

Ketamine

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Various toxicities following off-label use of ketamine: 3 case reports

In a study involving the patients who developed cholangiopathy following treatment with ketamine in Europe (Germany and France) between 20 March 2020 and 6 April 2020, 3 patients [*ages and sexes not stated*] were described, who developed cholangiopathy, sclerosing cholangitis, decompensated cirrhosis, jaundice, biliary sepsis, portal hypertension, liver stiffness or pruritus following off-label treatment with ketamine for maintenance sedation maintenance of sedation during mechanical ventilation due to acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) with COVID-19.

All the patients were diagnosed with COVID-19. All the patients developed ARDS and required mechanical ventilation. Subsequently, all the patients developed acute kidney injury [*aetiology not stated*], and required renal replacement therapy. All the patients started receiving off-label treatment with IV ketamine [*dosages not stated*] for maintenance sedation. All the patients received concomitant norepinephrine.

Subsequently, all the patients developed cholangiopathy. One of these patients died due to progressive sclerosing cholangitis and decompensated cirrhosis; while another patient died while waiting for liver transplantation with jaundice, pruritus, biliary sepsis, portal hypertension and liver stiffness of 64.1. One another patient also had pruritus.

Mallet V, et al. Intravenous ketamine and progressive cholangiopathy in COVID-19 patients. *Journal of Hepatology* 74: 1243-1244, No. 5, May 2021. Available from: URL: <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2021.02.007>

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