

PRESS RELEASE



Texas Liver Institute

607 Camden Street, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78215
Phone: 210-253-3426
www.txliver.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Patrick Magallanes
pmagallanes@txliver.com
210-918-8856

Hepatitis C treatment cures over 90 percent of patients with cirrhosis

Oral combination proves safe for patients who could not have interferon therapy

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (April 12, 2014) — A novel 12 week regimen of pills has cured more than 90% of hepatitis C patients with cirrhosis of the liver. Cirrhosis is the advanced stage of hepatitis C that can lead to liver failure and cancer. It is estimated that over a quarter of the 4-5 million in the US with hepatitis C have cirrhosis. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer in the United States. It has historically been treated with interferon-based regimens, which were difficult to tolerate, particularly in patients with advanced scarring. Cure rates were very low at less than 50% using previous therapies. Hepatitis C is spread through blood contact, and most of those infected are born between 1945 and 1965, and are unaware of their infection.

The new regimen is interferon-free and consists of several agents — ABT-450/ritonavir, ombitasvir, dasabuvir and ribavirin, and was developed by the biopharmaceutical company AbbVie. Twelve weeks of treatment yielded cure rates of 91.8 percent and those treated for 24 weeks had 95.9 percent response. A total of 380 patients were studied across North America and Europe. These results are unparalleled noted Fred Poordad, M.D., Vice President of Academic and Clinical Affairs at the Texas Liver Institute and lead author on the study, which will be published by The New England Journal of Medicine, in conjunction with Dr. Poordad's presentation of the data at the International Liver Congress in London. Dr. Poordad is also a professor of medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. "The reason this study is so profound is because interferon is not tolerated, nor is it safe in many people with cirrhosis. Many of the patients with cirrhosis in this study were not even eligible to be treated with interferon. This regimen allowed patients, who may not otherwise be treated, a high likelihood of eradicating virus."

The research in finding easier and more effective therapies for hepatitis C continues at the Texas Liver Institute. Eric Lawitz, M.D., Vice President of Scientific and Research Development, offered the therapy to an initially skeptical retired San Antonio anesthesiologist - Sergio Buentello, M.D. "I feel very lucky to be living in this time, because I was almost resigned to the idea that I could never be cured," Dr. Buentello said.

According to Dr. Poordad, "for patients like Dr. Buentello, life without this virus is soon a real possibility." The expected availability for this new treatment is late 2014 or early 2015, and "that will be the beginning of a new era for our patients", added Dr. Poordad. "Our mission is cure as many people of this infection as possible."

###

For current news from the Texas Liver Institute, please visit our news release website, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

About the Texas Liver Institute

The Texas Liver Institute's mission is to set the standard of excellence in care and innovative research in the field of liver disease. The institute is affiliated with the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. TLI physicians are professors and teach at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and are involved with the liver transplantation program of the University Transplant Center, a partnership between the Health Science Center and the University Health System. For more information, visit www.txliver.com.