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Summary

PERCEIVED STIGMA IN CHRONIC LIVER DISEASE ACCORDING TO AETIOLOGY: A PROSPECTIVE STUDY

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In a prospective study of 301 patients with chronic liver disease across eight aetiologies, 53.3% reported perceived stigma, with the highest burden in alcohol-related liver disease (82.4%) and MetALD (71.8%).

KEY POINTS

- Perceived stigma was assessed using the 18-item Hepatic Stigma Questionnaire evaluating stereotypes, discrimination, shame, and social isolation, with perceived stigma defined as agreeing or strongly agreeing to at least one item.
- Among 301 patients (response rate 58.33%, 63.5% male, mean age 64.7 years) representing MASLD (28.5%), HBV (18.3%), HCV (15.3%), MetALD (13.6%), ALD (11.6%), PBC (9.0%), AIH (3.0%), and PSC (0.7%), overall perceived stigma was 53.3%.
- Stigma prevalence varied significantly by aetiology: ALD 82.4%, MetALD 71.8%, HBV 59.3%, HCV 48.9%, and autoimmune liver diseases combined 44.4%.
- Patients with hepatitis B had significantly higher perceived stigma scores in the stereotype domain ($p < 0.05$) and the shame domain ($p < 0.05$) compared to other groups.
- The findings highlight the need for targeted strategies to reduce stigma in chronic liver disease, particularly in alcohol-related aetiologies.

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