



Early Detection and Impact of Portal Hypertension on Life Expectancy in Cirrhosis

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DESCRIPTION

Liver cirrhosis is a chronic condition that causes scarring and damage to the liver, affecting its ability to perform its vital functions. Cirrhosis can have various causes, such as chronic viral hepatitis, alcohol abuse, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, autoimmune diseases, and genetic disorders. Depending on the extent of liver damage and the presence of symptoms, cirrhosis can be classified into two stages: compensated and decompensated. Compensated cirrhosis is the early stage of the disease, where the liver is still able to function relatively well despite the scarring and fibrosis. People with compensated cirrhosis may not have any symptoms or may experience mild ones, such as fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, weight loss, or loss of appetite. They may also develop spider angiomas, which are small red spots on the skin caused by dilated blood vessels. Compensated cirrhosis can be diagnosed by various methods, such as blood tests, imaging tests, liver biopsy, or liver stiffness measurement. Blood tests can reveal abnormal levels of liver enzymes, albumin, bilirubin, or clotting factors, which indicate liver dysfunction. Imaging tests, such as ultrasound or (Computerized Tomography) CT scan, can show the size and shape of the liver and detect any nodules or masses. Liver biopsy involves taking a small sample of liver tissue and examining it under a microscope for signs of scarring and inflammation. Liver stiffness measurement is a noninvasive technique that uses ultrasound or magnetic resonance elastography to measure the elasticity of the liver tissue and estimate the degree of fibrosis.

The prognosis and life expectancy of people with compensated cirrhosis depend on several factors, such as the cause and stage of the disease, the presence of complications, the effectiveness of treatment, and the overall health status of the patient. According to one study, the median survival time for patients with compensated cirrhosis was 12.5 years. However, this may vary depending on the etiology of cirrhosis. For example, patients with hepatitis C-related cirrhosis had a median survival time of 9.4 years, while those with alcoholic cirrhosis had a median survival time of 6.8 years. Moreover, some patients may progress

from compensated to decompensated cirrhosis over time, which significantly reduces their life expectancy. The treatment of compensated cirrhosis aims to slow down or prevent the progression of liver damage and to manage any symptoms or complications that may arise. The treatment options may vary depending on the cause of cirrhosis. For example, patients with viral hepatitis may benefit from antiviral therapy that can clear the infection and improve liver function. Patients with alcoholic cirrhosis should abstain from alcohol consumption and seek counseling or rehabilitation if needed. Patients with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease should adopt a healthy diet and exercise regimen to reduce their weight and fat accumulation in the liver. Patients with autoimmune diseases may require immunosuppressive drugs to control their inflammation. In addition to specific treatments for the underlying cause of cirrhosis, patients with compensated cirrhosis should also follow some general measures to protect their liver health and prevent complications. These include:

- Avoiding hepatotoxic drugs or substances that can harm the liver, such as acetaminophen, herbal supplements, or illicit drugs.
- Getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B if not already immune.
- Getting screened for liver cancer regularly by ultrasound or blood tests.

CONCLUSION

Monitoring for signs of portal hypertension, such as ascites (fluid accumulation in the abdomen), varices (enlarged veins in the esophagus or stomach), or hepatic encephalopathy (confusion or mental changes due to high ammonia levels in the blood). Seeking medical attention promptly if any symptoms change. Compensated cirrhosis is a serious but manageable condition that requires regular monitoring and treatment. By following their doctor's advice and taking care of their liver health, patients with compensated cirrhosis can improve their quality of life and prolong their survival.

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Received: 21-Aug-2023, Manuscript No. JLR-23-23552; **Editor assigned:** 23-Aug-2023, Pre QC No. JLR-23- 23552 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 14-Sep-2023, QC No JLR-23-23552; **Revised:** 21-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. JLR-23- 23552 (R); **Published:** 28-Sep-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2167-0889.23.12.196

Citation: Filipe D (2023) Early Detection and Impact of Portal Hypertension on Life Expectancy in Cirrhosis. J Liver. 12:196.

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