Preface

Obesity and Liver Disease

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Editor

In recent decades, obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States and Western countries. Obesity and its complications have been shown to have tremendous impact on clinical, economic, societal, and patient-reported outcomes. Due to this wide ranging impact of obesity, it was recently recognized by the American Medical Association as a “disease.”

In particular, obesity affects the liver in a number of ways. Obesity is the most important risk factor for what is becoming the most common cause of liver disease, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). In addition, obesity and type 2 diabetes can affect other chronic liver diseases such as hepatitis C, hepatitis B, alcoholic liver disease, and drug-induced liver disease. Visceral obesity and associated white adipose tissue are the likely sources of the inflammatory adipocytokines, which potentially play an important role in the pathogenesis of obesity-related complications, including NAFLD.

Although the increasing prevalence of obesity seems to be related to the individual’s caloric intake, there is increasing evidence that obesity and its complications are consequences of complex interactions between environmental factors (food sources), personal habits or choices (calorie intake, activity, alcohol intake, and tobacco use), and an individual’s genetic predisposition.

In this issue of Clinics in Liver Disease, several internationally renowned experts present topics related to obesity, nutrition, and liver disease. In the first article, the epidemiology of obesity and its association with liver disease are covered. The following two articles focus on the roles that visceral adipose tissue and microbiota potentially play in the pathogenesis of obesity-related liver disease. The next article focuses on the hepatic pathology seen in patients with obesity-related liver disease and those with malnutrition. The next five articles are focused on NAFLD and provide in-depth data on the natural history and treatment strategies for patients with NAFLD. The next six articles deal with the impact of obesity on other liver diseases and on special populations including children and liver-transplant recipients. The final article provides the most updated information regarding genomics and genetic targets that...
may provide better prognostic and diagnostic biomarkers and more personalized treatment targets for patients with NAFLD.

Cutting-edge information provided in this issue of *Clinics in Liver Disease* will help readers gain better understanding of the natural history and pathogenesis of primary and secondary liver diseases associated with obesity. As the information about obesity-related liver disease expands, clinicians will be able to provide more targeted therapeutic options for these patients and develop more accurate diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers.

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