

Mistakes in liver function test abnormalities and how to avoid them

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Mistakes In Articles

Hepatobiliary

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Liver function tests are routinely used to screen for liver disease, but abnormal results do not always indicate structural liver disease and normal results do not exclude advanced disease.

KEY POINTS

- Elevation of at least one liver function test occurs in more than 20% of the population, making abnormal results frequently encountered in clinical practice.
- Many patients with abnormal liver function tests do not have structural liver disease, as these tests can be influenced by factors unrelated to significant liver damage, including pregnancy, cardiac damage, or skeletal muscle damage.
- Patients with advanced liver disease such as chronic hepatitis or compensated liver cirrhosis may have normal liver function tests.
- When interpreted correctly, liver function test abnormalities may suggest the cause, severity, and prognosis of underlying disease and can be used sequentially to assess treatment efficacy once diagnosis is established.

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