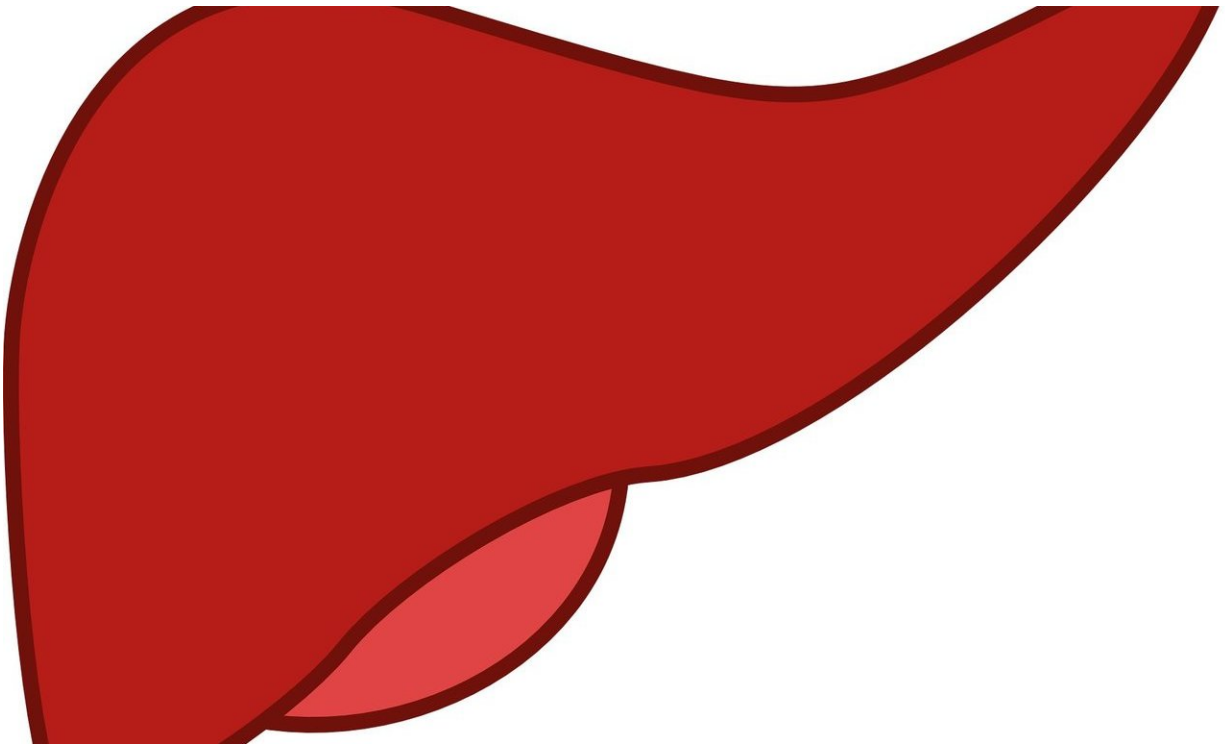


# International research network identifies triggers for severe course of liver cirrhosis

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Chronic liver disease and even cirrhosis can go unnoticed for a long time because many patients have no symptoms: the liver suffers silently. When the body is no longer able to compensate for the liver's declining performance, the condition deteriorates dramatically in a very short time: tissue fluid collects in the abdomen (ascites), internal bleeding

occurs in the esophagus and elsewhere, and the brain is at risk of being poisoned by metabolic products. This acute decompensation of liver cirrhosis can develop into acute-on-chronic liver failure with inflammatory reactions throughout the body and failure of several organs.

In the PREDICT study, led by Professor Jonel Trebicka, scientists from 15 European countries observed 1273 patients who were hospitalized with acute decompensation of their [liver](#) cirrhosis. The current evaluation of the study focused on the question of what can trigger acute decompensation of liver cirrhosis. The result: in the vast majority of cases (>90%), a bacterial infection, liver inflammation caused by alcohol consumption, or both together could be identified as the trigger.

Bleeding in the digestive tract and brain dysfunction induced by painkillers or sedatives (drug-induced toxic encephalopathy) were identified as further trigger, although at a lower rate.

Lead investigator Professor Jonel Trebicka, gastroenterologist and hepatologist at the Medical Clinic I of the University Hospital Frankfurt, explains: "The acute decompensation of liver cirrhosis demands rapid and targeted action. In the PREDICT study, we therefore want to learn a lot about the triggering factors of this life-threatening disease in order to be able to derive recommendations for diagnostics and therapy. Knowing what the most likely triggers of acute decompensation are will help to further develop diagnostic and treatment strategies for patients with this life-threatening disease."

The pan-European PREDICT study has monitored the clinical course of acute decompensations of liver cirrhosis to find early signs of the development of acute-on-[chronic liver failure](#) (ACLF). PREDICT is funded by the European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure. A total of 136 scientists from 47 centers and institutions in 15

European countries are participating in PREDICT.

The European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure (EF Clif) is a private, non-profit foundation whose mission is to promote study and research on Acute-on-Chronic Liver Failure and thus, contribute to improving both the quality of life and survival of patients with liver cirrhosis.

The EF Clif was created in 2015 to support the research work carried out by the EASL Clif Consortium, a research network of more than 100 European University Hospitals and 200 clinical investigators. In 2013, the consortium described a new syndrome: acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF), which is the most common cause of death in [cirrhosis](#).

Currently, the research activity of the EF Clif is fostered through two chairs: the EASL Clif Chair, to promote observational, pathophysiological and therapeutic studies through the EASL-Clif Consortium's hospital network; and the Grifols Chair, which promotes the development of translational research projects with the creation of a network of centers across Europe: The European Network for Translational Research in Chronic Liver Failure (ENTR-CLIF).

**More information:** Jonel Trebicka et al. PREDICT identifies precipitating events associated with the clinical course of acutely decompensated cirrhosis, *Journal of Hepatology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jhep.2020.11.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2020.11.019)

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