

# Study reveals tremendous clinical and economic burden of common chronic liver disease

September 27 2016

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Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), the most common liver disease worldwide, is increasing in prevalence and is currently estimated to affect approximately one-quarter of the general population. A new study published in the journal *Hepatology* reveals the clinical and economic burden of NAFLD in the United States and Europe. The findings will help clinicians and policy makers develop strategies to deal with this serious chronic disease.

NAFLD, which is characterized by the build up of extra fat in liver cells, is associated with obesity and diabetes, and it occurs with minimal or no symptom until the disease is advanced. When Zobair Younossi, MD, MPH, of Inova Fairfax Hospital in Virginia, and his colleagues constructed models to assess the potential burden of NAFLD, they estimated that there are 64 million individuals with the disease in the United States and 52 million in the four European countries examined (Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom). Annual direct medical costs were estimated to be approximately \$103 billion (\$1163 per patient) in the United States and € 35 billion (from € 354 to € 1163 per patient) in the four European countries. The [economic burden](#) of NAFLD would be even higher when including societal costs and indirect costs.

"Given the growing epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and NAFLD, this study brings to the attention of policymakers, providers, pharmaceutical

companies, payers, and patients the critical importance of understanding NAFLD and establishing a policy for prevention, early detection, and effective therapy," said Dr. Younossi. "This requires a multi-faceted national and possibly international policy to deal with this common, debilitating, and expensive [liver disease](#)."

**More information:** "The Economic and Clinical Burden of Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) in the United States and Europe." Zobair M. Younossi, Deirdre Blissett, Robert Blissett, Linda Henry, Maria Stepanova, Youssef Younossi, Andrei Racila, Sharon Hunt, and Rachel Beckerman. *Hepatology*; Published Online: September 27, 2016. [doi.wiley.com/10.1002/hep.28785](https://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/hep.28785)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Study reveals tremendous clinical and economic burden of common chronic liver disease (2016, September 27) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-reveals-tremendous-clinical-economic-burden.html>

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