Patient reported assessment of different diagnostic imaging tests for liver disease visual representation and ownership of results improves understanding.

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BACKGROUND
Liver disease is rising in prevalence; early intervention followed by action (eg dietary improvement) prevents later stages of disease and associated costs. Good patient experience and understanding leads to better outcomes in chronic disease, and thus information delivery is important to earlier positive outcomes.

METHODS
41 patients with experience of liver disease underwent Transient Elastography (FibroScan) and quantitative MRI analysed by Liver MultiScan. Results were fed back in a standard format. For FibroScan, a Liver Stiffness number, with comparison to colourised fibrosis score chart. For Liver MultiScan, a standard report featuring statistical summary of key parameters and coloured MRI scan. This was followed by a qualitative interview and questionnaire into patient experience and understanding. The interview was thematically analysed.

RESULTS
38 patients touched on the imagery of Liver MultiScan, 37 positively. Imagery theme summary was that access to the coloured visual image enhanced understanding, and so reassured patients of their health status. No discernible difference was seen by condition, though those with patchy disease commented strongly. 26 patients commented on information ownership and its effects, 25 positively. Patients spoke of frustration in terms of access to their information, and importance of access for personal empowerment and subsequent lifestyle action. On the questionnaire, done before and after scanning, patients rated understanding of their liver. Mean scoring increased from 6 to 9.3 on a 10-point scale and the changes were significant at the 1% level using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test.

CONCLUSION
Giving patients access to their own reports in an understandable and visual format may enhance patient experience and understanding of liver health, and so potentially form part of health interventions for liver disease. Patient empowerment in chronic liver disease merits further research.

REFERENCES
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www.perspectum-diagnostics.com