

Fulminant hepatic failure Insuficiencia hepática fulminante

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Fulminant hepatic failure (FHF) is an acute and eventually fatal illness, caused by a severe hepatocyte damage with massive necrosis. Its hallmarks are hepatic encephalopathy and a prolonged prothrombin time (<40%). FHF is currently defined as hyperacute (encephalopathy appearing within 7 days of the onset of jaundice), acute (encephalopathy appearing between 8 and 28 days) or subacute (encephalopathy appearing between 5 and 12 weeks). FHF can be caused by viruses, drugs, toxins, and miscellaneous conditions such as Wilson's disease, Budd-Chiari syndrome, ischemia and others. However, a single most common etiology is still not defined. Factors that are valuable in assessing the likelihood of spontaneous recovery are age, etiology, degree of encephalopathy, prothrombin time and serum bilirubin. The management is based in the early treatment of infections, hemodynamic abnormalities, cerebral edema, and other associated conditions. Liver transplant has emerged as the most important advanc