



Deaths From Chronic Liver Disease on the Rise

Chronic liver disease affects nearly 4.5 million adults in the United States.

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A new report details a rise in hospitalization and deaths from [chronic liver disease](#) (CLD) and [cirrhosis](#).

Salix Pharmaceuticals' "[Liver Health Annual Trends Report](#)" has found that proper care for people with chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is lacking. This may help explain why CLD has surpassed diabetes and stroke as a cause of death among people 25 to 54 years old.

Chronic liver disease refers to a long-term conditions that include [non-alcoholic fatty liver disease](#), alcohol-related liver disease and chronic [hepatitis B](#) or [hepatitis C](#). Over time, these can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer and the need for a liver transplant.

The report surveyed 400 health care providers who work with CLD patients to identify barriers to improving treatment and diagnosis for these patients.

The report found that 55% of [primary care](#) physicians and 49% of nurse practitioners and physician assistants claimed to feel uncomfortable treating overt hepatic encephalopathy (brain impairment due to severe liver cirrhosis) and seek consults in such cases. The report also found that 38% of the health care professionals surveyed were unfamiliar with [national guidelines](#) for managing CLD.

What's more, in the last year, 34% of gastroenterologists reported increases in patient hospitalizations caused by alcohol-related cirrhosis of the liver.

Nicola Kayel, vice president of marketing at Salix Pharmaceuticals, told [Fierce Pharma Marketing](#) that she hopes the report will spread awareness of this growing public health issue.

"[It] may help bring a better understanding of the impact of chronic liver disease and potentially help address underdiagnosis and undertreatment among the approximately 4.5 million adults in the U.S. living with the disease," she said.

