

Hepatic failure

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Hepatic failure has many dimensions because of liver's varied functions. Liver has excellent reserve capacity.

1. Jaundice is almost invariably present- (Mainly related to conjugated hyperbilirubinemia unconjugated hyperbilirubinemia may also contribute)
2. Hypoalbuminemia because of impairment of liver's synthetic functions - but this is not specific to hepatic failure.(Glomerulopathies and enteropathies may also cause)
3. Synthesis of Fibrinogen, Prothrombin and clotting factors(V, VII & X) are affected and so bleeding tendencies appear with hepatic failure (Prolongation of prothrombin time - PT - and partial thromboplastin time - PTT - are sensitive indices of impaired hepatic synthetic activities.
4. Leakage of enzymes from liver cells into blood occurs with all terms of hepatic injury. The Serum levels of a variety of enzymes are increased including non-specific lactic dehydrogenase. In animals there is much variation in the type of enzymes which show variation in levels in different types of hepatic injury.
5. A musty odour of breath and urine is noted in both acute and chronic hepatic failure and is related to be the production of mercaptans from methionine by the gastrointestinal flora.
6. With chronic liver failure, particularly that associated with cirrhosis of liver impaired degradation of oestrogens may induced gynaecomastia and testicular atrophy. Mainly noticed in human beings and occasionally in dogs.
7. Decreased renal function is a relative infrequent accompaniment that may arise in a variety of circumstances especially in hepato renal syndrome.
8. Hepatic encephalopathy (hepatic coma) is sequelae of acute and chronic liver failure. This is a metabolic disorder affecting CNS probably caused by bypassing of hepatic metabolism of putative toxins.
9. One principal effect of cirrhosis is interference with the flow of the portal blood through the many hepatic ramifications on its way to the heart there is chronic venous congestion and mild digestive disorders are seen. The Chief effect of retarded venous flow is ascites.

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