The results of the large experimental trial of our Bio-Artificial Liver (BAL) were published this year, placing in the public domain proof of its efficacy when applied in a large animal. This study, coordinated and performed between UCL and the University of Cape Town, represented a huge scientific effort, preparing the alginate-encapsulated cells that constitute the active biological component of the device in London, and air-freighting them to the other side of the world where the experiments were performed. In retrospect, the logistic challenges involved in this, ensuring maintenance of cell function during transport, proved helpful information on various issues that we have now solved, relevant to the use of our BAL Machine in clinical practice.

The trial results, which demonstrate some extraordinary improvements in the manifestations of liver failure, are of course being utilised to the unlocking of the further funding needed to get to the stage of our first-in-man clinical trial. As I outlined last year, this funding must be sought in packets from different sources, separately covering design and production of the clinical-ready device, and the processes of cryopreservation, and a new approach to enhancing treating the sepsis that often complicates liver failure. Although we raise money from grant-giving bodies for these work packages, the support to the charity from our donors becomes perhaps even more important, as we often need to tide-over between grant income, and as always we are hugely grateful to all our supporters for their contributions.

The Charity’s success of course is dependent on the scientists who work on the project, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge them, and of course our trustee Prof. Clare Selden who drives the laboratory work. Again, we had the help of two intercalating students, Catriona Williams and Maria Khalique, from the University of Bath in the administration of the Charity, whilst they also gained some practical scientific experience.

Finally, during this year we completed all the formalities associated with having changed our status, in 2016, ceasing to be ‘The Liver Group’ and becoming ‘The Liver Group Charity’, a ‘CIO’ - Charitable Incorporated Organisation - following the Charities Commission’s guidance. Our charity identification number changed as a result, now 1166985 (was 1024533). We are particularly grateful to one of our trustees, Sarah Bates, who helped facilitate the process.



Humphrey Hodgson

Chairman