New drug targets ‘zombie cells’ in effort to prevent liver disease, cancer

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A new drug candidate developed by Tulane University researchers may work to prevent a common type of fatty liver disease called metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), which sometimes leads to cirrhosis and liver cancer. (Photo by Shutterstock)

In a study published in *Nature Aging*, the newly developed drug called 753b targets and degrades two proteins that senescent cells rely on to survive. In mice, the drug successfully reduced the amount of fat and scar tissue built up in the liver caused by the senescent cells.

“Chronic fatty liver disease is a global problem,” said corresponding author Liya Pi, assistant professor of pathology at Tulane University School of Medicine. “Not only did the drug selectively target senescent cells and slow the progression of MASLD, it

also halted the development of associated liver diseases as well as hepatocellular carcinoma.” Click to read the full story.