

Hepatocellular Carcinoma is a Global Burden

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Hepatocellular carcinoma is the most common primary hepatic neoplasia that ranked second among cancer related mortality worldwide. HCC is predominant in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa with lower prevalence in the Eastern Mediterranean countries and western societies. In addition, almost 50% of newly diagnosed HCC cases occur in China. Moreover, In the USA, the HCC incidence rates have doubled over the past two decades [1].

The increase in HCC incidence globally could be attributed to many factors. First the continuous increase in the number of patients with hepatitis C virus (HCV)-related cirrhosis whereas liver cirrhosis is the primary predisposing factor for HCC. Other cirrhosis risk factors include alcohol abuse and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. In addition, HCC can develop in patients with chronic liver disease without underlying cirrhosis. Among patients with non-cirrhotic HCC, 20% had Fibrosis-4 (FIB-4) >3.6 and 45% had FIB-4 1.6-3.6, while NASH accounts for 26.3% of non-cirrhotic HCC cases. Furthermore, metabolic and genetic diseases associated with HCC are hemochromatosis, Wilson's disease, α -1 antitrypsin disease, tyrosinemia, glycogen storage types I and II, and porphyrias [2].

Besides, there are many occupational non-infective risk factors for HCC. These include exposure to vinyl chloride in food packaging factories, methylene chloride in a factory producing cellulose fibers and arsenic in glass and plastics factories. In addition, exposure to nitrosamines, or their precursors, in factories of agricultural chemicals, detergents, tobacco, plastics and research laboratories is one of HCC predisposing risk factors. Moreover, Aflatoxins are a potent hepatocarcinogen and also considered as non-infective HCC risk factor [3].

Despite current HCC treatment modalities, including surgical resection and liver transplantation, HCC is still of poor prognosis, mainly resulting from early metastasis and recurrence. Therefore, a new perspective of HCC pathogenesis and metastasis mechanisms is urgently needed, which may help to develop effective therapies for HCC patients [4].

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