Fatty Liver Disease Tied to Risk of Metabolic Problems in People With HIV

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease is more common among those with the virus compared with the general population.

April 29, 2020 By Benjamin Ryan

Among people with HIV, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is associated with a higher risk of metabolic health problems, Healio reports.

Fatty liver disease is the most common liver disease in the global general population and is associated with type 2 diabetes, irregular blood lipids and high blood pressure. The condition can give rise to inflammation, which over time can lead to fibrosis, cirrhosis and liver cancer. In its more severe form, fatty liver disease is known as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH).

As described in The Journal of Infectious Diseases, a research team led by Thomas Krahn, MD, of McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, assessed the association between fatty liver disease and new diagnoses of metabolic health conditions among 485 people with HIV who did not have hepatitis B or C viruses (HBV or HCV). They drew their sample from the LIVEr in HIV, or LIVEHIV, cohort.

The study members were followed for a median of 40 months. At the outset of the study, 38% of the participants had NAFLD, including 17% who had NASH. Fifteen percent were suspected to have substantial fibrosis (scarring) of the liver, and 2.5% were believed to have cirrhosis, the most advanced stage of fibrosis.

The rates of diagnosis of diabetes and irregular blood lipids during the study's follow-up were a respective 4.7-fold and 8.2-fold higher among those with NAFLD compared with those without the liver condition.

After adjusting the data to account for various differences among the cohort members, the study authors found that having NAFLD, compared with not having the condition, was associated with a 5.1-fold increased risk of developing diabetes and a 2.4-fold increased risk of developing irregular blood lipids.

People with HIV and NAFLD, the study authors concluded, “are at higher risk of [new diagnoses of] diabetes and [irregular blood lipids]. Early referral strategies and timely management of metabolic risk may improve outcomes.”

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/fatty-liver-disease-tied-risk-metabolic-problems-people-hiv