

**PRESS STATEMENT:**  
**Thursday 4 February, 2010**

## **‘Liver Let Live’ – charity launches online liver cancer game for World Cancer Day**

In aid of World Cancer Day on Thursday 4 February 2010, the British Liver Trust has launched a new online game to highlight common risks that could lead to liver cancer.

Alison Rogers, Chief Executive of the British Liver Trust, says:” With liver cancer rates tripling in the last three decades, the Trust is keen to look at new ways to prevent liver disease and promote good liver health. The big issue we face is that symptoms of liver disease can be non-specific and difficult to recognise. Many people only realise they have a problem with their liver when it is too late. Prognosis for primary liver cancer is particularly poor, with 8 out of 10 patients dying within a year of diagnosis.



‘Liverbod’

This game aims to encourage people to think about their liver health and take lifestyle steps to prevent liver damage and cancer. Prevention is such a key element in reducing rates of liver deaths as 95 per cent of liver disease can be avoided by lifestyle changes,” added Ms Rogers.

The Trust is encouraging people play Liver Let Live and guide ‘Liverbod’ to make healthy choices and avoid the risks of alcohol, fatty foods, hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses.

Liver cancer develops silently with few symptoms until it is well advanced. Treatment can then be difficult, but there are many interventions that can prevent primary liver cancer (cancer which starts in the liver). In particular, if people at risk are screened for hepatitis B or C and are offered effective treatment before liver damage has set in, their risk of liver cancer drops dramatically.

The Trust works hard to raise awareness of the potential risks for liver cancer and would encourage people to come forward for testing and treatment.

To play the game, please visit the Trust website at: [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk).

Players are being given the opportunity to win a £15 Amazon voucher if they play the game and submit their feedback.

## Ends

For further information please contact: Sarah Matthews

Phone: 01425 481 320

Out of hours: 07968 366 526

Email: [sarah.matthews@britishlivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.matthews@britishlivertrust.org.uk)

Web: [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk)

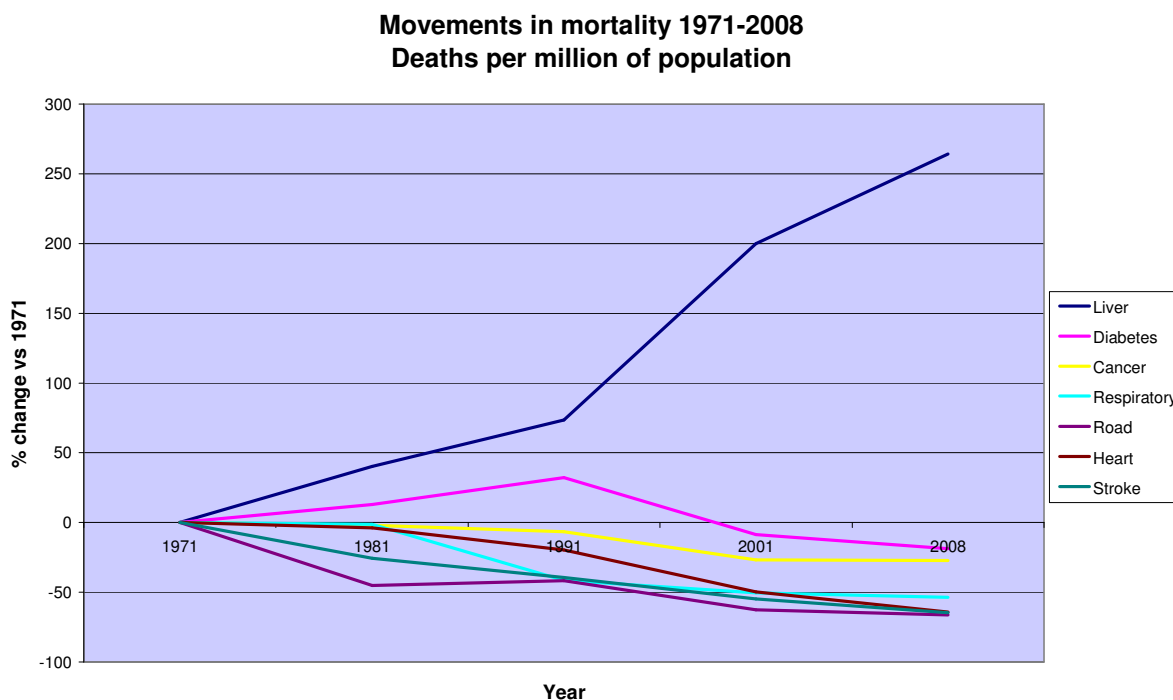
British Liver Trust, 2 Southampton Road,  
Ringwood, BH24 1HY

## Editor's Note:

1. Coordinators of World Cancer Day, the International Union Against Cancer (UICC), have focused this years annual event on preventable infections. "Cancer can be prevented too" is the theme of a and is backed by a new scientific report: 'Protection against cancer causing infections' which focuses on the nine infections that can lead to cancer.  
[http://www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=451&Itemid=818](http://www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=451&Itemid=818)
2. Of the 12 million people who are diagnosed with cancer each year around 20% of cases can be attributed to viral and bacterial infections that either directly cause or increase the risk of cancer.  
[http://www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=451&Itemid=818](http://www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=451&Itemid=818)
3. UK's figures indicate the rate of primary liver cancers almost tripled from 1.4 per hundred thousand in 1975 to 3.9 in 2006. By 2006, 1962 men and 1146 women were diagnosed with the disease.
4. There are two major types of primary liver cancer, hepatoma (also called hepatocellular carcinoma or HCC) and biliary tree cancer (which includes bile duct cancer or cholangiocarcinoma). The main cause of primary liver cancer is cirrhosis of the liver, where the liver has become scarred as a result of damage over a long period of time. Any disease that causes cirrhosis of the liver can lead to HCC, but certain causes of cirrhosis have a particularly strong link with HCC. These include the viral infections hepatitis B and C, the cirrhosis due to excessive alcohol, and haemochromatosis (a rare hereditary disease caused by an overload of iron in the body).
5. Many cases of liver cancer can be prevented with better prevention of liver disease, for example, by better protection against blood-borne viruses and hepatitis B vaccination, and by not drinking more alcohol than the Government guidelines (2-3 units a day for women, 3-4 units maximum for men). Treatment of the underlying cause of liver disease can delay or halt progression of liver damage and therefore reduce the risk of liver cancer developing. This can include antiviral treatment for hepatitis B or C; for those with alcoholic damage, stopping drinking; for fatty liver

disease (where fatty deposits build up in liver tissue causing inflammation and damage) to gradually lose weight and take more exercise.

6. This graph, produced by the British Liver Trust, illustrates the true extent of liver disease in the UK. Liver disease, when compared to the other five big causes of death, is the only one showing a steady increase year-on-year:



7. The British Liver Trust is Britain's only national liver disease charity for adults. We work to improve the lives of people suffering from liver disease with key roles in education, support and research. We rely on voluntary contributions from individuals and funding from companies and charitable trusts.
8. The Trust is working urgently to encourage prevention and investment in treatment and care for people with liver disease. Much of the increasing incidence of liver disease stems from lifestyle trends – relating to alcohol, obesity and viral hepatitis. However, liver disease has many other causes including genetics, abnormalities in the immune system and even the medicines we take. The Trust is working to raise awareness about the liver and combat the stigma associated with liver disease.
9. The Trust provides a comprehensive website [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk), free medical helpline – 0800 652 7330, and distributes a wide range of information leaflets to individuals and healthcare professionals. In addition, the Trust is a contact point for support groups nationwide, as well as co-ordinating funding and providing support for research.