

THE LIVER GROUP CHARITY CIO

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD FROM 6 MAY 2016 TO 31 DECEMBER 2016

When we reported at the end of 2015 for the 'old' Liver Group, I wrote of our aim to raise funds which would enable us to take our bioartificial liver – which we have demonstrated in animal trials offers a unique and novel means of buying time for the liver of a patient to repair and regenerate – all the way through to the critical phase of a first-in-man trial.

Disappointingly, our application to the Wellcome Trust for the large tranche of funding - over £7million - that was necessary to take this step was unsuccessful – although we passed successfully through the two preliminary rounds of the process; and we can take reassurance from the first-class reviews we received from international referees. We were always well aware that the size of the grant we requested amounted to well over half the funds the Wellcome had available in that competition.

So, the process of bringing this machine to the bedside will take longer, as the tactics must change, and we divide the developments we envisage into stages. As I discussed in last year's report, if our machine is going to help, it has to be ready, 'on standby', to deliver to a patient's bedside. And the best and most efficient means of doing this will be by keeping the cells that provide the liver function in our machine frozen, ready to be thawed and delivered ready to use to the patient's bedside. We have decided that the first tranche of grant funding we seek will be to improve this process – we have already shown that this is feasible, but need to scale this up to provide this process for the literally billions of cells that are needed for each patient. In particular we thank the Weston Foundation for their continued support since our inception, with a recent considerable donation.

However, we are in parallel seeking funding for another aspect of the work – making the tools which will create the disposable bioreactors, the chambers containing the liver cells, that will be connected to a patient with liver disease to buy time for their own liver support. Again, here we are working on developing the actual equipment that will be in use when we move to treating patients.

The advantage of dividing the project in this way is that the grant funding required for each project is less and we think much more achievable. However, to maintain momentum, the funding that the charity provides is invaluable, so it is vitally important we continue to raise money from our supporters and other charitable sources.

I should mention – to thank –Deniza Bogiqi, an undergraduate from the University of Bath who has helped the Charity in updating our website and paperwork, and finalising the paperwork to move the Charity towards its more modern status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation – (the name will not change). I must also thank our Trustees for all the work they have done in this regard. And as always, the sincerest thanks from me and my fellow trustees to all our supporters.



Humphrey Hodgson
Chairman

Dated: 18 September 2017