

# 1° Liver Cancer

## Definition

Hepatocellular carcinoma is a malignant tumour of the liver.

## Causes and Risks

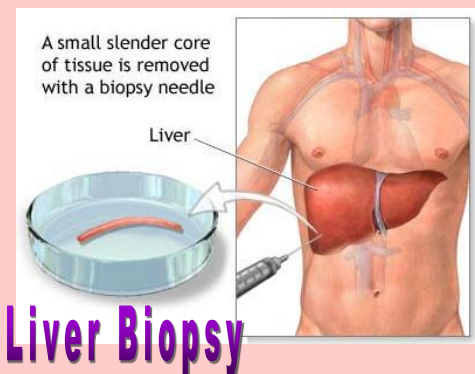
- Hepatocellular carcinoma accounts for 80 to 90% of all liver cancers.
- Affects men more than women
- Classic onset is between 50 to 60 years
- Most prevalent in Africa and Asia
- Cause of liver cancer is unknown contributing factors include
  - chronic liver disease,
  - viral hepatitis,
  - hemochromatosis,
  - known liver (hepatic) carcinogens,
  - and toxins found in foods in parts of Africa and Asia.
- The incidence is 4 out of 10,000 people.

## Symptoms

- Abdominal pain or tenderness, particularly in the right-upper quadrant
- Enlarged abdomen
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Jaundice

## Signs and Tests

- Physical examination shows an enlarged, tender liver.
- A liver biopsy shows hepatocellular carcinoma.
- There may be a mass shown on abdominal CT scan.
- Liver enzymes (liver function tests) are elevated.



## Prevention

- Control of known hepatic carcinogens may have a preventive effect.
- Prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis may be beneficial in reducing risk.

## Treatment

- Aggressive surgery or liver transplantation may be successful in treating small or slow-growing tumors if they are diagnosed early.

## Prognosis

- The probable outcome is poor.
- The course of the disease is rapid and usually fatal.
- Most patients die within 3 to 6 months.

## Complications

- Gastrointestinal haemorrhage
- Liver failure
- Metastatic spread