Hepatocellular carcinoma

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is the most common type of primary liver cancer, accounting for 90 percent of all liver cancers.

Cancer types and incidence

More than 905,600 people around the world are diagnosed with liver cancer each year.

Approximately 1 in 12 cancer deaths are due to liver cancer.

Liver cancer is the third leading cause of cancer mortality worldwide and occurs more often in men than women.

632,300 cases per year

273,400 cases per year

Source: www.cancer.gov 2022  Source: WCRF 2022

Median age

At diagnosis

At death

65

68

Source: SEER 2016-2018

Staging and survival rates

Five-year relative survival rates vary depending on the stage and type of liver cancer:

Source: SEER 2011-2017

Common risk factors

Between 80 and 90 percent of all HCC cases worldwide are caused by infection with the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) or Hepatitis C virus (HCV). Other common risk factors include:

- Chronic HCV/ HBV infection
- Cirrhosis
- Heavy alcohol use
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Certain genetic syndromes
- Type 2 diabetes
- Obesity
- Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)

Global incidence

Estimated numbers of annual liver cancer cases by region:

- North America: 46,600
- Europe: 87,600
- Asia: 657,600
- Central America & the Caribbean: 15,200
- Africa: 70,500
- South America: 24,300
- Oceania: 4,400

Source: GLOBOCAN 2020

Signs and symptoms

- Unintended weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Enlarged liver and/or spleen
- Abdominal pain and/or swelling
- Itching
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes

Potential benefits of early intervention

There are notable advantages of earlier diagnosis and treatment of HCC. These may include:

- Improved survival outcomes
- Increased quality of life
- Lower cost of treatment

Treatment options

A patient’s treatment options are largely dependent on stage of disease and may include:

- Surgery
- Immunotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Tumor ablation or embolization
- Targeted drug therapy