts, thought leaders, practitioners, and industry executives engaged in a solution-oriented discussion to consider what a coordinated and collaborative response to this challenge looks like, and what would be required to deliver this. The second and third dialogues focused on the health system responses to fatty liver disease and the need for improved models of care to address this challenge; this informed the development of a call to action and [review article of existing care models](#).

This final dialogue was held in-person at Wilton Park from 17-19 October 2022, convening over 40 thought leaders across research, clinical practice, and public health to take a forward look at how the field is evolving, and to develop a research and action roadmap which will provide a foundation to guide and spur action on this neglected public health challenge in the decade ahead. Participants also considered how to develop an organised community to lead this agenda.

This report provides high-level summary of the dialogue, including the aims, discussion framing and intended outcomes. Following the dialogue, a range of activities are being taken forward by EASL and other societies; here, we outline some immediate steps for the coming 6 months.

The fatty liver agenda to 2030 and beyond: what is required to deliver transformational change?

NAFLD represents an archetypical public health challenge of the 21st century and addressing it will require new ways of thinking and working, from the design of public health policy and how health systems are structured to the types of collaboration between sectors and disciplines. This dialogue convened experts from across liver health, diabetes, obesity, and primary care, and from different geographical regions, with wide ranging views and perspectives sought on what will be required to deliver transformation change on this neglected public health challenge.

At the outset participants envisaged where they hope the field will be in ten years' time, the responses provided a North Star for the conversations that followed, with participants challenged across the three days to outline research and action priorities that hold the greatest potential to drive change across knowledge, policy, and practice.

The dialogues focused on supporting a transparent, inclusive, and global collaboration, providing space for different stakeholders to inform the development of the research and action roadmap. Importantly, this process allowed for consideration of the priorities, efforts, and activities of different stakeholders, while underpinning the importance of forging a unified ambition and vision for advancing this agenda.

Participant ambitions up to 2030

- *The world knows what fatty liver disease is*
- *Better patient-centred management for people living with NAFLD resulting in better patient outcomes*
- *A new framework for fatty liver disease that allows for more targeted risk stratification and treatment*
- *Increased awards lead to early diagnosis of fatty liver disease and better outcomes for affected populations*
- *Models of care that incorporate fatty liver disease as part of non-communicable disease care and lead to a reduced burden of NCDs*
- *An organised community working collaboratively across disciplines to address metabolic diseases from a policy and health systems perspective*
- *A paradigm shift in primary care leading to liver disease being routinely considered and case finding normalised*
- *NAFLD Incorporated into relevant technical documents and guidance on NCDs, including by the World Health Organisation*
- *Effective therapies are available and accessible for people living with NAFLD*
- *A focus on prevention of fatty liver disease within a comprehensive public health agenda*

Developing a research and action roadmap

A core objective of this dialogue was to initiate the process of developing a research and action roadmap on fatty liver disease. The seven core areas outlined in the 2021 [NAFLD consensus statement](#) provided the framework for these discussions.

Seven key areas for research and action on fatty liver disease

1. *The human and economic burden*

Developing a compelling narrative and case for action on fatty liver disease with a common vision that can support action from the local to global level

2. *Defining and implementing models of care*

Improving the care of people living with fatty liver disease from the design of care pathways to the implementation of multidisciplinary patient-centred of care models.

3. Treatment and care

Accelerating the availability of and access to effective pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments for people living with fatty liver disease.

4. Awareness and education

Advancing awareness and knowledge of fatty liver disease amongst key stakeholder groups, from clinicians and policymakers to the public

5. Patient and community perspectives

Engaging and supporting affected populations, forming and strengthening patient groups and embedding patient perspectives in the research and action agenda

6. Policy strategies and a societal approach

Designing and delivering effective policy approaches across sectors and disciplines and forging new ties with the NCD community to deliver mutually beneficial policy change

7. Leadership

Outlining the strategic priorities for the field in the years ahead and providing a platform for knowledge sharing and collective action.

Ahead of the dialogue, for each of the seven areas a small group developed an initial set of priorities and actions and outlined key questions for participants to consider. These propositions were reviewed and debated by the group, who were tasked with aligning around a small set of priorities that have the greatest potential to drive change across policy and practise.

Participants brought wide ranging expertise and perspectives from across different disciplines, highlighting the importance of engaging different groups within the roadmap's development. The outcome of the discussions at Wilton Park will be taken forward in a Delphi process which is being coordinate by EASL. In this stage a large group of experts will have the opportunity input into the priorities which will be incorporated into the final roadmap.

Documenting the process

A range of publications and articles will document the process and outcomes.

Research and action roadmap publication

Following completion of the Delphi process, the research and action roadmap will be published as a commissioned peer-reviewed journal article. The article will set out the collective agenda for the community in the year ahead, and will provide a benchmark from which to track progress in the coming years. More than 300 stakeholders from over 100 countries are expected to contribute.

Commentary and thought leadership pieces

Several commentaries and thought leadership pieces addressing key issues will be published over the next year.

Leadership to accelerate action on fatty liver disease

Across the dialogue, participants explored what is needed to deliver sustained change. A recurring theme within this was the need for leadership at the local, national, regional, and global level. Change can be driven from different places, and participants acknowledged that while the liver health organisations—and specifically the regional associations—will be critical, this effort will require a broad collaborative that spans disciplines. In the short-term forging linkages between liver, diabetes, obesity, and primary care groups will be key, as will strengthening patient groups and platforms. While individuals can be powerful advocates and change agents, participants raised the imperative of institutional leadership, recognising the power of uniting the voices of organisations from the local to the global level.

On the final day, participants explored how to take this forward as an organised community and considered the value of a global platform or structure to supporting building momentum around this agenda.

Healthy Livers, Healthy Lives: A Global Coalition for Action on Fatty Liver Disease

The group agreed that the dialogue should be an inflection point from which momentum can be built and existing efforts amplified. To take advantage of the moment, participants suggested that a Global “Healthy Livers, Health Lives” Coalition provide a foundation for ongoing discussion and action. The coalition will be driven by the leading professional societies and be inclusive, facilitating action to end fatty liver disease as a global public health threat.

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