

A Comparison of MELD Score Calculation in Cirrhotics Between Medicine and Hepatology Clinic Visits

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Background: The Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) score is a validated tool used to determine severity of liver disease. Specifically, the score is commonly used in determining eligibility for liver transplant. It is composed of serum creatinine, total bilirubin, INR, sodium and whether the patient had recent dialysis. Therefore, the MELD score is vital in the assessment of those with cirrhosis, and can be utilized to identify disease severity and need for transplant. We identify whether MELD scores are calculated in the Internal Medicine clinic, to determine whether disease severity in cirrhosis is being accurately assessed during each visit.

Methods: Medical records of patients seen at the Academic Internal Medicine Clinic (AIMC) were accessed via EPIC electronic medical record, with IRB approval obtained beforehand. Over 250 patient records were accessed. Exclusion criteria included those under 18 years of age, and those who were not seen at the AIMC. Inclusion criteria included patients with a diagnosis of cirrhosis seen at the AIMC. MELD calculations across the AIMC and Hepatology clinic were compared and averaged.

Results: A total of 259 patients had cirrhosis, of whom 130 were seen by both hepatology and AIMC clinics, and 11 were seen only at the AIMC. All patients seen in the hepatology clinic had a MELD score. Of those seen at the AIMC, 48 patients had calculated MELD scores. Average MELD scores among the AIMC and Hepatology were 13.33 and 12.74 respectively.

Conclusion: MELD is a verified scoring system designed to stratify disease severity in cirrhosis, determining which patients qualify for liver transplantation, a potentially life-saving intervention. Less than half of cirrhotics seen at AIMC had MELD scores. MELD scores must be documented for patients with cirrhosis, in order to accurately assess their clinical status, enabling effective management of their disease.

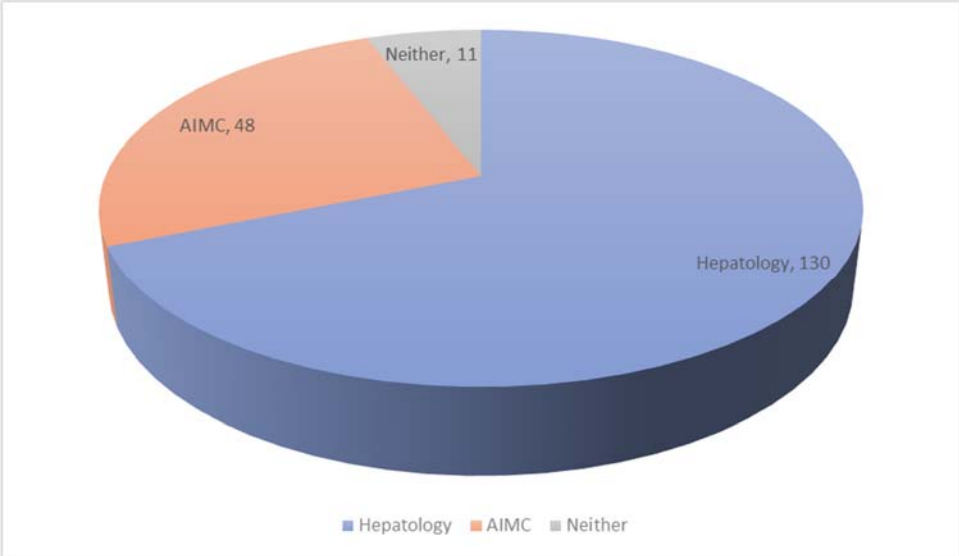


Figure 1 Differences in MELD Calculation Rates Among the Internal Medicine and Hepatology Clinics

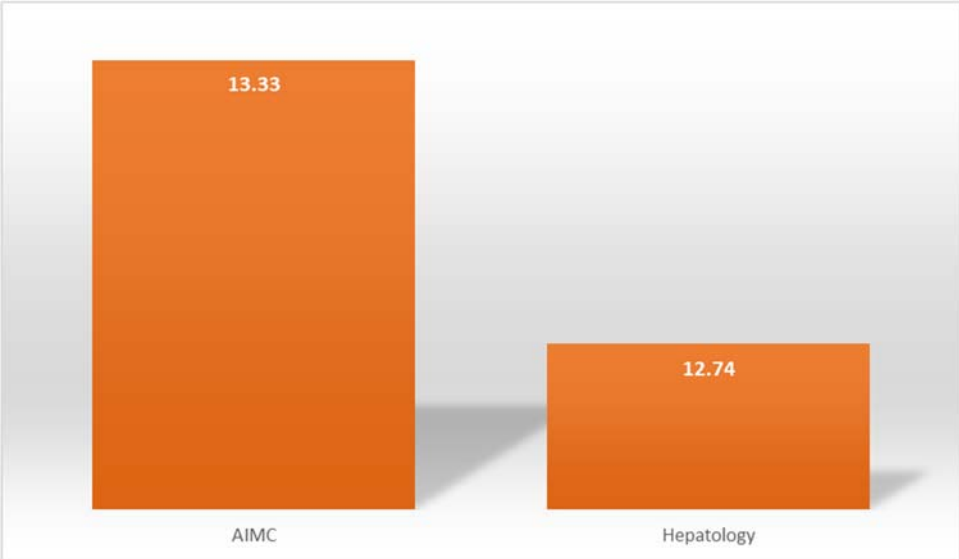


Figure 2 Average MELD Scores Across Both Clinics