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Hypovitaminosis D: Association With Altered Blood Lipid Profile

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Abstract: Although India is a country full of sunshine, it is reported that 80% of healthy Indians are deprived of the sunshine vitamin, vitamin D. Some of the risk factors for the same include non white ethnicity, obesity, less outdoor activity and age. Vitamin D status has been correlated with PTH status, blood pressure, Type I & II diabetes mellitus in humans. Reports on studies linking vitamin D with dyslipidemia amongst Indians is scarce. Since vitamin receptor and 1α hydroxylase gene is reported to be present in human adipocytes, white adipose tissue may be a direct target of Vitamin D. The present study aims at establishing a correlation between vitamin D status and lipid profile in the coastal belt of South India where dyslipidemia is prevalent. A total of 76 subjects in the age group 20-50 years were included in the study and categorized under 2 groups-Group 1 (n=62) had suboptimal levels of vitamin D (<29 ng/ml) and group 2 (n=14) had optimal levels of vitamin D (>29 ng/ml). Lipid profile was analysed in both groups. Group 1 had higher levels of cholesterol (p=0.05) and triglyceride levels (p=0.049) as compared to Group 2 although mean values in both groups were in the normal range. Accordingly, this group showed significantly higher levels of VLDL and LDL. Pearson correlation studies of vitamin D with lipid profile in both genders showed a negative correlation in all parameters while significant correlation was observed in males with respect to total cholesterol, LDL and total cholesterol to HDL ratio. In females vitamin D deficiency influenced only serum cholesterol levels significantly. Based on these findings, it is imperative to state that suboptimal levels of vitamin D may be implicated in the development of dyslipidemia, especially in male population.

Key Words: Vitamin D, lipoproteins, lipid profile

I. INTRODUCTION

Vitamin D deficiency is currently being considered as a worldwide problem. Some of the human races who have been reported to show a high incidence of hypovitaminosis D include US paediatric population [1], Black Americans [2], South Indian women [3], Northern European Russians [4]. Vitamin D receptors are reported to be present in most of the tissues within the human body based on recent research [5]. Therefore extraskelatal effects of vitamin D seems to be more challenging in the current scenario. Thus this vitamin has been correlated with parathormone status [6], Blood pressure [7], Diabetes mellitus [8], obesity [9], and immunity status [10] and has been stated to be a causative factor in most of these disorders. Since the expression of both vitamin D receptor and 25(OH) vitamin D 1 α hydroxylase (CYP27B1) genes have been shown in murine and human adipocytes [11], white adipose tissue may be a direct target for vitamin D. It is therefore crucial to relate vitamin D status with lipid metabolism, emphasising on the fact that dyslipidaemia is the underlying metabolic cause for cardiovascular diseases. The present work aims at establishing a correlation between vitamin D status and fasting lipid profile in the coastal belt of South India, where there is abundant sunlight all through the year, and dyslipidaemia being rampant in this part of the country.

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II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study cohort consisted of a total of 76 subjects in the age group 25-55 years, of which 46 were males and 30 were females. Those subjects who were non-hospitalized and apparently normal, having no history of cardiovascular, renal or any other systemic diseases, were randomly selected for the study.

Fasting lipid profile was validated with the use of standard autoanalyser methods on P-E 800, Roche Analyser. The blood samples were analysed for triglycerides, cholesterol and HDL cholesterol (after precipitating with magnesium and phosphotungstate). LDL cholesterol was calculated using Friedwald's formula. Vitamin D assay was performed based on the principle of electrochemiluminescence, on COBAS e-411 autoanalyser.

Statistical Analysis: Vitamin D levels below 29ng/ml were considered to be suboptimal (group 1) and values above 29ng/ml (group 2) optimal. All the statistical analysis was done based on IBM SPSS software version 20. Since the distribution of blood values were normal, Pearson correlation studies were performed to relate vitamin D levels with lipid profile, in both groups. Student t test was used to compare the mean values of the parameters in the 2 groups and p=0.05 or less than 0.05 were considered to be significant.

III. RESULTS

Suboptimal levels of vitamin D were significantly associated with higher blood levels of cholesterol (p=0.05) and triglycerides (p=0.049). Accordingly, this group showed a significant increase in VLDL and LDL, although all values of lipid profile reported were within normal limits (Table 1, 2, 3). Pearson correlation studies of vitamin D with lipid profile in both genders (Table 6) showed a negative correlation in all parameters of which total cholesterol and triglycerides were significant, while significant correlation was observed in males (Table 4) between vitamin D, total cholesterol, LDL, and total cholesterol to HDL ratio and a significant negative correlation only with respect to total cholesterol and vitamin D levels was observed in females (Table 5).

Table 1 : Serum Lipid profile values in Group1 (vitD < 29ng/ml) and Group2 (vitD > 29ng/ml) Values are Mean ± S.D (n=62)

| | Group 1 | Group 2 |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Lipid Profile | Units(mg/dl) | Units(mg/dl) |
| Triglycerides | 153.64±76* | 111.57±38 |
| Total cholesterol | 198.12±40.75* | 175.35±39 |
| VLDL | 29.48±13.6* | 22.78±7.6 |
| LDL | 119.61±41.5* | 101.82±27.5 |
| HDL | 47.41± 11.18 | 47.22± 14.37 |
| Total Cholesterol/HDL ratio | 4.36±1.3* | 3.76±0.94 |

*p<0.05: significant between group 1 and group 2

Table 2: Serum Lipid profile and vitamin D values in females (mean ± S.D) (n=36)

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Vit D (ng/ml) | 22.13 ± 14.29 |
| TC (mg/dl) | 188.65 ± 28.25 |
| TG (mg/dl) | 141.13 ± 66.64 |
| HDL (mg/dl) | 51.30 ± 11.998 |
| LDL (mg/dl) | 114.71 ± 25.70 |
| VLDL (mg/dl) | 27.99 ± 13.24 |
| Total Cholesterol/HDL ratio | 3.89 ± 0.92 |

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Table 3: Serum Lipid profile and vitD values in males (mean± SD),(n=40)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Vit D(ng/ml) | 22.56±12.03 |
| TC (mg/dl) | 199.33±53.83 |
| TG(mg/dl) | 148.60±79.67 |
| HDL(mg/dl) | 45.74±9.9 |
| LDL(mg/dl) | 123.11±49.21 |
| VLDL(mg/dl) | 29.40±14.33 |
| Total Cholesterol/HDL ratio | 4.54± 1.58 |

Table 4: Correlation of Serum Lipid profile with VitD in males (n=46); r values

| | Total cholesterol | Triglycerides | VLDL | HDL | LDL | Total cholesterol/HDL |
|---------|-------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Vit D | -.405 | -.171 | -.237 | -.104 | -.420 | -.304 |
| P value | 0.013* | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 | 0.01* | 0.05* |

*p<0.05:significant

Table 5: Correlation of Serum Lipid profile with Vit D in females (n=30); r values

| | Total cholesterol | Triglycerides | VLDL | HDL | LDL | Total cholesterol/HDL |
|---------|-------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Vit D | -.365 | -.150 | -.159 | -.029 | -.019 | -.083 |
| P value | 0.026* | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 |

*p<0.05:significant

Table 6: Correlation of Serum Lipid profile with VitD in both genders(n=76); r values

| | Total cholesterol | Triglycerides | VLDL | HDL | LDL | Total cholesterol/HDL |
|---------|-------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Vit D | -.281 | -.222 | -.192 | .031 | -.144 | -.163 |
| P value | 0.015* | 0.05* | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 | >0.05 |

*p<0.05:significant

IV.DISCUSSION

Hypovitaminosis D has been reported in several races across the world to date[12], due to several reasons described earlier. We report that vitamin D deficiency is prevalent in South Indian population as 82% of the subjects enrolled in the study had suboptimal levels of vitamin D.

Hypovitaminosis D has been associated with increased total cholesterol and reduced apoA-1 in Belgian men[13]. A significant association between serum 25(OH)D and lipid profile such as TG and HDL were observed in Chinese population[14]. Inverse correlations between vitamin D and lipids has been reported in Canadian subjects [15]. Total body fat

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was inversely associated with serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D in both sexes in a population based study by Snidjer et al [16]. Earlier reports on women belonging to different races showed that there was no correlation between lipids and vitamin D status in Asian women [17]. Our observations are in agreement with these findings which indicates that ethnicity may play a prominent role in body metabolism.

Further dyslipidemia and proinflammatory states are the coexisting factors in metabolic syndrome which is often accompanied by insulin resistance. Several reports published to date indicate the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in obesity [18] and insulin resistance [19]. Certain studies have stated that vitamin D inhibits production of proinflammatory cytokines like IL-1, IL-2, IL-6, TNF- α via the vitamin D receptor expressed in monocytes and activated lymphocytes [20], probably explaining the role of vitamin D in insulin resistance and obesity. Moreover, vitamin D is required for the regulation of appropriate levels of apo A1, a component of HDL [21] and regulation of lipoprotein lipase activity [22] thus influencing triglyceride levels in the blood. In support of this concept, vitamin D supplementation (25 μ g/d) in obese women showed a significant increase in HDL cholesterol and Apo A1 and a decrease in body fat [23].

It is also postulated that intracellular calcium in adipocytes favours lipogenesis in adipose tissue [24]. Thus deficiency of vitamin D may decrease the uptake of calcium by adipose tissue, initiating lipolysis elevating circulating levels of free fatty acids, increasing hepatic synthesis of VLDL and LDL. However to date there is no availability of authentic or concrete proof to state vitamin D as a causative factor in the development of dyslipidemia.

VDR gene polymorphism studies may overcome the paucity of evidences to support the involvement of vitamin D in influencing blood lipids, in future studies. Vitamin D supplementation may then reinforce survival benefits in patients with dyslipidaemia.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on these findings, it is imperative to state that suboptimal levels of vitamin D may be implicated in the development of dyslipidemia, especially in male population.

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