

## gerontology

A. Jolayne  
FarrellCirrhosis can  
be prevented

Dear Jo:

My father died of cirrhosis of the liver. I enjoy a drink (or two) every day and worry that I will suffer the same fate. Can this disease be prevented — and how can I tell if my liver is damaged?

Dear Mr. L.:

Cirrhosis, a chronic degenerative disease of the liver, is commonly the result of alcohol abuse but can also be the result of nutritional deprivation, hepatitis or other infections.

The symptoms of the disease are the same regardless of the cause: nausea, loss of appetite, weight loss, fatigue, distended abdomen, light-colored stools, weakness, abdominal pain, intestinal bleeding, jaundice, brain damage and kidney failure.

Cirrhosis can be prevented — depending on the cause. Alcohol has been shown to be the main contributing factor in about 80 percent of all cases in North America.

YOU MENTIONED you enjoyed a drink or two every day and were worried that your liver might also be affected. Since alcohol affects different people in different ways, the safest way to prevent this disease is to drink moderately or not at all.

According to experts, women who drink more than 15 drinks a week and men who have more than 25 drinks a week are risking liver damage. They also claim that those who drink less are not necessarily out of danger.

Finding out if your liver is damaged will require a visit to your doctor. Your liver is different from

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other organs in your body. More than three-quarters of your liver cells may be out of action before you notice any real symptoms — and by then it may be too late.

LIVER DAMAGE is not confined to those who get drunk. It may take years of drinking even a little too much alcohol before you notice any symptoms.

Therefore, it is important to have regular check-ups with your doctor who will be able to detect early signs of liver disease by blood tests and physical examination.

I hope I haven't painted too dismal a picture for you, but like you I have seen suffering and death from this disease and always felt it could have been prevented with some life-style changes.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at P.O. Box 66, Postal Station G, 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4M 3E8.

The University of Michigan-Dearborn will seek an increase in per-semester student activity fees from \$0 to \$35, over a three-year period.

Student activity fees are used to support student activities, lectures, concerts and speakers, some \$5 clubs and organizations, the student newspaper and student government, intercollegiate as well as intramural and recreational sports programs open to the 7,100-plus students on the commuter campus.

"Funding of UM-D student activities has been woefully inadequate for far too long. As a result, the quality of student life on campus does not approximate the excellence of our academic programs," said UM-D Chancellor William A. Jenkins.

"ON ALL campuses, but especially on a commuter campus, an enriched set of activities and opportunities to grow through lectures, concerts, debates and films is

essential," Jenkins said.

The proposed fee would go from:  
• \$5 to \$15 in January 1987.  
• \$5 more to \$20 in September 1988.

• Another \$5 to \$25 in September 1989.

Still another \$10 per term fee may be added at a later date, to create a student union building fund. Authorization for that project is still forthcoming.

Jenkins noted that the present \$6 fee has remained the same since 1971, through years of inflation and rapid increases in the costs of goods and services. "The only offsetting feature has been the enrollment increases. We now have more than twice the students that we had in 1971," he said.

"THE ADDITIONAL activities income will go further because we are down-sizing our intercollegiate athletics program, from five sports to

two, one each for men and women."

The proposed increased money will be distributed this way:

• 25 percent toward the intercollegiate athletics program, to be placed under the direction of a part-time athletic director. Effective next Sept. 1, only men's hockey and either women's volleyball or basketball will be continued as intercollegiate athletics.

Other athletics may be continued as club sports and/or funded as recreational activities.

• 50 percent toward student activities, including the 55 clubs, student government, the newspaper, lectures, concerts and other social/cultural activities.

• 25 percent toward an expanded intramural and recreational sports program, to be directed by a trained professional.

"THE INCREASE will support activities similar to those on a number of Michigan campuses, but certainly not all of them," Jenkins said. "The \$15 per term at UM-D certainly cannot support what fees at other campuses, which exceed \$100 per term, can support."

Of the proposed student union building fund, Jenkins said, "While activities of all sorts, including recreational sports, should be improved by the more adequate funding, until UM-D has a Student Union building they will hardly be comparable."

"Improving the facilities for student activities is as critical as support for these activities," he said.

The effectiveness of the proposed student fee increase would be reviewed at the end of three years by a committee to be appointed by the chancellor.

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