

Could a blood marker help identify patients at highest risk of developing acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF)?



In advanced cirrhosis, the **gut barrier** can become damaged, allowing bacterial substances to enter the body and activate the immune system.



MICROB-PREDICT

Researchers from **MICROB-PREDICT** and the **PREDICT Study Group** studied a blood marker called **secretory IgA (sIgA)** that can help predict patient outcomes.



Higher levels of **sIgA** were associated with more severe ACLF and a higher risk of **death within 90 days**.

1 Why does the gut barrier matter in liver disease?



In cirrhosis, the gut barrier can become damaged.

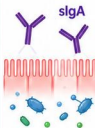


This allows bacteria and their products to enter the bloodstream.



This can activate the immune system, increase inflammation and contribute to further liver and organ damage and—in the worst case—progression to **ACLF**.

2 What is secretory IgA (sIgA)?



Secretory IgA (sIgA) is an antibody that normally helps protect the gut by binding to bacteria and preventing them from crossing the gut barrier.

Higher levels of sIgA in the blood may reflect gut barrier damage in advanced cirrhosis.

3 What did the researchers do?



Analysed blood samples from **128 patients** with acutely decompensated cirrhosis.

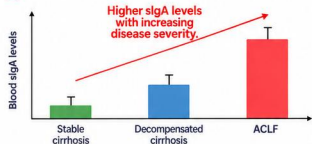


Measured several antibodies and immune markers, with a focus on secretory IgA (sIgA).



Validated the main sIgA findings in an independent group of **50 patients** with ACLF.

4 What did they find?



Higher blood levels of sIgA were associated with more severe ACLF and a higher risk of death within 90 days, and these findings were confirmed in a second patient group.

5 What could this mean for patients?



A blood test for sIgA could help identify patients at higher risk of complications.



It could provide additional information to guide closer monitoring and clinical decisions.



Goal: earlier identification of high-risk patients and more personalised care in advanced cirrhosis.



This approach could help move from **reactive to proactive care**, identifying high-risk patients before complications occur.

But this is still experimental.

6 Is sIgA already a treatment target?



No – not yet.



This study looked at a blood marker, not a treatment.



Larger studies are needed before sIgA can be used in routine clinical practice or as a treatment target.

7 What is the bigger picture?



This research highlights the important connection between the gut, immune system and liver, and how biomarkers could improve risk assessment in advanced cirrhosis.

A better understanding of the gut-liver connection could help identify high-risk patients earlier and move towards more personalised care.

8 About the research



Title of Publication: Secretory IgA Is a Key Marker Among Gut Barrier Dysfunction-Related Immunoglobulins Predicting Outcomes in ACLF



Conducted by Balogh and colleagues on behalf of MICROB-PREDICT and the PREDICT Study Group of the EASL-CLIF consortium.



Balogh B, Tornai D, Csillag A et al. (2025) Secretory IgA Is a Key Marker Among Gut Barrier Dysfunction-Related Immunoglobulins Predicting Outcomes in ACLF *Liver International*, Volume 45(10): e70350



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