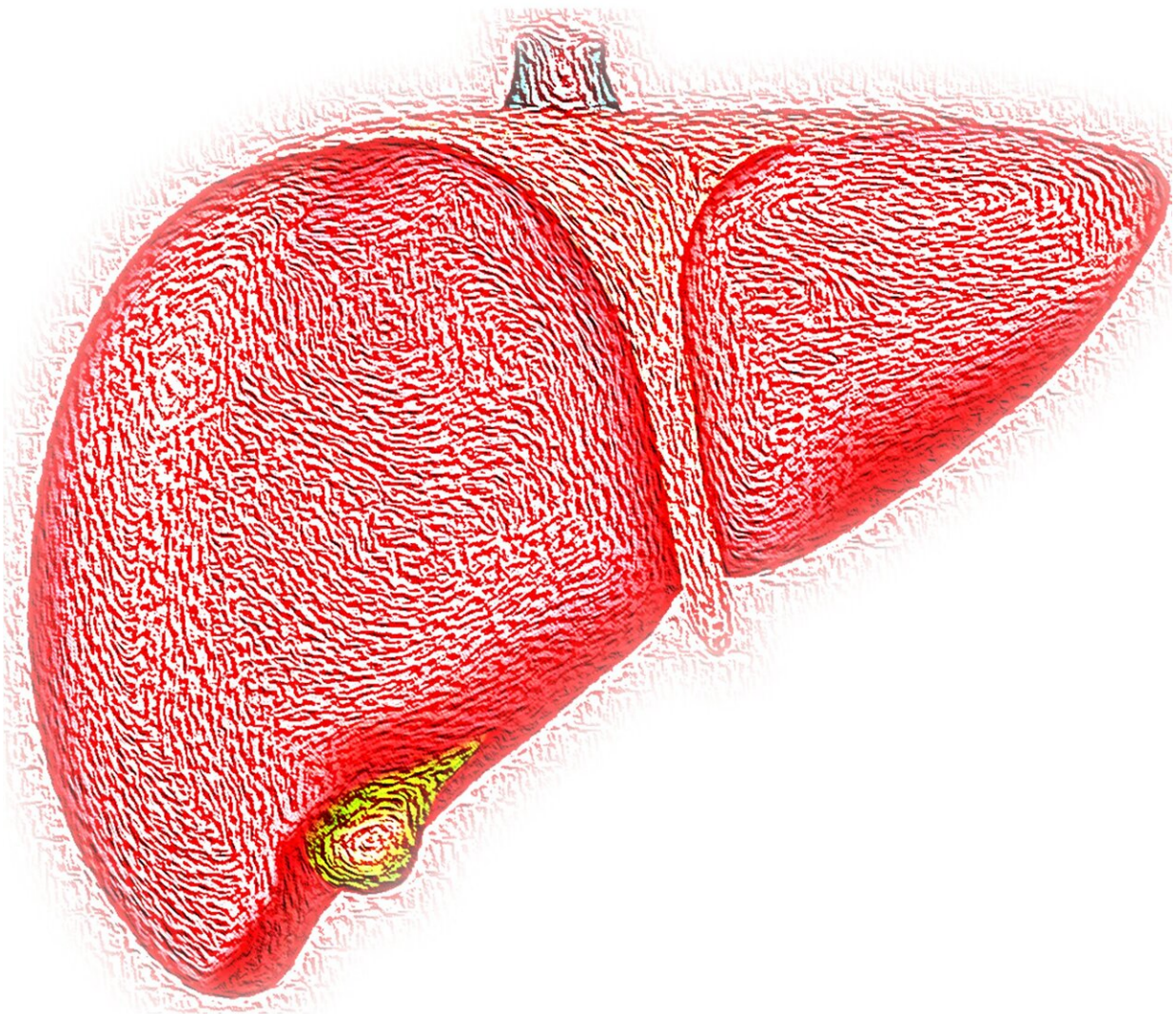


Researchers discuss findings of study on alcohol-related liver disease

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Through a unique database, KI researchers have been able to study the risk of mortality among people with liver disease caused by too much alcohol. Principal investigator Hannes Hagström, associate professor at the Department of Medicine Huddinge and Solna and co-author Jonas F Ludvigsson, professor at Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics describe the study.

What is the study about?

"We have studied the risk of death in people with [liver disease](#) caused by too much alcohol, one of the world's most common causes of [liver](#) damage. We found that the risk of death is more than four times as high as in the [general population](#) and that although the risk was greatest for people with cirrhosis, mortality is also increased for people without cirrhosis. We also found that the risk of death seems to increase further for those people who continue to drink after diagnosis," says Hannes Hagström.

What is new about this study compared to previous studies in the field?

"The study is the largest so far in the field, and also has the longest follow-up time. A major strength is that we could use information from biopsies to better characterize patients. The links between alcohol-caused liver disease and death that we see here are therefore more detailed and probably more accurate than previous studies in the field," says Hannes Hagström.

How will the findings benefit the patient group?

"The findings can be used partly to alert patients and attending physicians about the high risk of [death](#) at various stages of alcohol-caused liver disease, and partly to serve as a motivator for patients to cease or decrease alcohol consumption after diagnosis," says Hannes Hagström.

The data for the study originally comes from the so-called ESPRESSO study. What is it?

"In the ESPRESSO study we have collected data from all gastrointestinal biopsy reports in Sweden. We have data from nearly 350,000 liver biopsy reports. We then linked these data to Swedish health registers, including the Patient Register, and were thus able to define individuals with alcohol-related liver disease. The combination of biopsy data and healthcare register data makes it possible to (1) identify patients where the liver diagnosis has a [high specificity](#), but also (2) to better understand the role of tissue damage in the prognosis of alcohol-related liver [disease](#)," says Jonas F. Ludvigsson.

More information: Hannes Hagström et al. Mortality in biopsy-proven alcohol-related liver disease: a population-based nationwide cohort study of 3453 patients, *Gut* (2020). [DOI: 10.1136/gutjnl-2019-320446](https://doi.org/10.1136/gutjnl-2019-320446)

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