The incidence of newly diagnosed liver disease in the United States is estimated to be 72 per 100,000 population, with hepatitis B and C, alcohol, and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease being the most common etiologies. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis was ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States in 1998, and data show that this statistic has remained essentially the same over last 15 years. Further the economic impact of liver disease is quite substantial, with chronic liver disease and viral hepatitis accounting for $1.8 billion annually in inpatient costs. Further, hospitalizations for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease has increased 97% since 2000.

The substantial burden of liver disease necessitates that healthcare providers treat liver disease proactively. It should be a higher public health priority, and use of non-invasive tests to screen for early stages of fibrosis should be performed. New therapies for hepatitis B and C as well as advances in liver transplantation have provided a significant improvement in the short- and long-term management of liver diseases.

The goal of this series is to provide a detailed review of the liver and biliary system, which healthcare professionals may use as a reference point in their clinical practice as well as research initiatives. This series will review liver diseases at large, with a focus on fibrogenesis, non alcoholic fatty liver disease, HIV and the liver, and transplantation in patients with hepatitis B or C or HIV infection. Specifically, the article topics included in this series are:

- Assessment of liver function tests
- Hematological disorders of the liver
• Cirrhosis of the liver
• Hepatic fibrogenesis
• Hepatic failure
• Hepatic encephalopathy
• Portal hypertension
• Ascites
• Jaundice and cholestasis
• Primary biliary cirrhosis
• HIV and liver disease
• Autoimmune hepatitis and overlap syndrome
• Drug-induced liver disease
• Inherited metabolic disease
• Nonalcoholic liver disease and nutrition
• Alcoholic liver disease
• Liver diseases and pregnancy
• Liver in systemic diseases
• Extrahepatic manifestations of liver disease
• Space-occupying lesions/diagnostic approach
• Primary malignant neoplasms of the liver
• Hepatic transplantation

References