

LIVER DIGEST

July 21, 2023

A bi-weekly update of PLRC happenings



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- ASIP “Tissue, Matrix, and Pathobiology” Oct. 22nd
- 2nd International Liver Cancer Res. Conf, Heidelberg, Germany
- PLRC P&F Grant Program Opens Soon

• Want Ads :

- Open positions/Jobseekers CVs posted

Please acknowledge all support from the PLRC in your publications and presentations. Note the grant number and all CORES used. (NIH/NIDDK P30DK120531)

Please continue to share your relevant accolades (grants, publications, awards and other news worthy items) with us, as it relates to the PLRC mission, so we can share with all of our members.

Visit the PLRC website (www.livercenter.pitt.edu) for up-to-date news, and upcoming seminar and event information. Contact Aaron Bell (bellaaro@pitt.edu) if you have specific questions or suggestions.

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FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

Dr. George Michalopoulos, MD, PhD, professor of Pathology and world renowned expert in liver regeneration.

In recognition of your many seminal contributions to the field of liver pathobiology, as well as for your selfless service to the Department of Pathology and our institution, it is with great pride that we announce the “**Michalopoulos Endowed lectureship**” which will be co-sponsored by the Department of Pathology and the *Pittsburgh Liver Institute*. The inaugural “Michalopoulos Endowed lecture” will be held annually and will come with a commemorative plaque/award, a \$1000 honorarium in addition to sponsored travel for the award recipient. Stay tuned for the announcement of the first awardee. Coming Soon!



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Paul Monga, MD, professor of Pathology, vice chair and chief of experimental and translational pathology coauthored a publication in preprint on BioRxiv entitled “**Huntingtin loss in hepatocytes is associated with altered metabolism, adhesion, and liver zonation**”

Huntingtin loss in hepatocytes is associated with altered metabolism, adhesion, and liver zonation”

Bragg RM, Coffey SR, Cantle JP, Hu S, Singh S, Legg SRW, McHugh CA, Toor A, Zeitlin SO, Kwak S, Howland D, Vogt TF, Monga SP, Carroll JB. *bioRxiv* [Preprint]. 2023 Jun 26:2023.06.24.546334. doi: 10.1101/2023.06.24.546334. PMID: 37425835; PMCID: PMC10327156.



Huntington's disease arises from a toxic gain of function in the *huntingtin* (HTT) gene. As a result, many HTT-lowering therapies are being pursued in clinical studies, including those that reduce HTT RNA and protein expression in the liver. To investigate potential impacts, we characterized molecular, cellular, and metabolic impacts of chronic HTT lowering in mouse hepatocytes. Lifelong hepatocyte HTT loss is associated with multiple physiological changes, including increased circulating bile acids, cholesterol and urea, hypoglycemia, and impaired adhesion. HTT loss causes a clear shift in the normal zonal patterns of liver gene expression, such that pericentral gene expression is reduced. These alterations in liver zonation in livers lacking HTT are observed at the transcriptional, histological and plasma metabolite level. We have extended these phenotypes physiologically with a metabolic challenge of acetaminophen, for which the HTT loss results in toxicity resistance. Our data reveal an unexpected role for HTT in regulating hepatic zonation, and we find that loss of HTT in hepatocytes mimics the phenotypes caused by impaired hepatic β -catenin function

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PLRC HAPPENINGS

Pittsburgh Liver Institute (PLI)

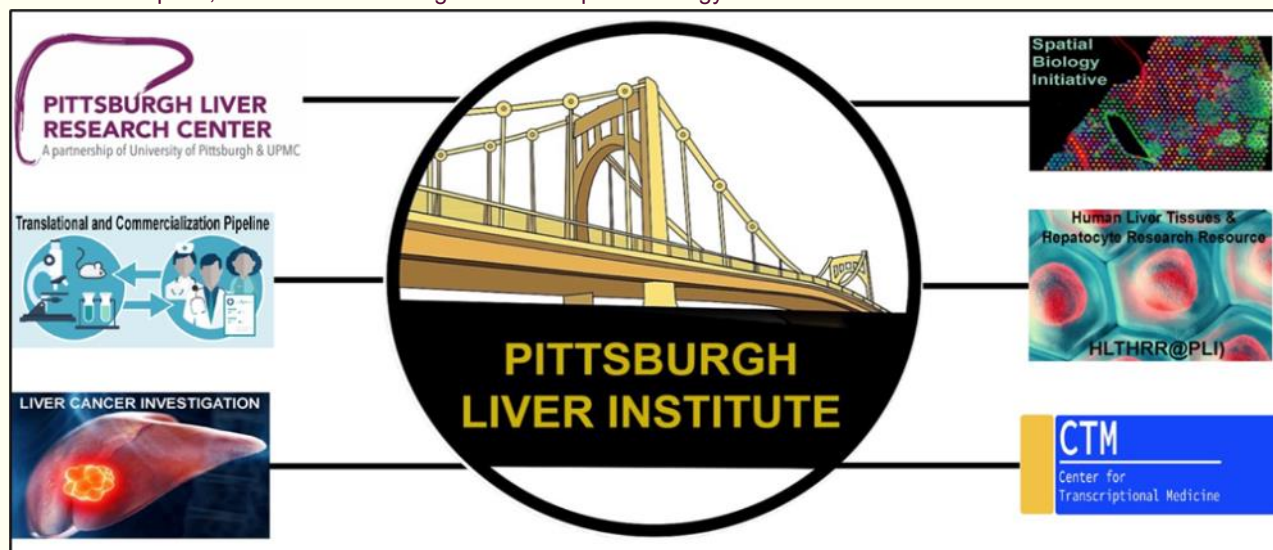
The newly formed **PLI**, directed by Dr. Paul Monga, professor of Pathology and vice chair and chief of experimental and translational pathology, aims to transform the University of Pittsburgh into the “liver corridor” of the world, with a focus on research, training and translation.



Note from the inaugural director, Dr. Paul Monga

It is my pleasure to share with you my vision for the newly formed Pittsburgh Liver Institute. Morbidity and mortality associated with the liver disease has been increasing gradually, both in the United States and globally. The landscape of liver disease has changed dramatically in past few decades in part due to successful therapies for some diseases and appreciation of synergistic effects of multiple risk factors for liver diseases including genetics, metabolic vulnerabilities, infections, alcohol, lifestyle and environment. At the same time, there has been a technological revolution that has allowed whole genome sequencing, multi-omic single cell spatial analytics as well as supportive computational advances for improved interpretation. The University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center have been at the forefront of research and delivery of clinical services, including in the liver space. PLI will focus on creating a more cohesive work environment with the focus of curbing liver related morbidity and mortality through enhanced collaboration between physicians and scientists among various departments and centers. The goal will be to create a workforce that is tackling complex liver problems through innovation, patient-based discovery and enabling efficient and safe translation of Pitt-First discoveries and inventions.

PLI is an independent financial and administrative organization physically located on the 4th floor of south-BST and the A-Stem of Scaife Hall. Currently, the administration of the PLI is handled with the assistance from the Department of Pathology. PLI is composed of 18 primary faculty and several affiliated faculty whose appointments are in various departments at the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC. PLI is home to various centers, programs and initiatives, providing them support in the form of infrastructure, space, administration and resources. Currently PLI houses the Pittsburgh Liver Research Center (PLRC), the newly founded Center for Transcriptional Medicine (CTM) and assisting in the establishment of the Human Liver Tissues and Hepatocyte Research Resource (HLTHRR). Additional PLI initiatives that are being considered include establishing a Translational and Commercialization pipeline in the liver space, Liver Cancer Investigations and Spatial Biology Initiative.



If you are a member of the PLRC, you will automatically become a member of the PLI. We welcome any additional new members. For more information, please email me directly at smonga@pitt.edu and/or Aaron Bell at bellaaro@pitt.edu. We are in the process of establishing a new website and will inform everyone, once it is ready. We will also announce any additional news about the PLI in PLRC Digest and on PLRC website as well.

Thank you for your continued support.

Paul Monga

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PLRC SEMINARS

- The seminar Series will be on summer hiatus and resuming in full September 12th.

Special Seminar: Aug 2nd 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm @



S123 BST

Peggy Stock, PhD

Medical Faculty, Department of Surgery
Applied Molecular Hepatology
University of Leipzig, Germany

Seminar Title: *Action points of MSC transplanted into Liver*

NOTE: Upon resumption of the seminars in the Fall term, the Format will be Live In-Person talks with minimal Zoom/online options. Everyone is highly encouraged to physically attend and help support our external and internal speakers.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PLRC Pilot & Feasibility Grants

2024 Application Cycle opens SOON!

PLRC Members should encourage qualified senior Post-Docs (ready to transition to independence) and junior faculty to begin to prepare now, watch for the announcements and apply.

Letters of Intent Due: September 1st, 2023

Full application Due: October 13th, 2023

More details on the PLRC P&F [Website](#)

****NEW** CLA/PLRC Award**

The Community Liver Alliance and the PLRC joint award will prioritize funding of studies of liver diseases in underserved communities, healthcare disparity, pathogenesis of sexually dimorphic diseases or other topics or candidates with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) focus.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Human Liver Tissue and Hepatocytes Resource-Related Research Project (R24 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

[RFA-DK-23-012 NIH/NIDDK](#)

The purpose of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to support a Human Liver Tissue and Hepatocytes Research Resource (HLTHRR) program to enable the continued availability of human liver tissue and hepatocytes to biomedical researchers. The research resource is expected to facilitate the procurement and preservation of human liver tissue and hepatocytes as well as the distribution of these materials to qualified biomedical researchers

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Administrative Supplements for Research on Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Populations (Admin Supp Clinical Trial Optional): <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-22-032.html>

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Research on the Health of Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Populations: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-md-22-012.html>

Notices of Intent to Publish:

NOT-DK-23-006 Notice of Intent to Publish a funding Opportunity Announcement for A Consortium for Gut-Brain Communication in Parkinson's Disease (U01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

NOT-DK-23-007 Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for A Consortium for Gut-Brain Communication in Parkinson's Disease (U24 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

NOFOs:

[RFA-DK-22-023 Ancillary Studies to the NIDDK Inflammatory Bowel Disease Genetics Consortium](#)

[\(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#) Next Due Date:

November 8, 2023.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

To see all NIH Grants sorted by week, please visit [NIH Guide: 2023](#)

Or click below for recent weeks:

Week of: [July 7:](#) [July 14:](#) [July 21:](#)

[Click here](#) for all current **NIDDK Funding opportunities**

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Communityliveralliance.org
DeLIVERing HOPE campaign: Liver Disease Awareness
- 
• FASEB “**The Cholangiocarcinoma Conference: Molecular Drivers, Microenvironment & Precision Medicine**” **August 13-17, 2023** @ Palm Springs, CA
[Meeting Registration & Abstract Submission!](#) [Meeting AGENDA](#)
- **AASLD “THE LIVER MEETING” Nov. 10-14, 2023** @ Boston, MA.
Meeting Registration opens Late July Abstract deadline Past Due
- Pittsburgh Liver Institute/PLRC Reception at The **AASLD LIVER MEETING** in Boston. Saturday **November 11th, 7:30pm-9:30pm** @ Sheraton Hotel Boston **“Save the Date”**
- **PLRC Annual Retreat 2023 October 17th** at University Club. Agenda TBD. Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Wells, Univ. of Pennsylvania. **“SAVE the DATE”**
- **ASIP “Tissue, Matrix, and Pathobiology: Joint Meeting of ASMB, HCS and ASIP”**
Oct. 22-25, 2023 @ Salt Lake City Utah. [Meeting Registration Site](#)
- **2nd INTERNATIONAL LIVER CANCER RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2023** “Novel Directions in Liver Cancer Research” **Oct. 11-13, 2023** @ Heidelberg, Germany [Detail-Flyer](#) [Conference Program](#)
- **PLRC Pilot & Feasibility Grant Program Opens soon.** [More details and info available on Website](#)
LOI due September 1, 2023, Applications Due October 13, 2023

WANT ADS

This section is available for PLRC members to communicate wants or needs in your laboratories.

Available positions / Collaboration ideas / Equipment needs

Please send any “wants/needs” to be advertised to Aaron Bell (bellaaro@pitt.edu)

OPEN POSITIONS:

- **Postdoc/Technician:** [Bone cell Differentiation](#) \$45K; PI: Harry Blair: US citizen ONLY! Contact: 412-383-9616 or hcblair@pitt.edu

JOB SEEKERS:

- **Research Assistant Professor**, Pathology Dept, UPMC Hillman Cancer Ctr. With experience in Bioinformatics, proteomics, genomics, molecular biology. liz45@pitt.edu [link to CV](#)
- **Senior Lab Scientist**, UPMC Dept of Pediatrics, with broad molecular biology experience and work in liver and breast cancer. suk85@pitt.edu [Link to CV](#)