

Vitamin D deficiency in cirrhosis

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A research team from Denmark examined the vitamin D status in patients with alcoholic cirrhosis compared to those with primary biliary cirrhosis. They found that vitamin D deficiency in cirrhosis relates to liver dysfunction rather than etiology, with lower levels of vitamin D in alcoholic cirrhosis than in primary biliary cirrhosis.

Vitamin D deficiency is a well reported complication in chronic cholestatic liver disease such as primary biliary cirrhosis. While the prevalence and treatment of this deficiency has been addressed in many articles over the last decades, little is known of the vitamin D status in alcoholic liver cirrhosis.

A research article published on February 21, 2011 in the [World Journal of Gastroenterology](#) addresses this question. The authors described the [serum](#) vitamin D status in a retrospective case series of patients with alcoholic liver cirrhosis compared to those with primary biliary cirrhosis.

The study showed that [vitamin D deficiency](#) is more frequent and severe in patients with alcoholic liver cirrhosis than in patients with primary biliary cirrhosis. Furthermore, it indicated that the degree of liver dysfunction, rather than the aetiology of cirrhosis, dictates the risk of vitamin D deficiency.

This study emphasizes the importance of monitoring vitamin D levels in all patients with cirrhosis. However, further studies are needed to find the most favourable form of vitamin D supplementation for these patients.

More information: Malham M, Jørgensen SP, Ott P, Agnholt J, Vilstrup H, Borre M, Dahlerup JF. Vitamin D deficiency in cirrhosis relates to liver dysfunction rather than aetiology. World J Gastroenterol 2011; 17(7): 922-925. www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v17/i7/922.htm

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