Abstract

Incidence and etiology of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) are variable around the world, depending mainly on the prevalence of chronic hepatitis B carriers in each region. No study has been published analyzing epidemiological features of patients with HCC in Argentina. The aim of this retrospective study was to describe demographical and etiological results in a series of 587 consecutive patients with HCC diagnosed in 15 Hepatology and Gastroenterology Units distributed all around our country. Seventy-two per cent of patients were male, the median age was 62 years (interquartile range 55-68 years), and 93% had cirrhosis. Regarding to etiological data (fully available in 551 cases), main etiologies were chronic alcoholism in 229 patients (41.6%) (the sole risk factor in 182, associated to HCV in 35 and to HBV in 12); hepatitis C in 223 patients (40.5%) (the sole risk factor in 181, associated to alcoholism in 35 and to HBV in 7); hepatitis B in 74 patients (13.4%) (the sole risk factor in 55, associated to alcoholism in 12 and to HCV in 7); cryptogenic cirrhosis in 51 patients (9.2%). There were significant differences in percentages of genders between main groups: males were highly predominant in alcoholic cirrhosis (93%), hepatitis B (87%) and HCV plus alcohol (94%), compared to 63% in cryptogenic cirrhosis and 49% in hepatitis C (p < 0.01). There were no differences in age at presentation between the main etiologies. In conclusion, the main causes of HCC in Argentina are alcoholic cirrhosis and hepatitis C (76% of cases). A majority of patients with HCC in our country are cirrhotics, males, and in their 6th or-7th decades of life.

Keywords

Hepatocarcinoma, Etiology, Epidemiology, Cirrhosis, Alcoholic cirrhosis, Hepatitis C.