

Liver transplant offers survival benefits for patients of all sizes

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Patients with high BMIs experience a significant survival benefit from liver transplantation and had similar rates of mortality after transplant compared to patients with normal BMI. Therefore, obesity alone should not keep patients from being listed for transplantation, say the authors of a study in the December issue of *Liver Transplantation*, a journal by John Wiley & Sons.

As the prevalence of obesity has increased in the United States, patients with end-stage liver disease—who might be saved by a transplant—are more likely to be obese. About 1 in 5 are morbidly obese, with a BMI over 40. Previous studies have shown that morbidly obese patients face higher risk of morbidity and mortality after liver transplantation, leading the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) to recommend that morbid obesity should be considered a contraindication to the surgery. However, until now, no studies have considered the survival benefit for patients who receive a transplant compared to those who do not.

To determine how BMI influences the survival benefits from liver transplantation, researchers led by Shawn Pelletier, of the University of Michigan, conducted a retrospective study of all 25,647 adult patients listed for liver transplantation in the U.S. between September 1, 2001 and December 31, 2004. The patients were classified by BMI in the following way: underweight (BMI

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