

Initial hospital contact for alcohol issues predicts cirrhosis

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(HealthDay)—An initial hospital contact for alcohol problems is a

significant predictor of alcoholic liver cirrhosis, particularly for patients 40 to 59 years and those diagnosed with harmful use or dependence, according to a study published online Nov. 16 in *Hepatology*.

Gro Askgaard, M.D., from Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark, and colleagues followed all Danish patients with an initial hospital contact for alcohol problems during 1998 to 2002 for development of alcoholic [liver cirrhosis](#) (36,044 patients). The authors examined predictors of the absolute risk for alcoholic liver cirrhosis.

The researchers found that in men and women, age and alcohol diagnosis were significant predictors of alcoholic liver cirrhosis risk, while civil status, education, and type of hospital care were not. The 15-year absolute risks were 0.7, 5.5, 9.8, 8.9, 6.2, and 2.5 percent, respectively, for men aged 20 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, 60 to 69, and 70 to 84. According to alcohol diagnosis, the 15-year absolute risks in men were 2.6, 7.7, and 8.8 percent, respectively, for intoxication, harmful use, and dependence. Relative to the [general population](#), the incidence rate ratio for alcoholic liver cirrhosis in the cohort was 11 in men and 18 in women.

"Hospital patients with [alcohol problems](#) had a much greater risk for alcoholic liver cirrhosis compared to the general population," the authors write. "The risk was particularly increased for patients 40 to 59 years and for [patients](#) diagnosed with harmful use or dependence."

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