

BMI linked to hepatocellular carcinoma risk in chronic hep B

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(HealthDay)—For patients with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV), body

mass index (BMI) is significantly associated with increased risk of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), with the risk more pronounced for women than men, according to a research letter published online March 22 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Kyuwoong Kim, from the Seoul National University Graduate School in South Korea, and colleagues used National Health Insurance Service data to examine the correlation between BMI and development of HCC in patients with chronic HBV infection. Participants underwent health examinations between Jan. 1, 2002, and Dec. 31, 2006, and were followed from Jan. 1, 2007, to Dec. 31, 2015. The cohort included 214,167 men and 156,155 women with chronic HBV infection.

The researchers found that there were 11,241 HCCs in men and 3,368 in women during the eight years of follow-up. In both men and women, the risk of HCC was positively associated with BMI in a dose-response manner. The hazard ratios for HCC were 1.22 and 1.46 in severely obese men and women compared with those whose BMI was between 18.5 and 22.9 kg/m². Compared with men, women who were overweight had a stronger magnitude of the association. Women also had a higher correlation between BMI and HCC.

"Our findings have both clinical and public health implications that support the need for intervention strategies and medical attention for obese patients with chronic HBV infection, especially in [women](#)," the authors write.

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