

# Telemedicine in Liver Cirrhosis is Associated with High Patient Satisfaction

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## Abstract

*Background and Aim:* The use of telemedicine in hepatology still represents a challenge. The objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of telemedicine in the prevention of decompensated liver cirrhosis and to evaluate the satisfaction of the patient who used this strategy. *Methods:* Consecutive telemedicine consultations performed to a team of hepatologists at a tertiary medical center were included. Email, WhatsApp or telephone were used as tools to interact, depending on the patient's preferences. Consultations were considered to be resolved via telemedicine when an adequate diagnosis and follow-up was achieved without the need to refer the patient to hospital. Patient satisfaction with telemedicine was assessed using the Telemedicine Satisfaction Questionnaire. *Results:* Out of 114 patients approached, 89 agreed to use telemedicine. 58.4% had liver cirrhosis, while 41.6% were scheduled for a follow-up appointment due to decompensation of liver cirrhosis. The most common conditions resolved by telemedicine were ascites (66.2%), hepatic encephalopathy (12.35%), antiviral therapy monitoring (43.8%), and toxic liver injury (14.6%). 53.9% rated their experience as "good" or "excellent". Satisfied patients were younger ( $p < 0.05$ ). Women were more satisfied than men ( $p = 0.05$ ). *Conclusions:* Our results show the effectiveness of telemedicine in severe liver diseases, especially for the monitoring and surveillance of patients with liver cirrhosis. A high degree of liver patient satisfaction was identified when using teleconsultation.

**Keywords:** Telemedicine; Liver cirrhosis; Telehepatology

