

## PEER-REVIEW REPORT

**Name of journal:** *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

**Manuscript NO:** 82919

**Title:** Association of non-alcoholic fatty liver and metabolic-associated fatty liver with COVID-19 outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis

**Provenance and peer review:** Invited manuscript; Externally peer reviewed

**Peer-review model:** Single blind

**Reviewer's code:** 04213276

**Position:** Peer Reviewer

**Academic degree:** MD, MSc

**Professional title:** Doctor

**Reviewer's Country/Territory:** Greece

**Author's Country/Territory:** United States

**Manuscript submission date:** 2022-12-29

**Reviewer chosen by:** AI Technique

**Reviewer accepted review:** 2023-01-19 15:36

**Reviewer performed review:** 2023-01-19 17:11

**Review time:** 1 Hour

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
Novelty of this manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: No novelty
Creativity or innovation of this manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: No creativity or innovation

<b>Scientific significance of the conclusion in this manuscript</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: No scientific significance
<b>Language quality</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of language polishing <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejection
<b>Conclusion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept (High priority) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept (General priority) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision <input type="checkbox"/> Major revision <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<b>Re-review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Peer-reviewer statements</b>	Peer-Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymous <input type="checkbox"/> Onymous
	Conflicts-of-Interest: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

#### SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

The manuscript is very well written - it needs a comprehensive review by an expert statistician in order to be published

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**Reviewer's code:** 05346014

**Position:** Editorial Board

**Academic degree:** MD

**Professional title:** Associate Professor

**Reviewer's Country/Territory:** Brazil

**Author's Country/Territory:** United States

**Manuscript submission date:** 2022-12-29

**Reviewer chosen by:** AI Technique

**Reviewer accepted review:** 2023-02-05 20:44

**Reviewer performed review:** 2023-02-12 21:03

**Review time:** 7 Days

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
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<b>Peer-reviewer statements</b>	Peer-Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymous <input type="checkbox"/> Onymous
	Conflicts-of-Interest: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Reviewers' comments: Thank you for allowing me to review your full-length article. The manuscript discussed a relevant topic in the field of hepatology and infectious diseases. Overall, the article was written well and concisely; however, I would just like to raise some relevant points for further discussion, which could possibly help to make the manuscript even better. 1. The authors considered patients with MAFLD and NAFLD in the same group. However, there are important differences between these two groups. Do the authors believe that these differences could not interfere with the evaluated outcomes? 2. It is important to note that all patients with MAFLD (+)/NAFLD (-) had a second aetiology for liver disease. Could liver disease superimposed on fatty liver disease interfere with COVID outcomes? 3. Do the authors consider that the stage of liver disease (hepatic cirrhosis) might influence COVID-associated outcomes? 4. Concerning the methods, I would suggest taking into account the following points: • "Garbage in, garbage out". The disadvantage of a meta-analysis is that it puts a "weak paper" in a fancy-looking package and can mislead both you and your readers. Heterogeneity begins when considering patients with MAFLD and NAFLD in the same



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group. In addition, liver fibrosis severity (presence and severity of cirrhosis) should be considered. These critical issues that could affect the findings of the meta-analysis, should lead to a more cautious conclusion. • The authors stated that the study search had been performed to July 2022; however, the pre-specified protocol (related to the link indicated in the material and methods section) was dated March 2022. Have the authors updated the search and consequently added new records? • Although excluding clinical trials reported in languages other than English from meta-analyses may introduce bias (speech distortion). For the sake of clarity, this limitation should be reported for discussion.

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**Peer-review model:** Single blind

**Reviewer's code:** 05270042

**Position:** Editorial Board

**Academic degree:** PhD

**Professional title:** Assistant Professor

**Reviewer's Country/Territory:** Viet Nam

**Author's Country/Territory:** United States

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**Reviewer chosen by:** AI Technique

**Reviewer accepted review:** 2023-02-05 02:36

**Reviewer performed review:** 2023-02-13 10:39

**Review time:** 8 Days and 8 Hours

Scientific quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not publish
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<b>Re-review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Peer-reviewer statements</b>	Peer-Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymous <input type="checkbox"/> Onymous
	Conflicts-of-Interest: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

This is a very valuable review with meta-analysis, good ideas and large data. However, there are a few issues that need to be clarified: 1. Which criteria did the authors use to diagnosis NAFLD? Were the patients diagnosed with NAFLD prior to admission or after admission? 2. Some studies only used FiB4 to measure NAFLD. Was it accurate? 3. In study 25 and 26, the number of patients with NAFLD was much more than the patients without NAFLD. Was this correct? 4. The authors should notice that the level of medical care at each medical clinic was different, and this could lead to different levels of disease severity and death.