

The €34 million project for assessing liver disease

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Testing Marker Utility in Steatohepatitis (LITMUS) funded by the European Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 Joint Undertaking, is bringing together clinicians and scientists from prominent academic centres across Europe with companies from the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). Their common goals are developing, validating and qualifying better biomarkers for testing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

The pioneering European research project aims to lead to new diagnostic tests to assess patients with NAFLD and identify those most at risk for developing severe inflammation and liver scarring.

The €34 million project is co-ordinated by Newcastle University, working closely with the lead EFPIA partner, Pfizer Ltd. LITMUS will include 47 international research partners based at leading international universities and some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies.

NAFLD is caused by a build-up of fat in the liver cells, which leads to inflammation, scarring of the liver and ultimately cirrhosis. It is strongly linked to obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Experts will work together to develop and validate new highly-accurate blood tests and imaging techniques that can diagnose the severity of liver disease, predict how each patient's disease will progress and monitor those changes, better or worse, as they occur.