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Summary

ALTERATIONS IN ENDOTHELIAL INTEGRITY AND MUCOSAL VESSEL DENSITY IN THE SMALL INTESTINE OF CIRRHOTIC PATIENTS AND THE ROLE OF ZO-1 PROTEIN EXPRESSION

John Vlachogiannakos

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A study of 63 cirrhotic patients found significantly increased loss of small intestinal endothelial ZO-1 expression compared to controls, with early-stage cirrhosis showing increased mucosal vessel density that declined with disease progression.

KEY POINTS

- Loss of endothelial ZO-1 expression in more than 50% of vessels was observed in 66.6% of cirrhotic patients versus 11.1% of controls (p=0.001)
- Patients with Child-Pugh class A cirrhosis had significantly increased mucosal vessel number compared to controls (p=0.048) and Child-Pugh B patients (p=0.045), with a negative correlation between vessel number and Child-Pugh score
- Mean lipopolysaccharide-binding protein levels were numerically higher in patients with significant ZO-1 loss versus those without (7801 vs 6761 µg/ml), though not statistically significant (p=0.342)
- The authors suggest findings support theories that bacterial translocation mechanisms in cirrhosis extend beyond the intestinal lumen and warrant further investigation

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