



\$12M Grant for Research on Early Liver Transplantation

Researchers will conduct a seven-year study and develop an updated archive of data on alcohol and liver health.

August 25, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Researchers at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California (USC) received a \$12 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct foundational research on early [liver transplantation](#) for [alcohol-associated liver disease \(AALD\)](#).

The [grant](#) will fund a seven-year study led by Brian Lee, MD, assistant professor of clinical medicine in gastrointestinal liver diseases at the Keck School of Medicine,, according to a [Keck news release](#).

AALD accounts for 50% of liver-related deaths, and its incidence is increasing worldwide. AALD covers a spectrum of liver injury, including alcohol-associated [cirrhosis](#) and [alcoholic hepatitis](#), according to the [American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases](#).

Treatment options for AALD vary, but early liver transplantation is considered one of the best, although some people object to the fact that patients are not required to abstain from alcohol prior to transplantation, which can result in [alcohol](#) relapse after surgery, according to Keck.

Livers for transplants are in short supply, and data on which kinds of patients most benefit from transplantation are lacking, which means many people have poor health even posttransplant. What's more, race, socioeconomic status and insurance type factor into which patients receive a transplant as well as health outcomes posttransplant.

"There are significant knowledge gaps that contribute to disparities in access to transplant as well as posttransplant outcomes," Lee told Keck. "Early transplant for alcohol-associated liver disease is now the fastest-growing reason for liver transplants, so there's a real urgent need for more data."

Lee added that because Latinos are often underrepresented in medical research, the Keck Hospital of USC offers a unique opportunity to study this group as they make up the majority of patients at the hospital.

With a goal to “help stem an epidemic of alcohol-associated liver disease and to provide our patient community with better treatment options,” Lee said he and his team will collect a broad range of data about patient outcomes and biological samples to create a new archive of data on alcohol and liver health.

To learn more, click [#Liver Transplant](#) or [#Alcohol-related Liver Disease](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Digital Intervention Reduced Alcohol Use in Latinos](#),” “[Excessive Drinking During the Pandemic Increased Alcoholic Liver Disease Death Rates](#)” and “[Congress Considers Easing Regulations on Air Transport of Donated Organs](#).”

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