

Liver diseases exhibit differing patterns in ethnic minorities

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Chronic liver disease (CLD) and cirrhosis are serious liver conditions but little is known about how they affect ethnic minority populations in the United States. When researchers examined CLD and cirrhosis among different groups, they found that the prevalence of CLD ranged from 3.9 percent in African Americans and Native Hawaiians to 4.1 percent in whites, 6.7 percent in Latinos, and 6.9 percent in Japanese.

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) was the most common cause of CLD in all ethnic groups combined (52 percent), followed by alcoholic [liver disease](#) (ALD) (21 percent).

NAFLD was the most common cause of cirrhosis in the entire study, and by ethnicity, it was also the most common cause of cirrhosis in Japanese Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Latinos, accounting for 32 percent of cases.. ALD was the most common cause of cirrhosis in whites (38.2 percent), while hepatitis C virus was the most common cause in African Americans (29.8 percent).

"This is the first study of its kind to include Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans, and it revealed the important discovery that NAFLD is the most common cause of CLD and cirrhosis in Japanese Americans, Latinos, and Native Hawaiians and that NALFD prevalence in Japanese is higher than in Latinos and other ethnic groups," said Dr. Veronica Wendy Setiawan, lead author of the Hepatology study. "This paper addresses the gap in knowledge for understudied populations with respect to CLD's underlying etiology and underscores NAFLD as the

most important cause of CLD. It also highlights the need to implement improved screening, diagnostic, and management approaches to face this growing epidemic."

More information: Veronica Wendy Setiawan et al. Prevalence of chronic liver disease and cirrhosis by underlying cause in understudied ethnic groups: The multiethnic cohort, *Hepatology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1002/hep.28677](https://doi.org/10.1002/hep.28677)

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