

UDK 37

ISSN 2545 - 4439
ISSN 1857 - 923X

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Institute of Knowledge Management

KNOWLEDGE



Scientific Papers

Vol. 31. 4.

MEDICAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH



KIJ

Vol. 31

No. 4

pp. 811 - 1198

Skopje 2019

Global Impact & Quality Factor 1.822 (2107) <http://globalimpactfactor.com/knowledge-international-journal/>

KNOWLEDGE – International Journal

Vol.31.4

June, 2019

KNOWLEDGE



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

**SCIENTIFIC PAPERS
VOL. 31.4**

*Promoted in Budva, Montenegro
June, 2019*



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Print: GRAFOPROM – Bitola

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KNOWLEDGE - International Journal Scientific Papers Vol. 31.4

ISSN 1857-923X (for e-version)

ISSN 2545 – 4439 (for printed version)

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CONTENTS

ETIOLOGY OF CIRCULAR CARIES	829
Olga Kokoceva-Ivanovska	829
Efka Zabokova-Bilbilovska	829
Mijoska Aneta.....	829
BIOCOMPATIBILITY AND REACTION OF DENTAL POLYMERS IN ORAL ENVIRONMENT .	835
Natasha Stavreva	835
Biljana Kapusevska	835
STUDY OF THE SIZE OF THE ANGLE OF THE MANDIBLE.....	841
Svetlana Jovevska.....	841
Mihajlo Petrovski	841
DENTAL SCANNERS IN PROSTHODONTICS	845
Blagoja Dashtevski	845
Aneta Mijoska.....	845
Marjan Petkov.....	845
Vanco Spirov	845
Oliver Dimitrovski.....	845
TEETH EXTRACTION WITH ROOT DELACERATION ON THE ORTHODONTIC INDICATIONS	
.....	853
Pavel Stanimirov.....	853
Greta Yordanova.....	853
DIFFERENCE IN CRANIOFACIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN ATTRACTIVE MALE AND FEMALE	
FACES	859
Sofija Carceva Shalja.....	859
Sandra Atanasova	859
Mihajlo Petrovski	859
ORAL TISSUE CONDITION IN PROSTHODONTIC GERIATRIC PATIENTS	865
Aneta Mijoska.....	865
Gordana Kovacevska	865
Georgi Tomov.....	865
INTRODUCTION TO ORTHODONTIC EDUCATION IN BULGARIA OF DIGITAL	
TECHNOLOGIES AND 3D ARCHIVING	869
Greta Yordanova.....	869
Martin Mladenov	869
INDICATIONS FOR MOLAR EXTRACTION DURING ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT.....	873
Sandra Atanasova	873
Sofija Carceva Salja.....	873
Ljubica Prosheva	873
COMPOSITE RESTORATIONS IN DENTISTRY.....	879
Aleksandar Andreevski.....	879
INFLUENCE OF GROWTH IN TREATED CLASS III GROWING PATIENTS WITH FACE MASK	
THERAPY AND UNTREATED PATIENTS.....	883
Sofija Carceva Shalja.....	883
Sandra Atanasova	883
POSITION OF THE MENTAL FORAMEN IN CORELATION WITH THE LOWER PREMOLARS: A	
PANORAMIC RADIOGRAPHIC STUDY	889
Mihajlo Petrovski	889
Svetlana Jovevska.....	889
Olivera Terzieva-Petrovska	889

PREVALENCE OF DENTAL CARIES IN CORRELATION WITH ORAL HYGIENE	895
Ivona Kovacevska.....	895
Natasha Longurova.....	895
Katerina Zlatanovska.....	895
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN ACCURATE EVALUATION OF NATURAL TOOTH COLOR	901
Julija Zarkova	901
Ivan Nacevski	901
Vesna Korunovska Stefkovska	901
FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY OF VOICE FUNCTION IN PATIENTS WITH LARYNGEAL DYSFUNCTION: OBSERVATIONAL STUDY	905
Galina Mratskova	905
Damyam Petrov	905
THE INFLUENCE OF HYPERPROLACTINEMIA ON THE LEVEL OF FSH AND LH IN WOMEN	911
Mire Spasov.....	911
Verica Spasova	911
ACREDITED MOLECULAR METHODS FOR DETECTION OF INFECTIONS CAUSED BY HIV, HEPATITIS B VIRUS AND HEPATITIS C VIRUS	917
Belinda Gelmanovska.....	917
Vaso Taleski	917
FLUORESCENT IN SITU HYBRIDIZATION AND IMMUNOHISTOCHEMISTRY FOR SUBTYPING “NON-CLASSIFIABLE” RENAL CELL CARCINOMAS	921
Atanas Ivanov	921
Vili Stoyanova	921
JEJUNAL ADENOCARCINOMA: A CASE REPORT	925
Gordana Bozhinovska Beaka.....	925
Biljana Prgova Veljanovska	925
Milka Zdravkovska.....	925
Irena Eftimovska Rogac	925
Nadica Bozhinovska	925
THE ROLE OF TUMOR MARKERS CA 125, CA 72-4 AND CA 19-9 IN DETECTION AND MONITORING OF THE COURSE OF DISEASE OF OVARIAN CARCINOMA AND CARCINOMA OF THE UTERINE BODY	931
Kristina Petkova	931
Venci Chalkov	931
SPLenic ABSCESS IN PATIENT WITH CHRONIC PANCREATITIS: A CASE REPORT	937
Gordana Bozhinovska Beaka.....	937
Biljana Noveska-Petrovska.....	937
Biljana Prgova Veljanovska	937
Nadica Bozhinovska	937
ROLE OF GOUT IN ATRIAL FIBRILLATION.....	943
Antoniya Kisheva	943
DEVELOPMENT ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF FETAL AUTOPSY SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	947
Tanya Kitova	947
BARRIERS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISEASE MANAGEMENT IN PEOPLE WITH DIABETES MELLITUS	953
Boryana Levterova	953

DYABETTE CONTROL PROGRAM AND PREVENTION OF THEIR CONDITIONS - PROPOSALS AND GUIDELINES	959
Varvara Pancheva.....	959
Valentin Vassilev.....	959
ALGORITHM OF COMPLEX PROGRAM FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION IN DEGENERATIVE DISEASES OF THE VERTEBRAL COLUMN IN THE CERVICAL AREA. PREVENTION OF CERVICAL ARTHROPATHY.....	963
Petya Kasnakova.....	963
THE DIAGNOSIS OF DAUCUS CAROTA AS ALERGOGEN ON THE IMMUNE SYSTEM IN WHITE LABORATORY RAT	969
Mire Spasov.....	969
Icko Gjorgoski.....	969
THE DIAGNOSIS OF PHLEUM PRATENSE AS ALERGOGEN ON THE IMMUNE SYSTEM IN WHITE LABORATORY RAT	975
Hristijan Spasov.....	975
Mire Spasov.....	975
Icko Gjorgoski.....	975
Majlinda Ademi.....	975
INCREASED MEASLES MORBIDITY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE RISKS OF REFUSING IMMUNIZATION FOR THIS DISEASE	981
Ivelina Dobрева.....	981
Pavlina Teneva.....	981
Tsvetana Bojkova.....	981
PERSPECTIVES IN HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN CHILDREN'S AND SCHOOL HEALTH.....	985
Monika Obreykova.....	985
Galina Terzieva.....	985
MYOPIA IN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND MOBILE PHONES	991
Aleksandar Dodevski.....	991
Strahil Gazepov.....	991
Biljana Dodevska.....	991
Alen Georgijev.....	991
VISUAL SCREENING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAPAREVA BANYA IN SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA.....	995
Slavena Stoykova.....	995
Ekaterina Petrova.....	995
WETTABILITY – ANOTHER PARAMETER FOR GOOD FITTING OF A SILICONE-HYDROGEL DAILY DISPOSABLE CONTACT LENS	1001
Nikola Peev.....	1001
SUCCESSFUL COGNITIVE AGING - COGNITIVE RESERVE AND NEUROPLASTICITY	1005
Antonia Yaneva.....	1005
Kristina Kilova.....	1005
Teodora Dimcheva.....	1005
THE ROLE OF ACUPUNCTURE IN THE REHABILITATION OF PARALYSIS OF N.FACIALIS	1009
Lence Nikolovska.....	1009
Stefanija Gjorgieva.....	1009
Mire Spasov.....	1009

NEED FOR TRAINING OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS FROM OUTPATIENT CARE FOR BURNS INJURIES	1013
Anushka Dimitrova.....	1013
CARE AND TREATMENT IN PATIENTS WITH HEPATITIS B IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRILEP	1019
Panova Gordana.....	1019
Boshevska Viktorija	1019
Liljana Simonovska	1019
Iva Paneva	1019
Lenche Nikolovska	1019
Mire Spasov	1019
Gjorgji Shumanov.....	1019
ACUTE VENLAFAXINE OVERDOSE WITH POSITIVE URINE IMMUNOASSAY FOR TRAMADOL – CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC OVERLAP - CASE REPORT AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW	1027
Pereska Zanina.....	1027
Janicevic-Ivanovska Danijela	1027
Bekjarovski Niko.....	1027
Simonovska Natasha.....	1027
Babulovska Aleksandra	1027
DRUG-INDUCED NEUTRALIZING ANTIBODIES TO TNF- α BLOCKES IN PATIENTS WITH INFLAMMATORY JOINT DISEASES FOLLOWED BY 24-MONTHS.....	1033
Krassimir Kraev.....	1033
Mariela Geneva-Popova	1033
Velichka Popova.....	1033
Stanislava Popova.....	1033
INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANTIBIOTICS AND THE ANTIBIOTIC RESIDENCE OF THE POPULATION FROM THE SOUTHEAST REGION OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA	1039
Milka Zdravkovska.....	1039
Marija Darkovska-Serafimovska	1039
Gordana Bozinovska-Beaka	1039
Svetlana Zivkova	1039
SIMPLE LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPHY METHOD WITH UV DETECTION FOR DETERMINATION OF BROMAZEPAM IN SOLID PHARMACEUTICAL DOSAGE FORMS	1045
Irena Brcina	1045
Marija Darkovska Serafimovska	1045
Tijana Serafimovska	1045
Trajan Balkanov	1045
Biljana Gjorgjeska.....	1045
CONSUMPTION ANALYSIS OF MOST PRESCRIBED ANTIBIOTICS FINANCED BY THE HEALTH INSURANCE FUND IN REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA	1051
Elena Drakalska.....	1051
Bistra Angelovska.....	1051
Veneta Zdravkova.....	1051
MICROBIOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS AND IMPORTANCE OF INFECTIONS CAUSED BY INFLENZAE – A VIRUS	1057
Zivadinka Cvetanovska	1057
Vaso Taleski	1057

POISONOUS SNAKES OF BULGARIA: CLINICAL AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS	1063
Olimpiada Atmazhova	1063
Evgenia Barzashka	1063
Iskra Petkova	1063
BODY FAT DISTRIBUTION AND LIPID PROFILE CHANGES AFTER WEIGHT LOSS – A CASE REPORT	1071
Slavica Shubeska Stratrova	1071
Danijela Janicevic Ivanovska	1071
FACTORS FOR OBESITY IN STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOLS	1077
Antoaneta Grozeva	1077
INFLUENCE OF SUNSHINE ON THE SERUM LEVELS OF VITAMIN D	1081
Ivelina Dobрева	1081
Pavlina Teneva	1081
Valya Trencheva.....	1081
GEOMEDICAL TOURISM – OUTDOOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ANTI-GEOPATHIC STRESS TREATMENT	1087
Krasimira Staneva.....	1087
APPLICATION OF BLASTWARE SOFTWARE FOR MEASURING MICROCOLIMIC CONDITIONS	1093
Naim Baftiu	1093
Raif Bytyqi	1093
Overall, the number of measurements	1096
Percentage	1096
APPLICATION OF BIOPRINTING IN CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE (REVIEW).....	1099
Desislava Bakova	1099
Kristina Kilova	1099
Maria Semerdjieva.....	1099
CBRN EVENT - DO WE NEED MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.....	1103
Elena Valkanova.....	1103
Rostislav Kostadinov.....	1103
ACUTE PANCREATITIS	1107
Redzep Emurlai	1107
PALLIATIVE CARE AND EUTHANASIA – CONVERGENCE POINTS AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES	1113
Nikola Sabev.....	1113
SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PATIENTS WITH TENSION HEADACHE IN MUNICIPALITY OF VELES	1119
Elena Manchevska.....	1119
Toshe Krstev.....	1119
Gordana Panova.....	1119
SEASONALITY IN THE APPEARANCE OF INTRA HOSPITAL INFECTIONS	1127
Emilija Chapevska.....	1127
PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE OF MENTORS DURING THE PRE-GRADUATION TRAINEESHIP OF FUTURE NURSES	1131
Snezhana Dragusheva.....	1131
Penka Petleshkova.....	1131
Tanya Paskaleva	1131

BODY FAT DISTRIBUTION AND LIPID PROFILE CHANGES AFTER WEIGHT LOSS – A CASE REPORT

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to discover the relationship between body fat distribution and lipid profile changes after weight loss. In this case report following subject's parameters were determined before and after weight loss of 12 kg: body mass index (BMI), body weight (BW), total, trunk and legs fat mass (FM) with dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) and their ratios legs/trunk and legs/total FM indexes of abdominal fat distribution. Lipid profile was also determined before and after weight loss: total cholesterol (TC), triglycerides (TG), HDL-C, LDL-C, LDL/HDL-C, TC/HDL-C. BW of 63 kg and BMI value of 28.74 kg/m² before the weight loss lowered to 51kg and 22.55 kg/m². The percentage difference between the change in BMI and BW was statistically not significant (p=0.782). Legs/total FM index value increase from 0.36 to 0.39 was significant (p<0.025). Legs/trunk FM index value increase from 0.67 to 0.76 was also significant (p<0.043). Legs, total and trunk FM had not significant reduction (p>0.05), but the percentage difference between their changes, during weight reduction was statistically significant (p=0.0001). TC, HDL-C, LDL-C, LDL/HDL-C, TC/HDL-C changes were also significant. The percentage difference between the change in BMI and BW to normal levels was statistically not significant, but the percentage difference between the changes in DXA indexes of visceral, abdominal obesity was significant and it was associated with significant reduction of atherogenic lipid profile indicating reduced atherogenic risk. These results confirmed that DXA measurements of abdominal fat distribution are very useful in studies related to obesity-associated disease risk.

Keywords: dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry, obesity, weight loss, lipids.

INTRODUCTION

The core abnormality of Metabolic Syndrome is the increased body weight, and particularly central, abdominal obesity as well as dyslipidemia. The TC/HDL-C ratio, known as the atherogenic or Castelli index and the LDL/HDL cholesterol ratio are two important components and indicators of cardiovascular risk, the predictive value of which is greater than the isolated parameters. Obesity and central body fat distribution are known risk factors for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. Android obesity, which is predominantly visceral, intra-abdominal, is more predictive of adipose-related comorbidities than gynecoid obesity, which has a relatively peripheral (gluteal) distribution. Excess abdominal fat is an important, independent risk factor for disease.

Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry enabled precise, accurate body composition and body fat distribution assessment and showed that BMI increase was associated with more pronounced abdominal obesity, indicating substantially higher risk for development of metabolic and cardiovascular complications of the hyperinsulinemic-dyslipidemic syndrome [1]. The assessment of abdominal fat accumulation especially in postmenopausal (postM) women is an important screening tool for the prevention of these health complications [2]. DXA measurements of fat distribution are very useful in studies related to obesity-associated disease risk. DXA is an excellent method to measure and monitor body composition changes in obese patients undergoing weight loss. DXA can precisely monitor how much fat was lost during weight loss. Some relationship ratios between central (android, abdominal) regional tissue and FM to peripheral gynoid regional parts of the body in patients with Cushing's syndrome (CS) were discovered as diagnostic criteria of visceral, abdominal obesity in patients with CS and non CS, and they are needed as diagnostic DXA indexes of central obesity [3,4]. DXA indexes of central, abdominal obesity legs/trunk FM and legs/total FM ratios discovered extreme central body fat distribution in CS, differentiated them significantly from healthy control women and obese with the same BMI, and are discovered DXA indexes of abdominal, central obesity that should be used as DXA indexes of extreme central (visceral, abdominal) obesity in CS and non CS obese women. They are indicators of abdominal obesity [4,5].

The aim of this case report was to investigate body composition and body fat distribution changes with DXA indexes of central, abdominal obesity, legs/trunk FM (L/Tr FM) and legs/total FM (L/To FM) as well as lipid values

and atherogenic indexes and their changes after weight loss with consequent normal BMI. It was important to discover weight loss influence on body fat distribution, lipid metabolism and atherogenic risk.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Author’s personal BMI and BW reduction were determined before and after weight loss of 12 kg as well as the changes of the DXA indexes of abdominal obesity L/To FM and legs/trunk L/Tr FM and lipid profile. Examined subject was postmenopausal (postMP).

Table1. BMI and BW values before and after weight loss, and percentage of their change

	Before weight lost	After weight lost	% of change	P
BMI (kg/m ²)	28.74	22.55	21.54	0.077
Body weight (kg)	63	51	19.05	0.067

The percentage difference between the change in BMI and BW, was statistically not significant
 Difference test: Difference 2,49% [(-13,41-21,90) CI 95%]; Chi-square=0,077; df=1 p=0,782.

Body height was measured by a wall stadiometer in barefoot subjects with head in a horizontal Frankfurt plane to the nearest 0.1 cm. BW was measured by a digital scale while wearing light clothing and it was estimated in kilograms (kg). BMI was calculated with the following formula: weight (kg)/height (m²). DXA assessment was performed with DXA System Lunar DPX-NT, which uses encore 10.x Windows-XP Professional OS computers. The entire body of the subject was scanned. During DXA scan, the subject was in a supine position while the x-ray scanner performed a series of transverse scans, measured at 1-cm intervals from the top of the head to the bottom of the toes. The DXA machine was calibrated daily in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines to ensure adequate quality control. The system enabled simultaneous assessment of total and regional body composition and body fat distribution. Total (To), trunk (Tr) as well as legs (L) fat mass were determined and their ratios L/Tr, L/To [4]. Total cholesterol (TC), triglycerides (TG), high density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C), low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C), LDL/HDL-C, TC/HDL-C were also determined.

Statistical analyses were performed using the statistical software program SPSS for Windows, version 19. Differences between the examined values before and after weight loss were tested by One-Sample T Test. P values <0.05 were considered to be statistically significant. Difference test, the percentage difference between the change of the examined values was determined with MedCalc statistical software.

RESULTS

Table 2. L/To, L and To FM before and after weight loss and percentage of their change

	Before weight lost	After weight lost	% of change	P
Legs/Total index	0.36	0.39	7.69	0.025
Legs FM (kg)	9.89	5.78	41.6	0.164
Total FM (kg)	27.89	14.96	46.33	0.186

The percentage difference between the change in L FM and To FM, was statistically significant.
 (Difference test: Difference 4,73% [(3,47-5,98) CI 95%]; Chi-square=53,981; df=1 p=0,0001) in favor of To FM.

Table 3. L/Tr index, L and Tr FM before and after weight loss and percentage of their change

	Before weight lost	After weight lost	% of change	P
Legs/Trunk index	0.67	0.76	11.84	0.043
Legs FM (kg)	9.89	5.78	41.6	0.164
Trunk FM (kg)	14.88	7.59	48.94	0.199

The percentage difference between the change in L FM and Tr FM, was statistically significant.
 (Difference test: Difference 7,34% [(6,08-8,59) CI 95%]; Chi-square=128,921; df=1 p=0,0001) in favor of Tr FM.

Table 4. Lipid levels before and after weight loss and percentage of their change

Fat mass	Before weight lost	After weight lost	% of change	P
Triglycerides	1.2	0.83	30.83	0.12
Total Cholesterol	6.5	5.65	13.08	0.044
HDL cholesterol	1.65	1.63	1.21	0.04
LDL cholesterol	4.3	3.61	16.05	0.05
LDL-C/HDL-C	2.61	2.21	15.32	0.05
TC/HDL-C	3.94	3.47	11.93	0.04

C- cholesterol; HDL - high density lipoprotein; LDL - low density lipoprotein

DISCUSSION

Obesity is a medical condition in which excess body fat has accumulated to an extent that it may have a negative effect on health [6]. Obese subjects have higher percentage of FM from the total body mass compared to non obese [7]. Central obesity can be an early warning sign of a condition called metabolic syndrome. People with metabolic syndrome have elevated blood pressure, high triglycerides, low levels of HDL cholesterol and insulin resistance. This combination of factors creates an especially high risk for stroke, coronary artery disease, cardiovascular disease-related mortality and type 2 diabetes. DXA measurements of fat distribution may be useful in studies related to obesity-associated disease risk [8]. Excess body fat in the abdominal region is referred to as android obesity, and it is associated with increased risk for cardiovascular disease. There is a growing evidence that intra-abdominal adipose tissue (IAAT), rather than total body fat, is a risk factor for metabolic conditions associated with obesity. For this reason the evaluation of IAAT is clinically important [9]. In a previous study, in 2011 Shubeska S. [1] discovered with DXA that BMI increase in healthy women was associated with a more pronounced abdominal fat distribution [8]. Because of that, effective methods for assessing visceral fat are important to investigate its role for the increased health risks in obesity [7]. There is an increased interest in the evaluation of various methods for assessment of body composition and fat distribution [10]. DXA body composition and fat distribution assessment may be useful in studies related to obesity-associated risks [11, 12].

Menopause is a high-risk time for weight gain. PostMP women have significantly more fat, a more central fat distribution, and less lean tissue mass than premenopausal (preMP) women [13]. Menopause-related central body fat accumulation potentially contributes to the increased incidence of disease observed in postMP, compared with preMP women [14, 15]. The subject of this case report is 60yr old postMP woman [1].

DXA is fast becoming the new "gold" standard" because it provides a higher degree of precision in only one measurement and has the ability to show exactly where fat is distributed throughout the body. It is very reliable and its results extremely repeatable; in addition, the method is safe and presents little burden to the subject. DXA method determines absolute (kg) and relative (%) total, bone, lean and fat body mass and separately their regional values on arms, legs, head and trunk (including ribs, pelvis, thoracic and lumbar spine). Body composition, including fat mass, body fat distribution and muscle mass, gradually change with aging, even if the body weight and BMI remain unchanged. LBM decreases significantly, while fat mass increases and is preferentially stored in abdominal tissues [16,17,18]. Trunk FM increase is a result of dominant android, abdominal FM increase indicating increased risk for metabolic complications [1]. Body fat distribution is simply determined with DXA by the relationship of the regional (segmental) fat compartments. The relationship of the predominantly central, android, abdominal FM and tissue mass (TM) and the gynoid (peripheral FM and TM) is an indicator of the central, abdominal obesity [3].

It was found that low weight, independent of menopausal status, leads to the typical gynoid pattern of fat distribution while excess weight and obesity result in an android pattern of distribution in pre- and postMP women [11]. By measuring body composition, a person's health status can be more accurately assessed and the effects of both dietary and physical activity programs better directed. Total body analysis with DXA is the ideal way for the serious athlete, the person monitoring or beginning a program of exercise or weight loss, or anyone curious or concerned about their health to receive a quick, painless, accurate and confidential assessment of their body's composition. Also, measurements of body composition and body fat distribution with DXA have provided a research tool to study the metabolic effects of aging, obesity, and various wasting conditions. Because a scale measures "body weight," which includes fat, muscles, bones and organs, it can't specifically tell how much fat had

been lost, and the only way to measure actual fat loss is to measure "body composition," not body weight in weight loss programs [19,20]. DXA can precisely monitor how much fat is lost during weight loss.

Changes in body composition during weight loss programs might have a significant effect on long-term results and sensitive DXA indexes of visceral central obesity are needed, because of lack of normal reference data, which is an issue that is currently being addressed.

CS patients are discovered gold standard of extreme central, visceral, abdominal body fat distribution. DXA indexes of central body fat distribution in Cushing's (CS) also could be used as a gold standard for abdominal obesity in non CS. They were discovered as diagnostic criterion of extreme central, visceral obesity in CS and obese controls (CO) with the same BMI as CS (non CS). Shubeska-Stratrova S. (2015), showed that the ratios of insignificantly different central and peripheral regional parts of the body, precisely differentiated the patients with CS and non CS obese, and confirmed central body fat distribution in CS [2,21]. In that study it was found that legs/trunk FM ratios differentiated CS and CO with very high significance ($p<0.001$) and discovered extreme central body fat distribution in CS. DXA indexes legs/trunk FM, legs/total FM ratios discovered extreme central body fat distribution in CS, differentiated them significantly from C and CO, and could be used as DXA indexes of extreme central, abdominal obesity in CS and non CS obese women. DXA indexes of central body fat distribution in CS also could be a gold standard and diagnostic criterion of extreme central, visceral fat distribution in different types of obesity (non CS). Cut-off points of the following indexes confirmed extreme central, abdominal obesity: legs/trunk FM lower than 0.65 and legs/total FM indexes lower than 0.36 [2, 3].

In this case report subject's L/Tr FM ratio value was 0.67, but after the weight loss of 12 kg it increased significantly to normal value of 0.76 ($p<0.048$). L/To FM ratio value of 0.36 before the weight loss, increased significantly to its normal value of 0.39 ($p<0.025$) after the weight loss. The percentage difference between the change in L FM and To FM, was statistically significant in favor of To FM. The percentage difference between the change in L FM and Tr FM, was statistically significant in favor of Tr FM. Significant higher percentage of trunk FM reduction (48.94%) compared to legs FM reduction (41.6%) showed significant higher reduction of intra-abdominal, android FM mass indicating reduced risk for metabolic complications. Significant difference of L/Tr and L/To FM indexes compared to its value after weight reduction confirmed lowering of the android fat mass and significantly reduced risk for metabolic complications. Significant increase in these indexes of central obesity after the weight loss confirmed reduction of abdominal obesity and normalized body fat distribution.

An increase in total cholesterol concentration, and specifically LDL cholesterol (an atherogenic lipid marker), and reduced HDL cholesterol concentration are correlated with numerous risk factors, including the components of the metabolic syndrome, and probably involve independent risk [22, 23, 24]. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol concentration has been the prime index of cardiovascular disease risk and the main target for therapy.

In an attempt to optimize the predictive capacity of the lipid profile, several lipoprotein ratios or "atherogenic indices" have been defined. These ratios can provide information on risk factors difficult to quantify by routine analyses and could be a better mirror of the metabolic and clinical interactions between lipid fractions. Total/high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and LDL/HDL cholesterol ratios are risk indicators with greater predictive value than isolated parameters used independently, particularly LDL. Total cholesterol/HDL ratio is considered a more sensitive and specific index of cardiovascular risk than total cholesterol [25, 26, 27, 28].

In this study lipid levels in the examined overweight subject also showed higher risk for development of metabolic complications. Higher LDL-C values reduced for 16.05% and total cholesterol reduced for 13.08% after the weight loss. LDL/HDL-C and TC/HDL-C significantly lowered after weight lost and BMI normalization. Atherogenic indexes reduced significantly, LDL/HDL-C ($p<0.05$) and TC/HDL-C ($p<0.04$). BMI and BW reduction to normal levels was associated with significant increase of indexes of central body fat distribution legs/total and legs/trunk FM to normal values as well as significant reduction of atherogenic lipid indexes indicating reduced atherogenic risk.

CONCLUSION

Legs/total and legs/trunk fat mass values before the weight loss confirmed abdominal obesity with dyslipidemic profile and higher cardiovascular risk in a DXA examined overweight subject. BMI, BW, legs/total and legs/trunk FM change to normal levels after the weight loss, confirmed reduced abdominal body fat distribution and consecutive normalized body composition and body fat distribution. This showed that body weight reduction in overweight subjects is important in order to improve body composition and minimize the cardiometabolic profile and risk. These results confirmed that DXA measurements of body composition and fat distribution are very useful in studies related to obesity-associated disease risk.

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