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IN BRIEF

LIVER

Genetic loci affect plasma liver enzyme concentrations

Concentrations of liver enzymes in plasma are used as indicators of liver disease. A genome-wide association study of 61,089 individuals identified 42 loci (of which 32 were new) associated with plasma liver enzyme concentrations. Functional genomic approaches identified 69 candidate genes involved in multiple cellular processes including biliary transport, inflammation, immunity and lipid, glucose and carbohydrate metabolism as well as several genes of unknown function.

Original article Chambers, J. C. *et al.* Genome-wide association study identifies loci influencing concentrations of liver enzymes in plasma. *Nat. Genet.* 43, 1131–1138 (2011)

IBS

Valid Malay translation of Rome III IBS questionnaire

The Malay language is spoken by 300 million people from several countries including Malaysia and Singapore. However, owing to the lack of a valid Malay translation of the Rome diagnostic questionnaire, no reliable IBS epidemiological data are available for this population. Lee *et al.* aimed to translate (and validate) the Rome III IBS diagnostic questionnaire into the Malay language. The translated version was assessed in 31 patients with IBS (based on Rome II symptom criteria) and 31 healthy controls and was found to be sensitive (80.65%), specific (100%) and of positive predictive value (100%).

Original article Lee, Y.Y. *et al.* The validity and reliability of the Malay-language of the translation of the Rome III diagnostic questionnaire for irritable bowel syndrome. *J. Gastroenterol. Hepatol.* doi:10.1111/j.1440-1746.2011.06943.x

HEPATITIS C

HCV activates microglia

Chronic HCV infection can lead to cognitive impairment, but whether the brain is a site of HCV replication and subsequent neuroinflammation is not clear. In a pilot study of patients with biopsy-proven mild chronic HCV and healthy controls, PET revealed microglial activation, which positively correlated with HCV viremia and altered cerebral metabolism, in the brains of patients with mild hepatitis C.

Original article Grover, V. P. B. *et al.* Cerebral microglial activation in patients with hepatitis C: *in vivo* evidence of neuroinflammation. *J. Viral Hepatitis* doi:10.1111/j.1365-2893.2011.01510.x

INTESTINAL INFLAMMATION

LBP might promote intestinal wound healing

Abnormal bacterial colonization and activation of innate immunity by lipopolysaccharide (LPS) probably have a role in the pathogenesis of necrotizing enterocolitis. In a rodent model of necrotizing enterocolitis, high concentrations of LPS-binding protein (LBP) promoted wound healing and decreased levels of TLR4 (a marker of inflammation). Further studies are now warranted to investigate this potential therapeutic strategy.

Original article Richter, J. M. *et al.* Lipopolysaccharide binding protein enables intestinal epithelial restitution despite lipopolysaccharide exposure. *J. Pediatr. Gastroenterol. Nutr.* doi:10.1097/MPG.0b013e31823a895a