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Newsletter 1 - December 2021



A-TANGO

Featuring G-TAK,

a novel combinatorial therapy
for acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF)

Scientific coordination & Management

2nd SC Meeting & Major steps forward

Save the dates

Successful first patient event

Meet our early-career scientists (ECS)

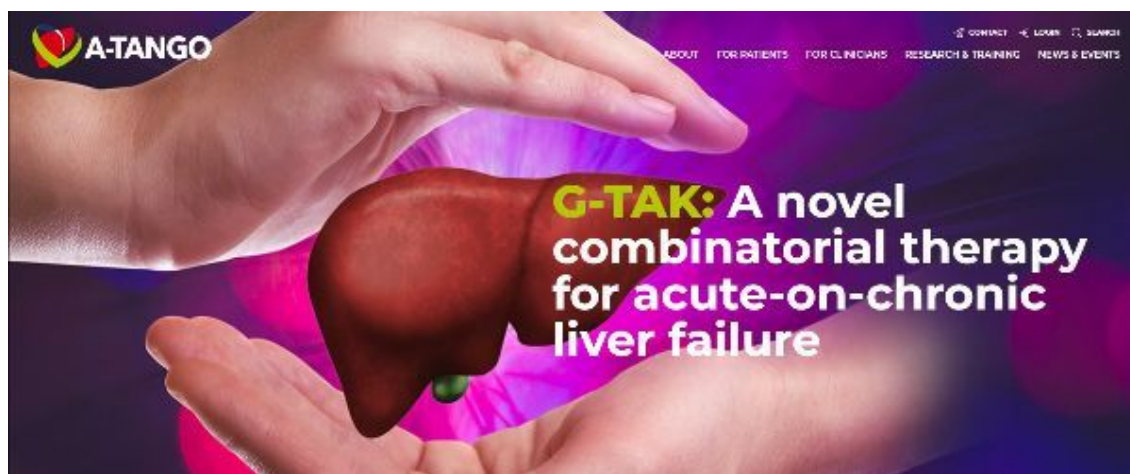
A-TANGO info brochure in 5 languages

Join the Liver Health Helix!

Welcome to our first newsletter!

A-TANGO is an international, collaborative **Horizon 2020** research project, funded by the European Commission, that started in March 2021 and brings together **14 partner institutions** from 8 European countries to fight **decompensated cirrhosis** and develop an effective treatment for acute-on-chronic liver failure (**ACLF**). We perform **Phase 2 clinical studies** of an innovative therapeutic strategy that improves hepatocyte proliferation through

call this novel combinatorial therapy “G-TAK”. In addition, **A-TANGO** strives to identify reliable biomarkers for better patient stratification and an increased survival rate. Up to 30 liver centers in Europe will participate in the clinical study and we are very grateful that both the European Association for the Study of the Liver (**EASL**) as well as the European Liver Patients' Association (**ELPA**) actively support **A-TANGO** as project partners. **Sign up here to receive our newsletter**. We wish everyone Happy Holidays & a healthy New Year!



Scientific coordination & management

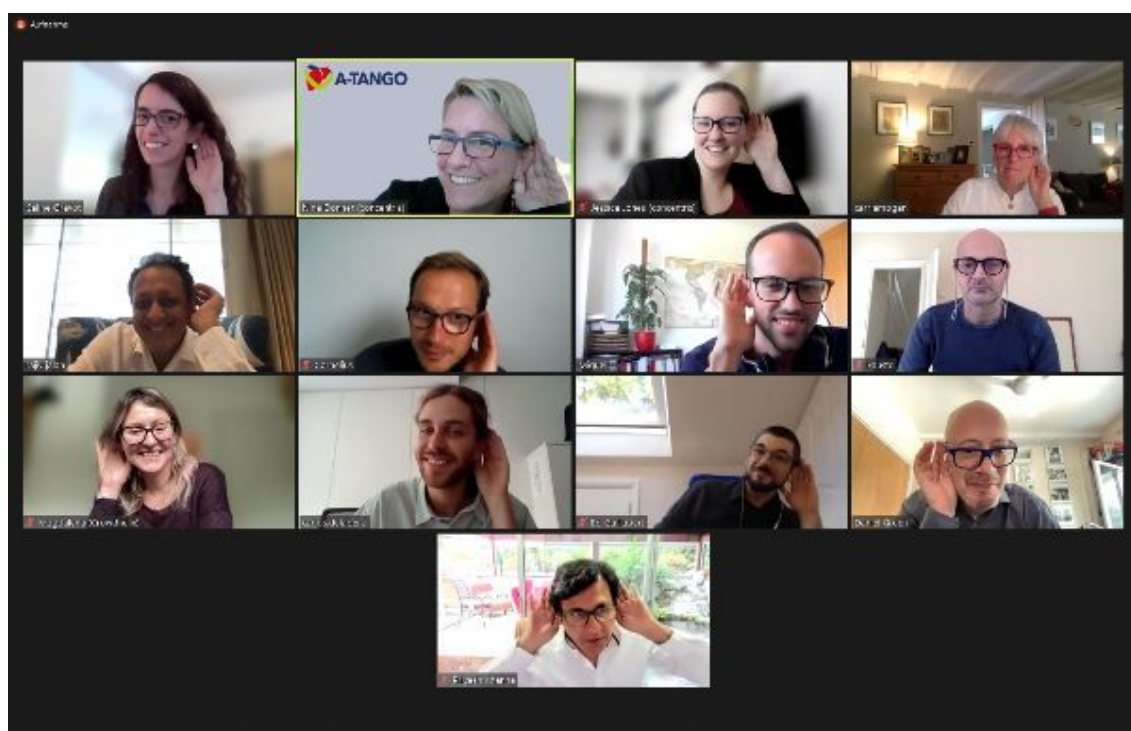
Prof. Dr. Rajiv Jalan, scientific director of the European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure (**EFCLIF**) in Barcelona, Spain, and professor of hepatology at University College London (**UCL**) spearheads and coordinates A-TANGO, while **Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann**, hepatologist and research group leader at **Charité** in Berlin, Germany, supervises the clinical "G-TAK" trial of A-TANGO. **Dr. Céline Gravot** from concentris research management gmbh (**concentris**) leads the A-TANGO project management.



2nd SC Meeting & Major steps forward

Successful 2nd SC Meeting

Congrats to all work package (**WP**) leaders for the great progress made on their tasks, and for the detailed updates and presentations during the 2nd Steering Committee (SC) Meeting on 20 September 2021. The preparations for getting 30 European liver centres on board, receiving all necessary ethics approvals, and setting up the **clinical study** (including organising the manufacturing of the drugs for the combinatorial G-TAK therapy) are at full speed.



Major steps forward

While, at this stage, most of the work performed in preparation for the clinical study has to remain confidential, two **public deliverables** have been completed. This includes the set-up of the **Liver Health Helix** (see **deliverable report D6.1**) by project partner Crowdhelix Ltd. (**CHX**) and the go-live of the public **project website** in June 2021 (see **deliverable report D7.3**), which was developed by **concentris**. Within EU-funded Horizon 2020 projects, ‘Deliverables’ are “outputs that must be produced at a given moment” during the project, meaning “building blocks” that are required to move the project forward.

Save the dates

2nd A-TANGO General Assembly (GA) Meeting

Barcelona, Spain

15 – 17 March 2022

International Liver Congress (ILC)

London, United Kingdom

6 – 10 April 2022

Joint International Congress of ILTS, ELITA, and LICAGE

Istanbul, Turkey

04 – 07 May 2022



Successful first patient event

The project's first online educational event for patients on *"Therapies for acute decompensation of cirrhosis and ACLF, research needs and outlook"* took place on 09 June 2021 and was kindly moderated by **Marko Korenjak**, president of the European Liver Patients' Association (**ELPA**). Watch this **introductory video about A-TANGO**, which is a recording of **Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann's** presentation about the novel, combinatorial therapy "G-TAK". The patient event was a joint effort between **A-TANGO** and two related liver research projects, namely **DECISION** and **MICROB-PREDICT** to engage actively with liver patients in Europe.



Meet our early-career scientists (ECS)



Ahmed Ibrahim (MD) is a clinical research fellow in the Liver Failure Group, University College London (**UCL**) Institute for Liver and Digestive Health, Royal Free Campus, UK. His main research interest is ACLF. After completing his master's degree in hepatology in Egypt, Ahmed has been enthusiastic to deepen his knowledge in the area of ACLF. He has been awarded the Newton Mosharafa scholarship to continue his PhD studies at UCL. He is currently investigating the role of liver transplantation as a salvage treatment option in patients with ACLF. As a new

ambitious young researchers who want to make real progress in their career development.

Akosua Boakye-Yiadom is a Master's student completing her study programme in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Potsdam. She is currently working on her Master's research at the **Charité** (Campus Virchow-Klinikum) under the supervision of Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann.



My name is **Dr. Annarein Kerbert**. I am 29 years old and I am based at the Leiden University Center (**LUMC**) in Leiden, the Netherlands, where I work as a Hepatology resident and postdoc with Dr. Minneke Coenraad. Together with Prof. Dr. Rajiv Jalan, I am working on several research projects on ammonia-induced organ injury. Within **A-TANGO**, I will be guiding the determination of a subset of biomarkers that were assigned as a project task to **LUMC**. I am also happy to be the speaker of the Early Career Scientist (ECS) group, with whom we will have our first online seminar in early January 2022!

Carlos de la Peña-Ramírez is a biostatistician at **EFCLIF** with an academic background in both Biology and Statistics. His main interest is to offer an integrative perspective of clinical and biological results obtained with state-of-the-art statistical methods. He will be involved in **WP5** as the work package leader as well as performing and interpreting the analyses.



My name is **Lilli Rausch** and I'm a medical student from Berlin and started working in the Dr. med. Engelmann's group at the **Charité** in September 2021. I'm joining **A-TANGO** as an early career scientist (ECS). In order to achieve my medical degree (MD), I'm working on a project that deals with the role of senescence during the transition from NAFLD to NASH.

the Department of Hepatology and Gastroenterology, **Charité** – Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, interested in studying cellular and molecular mechanisms regulating regeneration and senescence during ACLF. He did his Master's in Biochemistry at the University of Kashmir, his PhD at the Department of Hepatology, University Hospital of Bern, Switzerland, and obtained his doctorate in Biomedicine from the University of Bern, Switzerland, in 2019. He showed how intestinal Paneth cells not only prevent the passage of bacteria into the blood circulation but also sense microbial signals, thereby promoting angiogenesis and regulating Portal hypertension.

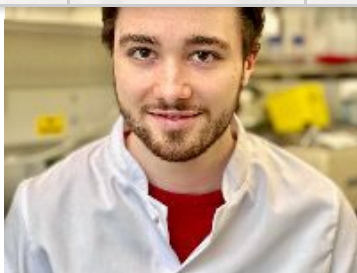


Patricia Sierra from **EFCLIF** is a biotechnologist with Master's degrees in Biomedicine and in Clinical Trial Monitoring & Pharmaceutical Development. Her main interests are the correlation between activities in clinical facilities, sample management, and the associated clinical data.

My name is **Richard Sittner**, a medical student in my fifth year at the **Charité** - Universitätsmedizin, Berlin. Currently, I focus on the role of senescence in long-term graft survival and dysfunction of liver transplants, with additional research on the effects of common immunosuppressive agents in organ transplantation. In the context of **A-TANGO**, I am assisting **WP3** tasks under the supervision of Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann and take part in building a strong group of young hepatology researchers and clinician-scientist.



My name is **Sven Lamatsch**. I am a medical doctor (MD) working in the group of Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann at the **Charité** on acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF).



My name is **Dr. Wenting Tan** and I am a postdoctoral researcher working in University College London (**UCL**) at the Institute for Liver and Digestive Health (UCL-ILDH). As an early career scientist of **A-TANGO**, I will take part in the lab experiments and focus on hepatic senescence and regeneration involved in ACLF.



A-TANGO info brochure in 5 languages

The **A-TANGO info brochure** is now not only available in **English (EN)**, but also in four more languages (**DE**, **ES**, **FR**, and **NL**), each in a print and a web version, depending on individual use and purpose. Feel free to **download**, print, and share! We are getting ready for the G-TAK study to treat ACLF, occurring in late-stage cirrhosis, and will use the info brochure to inform patients participating in the study, as well as their relatives, about the bigger scope of the **A-TANGO** project. A big thank you goes out to the volunteer translators within the consortium!



Join the Liver Health Helix!

Dear consortium members, the **Liver Health Helix** was set up by project partner Crowdhelix Ltd. (**CHX**) and is intended to form a community hub of peers that allows you to collaborate and also follow the **A-TANGO** project's progress, activities, and results. Within the Helix, you can share and join specific collaboration opportunities related to cirrhosis, ACLF, and liver health. You can also invite stakeholders outside of the network who may be interested in this field. Join the **Liver Health Helix** and click "Follow". You will then be notified of new opportunities according to your chosen interests.

Crowdhelix

Liver Health Helix

Novel treatment of acute-on-chronic liver failure, srAH- and ACLF therapy-focused technology, novel biomarkers

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Dr. Karen Galvin
Helix Manager

RJ Rajiv Jalan
Helix Leader

Organisations

European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure (EF-CLIF)
Leading Organisation

Alcoholic liver disease is the most frequent cause of liver cirrhosis and a major non-communicable chronic disease accounting for 6.5% of all deaths and 30-40% of liver related deaths in Europe. Alcoholic steatohepatitis (AH) is a severe complication of long-term heavy alcohol consumption. It accounts for 4.5 hospitalisations per 100,000 persons a year and more than 50% of them develop a liver disease, which progresses to acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) with multi-organ injury and mortality rates of about 40%. Therapeutic options are limited to best supportive care as there is no treatment known to improve quality of life and/or prolong survival of patients with steroid unresponsive severe AH (srAH). A clinically efficacious and cost-effective therapy is an unmet need to treat srAH patients who progress to ACLF.



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