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Asymptomatic non-alcoholic fatty liver disease patients in GP practice

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Background & Aim: Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) often is not diagnosed in early stages, because for a long time, it may be asymptomatic. NAFLD is associated with obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome. The disease could progress to NAFLD steatohepatitis, liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. The aim of this study is to compare biochemical analysis of clinically asymptomatic patients with and without NAFLD diagnosed in CT.

Method: There were 76 clinically asymptomatic patients (aged 30-45) from GP practice in this study. Non-enhanced CT was done to assess the NAFLD. Anthropometric measurement as body mass index (BMI), blood tests- total cholesterol (TC), HDL-cholesterol (HDLC), LDL-cholesterol (LDLC), triglycerides (TG), glucose (Glu) and HOMA-IR were taken from all patients. Every patient had abdominal CT in which we assessed NAFLD according to liver-spleen index.

Results: There were 38 patients with NAFLD (NAFLD group) and 38 patients without NAFLD (control group). There were statistically significant higher levels of the BMI ($p<0,001$), TC ($p=0,028$), non-HDLC ($p=0,001$), LDLC ($p=0,025$), Glu ($p<0,001$), HOMA-IR ($p<0,001$), TG ($p<0,001$) and lower level of the HDLC ($p=0,001$) in NAFLD group.

Conclusions: Patients even with asymptomatic NAFLD diagnosed in non-enhanced CT had increased TC, non-HDLC, LDLC, decreased HDLC levels increasing cardiovascular risk and elevated Glu, HOMA-IR and TG contributing to the development of the diabetes mellitus type 2. It is necessary to assess and reduce the cardiovascular and diabetes mellitus risk in clinically asymptomatic NAFLD patients.