

UEG Research Prize Award: Advancing cell therapy for ischaemic cholangiopathy towards clinical translation

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Presentation

Immunology

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The speaker presented a bile duct cell therapy approach to repair ischaemic cholangiopathy in donor livers, reporting proof-of-concept data from mouse models, human-sized pig studies, and ex vivo human liver perfusion experiments.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker stated that ischaemic cholangiopathy affects up to 1 in 3 non-heart-beating donor liver recipients even with machine perfusion, leading to re-transplantation in 1 out of 2 affected patients.
- In mouse models, bioengineered bile ducts seeded with lab-grown bile duct cells integrated and remained viable 3 to 6 months after transplantation, with a cholangiogram from a pig study at six months showing excellent lumen patency.
- In ten human donor livers perfused ex vivo but rejected for transplantation, the speaker reported that injected bile duct cells showed significant biliary reconstruction on imaging and rescued bile biochemistry parameters.
- The speaker is collaborating with industry to advance the bioengineered bile duct technology to first-in-human studies.
- The speaker identified two key research questions for the next phase: identifying which livers will develop ischaemic cholangiopathy before transplantation, and understanding why cell therapy fails in some cases to improve its efficacy.

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