

Community: Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club at the Harrow International Christian Centre

Topic: Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) in post-menopausal women

On 2 August 2024, we were invited by the Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club to speak to members at one of their regular Friday morning meetings, which are held at the Harrow International Christian Centre (HICC). The session was delivered by Dr Chioma Izzi-Engbeaya (NIHR Senior Clinician and Practitioner Awardee, and Consultant Endocrinologist at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust), Dr Sandhi Wynn Nyunt (Clinical Researcher and PhD candidate), and Dr Giovanna Tsoutsouki (Clinical Research Fellow).

Background and development of the session

The session came about by an invitation from an Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) Community Partner for the Metabolic Medicine and Endocrine Imperial BRC research theme, who is on the organising committee of the Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club, hosted at the HICC.

The Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club is a social club and peer support group, which meets on Friday mornings at the HICC to:

- share information on topics related to type 2 diabetes
- provide support with IT skills
- run fitness classes
- socialise

Most members are aged 60+ and include individuals who either do not have diabetes, have prediabetes, or are living with type 2 diabetes. Attendance at sessions averages between 20-25 people, depending on the time of year.

Prior to the session, Dr Sandhi Wynn Nyunt and Naomi Asantewa-Sechereh (Imperial Patient Experience Research Centre) had a call with two members of the organising committee of the Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club to plan the session. Having type 2 diabetes or having obesity increases the risk of developing metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), which made it an area of interest to the Harrow Diabetes Community Club. The call was used to agree which areas of MASLD would be of most interest to the members, the link to type 2 diabetes, and to finalise the session outline.

Agenda

The agenda of the session was:

- 10:00am: Arrival and refreshments
- 10:15am-11:15am: Talk and Q&A
- 11:15am: Socialise and chair-based exercise (regular Club activity)

- 12:30pm: Event close

Overview of the session

The session covered the following:

- What does the liver do?
- Different types of liver disease
- What is fatty liver disease/ metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)
- What are the stages of MASLD?
- What can increase the chances of having MASLD?
- Type 2 diabetes and MASLD
- An overview of the team's research on MASLD in post-menopausal women

The team's research studies relate to the naturally occurring hormone, kisspeptin, which they are currently exploring as a potential treatment for MASLD. The team discussed their study design, which could involve participants injecting themselves at home with kisspeptin.

Attendees

Attendees at the session included:

- 30 Harrow Digital Inclusion and Diabetes Community Club members
- 3 NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre staff/researchers
- 1 Imperial Patient Experience Research Centre staff member

Session feedback

At the end of the session, attendees were provided with a feedback form to share their comments on the research and what they thought of the session. Of the 30 attendees, 26 attendees completed a feedback form.

Of those attendees who completed a feedback form:

- 96% thought that research about fatty liver disease in women is important (4% were not sure).
- 38% said they would not be comfortable with injecting themselves at home, if provided with training on how to do it.
- 69% rated the session as good or excellent (31% did not respond to this question).
- 96% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with the statement '*I feel more knowledgeable about what the liver does*'
- 96% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with the statement '*I feel more knowledgeable about the link between fatty liver disease and conditions such as type 2 diabetes*'

Full details of the completed feedback forms and comments can be found in **Appendix 1** and demographics of attendees can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Questions asked by attendees:

- If you eat all the right foods and do exercise, when you reach menopause can you still get fatty liver disease?
- Is there a cultural aspect to this?
- What happens if you find that you have fatty liver?
- If you have high cholesterol, does that mean you have fatty liver?
- How can you find out if you have fatty liver if you're normal?
- Can you get hepatitis from fatty liver?
- I like to go for a yearly blood test, sometimes the doctor does a full blood count to test the liver. Even if the results are normal, can you still have fatty liver disease?
- If you're testing on humans, does that mean you are at the later stages of your research?
- I read an article where some researchers say only 15% of cholesterol can be reduced by diet. Is this true?
- Even if you are a normal person and you have problems in your gene, can you get fatty liver disease?
- I went to the GP who told me my cholesterol was high, so I don't eat meat anymore and I exercise.
- What are the indicators of fatty liver disease in the early stages?
- If your eyes go yellow, is this a symptom of fatty liver disease?
- Is picking up fatty liver disease from a liver scan quicker than a blood test?
- Can fatty liver disease cause cancer?
- Can cancer caused by fatty liver be treated?
- I always associate cirrhosis with people who drink a lot of alcohol, can you explain what cirrhosis is?
- Which stages of fatty liver disease are painful?

Appendix 1: Feedback from attendees

At the end of the session, we shared a printed feedback form to gather comments from attendees on the research study and their experiences of the session. The responses from 26 completed feedback forms are written up below:

Q1. Following today's session, do you think research about fatty liver disease in women is important?	
Yes	Not sure
25*	1

*Additional comment: Yes - very important

Q2. Would you be comfortable with injecting yourself at home, if provided with training on how to do it?			
No response	Yes	No	Not sure
9	5*	10	2

*Additional comment: Yes. If I received training plus know it will help my situation and others. Also, I'm not frightened of injections – just find them uncomfortable.

Q3. How often would you prefer to inject yourself if you took part in the study?			
No response	Twice a day for 12 weeks	Once a day for 12 weeks	Don't mind
13	0	8	5

Q4. Would you be happy to take part in the second study presented today, if you were attending a fatty liver disease (MASLD) Clinic?			
No response	Yes	No	Not sure
11	6	6	3

Q5. Please share your ideas of how we can encourage women to take part in this research about fatty liver disease (MASLD):Would you be happy to take part in the second study presented today, if you were attending a fatty liver disease (MASLD) Clinic? (free-text)
More community based talks to inform people of this fantastic research!
More community based talks. Put flyers out, create an advert.
National exposure: TV, newspapers, women's magazines, lectures
Put out adverts.
Living a healthy lifestyle.
Through women's groups e.g. nationally – The Women's Institute. Locally and boroughwide – e.g. like our group in churches/mosques/temples, other health groups.
1. Keep on teaching; 2. Spread the word through GPs.

Media, leisure centres, community clubs.

More information on how for women in general.

Regular session / education.

Q6. Overall, how would you rate the session?

No response	Very bad	Bad	Average	Good	Excellent
8	0	0	0	4	14

Q7. Please rate the following statements:

a) I feel more knowledgeable about what the liver does

No response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	0	0	11	14

b) I feel more knowledgeable about the link between fatty liver disease and conditions such as type 2 diabetes

No response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	0	0	17	8

Appendix 2: Attendee demographics

The demographics of attendees taken from the completed feedback forms (n=26/30) are reported below:

Age groups (in years)

Characteristics	Number	%
<25	1	4
36-45	1	4
56-65	3	12
66 – 75	10	38
76 – 85	6	23
86+	2	8
Prefer not to say	3	12

Ethnicity (self-reported)

Characteristic	Number	%
Afro - Caribbean	1	4
Asian	5	19
Barbadian	2	8
Black African	1	4
Black Caribbean	1	4
British	2	8
Caribbean	2	8
Indo - Caribbean	1	4
Mixed	1	4
West Indian	1	4
White	2	8
Prefer not to say	6	23