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Hong Kong discovers liver injury in COVID-19 patients

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Researchers from the Faculty of Medicine at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CU Medicine) have recently conducted a study to investigate the impact of liver injury on clinical outcomes in COVID-19 patients.

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The estimated risk of COVID-19 patients with liver injury experiencing adverse clinical outcomes such as intensive care unit (ICU) admission, use of invasive mechanical ventilation or death was almost eight times of other patients. It is suggested that liver function monitoring is important regarding its association with adverse clinical outcomes in COVID-19 patients. These findings have been published recently in the world-renowned medical journal ***Gut***.

Liver injury, in the form of hepatitis, cholestasis or both, can be observed in patients infected by different coronaviruses. For the territory-wide study in ***Gut***, researchers from CU Medicine analysed the data from 1,040 COVID-19 patients in Hong Kong. It was found that the level of liver enzyme alanine aminotransferase (ALT) or aspartate aminotransferase (AST) was elevated in 23% of the COVID-19 patients, which indicated liver damage.

Furthermore, cautious use of appropriate medications with least hepatotoxicity as well as vigilant monitoring of liver biochemistries are recommended in order to minimise liver injury in COVID-19 patients.