

Question 18 – January 4

Which of the following will respond to phlebotomy treatment in cirrhotic patients with hereditary hemochromatosis?

- A. Risk of hepatocellular carcinoma
- B. Arthropathy
- C. Skin pigmentation
- D. Testicular atrophy

Answer: C

Certain clinical features are likely to be ameliorated by phlebotomy such as malaise, fatigue, skin pigmentation, insulin requirements for diabetics, and abdominal pain), whereas other features are either less responsive to iron removal or do not respond at all. These include arthropathy, hypogonadism, and advanced cirrhosis. The life-threatening complications of established cirrhosis, particularly HCC, continue to be a threat to survival even after adequate phlebotomy. Therefore, patients with cirrhosis should continue to be screened for HCC following phlebotomy.

Reference:

Bacon BR et al. Diagnosis and Management of hemochromatosis: 2011 practice guideline by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases. *Hepatology*. 2011 Jul;54(1):328-43.