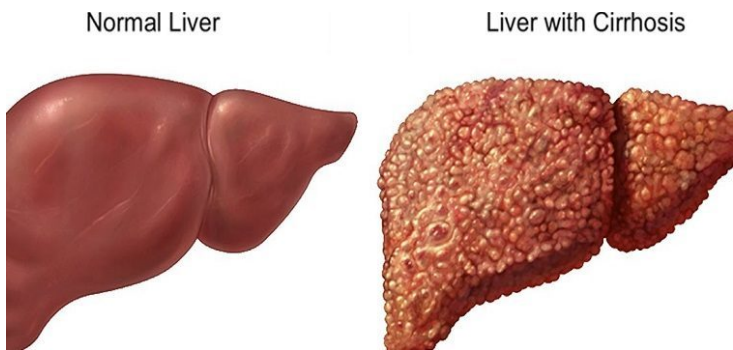


## “Over 10 lakh Indians diagnosed with liver cirrhosis each year”

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### Currently liver transplant is the only treatment available for severe liver cirrhosis



“About 10 lakh people are diagnosed with liver cirrhosis every year in India says World Health Organization (WHO) report. While new approaches, such as stem cell therapy are being researched, currently liver transplant is the only treatment available for severe liver cirrhosis,” said Dr Dheeraj Karanth C, Medical Gastroenterologist, Vikram Hospital.

Speaking to reporters he said that sedentary lifestyles, intake of more than the permitted quantity of alcohol, having fat-filled diets, and not maintaining regular immunizations for Hepatitis B are some of the reasons for increasing liver diseases in India.

Dr Karanth further said the importance of institutes and companies taking up organ donation efforts, and to promote information about control of alcohol consumption, taking Hepatitis B vaccinations etc. According to him, technology to ensure faster diagnosis could help make transplants cheaper, and thus, efforts should make in that direction.

‘Alambana,’ a scheme created by the Karnataka government, is one which allows people and organizations to make monetary donations to patients requiring organ transplants, which usually cost up to Rs 25 lakh. Speaking about this, Dr Somesh Mittal, CEO, Vikram Hospital said, it is a transparent scheme where the donors will know whom they are donating to. In addition, the government is also making efforts to provide free tablets, including immunosuppression drugs.

In an effort to reduce the disparity between the number of organ donors and receivers, Dr Mittal said that more than 30 doctors of Vikram Hospital have already pledged to donate their organs and hope to get other doctors of the hospital to sign up for organ donation.

While there are around 1000 patients on the waiting list for liver transplants in India, only 70 people pledged their organs

between 2016 and 2017, according to Dr C. Vikram Belliappa, Consultant Surgical Gastroenterologist, quoting the recent Jivan Sarthakathai research paper. "This gap is wider than it seems, since the number of people who are on waiting lists for transplants are only those that can afford it; there are many cases that go unrecognized," he added.

Since liver diseases are "silent killers" that are not diagnosed till much later, there is a need to go for regular health checkups, and to take regularized Hepatitis B vaccinations.