STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING MACRO- AND MICROANGIOPATHIC COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES MELLITUS

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Abstract. *Diabetes mellitus is a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by sustained hyperglycemia due to insulin deficiency or resistance. Long-term hyperglycemia leads to vascular damage, resulting in both microangiopathic (retinopathy, nephropathy, neuropathy) and macroangiopathic (coronary artery disease, stroke, peripheral arterial disease) complications. These are the leading causes of disability and mortality among diabetic patients.*

This article explores modern strategies to prevent such complications, emphasizing glycemic control, blood pressure and lipid management, early screening, and lifestyle modification. A multidisciplinary and patient-centered approach is crucial to reduce the risk and burden of vascular complications in diabetes.

Key words: *Diabetes mellitus, macroangiopathy, microangiopathy, prevention, retinopathy, nephropathy, neuropathy, cardiovascular disease, glycemic control, hypertension, dyslipidemia.*

СТРАТЕГИИ ПРЕДУПРЕЖДЕНИЯ МАКРО- И МИКРОАНГИОПАТИЧЕСКИХ ОСЛОЖНЕНИЙ САХАРНОГО ДИАБЕТА

Аннотация. *Сахарный диабет — хроническое метаболическое расстройство, характеризующееся устойчивой гипергликемией из-за дефицита или резистентности инсулина. Длительная гипергликемия приводит к повреждению сосудов, что приводит как к микроангиопатическим (ретинопатия, нефропатия, нейропатия), так и макроангиопатическим (ишемическая болезнь сердца, инсульт, заболевание периферических артерий) осложнениям. Это основные причины инвалидности и смертности среди пациентов с диабетом. В этой статье рассматриваются современные стратегии предотвращения таких осложнений, подчеркивая гликемический контроль, управление артериальным давлением и липидным балансом, раннее обследование и изменение образа жизни. Многопрофильный и ориентированный на пациента подход имеет решающее значение для снижения риска и бремени сосудистых осложнений при диабете.*

Ключевые слова: *сахарный диабет, макроангиопатия, микроангиопатия, профилактика, ретинопатия, нефропатия, нейропатия, сердечно-сосудистые заболевания, гликемический контроль, гипертония, дислипидемия.*

Diabetes mellitus (DM) affects millions of people worldwide and poses significant public health challenges. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the global prevalence of diabetes reached over 537 million in 2023, with numbers expected to rise steadily in the coming decades. One of the most devastating outcomes of diabetes is vascular complications, which are primarily categorized into **microangiopathies** and **macroangiopathies**.

Microangiopathies involve small blood vessels and include:

- Diabetic retinopathy (eye),
- Diabetic nephropathy (kidney),
- Diabetic neuropathy (nerves).

Macroangiopathies involve large arteries and include:

- Coronary artery disease (heart),
- Cerebrovascular disease (brain/stroke),
- Peripheral artery disease (limbs).

These complications lead to blindness, kidney failure, amputations, heart attacks, and strokes. Therefore, early detection and effective prevention strategies are essential for improving outcomes and quality of life for patients with diabetes.

2. Microangiopathic Complications and Prevention

2.1 Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy results from damage to the retina's microvasculature. It progresses from non-proliferative to proliferative stages and may cause blindness if untreated.

Prevention strategies:

- Intensive glycemic control (HbA1c <7%)
- Annual dilated eye exams
- Use of anti-VEGF agents and laser therapy when indicated
- Blood pressure control (<130/80 mmHg)

2.2 Diabetic Nephropathy

This is a leading cause of chronic kidney disease and dialysis. Persistent albuminuria is an early marker.

Prevention strategies:

- Monitor urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio
- Use of ACE inhibitors or ARBs
- Blood pressure and glycemic control
- Limit dietary sodium and protein intake

2.3 Diabetic Neuropathy

Neuropathy leads to pain, numbness, and foot ulcers, often resulting in amputations.

Prevention strategies:

- Regular foot examination
- Glycemic control
- Lifestyle modifications: smoking cessation, physical activity
- Medications: alpha-lipoic acid, duloxetine, pregabalin

3. Macroangiopathic Complications and Prevention

3.1 Coronary Artery Disease

CAD is the leading cause of death among diabetic patients. It results from accelerated atherosclerosis.

Prevention strategies:

- LDL cholesterol control (<1.8 mmol/L for high-risk patients)
- Statin therapy
- Antiplatelet therapy (aspirin) in selected patients
- Physical activity and weight management

3.2 Stroke

Cerebrovascular accidents are more frequent in diabetics due to endothelial dysfunction and coexisting hypertension.

Prevention strategies:

- Maintain blood pressure <130/80 mmHg
- Control blood sugar and lipids
- Use of antithrombotic therapy in atrial fibrillation
- Smoking cessation and alcohol moderation

3.3 Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

PAD impairs blood flow to the lower limbs and increases the risk of foot ulcers and gangrene.

Prevention strategies:

- Routine foot care and education
- Ankle-brachial index (ABI) screening
- Antiplatelet and statin therapy
- Revascularization procedures when needed

4. Integrated Prevention Strategy

A holistic approach is crucial for preventing both macro- and microvascular complications.

Key elements include:

- **Glycemic control**: Maintain HbA1c <7%
- **Blood pressure control**: <130/80 mmHg
- **Lipid control**: Use statins, especially in patients over 40
- **Lifestyle**: Encourage a Mediterranean diet, regular exercise, smoking cessation
- **Patient education**: Empower patients to self-monitor and adhere to treatment
- **Regular screening**: Annual checks for eye, kidney, nerve, and cardiovascular function

5. Conclusion

Macro- and microvascular complications are the main contributors to disability and death in patients with diabetes mellitus. These complications are largely preventable through comprehensive, evidence-based interventions focused on metabolic control, lifestyle changes, and continuous medical follow-up. Patient-specific risk assessment and individualized care plans, supported by interdisciplinary teams, are essential to minimize long-term complications and enhance life expectancy in diabetic patients.

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