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Summary

Emerging treatments: Improving strength and quality of life

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Primary Care | Hepatobiliary

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This educational presentation reviewed evidence-based strategies to improve frailty and quality of life in patients with cirrhosis, emphasizing nutrition with adequate protein intake, resistance training, sleep regularity, and the potential role of TIPS in selected patients.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker recommended nutritional targets of 35 to 40 kilocalories per kilogram body weight and up to 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram, with a late night snack of more than 200 kilocalories to prevent overnight muscle catabolism.
- A trial in 66 transplant waiting list patients with liver frailty index above 3.2 showed that supervised physical therapy with strength training plus dietician visits reduced the proportion of frail patients by 28 percent versus 9 percent in the control group over 12 weeks.
- The speaker stated that up to 300 minutes of aerobic training per week and three times weekly resistance exercises are recommended, though noted in discussion that resistance training may be more important for building muscle.
- A study of 119 patients using sleep tracking found that sleep regularity was the strongest factor associated with sleep quality and quality of life, leading the speaker to recommend consistent bed and wake times.
- A study of 123 patients undergoing elective TIPS found that frailty was not associated with post-TIPS hepatic encephalopathy or survival, and patients who were frail at baseline improved significantly by more than 15 percent, though the speaker noted no evidence yet supports using TIPS explicitly to manage frailty.
- The speaker recommended practical tools including home-based exercises requiring only water bottles, assessing frailty through questions about daily activities when hand grip devices are unavailable, and using AI to generate meal plans.

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