Alcoholic Liver Disease: Pathobiology, Epidemiology, And Clinical Aspects

Pauline Hall

Alcoholic liver disease occurs after prolonged heavy drinking, particularly among persons who are physically dependent on alcohol. Alcoholic liver disease is pathologically classified into three forms: fatty liver (hepatic steatosis), alcoholic hepatitis, and cirrhosis. There is considerable overlap among these conditions. The most compelling section of this multiauthored book covers the epidemiology of alcoholic liver disease. More than a third of the book marshals evidence from all over the world that the incidence of liver disease is rapidly increasing in step with the increasing consumption. Alcoholic liver disease shares with other nonthyroidal illnesses patterns of serum thyroid hormones that usually do not reflect true thyroid function. Although ethanol can affect the thyroid gland and also may directly interfere with thyroid hormone metabolism, most patients with alcoholic liver disease are euthyroid. However, some have mild hypothalamic-pituitary axis dysfunction.