Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Month

What is Cholangiocarcinoma?

(Cholangiocarcinoma is pronounced kol-an-gee-oh-car-sin-oh-ma).

Cholangiocarcinoma, or bile duct cancer, is a primary liver cancer that arises within the biliary system. It can occur in the small bile ducts within the liver, the big branches in the centre of the liver (hilum) or in the main or common bile duct draining out of the liver.

Causes and risk factors

What causes cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer)?

The exact cause of cholangiocarcinoma is unclear. It is likely that this cancer arises due to a combination of factors, including other illnesses that cause chronic damage to the liver and/or bile ducts, certain toxins and possibly a small genetic predisposition, although it is not a directly inherited disease.

Liver cancer can prevent your liver from working correctly and removing harmful material from your blood.The 2 most common types of liver cancer are hepatocellular carcinoma and cholangiocarcinoma.

What increases risk ?

- Cirrhosis (liver disease) from alcohol abuse, or from conditions such as hematochromatosis
- Long-term infection with hepatitis B or C virus
- Cigarette smoking or alcohol abuse
- Exposure to toxic substances
- Long-term inflammation caused by gallstones in your liver or bile duct
- Medical conditions such as nonalcoholic fatty liver or obesity
- A family history of liver cancer

Although most cases of cholangiocarcinoma occur in people over 60 years of age, it appears to be increasing across all age groups including younger people. The cause of this ongoing rise is currently unknown.

The following risk factors are all accepted by scientists to increase the likelihood of developing cholangiocarcinoma:

Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC)	Bile duct stones
Liver fluke	Choledochal cysts

Symptoms

Cholangiocarcinoma symptoms

Liver & Bile duct illustrationCholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer) causes few symptoms in its early stages. Any symptoms that there are tend to be quite vague, such as nausea and loss of appetite.

There are often few specific symptoms of cholangiocarcinoma until the disease is more advanced. Symptoms can then can include:

- Jaundice
- Discomfort in the abdomen
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness
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- Feeling generally unwell
- High temperatures and shivering
- Weight loss

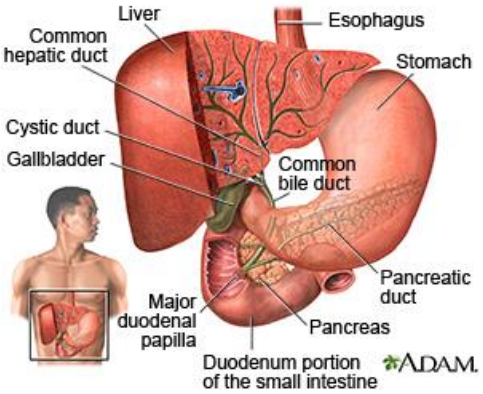
Treatment options

Treatment of cholangiocarcinoma will depend on the position and size of the cancer and whether it has spread beyond the bile duct, as well as on general health.

1.Surgery

What is a biliary bypass?

Biliary bypass is surgery to go around a blockage in your bile duct. A blockage can cause bile to build up in your gallbladder or liver. This can cause problems such as pain, itching, jaundice, and liver failure. Surgery will help bile flow out of your liver to your gallbladder or small intestine. This can help relieve signs and symptoms caused by the blockage. Biliary bypass may be done if you have a blockage that cannot be removed through another kind of surgery.



2.Chemotherapy

3.Radiotherapy (SIRT / SBRT / CyberKnife)

How Cholangiocarcinoma may be diagnosed

- Ultrasound scan
- CT (computerised tomography) scan
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)
- ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography)
- EUS (endoscopic ultrasound scan)
- PTC (percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography)
- PET (positron emission tomography)
- Angiogram
- Biopsy
- Laparoscopy

Reference-Micromedex Solutions