Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD)

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Health*

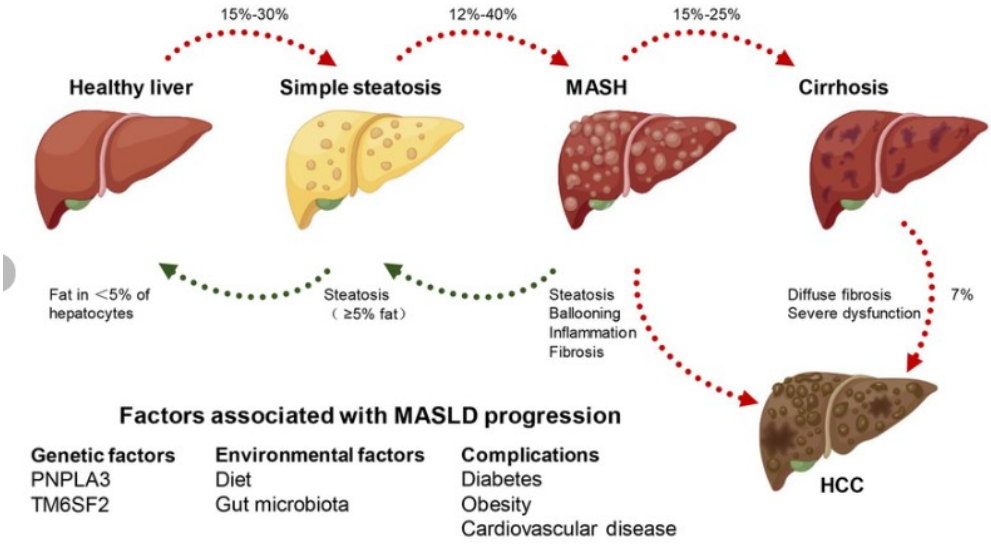
Why in News?

Recently, Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) has been emerging as a major public health concern in India.

- **About –** MASLD is a ***metabolic liver disorder*** characterised by excessive fat accumulation in the liver.
- Earlier termed as ***Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).***
- The new term highlights that the disease is a metabolic one, linked to factors such as obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol.
- **Symptoms –** It is often a silent disease with no symptoms in the early stages.
- As it progresses, it can cause liver inflammation and long-term damage with the ***risk of liver failure and liver cancer.***
- **Causes –** It is caused by *metabolic dysfunction* associated with obesity, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.
- **Vulnerable populations –** Overweight or obese persons, People with Type 2 diabetes, Individuals with high blood pressure, Persons with high cholesterol levels, middle-aged and older adults and physically inactive or sedentary individuals.
- **Progression Stages** - **Steatosis -** It initially presents as simple steatosis, where fat accumulates in the liver without causing significant inflammation.
- **Steatohepatitis -** The disease can progress to steatohepatitis, a more severe stage characterized by inflammation (MASH, formerly NASH) of the liver cells.
- **Fibrosis** - This inflammation can lead to the formation of scar tissue, a process known as fibrosis.
- **Cirrhosis** - As fibrosis becomes extensive, it can lead to cirrhosis, a late-stage condition where the liver is permanently scarred and unable to

function properly.

- Hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer)- At this point, the risk of liver failure and hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer) becomes extremely high.



- **Diagnosis –** Initial clues come from blood tests and liver function tests.
- Imaging techniques like ultrasound and *FibroScan* help assess liver fat and fibrosis non-invasively.
- **Treatment –** MASLD is a highly manageable disease, primarily through lifestyle changes, especially weight loss and regular physical activity.
- Managing diabetes and high cholesterol is also essential.

References

1. TH | MASLD
2. NCIB | MASLD

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