

Charity calls for action following alarming rise in liver cancer mortality in the UK

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As Liver Cancer Awareness month comes to an end, the [British Liver Trust](#), the UK's leading liver health charity, is calling for greater awareness of the fastest rising cause of cancer death in the UK. In the last 40 years, liver cancer mortality rates have more than tripled in the UK with over 5,400 people dying from the disease each year.

The British Liver Trust is urging the public and healthcare professionals to learn more about liver cancer risk factors and symptoms. 16 people are diagnosed each day and most cases are linked to hepatitis infections, alcohol and obesity. Co-factors such as diabetes and smoking further increase the risk.

Early diagnosis of liver cancer is difficult because there are often no signs or symptoms in the early stages. Late symptoms may include yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice), weakness and fatigue, a change in appetite, unexplained weight loss and abdominal pain. The British Liver Trust's Helpline receives many calls from people who have been diagnosed with liver cancer, where the primary cause is liver disease but this has never been picked up. It is therefore vital that we identify people with liver disease and those who are at risk of developing liver disease, at a much earlier stage. Regular screening for cancer in people with advanced liver disease is essential in order to make an early diagnosis.

By 2035, liver cancer cases will have more than doubled in the UK. For most cancer types, an increase in incidence will be offset by decreases in mortality rates. This is not the case for liver cancer which has a five year survival rate of just 12%.

Judi Rhys, Chief Executive, British Liver Trust, explains further: "More and more people are being diagnosed and dying from liver cancer year on year. We urge people across the UK to find out more about the risks and symptoms. It is also essential that GPs and other healthcare professionals keep the risk factors and warning signs at the front of their mind so people are referred for specialist tests and diagnosed quickly.

"We are also campaigning with other charities to double the five-year survival rate over the next ten years for the less survivable cancers, which includes liver cancer, so that the successes seen in other cancers such as prostate and breast are emulated."

The British Liver Trust is the largest UK liver charity for adults and leads the fight against liver disease and liver cancer. The charity reaches over a million people each year; raising awareness of the risk factors of liver disease and providing vital advice to help people improve their liver health. It provides patients with up to date information and support including a free nurse-led helpline and online community.

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