



**Research Project Proposal**  
Academic year 2018-2019

**Project Nº 8**

**Title:** *Role of the scavenger receptor MARCO in liver disease: new diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic strategy*

**Department/ Laboratory**

Liver Diseases Group,  
Department of Hepatology and Gastroenterology  
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**Summary**

Chronic liver diseases include a heterogeneous group of disorders characterized by progressive inflammation, injury and fibrosis, which can progress to cirrhosis and to the development of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). These patients frequently show increased intestinal permeability, favoring the translocation of bacterial components from the intestine to the liver. Innate immune cells recognize pathogens through pattern recognition receptors (PRRs), which include scavenger receptors (SRs) predominantly localized on macrophages and dendritic cells. The scavenger receptor MARCO is expressed on certain subsets of macrophages, and its expression can be induced after bacterial infection. MARCO seems to play a role in inflammatory responses and the clearance of pathogens. Therefore, we hypothesize that MARCO could play a key role in liver injury and inflammation.

Aims:

1. Analysis of MARCO expression in cirrhotic, HCC and normal human liver tissue and correlation with clinicopathological features.
2. Determination of MARCO hepatic expression in animal models of acute or chronic liver injury, as well as in mouse primary liver cells *in vitro*.
3. Characterization of the role of MARCO modulating the hepatic inflammatory response.

Methodology:

1. MARCO hepatic expression (qPCR, WB, IHC) in cirrhotic, HCC and normal individuals, as well as in acute (CCI4) and chronic (CCI4, BDL, DEN) animal models of liver injury.
2. Primary liver cells (hepatocytes, cholangiocytes, Kupffer cells and hepatic stellate cells) will be characterized (qPCR, WB).
3. Acute CCI4 injury model in Wt and *Marco*<sup>-/-</sup> mice: study of the liver phenotype (inflammation, fibrosis and injury by qPCR, WB and IHC).

yes	X
no	

**Does the project include the possibility of supervised animal manipulation to complete the training for animal manipulator?**