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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Non-invasive Markers and Left Ventricular Diastolic Dysfunction in Type II Diabetic Patients

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ABSTRACT

Background: Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is strongly associated with subclinical cardiovascular disease (CVD), often progressing undetected until advanced stages. Left ventricular diastolic dysfunction (LVDD) is a common but underrecognized complication, necessitating the identification of reliable, non-invasive predictive markers. This study aimed to evaluate non-invasive biomarkers for the early detection of LVDD in T2DM patients. Methods: This case-control study included 60 patients with T2DM, stratified into two groups: Group A (n=30) with LVDD grade >1 and Group B (n=30) with mild or no LVDD. Comprehensive clinical assessments were performed, including vital signs. body mass index (BMI), and cardiovascular symptoms. Electrocardiographic (ECG) parameters, such as rhythm analysis, P-wave dispersion, and QT dispersion, were evaluated. Echocardiographic and tissue-Doppler imaging were conducted to assess diastolic function, alongside laboratory investigations including serum creatinine, serum uric acid, highsensitivity C reactive protein (Hs-CRP), and neutrophil-lymphocyte ratio (NLR). Results: Patients with LVDD (Group A) exhibited significantly elevated levels of serum creatinine, Hs-CRP, serum uric acid, and NLR. Urinary albumin excretion ranged from 45 to 290 mg/day (mean 168.4±7.6mg/day), and the albumin-to-creatinine ratio ranged from 3 to 16mg/mmol (mean 9.1±3.6 mg/mmol). In contrast, Group B demonstrated urinary albumin levels <30 mg/day and an albumin-to-creatinine ratio <1 mg/mmol.

Conclusion: Hs-CRP could be an independent predictor of LVDD emphasizing its potential use as a non-invasive biomarker for early screening and risk stratification in T2DM patients. Implementing Hs-CRP testing in routine clinical practice could facilitate early intervention strategies to prevent the progression of diastolic dysfunction and improve cardiovascular outcomes.**Keywords** Type 2 diabetes mellitus, Left ventricular diastolic dysfunction, Cardiovascular Disease, Echocardiography

INTRODUCTION

A common cardiac ailment known as left ventricular diastolic dysfunction (LVDD) is defined by the left ventricle's incapacity to (LV) to relax and fill adequately during diastole. This impairment compromises the heart's ability to effectively accommodate blood volume, disrupting cardiac output and potentially leading to adverse cardiovascular events [1].

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Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), which is typified by insulin resistance and relative insulin insufficiency, significantly raises the incidence of LVDD. Persistent hyperglycemia in type 2 diabetic patients triggers a number of pathophysiological processes, including endothelial damage, oxidative stress, inflammation, and fibrosis, contributing to myocardial stiffness and impaired diastolic function [2]. Dapagliflozin is an example of an oral hypoglycemic drug (OHA) that inhibits sodium glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT2), and empagliflozin has cardiovascular advantages beyond glycemic control, such as a lower risk of heart failure [3]. Echocardiography's thorough evaluation of heart function and non-invasive nature make it the gold standard for diagnosing LVDD. By analyzing specific Doppler flow parameters, echocardiography enables accurate classification of LV diastolic function into various grades [4]. Noninvasive indicators, however, include microalbuminuria, the albumin-to-creatinine ratio (ACR), uric acid, NLR, and C-reactive protein (CRP), are becoming useful instruments for LVDD risk assessment and early identification [5-7]. This study aimed to assess non-invasive

laboratory markers associated with LVDD in T2DM patients, providing insights into early diagnostic and prognostic strategies.

METHODS

This case-control study was conducted at the Cardiology Department Clinic of Zagazig University Hospital and Alahrar Hospital to evaluate non-invasive markers for predicting LVDD in T2DM patients. A total of 60 patients were enrolled and categorized into two groups: Group A (30 patients with LVDD greater than grade 1) and Group B (30 patients with mild or no LVDD). The grading of LVDD was based on standardized echocardiographic criteria. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB# 311/23-April-2024) of Zagazig University, and the study adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki guidelines. Inclusion criteria comprised adult patients diagnosed with T2DM, confirmed by medical records or physician diagnosis. Exclusion criteria included Type I diabetes, significant valvular or congenital heart diseases, recent myocardial infarction (within three months), severe renal impairment, dialysis-dependent end-stage renal disease (eGFR <30 mL/min/1.73 m2), immunological diseases, malignancies, severe hepatic impairment or cirrhosis, and pregnancy or lactation. Comprehensive clinical evaluations included demographic data gathering and evaluation of risk variables, including smoking, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, stroke history, peripheral arterial disease, and coronary artery disease. A systolic blood pressure of 140 mmHg or above and a diastolic blood pressure of 90 mmHg or higher were considered hypertension, under the 2018 ESH/ESC recommendations [8]. Dyslipidemia was thought to be indicated by either lower levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol or elevated levels of total or lowdensity lipoprotein cholesterol [9]. T2DM diagnosis was based on glycated hemoglobin (A1C) levels, with thresholds of <5.7% for normal, 5.7%-6.4% for prediabetes, and $\geq 6.5\%$ for diabetes [10]. Among the laboratory tests were complete blood counts (CBC) to calculate the NLR, urinary albumin to evaluate microalbuminuria, ACR, serum uric acid, serum creatinine levels and Hs-CRP. These markers were assessed for their potential to indicate endothelial and diastolic dysfunction.

Electrocardiogram (ECG) assessments were performed using a 12-lead BIOCARE (ECG-300 G) system to evaluate heart rhythm, left and right ventricular hypertrophy, QT dispersion and P wave dispersion (PWD). PWD was computed as the difference between the highest and lowest P-wave durations using both manual and computerized methods [11,12]. QT dispersion was calculated using the difference between the longest and shortest QT intervals, and it was then modified using Bazett's formula (QTc = QT/ $\sqrt{R-R}$ interval) [13].

A 2.5-MHz transducer-equipped Vivid 5 GE medical ultrasound equipment was used for echocardiographic exams. Data were collected and analyzed blindly to ensure objective results. Among the echocardiographic parameters measured were the following: ejection fraction (EF), left atrial diameter (LAD), left atrial volume index (LAVI), early diastolic mitral inflow velocity to early diastolic mitral annular velocity (E/e'), early to late diastolic mitral inflow velocity (E/A), tricuspid regurgitation (TR) velocity ratios, and left ventricular enddiastolic and end-systolic sizes [14,15]. The comprehensive assessment of cardiac anatomy and function provided by these measurements facilitated the identification and classification of LVDD.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the baseline attributes of the groups under study. Group A patients were considerably older than those in Group B (mean age 58.5 ± 9.9 vs. 51.5 ± 9.4 years, p = 0.01). A significantly higher weight and BMI were noted in Group A (p < 0.001 for both), indicating a link between obesity and LVDD. Cardiovascular risk factors, including a history of coronary artery disease (CAD) and obesity, were more prevalent in Group A (p = 0.039 and p = 0.015, respectively), as shown in Table 1.

Characteristic	Group A (n=30)	Group B (n=30)	Statistical Test	P Value
Age (years)	58.5 ± 9.9	51.5 ± 9.4	U = 276	0.01*
Gender (Female)	17 (56.7%)	17 (56.7%)	-	1.000
Weight (kg)	94.1 ± 11.3	85 ± 8.7	t = 3.49	< 0.001*
Height (cm)	168.6 ± 9.6	172.6 ± 7.8	U = 556	0.113
BMI (kg/m²)	33.5 ± 5.8	28.4 ± 2.9	U = 196	< 0.001*
Hypertension	24 (80%)	20 (66.7%)	$\chi^2 = 1.36$	0.243
Dyslipidemia	22 (73.3%)	21 (70%)	$\chi^2 = 0.08$	0.774
History of Stroke	6 (20%)	4 (13.3%)	$\chi^2 = 0.48$	0.488
Peripheral Artery Disease	4 (13.3%)	5 (16.7%)	$\chi^2 = 0.13$	0.718
Coronary Artery Disease	19 (63.3%)	11 (36.7%)	$\chi^2 = 4.27$	0.039*
Smoking	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)	$\chi^2 = 0.27$	0.606
Obesity	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	$\chi^2 = 5.9$	0.015*

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics of the Studied Groups

*Significant p-values (<0.05) are indicated by an asterisk.

Significant variations in the groups' heart function were shown by the electrocardiographic and echocardiographic results (Table 2). Higher left atrial volume index and greater P wave and QT dispersion were linked to advanced LVDD (LAVI), and elevated E/e' ratio, underscoring the importance of comprehensive cardiac assessment.

Parameter	Group A (n=30)	Group B (n=30)	Statistical Test	P Value
LVH Present (%)	12 (40%)	10 (33.3%)	$\chi^2 = 0.29$	0.592
RVH Present (%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	$\chi^2 = 3.16$	0.076
P Wave Dispersion (ms)	56 ± 3.1 (50-60)	33.4 ± 2.9 (29-38)	t = 29.3	< 0.001*
QT Dispersion (ms)	54.6 ± 3.7 (50-60)	45.4 ± 2.8 (40-50)	t = 11.05	< 0.001*
LVEDD (mm)	52.4 ± 4 (42-57)	$49.2 \pm 4.9 (38-58)$	U = 280	0.011*
LVESD (mm)	34.5 ± 3.6 (28-41)	$32 \pm 3.6 (26-39)$	t = 2.69	0.01*
LAD (mm)	36.7 ± 2.7 (30-41)	34.1 ± 3.1 (28-38)	U = 238	0.002*
LAVI (mL/m ²)	$47.5 \pm 9.6 (35-68)$	26.2 ± 1.7 (22-29)	t = 12.03	< 0.001*
EF (%)	$60.9 \pm 4.5 \ (51-70)$	62.1 ± 3.8 (56-68)	U = 512	0.357
E/A Ratio	$1.6 \pm 0.4 \ (1.1-2.4)$	$0.8 \pm 0.1 \; (0.6-1)$	t = 10.29	< 0.001*
E/e' Ratio	$12.7 \pm 1.5 (10-16)$	8.3 ± 0.7 (7-9)	t = 14.4	< 0.001*
Late e' (cm/s)	8.8 ± 0.8 (7-10)	11.6 ± 1 (10-13)	U = 885	< 0.001*
Septal e' (cm/s)	6.4 ± 0.6 (5-7)	8.4 ± 0.6 (7-9)	U = 887	< 0.001*
TR Velocity (m/s)	$3.2 \pm 0.2 \ (2.9-3.6)$	$2.5 \pm 0.2 (2.1-2.7)$	t = 12.65	< 0.001*

*Significant p-values (<0.05) are indicated by an asterisk.

Laboratory data (Table 3) indicated significantly higher levels of serum creatinine, Hs-CRP, uric acid, and NLR in Group A (all p < 0.001). The albumin-to-creatinine ratio (ACR) was also significantly elevated, suggesting that these biomarkers could aid in identifying high-risk patients.

 Table 3: Laboratory Data Among the Studied Groups

Parameter	Group A (n=30)	Group B (n=30)	Statistical Test	P Value
Albumin in Urine (mg/d)	168.4 ± 7.6 (45-290)	<30 mg/d	-	-
Albumin/Creatinine Ratio (mg/mmol)	9.1 ± 3.6 (3-16)	<1 mg/mmol	-	-
Serum Creatinine (mg/dL)	1.8 ± 0.27 (1.4-2.4)	$\begin{array}{c} 0.9 \pm 0.19 \\ (0.09 \text{-} 1.1) \end{array}$	t = 14.9	<0.001*
Hs-CRP Positive	24 (80%)	8 (26.7%)	$\chi^2 = 15.1$	< 0.001*
Hs-CRP (mg/L)	3.3 ± 1.1 (2-6)	2.03 ± 0.32 (2-3)	t = 3.26	<0.001*
Uric Acid (mg/dL)	9.3 ± 1.2 (8-11)	5.3 ± 1.14 (4-7)	t = 13.3	<0.001*
NLR	2.2 ± 0.2 (1.8-2.4)	$\begin{array}{c} 1.89 \pm 0.24 \\ (1.5 \text{-} 2.4) \end{array}$	U = 162	<0.001*

*Significant p-values (<0.05) are indicated by an asterisk.

Logistic regression analysis (Table 4) identified Hs-CRP as a significant independent predictor of LVDD (OR=17.5, 95% CI: 1.6–184.6, p=0.018). While uric acid and NLR showed strong predictive power in univariate analysis, they did not remain significant in the multivariate model, potentially due to confounding variables or multicollinearity.

Parameter	Univariate OR (95% CI)	p Value	Multivariate OR (95% CI)	p Value
Hs-CRP	16.5 (1.7–157.5)	0.015*	17.5 (1.6–184.6)	0.018*
Uric Acid	2.59 (1.67–3.99)	< 0.001*	-	-
NLR	369 (16.3–8387)	< 0.001*	0.04 (0.001–2973)	0.853

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Table 4: Univariate and	i Millitivariate L	agistic Regressia	n Analysis of	Predictors of LVDD
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*Significant p-values (<0.05) are indicated by an asterisk.

These findings emphasize that non-invasive biomarkers, particularly Hs-CRP, could enhance early diagnosis and management of LVDD in T2DM patients, supporting their inclusion in clinical practice for improved cardiovascular outcomes.

DISCUSSION

T2DM is strongly associated with subclinical CVD, often progressing undetected until advanced stages. LVDD is a common but underrecognized complication, necessitating the identification of reliable, non-invasive predictive markers.

This study identified several key predictors of LVDD in T2DM patients, including advanced age, higher BMI, elevated serum creatinine, uric acid, Hs-CRP, and NLR levels. The study found that Hs-CRP is an independent predictor of LVDD. demonstrating its potential use as an early risk stratification non-invasive biomarker. LAVI and elevated E/E' ratio are two echocardiographic measures that further support their diagnostic use in evaluating diastolic dysfunction. These findings support the integration of non-invasive biomarkers into routine clinical assessments to facilitate early detection and targeted management of LVDD in diabetic populations.

Consistent with Wazeem et al.'s findings, which showed a favorable relationship between LVDD prevalence and advancing age, the current investigation showed that patients in Group A (with LVDD > grade 1) were substantially older than those in Group B LVDD in T2DM patients in a cross-sectional study in Kerala, India [16]. Similarly, Yadava et al. reported that diastolic dysfunction prevalence increases with age, which may be attributed to age-related myocardial stiffness, reduced compliance, and alterations in extracellular matrix composition [17]. These findings highlight age as a critical risk factor for LVDD.

Weight and BMI were also significantly higher in Group A, in agreement with Russo et al.'s study, which showed that higher BMI independently correlates with increased E/A and E/E' ratios, indicating elevated LV filling pressures [18]. Di Bello et al. supported this by showing that diastolic dysfunction can manifest even in overweight individuals [19]. Powell et al. also found that obese patients undergoing coronary angiography exhibited higher LV enddiastolic pressures, emphasizing the link between obesity and impaired diastolic function [20].

This study identified significantly higher NLR values in Group A compared to Group

B. Supporting this, Zhang et al. showed that in hyperthyroid patients, higher NLR values were linked to higher risks of LVDD[21]. NLR, as a marker of systemic inflammation, likely contributes to myocardial fibrosis and diastolic dysfunction through the activation of pro-fibrotic pathways and myocardial remodeling, suggesting inflammation's pivotal role in LVDD pathogenesis.

Significantly higher serum creatinine levels in Group A align with Viegas et al., who found that elevated creatinine in CKD patients with diabetes correlated with advanced LVDD and worse myocardial performance indices [22]. These findings underscore the interplay between renal impairment and diastolic dysfunction, potentially mediated by fluid overload, increased myocardial fibrosis, and remodeling.

Higher serum uric acid (SUA) levels in Group A support Yang et al.'s findings, in healthy individuals, SUA was a distinct cardiometabolic risk factor for the development of LVDD [23]. Tu et al. also noted that elevated SUA correlated with LVDD criteria, such as reduced septal e' velocity in military personnel [24]. SUA's role in promoting oxidative stress, endothelial dysfunction, and myocardial fibrosis may explain its association with LVDD [28]. Notably, clinical trials with xanthine oxidase (XO) inhibitors that reduce SUA levels have demonstrated improvements in LVDD and clinical outcomes [29].

The study also revealed significantly higher Hs-CRP levels in Group A, consistent with Shah et al., who found an association between elevated CRP levels and LV dysfunction parameters, including increased LVEDP [30]. Ghavam et al. further confirmed the strong link between high hs-CRP and diastolic dysfunction in T2DM patients [31]. These results support systemic

inflammation, as indicated by hs-CRP, as a key contributor to LVDD pathophysiology. Our findings also showed elevated albuminuria and albumin/creatinine ratios in Group A, corroborating Shogade et al.'s study, which identified a strong association relationship LVDD and microalbuminuria in individuals with type 2 diabetes [32]. Similarly, T2DM patients with albuminuria were reported to have a considerably greater risk of LVDD by Akiyama et al [34]. Since endothelial dysfunction is indicated by microalbuminuria, this suggests a potential mechanism through which impaired vascular function may contribute to myocardial relaxation abnormalities. Echocardiographic findings in this study demonstrated higher LVEDD, LVESD, LAD, LAVI, E/A ratio, E/E' ratio, and TR velocity in Group A. Sušić et al. reported similar results, showing that higher LVDD grades were linked to larger LV dimensions [37]. Tu et al. also linked higher LAVI and Diastolic dysfunction E/e' ratios in coronary heart disease patients[24]. Group A much higher E/E' ratio, a reliable indicator of LV filling pressure, was consistent with research by Ayman et al., who found a similar pattern in individuals with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes[38].

The increased E/E' ratio observed in LVDD can be attributed to insulin resistance and hyperinsulinemia, which promote prohypertrophic myocardial changes and enhance LV stiffness[39]. This is further supported by studies suggesting that cardiomyocyte resting tension is a critical determinant of LVDD progression, particularly in diabetics with an intact left ventricular ejection fraction [40].

Clinical Implications

The identification of Hs-CRP as an independent predictor of LVDD emphasizes its potential use as a non-invasive biomarker for early screening and risk stratification in T2DM patients. Implementing Hs-CRP testing in routine clinical practice could facilitate early therapeutic techniques to enhance cardiovascular outcomes and stop diastolic dysfunction from getting worse. **Study Limitations**

The study's single-center methodology and somewhat small sample size of 60 patients are among its shortcomings, which could restrict how broadly the results can be applied. Furthermore, the evaluation of the long-term course and results of LVDD in patients with type 2 diabetes was limited by the little follow-up period. It is advised that bigger, multicenter cohorts and longer follow-up times be used in future studies to confirm these results and investigate the potential clinical use of non-invasive biomarkers in LVDD prediction.

CONCLUSION

Hs-CRP could be an independent predictor of LVDD emphasizing its potential use as a non-invasive biomarker for early screening and risk stratification in T2DM patients. Implementing Hs-CRP testing in routine clinical practice could facilitate early intervention strategies to prevent the progression of diastolic dysfunction and improve cardiovascular outcomes.

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