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Summary

Non-invasive biomarkers for NAFLD: Liver special

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Non-invasive biomarkers for diagnosing and staging non-alcoholic fatty liver disease are advancing rapidly, with imaging-based methods approaching 90% accuracy for fibrosis detection and MRI-based fat quantification now the gold standard.

KEY POINTS

- NAFLD affects more than 30% of the general population and is now the second leading indication for liver transplantation in the United States, driven by obesity and metabolic syndrome.
- Simple serum fibrosis scores such as FIB-4 achieve 70-80% diagnostic accuracy and have high negative predictive value for excluding advanced fibrosis and future complications.
- Imaging biomarkers including ultrasound and MRI elastography for liver stiffness approach 90% accuracy for advanced fibrosis and cirrhosis detection.
- MRI proton density fat fraction is the current gold standard for quantifying liver fat and is more sensitive than liver biopsy for detecting small changes during treatment.
- The speakers note that ongoing phase three trials are expected to yield longitudinal data validating biomarkers for treatment monitoring and potentially replacing repeated liver biopsies in clinical practice.

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