New Saliva Test May Predict ’Flare-Ups’ in Cirrhotic Patients

April 23, 2015

Researchers in Virginia claim they have developed a new saliva test for chronic liver disease patients that can predict which cirrhosis patients will have inflammations or “flare-ups” that end up requiring hospitalization, News Medical reports.

The new test may also help show how closely connected liver diseases are with the body’s microbiota, particularly with bacteria in the gut and digestive pathways. Specifically, the test may show that saliva can also be an accurate indication of liver inflammation.

Researchers looked at the saliva of more than 100 cirrhosis patients from the Virginia Commonwealth University and the local Veterans Administration Medical Center. Of those patients, 38 had to be hospitalized within 90 days because of liver inflammation. Researchers also compared the saliva of 80 people with and without cirrhosis in search of harmful bacterial markers.

In both parts of the study, researchers found that cirrhotic patients showed signs of impaired immune responses in their saliva, which turned out to be quite similar to the number of bad bacteria found in the gut mucosa and stool samples of liver disease patients.

Scientists claim the new, non-invasive test could help improve testing treatment protocols for patients with cirrhosis, particularly in determining which patients are at the biggest risk for liver disease complications.

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