



News Release

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Alcohol-related liver disease patients need more care, study finds

Patients with alcohol-related liver disease (ALD) tend to have worse outcomes than others following a stay in intensive care, research shows.

Two in three ALD patients admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU) survived for less than a year afterwards, the study shows.

The findings highlight the need for increased support for ALD patients after they leave hospital, researchers suggest.

The number of intensive care admissions for ALD are increasing in the UK but, until now, little was known about the long-term consequences for patients following time spent in critical care.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh looked at anonymised records of over 8000 ICU admissions in Scotland over six years to make their findings. Their study is the first to create a snapshot of ALD patients for a nation.

Patients with ALD were 31 per cent more likely to die in the five years following a stay in intensive care, compared with those with severe heart, lung or kidney disease and other patients of similar age and background.

ALD survivors were also more likely to undergo an emergency admission to hospital within five years after their stint in ICU compared with people with other conditions.

Almost half of these emergency visits were linked to alcohol or liver problems, which highlights the long-term issues faced by patients living with addiction, researchers say.

The study is published in *Critical Care Medicine* and was funded by the Chief Scientist Office, part of the Scottish Government Health Directorates.

Dr Nazir Lone, Senior Clinical Lecturer in Critical Care at the University of Edinburgh, who led the study, said: "Alcohol-related liver disease is often associated with stigma in society. Our findings underline the need for better community services for alcohol addiction and management of long-term conditions."

“We hope that these findings will also help inform discussions between patients and doctors before they become critically ill so that they receive care in line with their wishes.”

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