

# Morphology of the myenteric plexus of the small intestine in patients with liver cirrhosis

## Morfologia de los plexos mientericos del intestino delgado en pacientes con cirrosis hepática.

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**BACKGROUND.** Patients with liver cirrhosis develop small bowel dysmotility of unknown etiology. Morphological features in the enteric nervous system and the intestinal smooth muscle may shed light on pathophysiology of the gut motility disturbances in this disease. **AIM.** To investigate the morphology of the myenteric plexuses and smooth muscle layers of the small intestine in patients with liver cirrhosis. **PATIENTS AND METHODS.** Full thickness biopsies of duodenum, jejunum and ileum from seven cirrhotic patients and seven controls were stained with several techniques, including silver impregnation. Neuronal counting and light microscopy studies were stained performed. **RESULTS.** The neuronal count was not significantly different in patients with cirrhosis compared to controls in duodenal samples (1.6 +/- 0.4 cel/mm vs 1.6 +/- 0.2 cel/mm), jejunal tissue (1.2 +/- 0.3 cel/mm vs 1.4 +/- 0.2 cel/mm), and in ileal specimens (0.8 +/- 0.3 cel/mm vs 0.9 +/- 0.2 cel/mm). In both groups, evidence of