

ACHIEVEMENTS

Metabolic Dysfunction Increases Mortality and Liver Cancer Risk in Hepatitis B & C Patients

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The NTUH research team.

Liver disease remains a critical national health challenge in Taiwan, closely linked to the high prevalence of chronic hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) infections. Prof. Jia-Horng Kao, Vice Superintendent of National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH), leads a pioneering research team dedicated to the management of hepatitis patients with concurrent metabolic dysfunctions.

Recent studies by Prof. Tung-Hung Su and Dr. Shang-Chin Huang disclose that HBV patients with concurrent metabolic dysfunction face a significantly elevated risk of mortality. In contrast, HBV patients with liver steatosis alone—without other metabolic dysfunction—showed a 50% reduction in long-term mortality risk, suggesting nuanced differences in disease progression.

Meanwhile, hepatitis C remains a major contributor to liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). A groundbreaking study by Prof. Chen-Hua Liu revealed that even after successful HCV eradication using direct-acting antivirals (DAAs), patients with metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) continue to have a substantially higher risk of developing HCC compared to those without metabolic dysfunction. These findings underscore the need for early intervention—whether through medications or lifestyle modifications—and regular surveillance for HCC to manage long-term risks effectively.

Both studies were published recently in the internationally respected *Journal of Hepatology*, drawing significant attention from the global hepatology community. The discoveries

offer crucial new insights into the long-term management of hepatitis B and C patients and underscore the urgent need to address metabolic dysfunctions to prevent liver cancer progression.

The Broader Impact: Metabolic Dysfunctions and Liver Disease

Metabolic dysfunctions—including diabetes, hypertension, and obesity—exert a profound impact on patients with chronic liver disease. In addition to antiviral therapies, managing metabolic syndromes, maintaining a healthy weight and diet, and undergoing regular liver function monitoring are essential to reducing complications, such as cirrhosis and liver cancer, ultimately improving long-term patient outcomes.

Prof. Chun-Jen Liu, Director of the Hepatitis Research Center at NTUH, emphasizes the importance of patient self-management. He advocates regular liver function tests and

abdominal ultrasounds for early detection of cirrhosis and HCC. Furthermore, active monitoring and management of metabolic risk factors—such as blood pressure, blood sugar, body weight, and cholesterol levels—are vital. Any detected abnormalities should prompt immediate medical consultation. Adhering to medical advice on lifestyle changes and treatment regimens is critical for achieving better long-term health outcomes.



Click or Scan the QR code to Access the Journal Article "All-cause and cause-specific mortality in patients with chronic hepatitis B and concurrent steatotic liver disease" in *Journal of Hepatology*.



Click or Scan the QR code to Access the Journal Article "Risk of de novo HCC in patients with MASLD following direct-acting antiviral-induced cure of HCV infection" in *Journal of Hepatology*.