

## **Mortality from chronic liver disease: Recent trends and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Prepandemic time trends in mortality from chronic liver disease (CLD) differed according to specific cause of death (decreasing for liver cirrhosis, stable or increasing for liver cancer), etiology (increasing for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, generally decreasing for other etiologies), and world region (decreasing in areas with the highest burden of hepatitis B virus, increasing in Eastern Europe and other countries). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic affected mortality of patients with CLD both directly, with a higher risk for severe illness and death depending on age, stage and etiology of the disease, and indirectly, through social isolation and loss of support, harmful drinking, and difficulties in access to care. Nevertheless, only sparse data are available on variations in CLD as a cause of death during the pandemic. In the USA, in 2020-2021 a growth in mortality was registered for all liver diseases, more marked for alcoholic liver disease, especially among young people aged 25-44 years and in selected ethnic groups. COVID-19 related deaths accounted only for a minor part of the excess. Further data from mortality registers of other countries are warranted, preferably adopting the so-called multiple cause-of-death approach, and extended to deaths attributed to viral hepatitis and liver cancer.

Keywords: COVID-19; Chronic liver disease; Liver cancer; Liver cirrhosis; Mortality; Multiple causes of death.

### **FULL TEXT**

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