Cirrhosis of the liver is a final common pathway for all chronic liver diseases; it is defined as progressive disease of the liver characterized by diffuse damage to hepatic parenchymal cells with nodular degeneration, fibrosis, and disturbance of normal architecture.\(^1\) Cirrhosis occurs worldwide in both genders regardless of age or race.\(^2\) Epidemiologic data are limited, partially because of delays in diagnosis; up to 40% of individuals with cirrhosis are asymptomatic.\(^3\) Data reporting methods that utilize death certificate reporting are also likely to underrepresent the true prevalence and impact of cirrhosis and chronic liver diseases due to the use of a primary cause of death, which frequently lists complications related to cirrhosis but do not explicitly contain the diagnosis of cirrhosis and thus cause underestimation of the true impact of cirrhosis.\(^4\) In 2001, cirrhosis was the sixth leading cause of death among adults in developed countries and is increasing worldwide.\(^2\) In 1998, cirrhosis was responsible for approximately 45,000 deaths and was the at least the 10th and possibly as high as the eighth leading cause of death in the United States based on mortality data.\(^5\) Cirrhosis, including unrecognized disease with well-compensated hepatic function, is not uncommon and is estimated to be present in 1% of the population worldwide.\(^6\)

**Surgery in Patients With Liver Disease**

Patients with liver disease frequently undergo surgery. Among patients with advanced liver disease, up to 10% will undergo an operation during the last