

## Perspective

# A short note on chronic hepatitis

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

Hepatitis is a liver infection that causes inflammation. The liver inflammation in chronic hepatitis lasts at least six months. This condition can be mild, causing only minor damage, or it can be severe, causing the death of many liver cells. Cirrhosis and liver failure can occur in some cases.

### Causes of chronic hepatitis

Chronic hepatitis is caused by a variety of factors.

**Hepatitis B and C:** Even sometimes, the person who has been infected is completely unaware of any early symptoms. Alternatively, the symptoms were so minor that the individual did not seek medical help. This is particularly true in the case of chronic hepatitis C. Due to the ongoing destruction of liver cells and the resulting scarring; both types may lead to the serious complication of cirrhosis over time, perhaps a decade or more. Cirrhosis patients in the minority develop liver cancer over time.

**Hepatitis D:** Hepatitis D affects only those who have already been infected with hepatitis B and causes a flare-up of active hepatitis.

### Symptoms of chronic hepatitis

When liver disease has progressed and cirrhosis is present, the first specific symptoms appear. Among the signs and symptoms are:

- A spleen that has become larger
- In the skin, there are small spider-like blood vessels visible
- Palms of the hands are red
- There is a setup of fluid retention
- A proclivity to bleed
- Jaundice

- Brain function deterioration

### Diagnosis of chronic hepatitis

Chronic hepatitis is diagnosed by blood test and biopsy. Blood tests to measure the levels of liver enzymes and other substances produced by the liver are usually the first step in diagnosing chronic hepatitis. These tests can help confirm or rule out a hepatitis diagnosis, pinpoint the cause, and assess the severity of liver damage. Blood tests are also used to determine whether the infection is caused by the hepatitis virus. If no virus is found, additional blood tests are required to rule out other possibilities, such as autoimmune hepatitis. To confirm the diagnosis, a liver biopsy is sometimes performed.

Other tests may be performed to determine the extent of the damage to the liver and to rule out any other issues. Ultrasound elastography and magnetic resonance elastography are two examples of specialised imaging tests.

### Prognosis for chronic hepatitis

Patients with chronic hepatitis have a wide range of prognoses, which are often dependent on the cause and treatment options. When the causative drug is removed, chronic hepatitis caused by drugs frequently regresses completely.

Cirrhosis is caused by untreated chronic hepatitis caused by HCV in 20%-30% of patients, though development can take decades and varies due to a patient's other chronic liver disease risk factors, such as alcohol use and obesity. Chronic autoimmune hepatitis usually responds to treatment, but it can also lead to fibrosis and cirrhosis. Cancer is linked to chronic HBV infection. Other liver disorders, such as cirrhosis or advanced fibrosis, increase the risk, but this is most common when cirrhosis or advanced fibrosis has developed.

### Treatment of chronic hepatitis

The goals of chronic hepatitis treatment are to keep the disease from worsening and to avoid cirrhosis and liver failure. Antiviral medications are used to treat chronic hepatitis B and C. The success rates of the most recent drugs are astounding.

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