

### QUESTION

1. A patient with a long history of alcohol abuse presents with a 2-week history of weight loss, anorexia, and weakness. Physical examination shows a 10% weight loss, tachycardia, and a positive Tinel's sign. Laboratory studies show a serum albumin of 2.5 g/dL, a total bilirubin of 2.0 mg/dL, and a prothrombin time of 18 seconds. The patient's most likely diagnosis is:

A. Alcohol withdrawal  
B. Acute pancreatitis  
C. Cirrhosis  
D. Hemochromatosis  
E. Primary biliary cirrhosis

Answer	Explanation	Reference
C	The patient's history of alcohol abuse, weight loss, anorexia, and weakness, along with physical findings of tachycardia and a positive Tinel's sign, are consistent with cirrhosis. Laboratory studies showing a low serum albumin, elevated total bilirubin, and a prolonged prothrombin time further support this diagnosis.	1
A	Alcohol withdrawal typically presents with tremors, sweating, and tachycardia, but does not cause weight loss or a positive Tinel's sign.	2
B	Acute pancreatitis is characterized by severe abdominal pain and elevated serum amylase and lipase levels.	3
D	Hemochromatosis is a genetic disorder characterized by excessive iron accumulation in the body, leading to symptoms such as joint pain and skin discoloration.	4
E	Primary biliary cirrhosis is a chronic liver disease characterized by progressive damage to the bile ducts, leading to jaundice and pruritus.	5

1. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, 18th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005, p 182.

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1. Engineering Mechanics: Dynamics, 2nd ed. New York: Wiley, 1999, p 100.