

May Skeletal Muscle Index Predicts Mortality in Individuals with Cirrhosis?

I read with great appreciation the study “European working group on sarcopenia in older people (EWGSOP2) criteria with population-based skeletal muscle index best predicts mortality in Asians with cirrhosis”.¹ The authors estimated the prevalence of sarcopenia based on four criteria and assessed their utility in predicting mortality in cirrhotics. The paper has an elegant rationale, and I am sure that will generate new research; however, some points of the paper reduce the clinical applicability of these results.

The authors describe that the handgrip strength was measured using a digital hand dynamometer according to standard protocols (p. 53); however, these “standard protocols” comes from a systematic review,² whose conclusion states that the majority of the studies included did not describe a complete procedure of handgrip strength measurement; the high heterogeneity between the protocols used, in the sarcopenia and frailty studies, create an enormous difficulty in drawing comparative conclusions among them.²

In addition, the body mass index (BMI) must be (always!) evaluated with additional measures capable of representing body proportionality, e.g., waist perimeter divided by the stature in centimeters (waist-to-stature ratio),^{3,4} sagittal abdominal diameter,⁵⁻⁷ or both indices (as they are easy, noninvasive, and clinicians/scientists take <2 min to do this). I think that before reaching the conclusion of the best predictor (highlighted on the title), for any health condition, it is important to check the patients’ abdominal obesity.⁸

To contribute to the authors, I present a mathematical model that has scientific support for clinical applicability, whose body proportionality (as well as patients’ abdominal obesity) can be obtained through the waist-to-stature ratio: waist perimeter (cm)/stature (cm). The cut-off point is < 0.50 (i.e., the central perimeter must be less than 50% of human stature).^{9,10}

Finally, in the scientific context, we need to use the technical terms, e.g., “circumference” is wrong—measurements of body surfaces are called “perimeters”, “height” must be “stature”, and “weight” should be “body mass” (note that the concept of BMI is body [mass] index, not body [weight] index).

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