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# PATTERN OF DYSLIPIDAEMIA IN PATIENTS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES MELLITUS IN FUJAIRAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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#### ABSTRACT

A retrospective cross-sectional study was conducted based on the available biochemical data of patients who attended the endocrine clinic of Fujairah hospital, in Al Fujairah between June 2013 and June 2015. The aim of the study was to detect the pattern of lipid abnormalities in patients with type 2 diabetic mellitus (T2DM) and to observe the association between glycemic control and serum lipid profile. The majority (72%) of T2DM patients in the current study did not sustain a good glycemic control. Low level of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) was the most common pattern of dyslipidaemia observed in diabetic patients (55%) followed by elevated triglycerides (TG) level (29%). There was no significant difference between males and females in lipid levels except for HDL-C in which females had higher levels compared to males (*P*=0.050), indicating a certain degree of gender influence on lipid levels. TG showed significant negative correlation with the age while total cholesterol (TC) and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) demonstrated significant positive correlation with fasting blood sugar (FBS) and glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c). Consequently, identification and treatment of dyslipidaemia together with tight glycemic control should be maintained in order to minimize the cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk among T2DM patients.

KEYWORDS: Dyslipidaemia, Type 2 Diabetic Mellitus, Lipid Profile, Glycemic Control.

#### INTRODUCTION

The lipid abnormalities are common in diabetic mellitus (DM) because insulin resistance or deficiency affects key enzymes and pathways in lipid metabolism.<sup>[1]</sup> 70% to 97% of adults with type 2 diabetes have one or more lipid abnormalities.<sup>[2]</sup> The pattern of lipid profile in T2DM is called diabetic dyslipidaemia or atherogenic dyslipidaemia.<sup>[3]</sup> Diabetic dyslipidaemia is characterized by elevated triglycerides (TG) level, low high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) level and the presence of smaller and denser low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (sdLDL-C) particles.<sup>[4,5]</sup> Besides, abnormality in the level of each of the major lipids has been independently related with increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD).<sup>[6]</sup>

The previous study has been documented that, for every 1% reduction in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels there an equivalent reduction in cardiovascular events.<sup>[7]</sup> It is well documented that a high HDL-C level is cardioprotective <sup>[8]</sup> and low HDL-C

levels are widespread in type 2 diabetes patients, and this appears to be associated to the increased mortality and morbidity in coronary heart disease (CHD).<sup>[9]</sup> Additionally, low HDL-C levels are commonly escorted by elevated TG levels<sup>[10]</sup>, and the combination appears to be the most severe combination for hastening vascular damage. The main step in the direction of reducing the risk of CVD-related with diabetes is detection and treatment of dyslipidaemia.<sup>[11]</sup> According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), LDL-C lowering is the first priority, lowering triglyceride level is the second priority and raising levels of HDL-C is the third priority.<sup>[12]</sup>

It is well recognized that diabetic dyslipidaemia patients have an excess risk of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality because the lipid particles in these patients are more atherogenic than in general population.<sup>[13]</sup> Moreover, the lipid abnormality associated with type 2 diabetes increases with increase in duration of diabetes.<sup>[14-19]</sup> For that reason, there is an urgent need for screening and management of dyslipidaemia in diabetics in order to reduce morbidity and mortality from coronary artery disease (CAD).<sup>[15]</sup> The incidence of dyslipidaemia differs depending on the population studied, geographic development.<sup>[20,21]</sup> location and socioeconomic Additionally, ethnic-specific strategies and guidelines on risk estimation and prevention of CVD due to dyslipidaemia are essential as a result of ethnic-specific patterns of lipid profile in type 2 diabetics despite their glucose levels.<sup>[22]</sup> A previous study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) showed that 31% of diabetic patients suffered from dyslipidaemia, 35% from hypertension and 14% from coronary artery disease.<sup>[23]</sup> Evidence reported that cardiovascular disease in the UAE is one of the highest age-standardized death rates in the world.<sup>[24]</sup> As a result of an increase in CVD in UAE, the purpose of current study was to detect the pattern of lipid abnormalities in patients with T2DM and to observe the association between glycemic control and serum lipid profile in type 2 diabetic patients. Moreover, there are no studies found to evaluate the pattern of lipid abnormalities in T2DM patients in the UAE so the current study considers the first cross-sectional analysis to be carried out in the country.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the endocrine clinic of Fujairah hospital, in Al Fujairah. A total of 100 adult type 2 diabetic patients attending the endocrine clinic between June 2013 and June 2015 were reviewed. Data collection was supervised by the physician conducting the DM clinic. Demographic, anthropometric data and biochemical investigations were collected from the

## RESULTS

 Table 1: Socio-demographic data of all participants

patients' medical records. Duration of diabetes, blood pressure, associated chronic condition and different treatment regimens were documented. The biochemical investigations included: detecting the levels of serum fasting blood sugar (FBS), glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c), serum total cholesterol (TC), LDL-C, serum HDL-C and serum TG. Dyslipidaemia was defined by the presence of one or more than one abnormal amount of lipids.<sup>[56]</sup> The ADA standard of medical care for patients with DM was used to define desirable levels of HbA1c and serum lipids.<sup>[57]</sup>

Male and female who aged  $\geq 20$  years with the history of type 2 diabetes and dyslipidaemia were included in the study. Type 1 diabetic patients, pregnant women, patients with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), patients with cancer and patients with missing clinical data were excluded from the study.

Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the sociodemographic data. The descriptive statistics included mean, median, frequency and standard deviation. Mann-Whitney test was used to compare quantitative data in groups. Pearson correlation test was used to study the correlations between lipid fractions and other clinical characteristics. All data was expressed as the mean and standard deviation and a P value  $\leq 0.05$  was considered as significant.

| Variable group        | ble group Sub-variable group Frequency |                        |                |  |  |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------|----------------|--|--|
|                       |  | Number of Patients (N) | Percentage (%) |  |  |
| Gender                | Male                                   | 26                     | 26 %           |  |  |
| Gender                | Female                                 | 74                     | 74 %           |  |  |
| Nationality           | Local                                  | 90                     | 90 %           |  |  |
| Nationality           | Non-local                              | 10                     | 10 %           |  |  |
| Status                | Single                                 | 3                      | 3 %            |  |  |
| Status                | Married                                | 96                     | 96 %           |  |  |
|                       | Divorced                               | 1                      | 1 %            |  |  |
| IIImontoncion         | No                                     | 27                     | 27 %           |  |  |
| Hypertension          | Yes                                    | 73                     | 73 %           |  |  |
| Thymaid Duchlam       | No thyroid problem                     | 87                     | 87 %           |  |  |
| Thyroid Problem       | Hypothyroidism                         | 12                     | 12 %           |  |  |
|                       | hyperthyroidism                        | 1                      | 1 %            |  |  |
| Heart Disease         | No                                     | 90                     | 90 %           |  |  |
| Heart Disease         | Yes                                    | 10                     | 10 %           |  |  |
| Vidnay Diagona        | No                                     | 95                     | 95 %           |  |  |
| Kidney Disease        | Yes                                    | 5                      | 5 %            |  |  |
| Descrimentory Disease | No                                     | 98                     | 98 %           |  |  |
| Respiratory Disease   | Yes                                    | 2                      | 2 %            |  |  |
| Other Chronic Disease | No                                     | 62                     | 62 %           |  |  |
| Other Chronic Disease | Yes                                    | 38                     | 38 %           |  |  |

| Variable group         | Sub-variable group            | Frequence              | ey .           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
|                        |                               | Number of Patients (N) | Percentage (%) |
| Lipid Lowering Agent   | Statin                        | 96                     | 96 %           |
|                        | Statin and Ezetimibe          | 4                      | 4 %            |
| Anti-diabetic Agent    | Oral hypoglycemic agent       | 64                     | 64 %           |
|                        | Oral hypoglycemic + Insulin   | 34                     | 34 %           |
|                        | Insulin only                  | 2                      | 2 %            |
| Antihypertensive Agent | No                            | 27                     | 27 %           |
|                        | Yes                           | 73                     | 73 %           |
| Diuretic               | No                            | 64                     | 64 %           |
|                        | Thiazide diuretic             | 25                     | 25 %           |
|                        | Loop diuretic                 | 4                      | 4 %            |
|                        | Aldosterone antagonist        | 1                      | 1 %            |
|                        | Amiloride with thiazide       | 4                      | 4 %            |
|                        | Triamterene with thiazide     | 1                      | 1 %            |
|                        | Loop diuretic and aldosterone | 1                      | 1 %            |
|                        | antagonist                    |                        |                |
| Other medications      | No                            | 22                     | 22 %           |
|                        | Yes                           | 78                     | 78 %           |

#### Table 2: Medication history of all participants

### Table 3: Basic demographic and anthropometric features of all patients

| N=100        | Range          | Mean ± SD            |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Age (years)  | (21.00 - 84.0) | (57.4 <u>+</u> 11.3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| HbA1c (%)    | (5.6 - 16.0)   | (8.3 <u>+</u> 2.0)   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| FBS (mmol/L) | (3.3 - 23.3)   | (9.1 <u>+</u> 8.5)   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10           |                |                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |

N= number of patients, SD= standard Deviation

#### Table 4: Mean lipid levels for overall 100 patients

| N=100          | All Mean ± SD       |
|----------------|---------------------|
| TC (mmol/L)    | $(3.9 \pm 0.9)$     |
| TG (mmol/L)    | $(1.6 \pm 0.8)$     |
| HDL-C (mmol/L) | $(1.2 \pm 0.3)$     |
| LDL-C (mmol/L) | (1.9 <u>+</u> 0.87) |

#### Table 5: Classification of the patients according to lipid profile disturbance

| Lipid type |        | All patients |      | Female |        | Male |        |
|------------|--------|--------------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| Lipia type |        | Ν            | %    | Ν      | %      | Ν    | %      |
| TC         | Normal | 92           | 92 % | 69     | 93 %   | 23   | 88.5 % |
|            | High   | 8            | 8 %  | 5      | 6.8 %  | 3    | 11.5 % |
| TG         | Normal | 71           | 71 % | 51     | 68.9%  | 20   | 76.9 % |
|            | High   | 29           | 29 % | 23     | 31.1 % | 6    | 23.1 % |
| LDL-C      | Normal | 84           | 84 % | 64     | 86.5 % | 20   | 76.9 % |
|            | High   | 16           | 16 % | 10     | 13.5 % | 6    | 23.1 % |
| HDL-C      | Normal | 45           | 45 % | 29     | 39.2 % | 16   | 61.5 % |
|            | Low    | 55           | 55 % | 45     | 60.8 % | 10   | 38.5 % |

\*Normal value indicates TC level less than 6.2 mmol/l, TG less than 1.7 mmol/l, LDL-C less than 2.6 mmol/l and HDL-C more than 1.0 mmol/l in males and more than 1.3 mmol/l in females.

#### Table 6: Pattern of dyslipidaemia in studied patients according to their glycemic status.

| Lipid level |        | HbA | 1C <7 (28 patients ) | HbA1c | $\geq$ 7% (72 patients) |
|-------------|--------|-----|----------------------|-------|-------------------------|
|             |        | Ν   | %                    | Ν     | %                       |
| тс          | Normal | 26  | 92.9 %               | 66    | 91.7 %                  |
| TC          | High   | 2   | 7.1 %                | 6     | 8.3 %                   |
| TC          | Normal | 19  | 67.9 %               | 52    | 72.2 %                  |
| TG          | High   | 9   | 32.1 %               | 20    | 27.8 %                  |
| LDL-C       | Normal | 25  | 89.3 %               | 59    | 81.9 %                  |
|             | High   | 3   | 10.7 %               | 13    | 18.1 %                  |

| HDL-C  |        | Normal | 14     | 50 %        | 31  | 43.1 % |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-----|--------|
|        |        | Low    | 14     | 50 %        | 41  | 56.9 % |
| • 1• / | TC 1 1 | 1 .1   | $\sim$ | 1/1 ( 1 1 7 | 1/1 |        |

\*Normal value indicates TC level less than 6.2 mmol/l, TG less than 1.7 mmol/l, LDL-C less than 2.6 mmol/l and HDL-C more than 1.0 mmol/l in males and more than 1.3 mmol/l in females.

| Table 7: Correlations between | en lipid profile and | l demographic, anthr | opometric and other clin | ical characteristics |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
|                               |                      |                      |                          |                      |

| Source                |         | TC TG                  |         | HDL-C                  |         | LDL-C                  |         |                        |
|-----------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|
|                       | P value | Pearson<br>Correlation |
| Age (years)           | 0.459   | -0.075-                | 0.030   | - 0.217                | 0.868   | 0.17                   | 0.966   | -0.004-                |
| Gender                | 0.299   | 0.105                  | 0.815   | 0.024                  | 0.008   | 0.265                  | 0.887   | 0.014                  |
| Type of lipid therapy | 0.439   | -0.078-                | 0.780   | -0.028-                | 0.861   | 0.018                  | 0.418   | -0.082-                |
| FBS (mmol/L)          | 0.003   | 0.296                  | 0.225   | 0.122                  | 0.246   | 0.117                  | 0.026   | 0.222                  |
| HbA1c (%)             | 0.017   | 0.238                  | 0.847   | 0.020                  | 0.214   | 0.125                  | 0.049   | 0.197                  |

Table 8: Gender differences in term of lipid profile.

| N=100          | Male<br>Mean ± SD  | Female<br>Mean ± SD | P value |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|
| TC (mmol/L)    | $(3.7 \pm 1.0)$    | $(3.9 \pm 0.9)$     | 0.442   |
| TG (mmol/L)    | $(1.6 \pm 0.8)$    | $(1.6 \pm 0.8)$     | 0.441   |
| HDL-C (mmol/L) | $(1.1 \pm 0.3)$    | $(1.3 \pm 0.3)$     | 0.050   |
| LDL-C (mmol/L) | (1.9 <u>+</u> 1.0) | ( 1.9 <u>+</u> 0.8) | 0.255   |

### DISCUSSION

There were 100 patients in this study out of which 74% of the patients were female and 26% were male. Seventy-three percent of total patients had hypertension, which represented the highest of the total co-morbidities observed in our patients. Hypertension is around twice as common in patients with diabetes compared to those without diabetes.<sup>[25,26]</sup> Medication history of the patients indicates that all patients were using statin as lipid lowering agent and only 4% of them were using ezetimibe as an additional treatment. All participants were using anti-diabetic agents; 64% were using an oral hypoglycaemic agent and 34% were using oral hypoglycaemic together with insulin (Table 2).

The basic demographic and anthropometric features of all patients (Table 3) showed that the mean age for patients was 57.4 + 11.3 years. Our results have shown that the majority (72%) of the T2DM patients did not sustain a good glycaemic control; where the mean levels of HbA1c and FBS were 8.3 % and 9.1 mmol/l respectively. These findings are consistent with previous studies in Malaysia <sup>[27]</sup> and in Saudi Arabia.<sup>[28]</sup> This result suggests more attention by healthcare providers in following the optimal guidelines to achieve the desired glycemic control. In addition, there is critical need to ensure patient compliance to medication and healthy lifestyle to avoid poor glycemic control.

In the present study the mean levels of TC, TG, HDL-C and LDL-C were (3.9 mmol/L, 1.6 mmol/L, 1.2 mmol/L and 1.9 mmol/L), respectively (Table 4). Compared with other previous studies, our findings were lower than those in Malaysia <sup>[26]</sup> and in Brazil.<sup>[29]</sup> In Malaysia, the mean levels of TC, TG, HDL-C and LDL-C were 4.68 mmol/L, 1.70mmol/L, 1.19 mmol/L and 2.71 mmol/L respectively. While in Brazil, the mean levels of TC,

TG, HDL-C and LDL-C were 4.81 mmol/L, 1.68 mmol/L, 1.24 mmol/L and 2.78 mmol/L respectively.

The results of the present study showed that the most common lipid abnormality was reduced HDL-C (55%) followed by hypertriglyceridemia (29 %) (Table 5). This is the common trend in the majority of type-2 DM patients, in view of the fact that, diabetic dyslipidaemia is usually reflected as a decreased level of HDL-C and elevated TG with a prevalence of small, dense LDL-C particles along with relatively normal LDL-C levels [30]. Findings consistent with our results were also found in the previous study conducted in Nepal<sup>[31]</sup>, southern India <sup>[32]</sup> and another recent study conducted in Mangalore, India.<sup>[33]</sup> Additionally, a study conducted in Ghana <sup>[34]</sup> showed that the highest number of diabetics (50.4%) had HDL-C dyslipidaemia. Likewise, in a study conducted in Sudan<sup>[35]</sup> on type 2 diabetes patients, the authors found statistically significant higher TG levels and low HDL-C levels in diabetic patients as compared to healthy controls. These differences may be explained by different lifestyle, occupation and level of education among diabetic patients.<sup>[36]</sup>

In the present study, the HDL-C levels below 1.3 mmol/l were present in 60.8 % of the female and below 1.0 mmol/l in 38.5 % of the male. This finding is in agreement with the previous studies which showed that reduced HDL-C were more common in females than males.<sup>[37, 38, 39, 40]</sup> Additionally, previous studies indicated that dyslipidaemia was more marked in women than men. <sup>[41, 42]</sup> Different levels of sex hormones particularly estrogens and androgens in women versus men most likely account for these differences.<sup>[43, 44]</sup>

The pattern of dyslipidaemia in the studied patients according to their glycaemic status (Table 6) indicated that about 72% of them were poor glycaemic control (HbA1c $\geq$ 7%). Of these 56.9 %, 27.8 %, 18.1 % and 8.3 % had HDL-C, TG, LDL-C and TC out of target levels respectively. Whereas, 28% of patients were good glycaemic control and 50 %, 32.1%, 10.7 % and 7.1 % of them had HDL-C, TG, LDL-C, and TC out of target levels respectively.

The correlation between lipid profile and demographic, anthropometric and other clinical characteristics was investigated using Pearson correlation test (Table 7). Our results showed that TC and LDL-C were positively correlated with FBS and HbA1c. This significant correlation suggesting that poor glycemic control showed to be directly associated with hypercholesterolemia and elevated LDL-C level. Likewise, Blebil et al. [27] and Chowta et al. <sup>[46]</sup> found that TC, LDL-C and TG were significantly positive correlated with FBS and HbA1c. Additionally, Chan et al. <sup>[47]</sup> and Ladeia et al. <sup>[48]</sup> showed that TC, LDL-C and TG were significantly correlated with HbA1c. A study by Mullugeta et al. <sup>[49]</sup> found that TG and TC were significantly correlated with HbA1c. On the other hand, certain studies reported no significant correlation between serum HbA1c and serum lipid parameters.<sup>[50, 32]</sup>

Additionally, in this study, TG was negatively correlated with the age, suggesting that older patients in our study were more compliant to treatment than younger patients. While Elnasri and Ahmed <sup>[35]</sup> found statistically significant association between TG and increase age. Also, Ali, et al. <sup>[45]</sup> reported that dyslipidaemia in both genders increases with age. On the other hand, Nadeem et al. <sup>[51]</sup> reported that no significant correlation between age and dyslipidaemia. The previous study shows that after the sixth decade triglyceride levels decreased as a result of increased rate of catabolism and lower food intake and absorption.<sup>[52]</sup>

Mann-Whitney test was conducted to compare lipid profile between males and females (Table 8). There was no significant difference between males and females in lipid levels except for HDL-C in which females had higher level compared to males, indicating a certain degree of gender influence on lipid levels in our participants. Our results agreed with a previous study.<sup>[27]</sup> In contrast to our findings, it was reported that females have higher LDL-C compared to males.<sup>[39, 53, 54]</sup> On the other hand, a number of studies have shown that no significant correlation exists between gender and dyslipidaemia.<sup>[34, 55]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Low HDL level was the most common pattern of dyslipidaemia observed in our patients followed by elevated TG level. Serum HDL-C was higher in a diabetic female in comparison to males, indicating gender influence on lipid levels in diabetics. TC and LDL-C correlate positively with FBS and HbA1c, suggesting that poor glycaemic control showed to be directly associated with hypercholesterolemia and elevated LDL-C level. Therefore good glycaemic control can prevent progression of lipid abnormalities in diabetic patients. The majority of the T2DM patients in our study do not sustain a good glycaemic control. Consequently, identification and treatment of dyslipidaemia together with tight glycaemic control should be maintained in order to minimize the CVD risk among T2DM patients.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was a retrospectively collected data from a routine clinic and not a prospectively collected data. A similar group of patients without diabetes was not available in the current health system to allow comparison with subjects in this study. Moreover. variables such as duration of disease, BMI and cigarette smoking which modify the lipid profile were not available in the hospital electronic records. Medications that can modify lipid levels like beta blockers and diuretics were not considered. Additionally, patients used multi-vitamin supplementation or patients with hepatic, renal or metabolic bone disorders which may affect the carbohydrate and lipid metabolism in diabetes were not excluded from this study. Finally, this study was based on population from one hospital.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Early management of dyslipidaemia and improvement of glycemic control are helpful in reducing the incidence of CVD among T2DM patients. The awareness of diabetic patients about their high risk of having dyslipidaemia complications and the importance of having routine screening for their lipids profile should be maintained and implement by developing effective strategies by healthcare providers and decision makers in the country. Improving medication adherence among type 2 diabetes patients is essential to achieve good glycemic control.

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