Acute-On-Chronic Liver Failure: Current Interventional Treatment Options and Future Challenges.

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Abstract

Acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) is a frequent complication in patients with liver cirrhosis that has high short-term mortality. It is characterized by acute decompensation (AD) of liver cirrhosis, intra- and extrahepatic organ failure, and severe systemic inflammation (SI). In the recent past, several studies have investigated the management of this group of patients. Identification and treatment of precipitants of decompensation and ACLF play an important role, and management of the respective intra- and extrahepatic organ failures is essential. However, no specific treatment for ACLF has been established to date, and the only curative treatment option currently available for these patients is liver transplantation (LT). It has been shown that ACLF patients are at severe risk of waitlist mortality, and post-LT survival rates are high, making ACLF patients suitable candidates for LT. However, only a limited number of patients are eligible for LT due to related contraindications such as uncontrolled infections. In this case, bridging strategies (e.g., extracorporeal organ support systems) are required. Further therapeutic approaches have recently been developed and evaluated. Thus, this review focuses on current management and potential future treatment options.