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TITLE

Increased liver fat and glycogen stores following high compared with low glycaemic index food: a randomized cross over study

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SHORT RUNNING TITLE

GI Diet Study

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242

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NAFLD – Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

NASH – Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis

GI – Glycaemic Index

LGI – Low Glycaemic Index

HGI – High Glycaemic Index

MRS – Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy

SPMIC – Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging Centre

IPAQ – International Physical Activity Questionnaire

COMA – Committee on Medical Aspect of Food Policy

QMC – Queen’s Medical Centre

VAS – Visual Analogue Scale (subjective appetite rating)

PRESS – Point Resolved Spectroscopy

GCV – Gastric Content Volume

AUC – Area Under Curve

iAUC – Incremental Area Under Curve

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

CV – Coefficient of Variance

NIHR – National Institute of Health Research

CLINICAL TRIALS REGISTRY NUMBER AND WEBSITE

This study was registered at clinicaltrials.gov, ID: NCT02482558.

1 **ABSTRACT**

2 **Aims**

3 To investigate the acute and longer term effects of low (LGI) v high (HGI) glycaemic index
4 diets on hepatic fat and glycogen accumulation and related blood measures in healthy
5 volunteers.

6 **Methods**

7 Eight healthy males (age=20.1±0.4y, BMI=23.0±0.9 kg/m²) attended a test day before and
8 after a 7-day macronutrient and energy matched HGI or LGI diet, followed by a minimum 4
9 week wash-out period, and then returning to repeat the intervention with the alternative diet.
10 During test days, participants consumed either a HGI or LGI test meal corresponding to their
11 diet week, and liver fat (¹H MRS), glycogen (¹³C MRS) and gastric content volume (MRI)
12 were measured. Blood samples were obtained regularly throughout the test day for plasma
13 glucose and insulin.

14 **Results**

15 Plasma glucose and insulin peak values and AUC were significantly greater following the
16 HGI test meal compared with LGI test meal as expected. Hepatic glycogen concentrations
17 increased more following the HGI test meal ($P < 0.05$) and peak levels were significantly
18 greater after 7 days of HGI dietary intervention compared to that at the beginning of the
19 intervention ($P < 0.05$). Liver Fat fractions increased significantly following the HGI dietary
20 intervention compared with the LGI dietary intervention (two way repeat measures ANOVA,
21 $P \leq 0.05$).

22 **Conclusions**

23 Compared to an LGI diet, a one week HGI diet increased hepatic fat and glycogen stores.

24 This may have important clinical relevance for dietary interventions in the prevention and

25 management of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

26

27 INTRODUCTION

28 Shifts in eating patterns and dietary compositions are believed to be a major contributing
29 factor to the recent rise in obesity and obesity related problems [1, 2]. Type II diabetes, for
30 example, has been thought to be a disease of ectopic fat and the development of non-
31 alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) as well as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) have
32 been considered as key steps in its pathogenesis [3]. Changes in the amount of food
33 consumed and total energy intake influences long-term energy stores such as adipose tissue
34 and intrahepatic triglycerides, but the specific influence of individual macronutrients on
35 ectopic fat in general and accumulation of liver fat in particular are not established.

36 Recently, glycaemic index has been considered as a potentially important factor influencing
37 these conditions, and low glycaemic index (LGI) dietary interventions have been shown to be
38 effective in lowering total fat mass and increasing lipid utilisation in patient studies [4, 5].
39 LGI foods have also been linked to more rapid recovery from previous training sessions [6]
40 and improved satiety with less hunger between meals [7]. Whilst these findings are promising
41 with potential clinical relevance, work is needed to investigate a wide range of factors
42 effecting metabolic disorders. This includes both forms of energy storage in the liver, in the
43 longer term as fats, and in the shorter term as glycogen. Gastric emptying also impacts the
44 delivery of foods to the small intestines for absorption of nutrients into the blood stream and
45 previous studies have shown meal timing, volume and fibre content can affect the
46 postprandial response [8, 9].

47 Magnetic resonance techniques offer a unique method of investigating some of these
48 parameters. ^1H MRS measurements of liver fat have been validated and used in many
49 previous studies [10-12] and ^{13}C MRS measurements of glycogen have also been well
50 validated [13, 14] and provides the only non-invasive measure of hepatic glycogen stores *in*

51 *vivo*. Fast imaging techniques can also be used to monitor gastric emptying [15, 16]. These
52 magnetic resonance measures can be obtained alongside blood samples to provide a broader
53 picture of metabolic response.

54 Previous studies have focussed on the acute postprandial changes alone, and as such less is
55 known about the longer term effect of well controlled diets with varying glycaemic index.

56 The aim of this study was to investigate both the immediate and cumulative effects of varying
57 glycaemic index on liver metabolic control in healthy volunteers by monitoring hepatic
58 glycogen and lipid levels *in vivo* with MRS [14, 17]. Secondary outcomes were related
59 changes in gastric content volume, blood glucose and insulin and subjective appetite scores.

60 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

61 *Study Design.* Eight male participants underwent two 7-day diet periods separated by a
62 minimum four-week washout in a randomized cross-over study. The day before (visit 1) and
63 the day after (visit 2) each diet period, participants attended the Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging
64 Centre (SPMIC) in Nottingham for a test day. Ethical permission was obtained from the
65 University of Nottingham Medical School Research Ethics Committee and all participants
66 provided informed written consent before participation.

67 *Eligibility.* Participants were screened for eligibility (male, aged between 18 and 35 years old,
68 with a BMI between 20 and 25 kg/m² and no contraindications for MRI). Participants were
69 excluded if they were on any special diets, weight loss programs or strict physical training
70 routine (defined as > 5 hours of intense training per week); if they were heavy drinkers (more
71 than 3 units a day) or smokers; or if they had any metabolic disorders or liver disease.

72 Participants were block randomized to determine the initial intervention (HGI or LGI).

73 *Demographics.* Mean age of participants was 20.1 ± 0.4 years with a mean BMI of 23.0 ± 0.9
74 kg/m^2 . The mean weight of participants at the start of visit 1 was 73 ± 3 kg and at the start of
75 visit 2 was 73 ± 3 kg.

76 *Test Day.* Prior to the test days the participants were asked to refrain from alcohol and to
77 consume the same evening meal by 9:00 pm the night before visit 1 of both diets. At the end
78 of each dietary period the final meal was consumed before 9:00pm on the evening before
79 visit 2. On the morning of each test day participants arrived fasted at the MR centre between
80 7:30am and 8:00am, and were weighed. After fasted measurements, participants were given
81 either a high glycaemic index (HGI) or LGI test meal for breakfast (supplementary table 1)
82 depending on their diet week, which was to be consumed within 10 minutes followed by
83 regular measurements for 360 mins.

84 At the start of the day, participants were cannulated in the forearm and samples were taken at
85 regular intervals throughout the day. Samples were centrifuged, frozen and stored at -80°C
86 for analysis of plasma glucose and insulin (detailed methods in supplementary material).

87 All MR measurements were acquired using a Philips Achieva 3T system (Philips, Best, The
88 Netherlands).

89 ^{13}C MRS measurements of glycogen were detected with an adiabatic half passage pulse-
90 acquire sequence (MRS bandwidth = 7 kHz, TR = 959 ms). Spectra were acquired using a
91 single loop carbon coil with proton decoupling (Pulseteq, Surrey, UK) as described
92 previously [15, 18, 19] (more details in supplementary material). Measurements were taken at
93 start of day (fasted) and hourly following the test meal.

94 ^1H MRS measurements of liver fat were detected with a respiratory triggered point resolved
95 spectroscopy (PRESS) sequence (Bandwidth = 2 kHz; TR = 5 s) with varying TE (40, 50, 60

96 and 80 ms). Spectra were acquired using a 32 channel Philips XL SENSE torso coil from a
97 $30 \times 30 \times 30 \text{ mm}^3$ voxel in the lower right hepatic lobe, with and without water suppression. T2
98 was determined and used to correct fat-to-water ratios to determine liver fat fractions [10, 20]
99 at start of day (fasted) and 360 mins after test meal (more detail in supplementary material).

100 MR Images were also acquired throughout the test day and regions of interest were drawn
101 around the content of the stomach using Analyze9 (Mayo Foundation, Rochester, MN, USA)
102 and summed across slices to determine Gastric Content Volume (GCV) as described
103 previously [15, 16]. GCV was therefore a combined measure of both ingested food and
104 stomach secretion.

105 Visual analogue scales (VAS) were completed at the same time as blood sampling to assess
106 subjective appetite ratings using five mixed appetite questions [21-23]. On day 1 (start of
107 diet), day 4 (middle of diet) and day 7 (end of diet) participants also filled out subjective
108 appetite ratings. The VAS methods and results are reported in the supplementary material.

109 *Diet Week.* Following the test day, participants undertook a 7 day HGI or LGI diet before
110 visit 2, and returned again after a >4 week washout for the alternate diet. During the diet
111 week participants were provided with all the food required as adapted from Morgan et al [24]
112 shown in supplementary table 2. All food was purchased from a single supplier and given
113 directly to participants. They were also given a booklet describing the quantities of each meal
114 to be consumed, along with scales and a measuring jug to measure out the required
115 ingredients for each meal. Participants recorded whether they consumed the full meal, and if
116 not how much was remained.

117 Prior to the study, participants completed the international physical activity questionnaire
118 (IPAQ) and their basal metabolic rate was calculated using the Henry modified Schofield
119 formula [25, 26]. This was used to scale the amount of food consumed during diet weeks to

120 match expected energy expenditure and provide over all energy balance (no weight loss or
121 weight gain). The energy intake and macronutrient content was matched for the HGI and
122 LGI diets (71% carbohydrate, 14% protein, 14% fat per day). Whilst this level of
123 carbohydrate is greater and level of fat is lower than national standards, these proportions
124 were based on previous well defined HGI v LGI intervention in healthy volunteers that show
125 clear glycaemic differences [24], and the diet was deemed suitable for this preliminary proof
126 of concept study exploring carbohydrate glycaemic index. As would be expected and is
127 usually the case, the fibre content was greater during LGI compared with HGI (Fibre: ~22
128 g/day for HGI and ~42 g/day for LGI) [24] and therefore the term LGI denotes a high-fibre
129 low glycaemic index diet and HGI denotes a lower-fibre high glycaemic index diet.

130 *Sample size.* The exploratory nature of this study with few related publications made sample
131 size calculations difficult. However, estimates of effect size were made based on previous
132 studies and used to determine an appropriate sample size using G*power 3.1.5 [27]. An *a*
133 *priori* two way repeated measures F-test (ANOVA) will find a significance interaction with a
134 power of 0.8 given an effect variance (HGI – LGI) of 2.1% and a within group variance of
135 2.9% in a sample size of 6 subjects (effect size = 0.84). These variances were based on liver
136 fat changes observed in a previous study [28] assuming changes only observed on HGI diet.
137 There are a number of important differences in the present study, such as increased
138 carbohydrate proportion and iso-energetic intervention, and as such the sample size was
139 increased to 8 subjects. This sample size would also calculate a significant change of 15%
140 hepatic glycogen using a matched pair student's t-test given variability observed in previous
141 studies [13]

142 *Blinding.* On completion of all data acquisition, results were blinded by an uninvolved
143 colleague and analysed by the first author. Although the first author was present during scan
144 sessions, spectroscopy data were not viewed in real time and only assessed after blinding.

145 Blood samples were analysed by uninvolved colleagues and so were not blinded. Following
146 initial analysis a blind review meeting was held before data were unblinded. Deviations from
147 protocol were discussed and data assessed for statistical relevance on a *per* protocol basis.

148 *Data Analysis.* Methods of analysis are described in more detail in the supplementary
149 material. Values were calculated for individual time points and hepatic glycogen values were
150 also calculated as percentage baseline. The total area under curve (AUC) across the test visit
151 was also calculated for glucose, insulin and glycogen. In addition, the glycaemic index was
152 calculated using the area above baseline (incremental AUC, iAUC) from t=0 to t=120minutes
153 from plasma glucose results. Homeostasis model assessment of insulin resistance (HOMA-
154 IR) was also calculated from fasted glucose and insulin values using $(GLUCOSE \times$
155 $INSULIN)/ 22.5$.

156 *Statistical Analysis.* Results are reported as mean with standard error, and mean difference
157 with standard deviation. Parametric testing was performed assuming normal distributions of
158 lipid and glycogen in tissue, as well as postprandial hepatic glycogen and glucose response,
159 which is reasonable given the restrictive selection criteria (healthy, male, sedentary, non-
160 smokers etc.).

161 To assess differences in the acute response between test meals, Postprandial peaks, AUCs
162 and iAUCs following test meals (HGI v LGI) on visit 1 (prior to diet) were compared using a
163 matched pair Student's t test. Measurements taken across the time course on this visit were
164 also assessed using a two way repeated measures ANOVA and used to evaluate any
165 significant main effect of diet (LGI v HGI) or time of day (across the test day) and/or any
166 significant interaction between diet and time of day.

167 To assess longer term effects of the dietary intervention, differences in fasted values at each
168 visit were compared using a two way repeated measures ANOVA. Changes across the time

169 course between visit 2 and visit 1 in LGI and HGI diet arms independently were also assessed
170 using a two way repeated measures ANOVA to evaluate any significant main effect of visit
171 (visit 1 v visit 2) or time of day (across the test day) and/or any significant interaction
172 between visit and time of day.

173 All significant main effects were followed up by pairwise comparisons using a matched pair
174 two-tail Student's t test and significant interactions were followed up by pairwise
175 comparisons of change from baseline values.

176 A Bonferroni adjustment was applied for multiple comparisons. In all cases significance was
177 attributed to $P < 0.05$. The statistical package used for analysis was SPSS version 21 for
178 Windows (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL).

179 **RESULTS**

180 *Participant recruitment and Flow.* The first test day was 13th May 2013 and the final test day
181 was on 08th October 2013. One participant dropped out early, and as such his data were
182 removed from analysis and one subject failed to complete the LGI diet week and so his visit 2
183 data was excluded. For primary outcomes, this gave a sample size of $n = 8$ for visit 1 HGI v
184 LGI comparisons and $n = 7$ for visit 1 v visit 2 comparisons. Other difficulties arose for
185 secondary outcomes, such as failure to cannulate, and as such the sample size for each
186 analysis varies as follows - glucose: $n=5$; insulin: $n=6$.

187 *Compliance.* Participants reported good compliance across the diet week (beside the one
188 exception mentioned above). According to the returned volunteer's booklets, 98 ± 2 % of
189 meals were consumed during the HGI diet and 97 ± 3 % during the LGI diet (reported energy
190 intake was 100 ± 0 % as provided for HGI and 99 ± 1 % for LGI).

191 *Fasted Values on visit 1 (prior to diet).* HOMA-IR values were similar prior to both diets
192 ($\text{HOMA-IR}_{\text{HGI}} = 1.91 \pm 0.12$, $\text{HOMA-IR}_{\text{LGI}} = 1.78 \pm 0.05$). Fasted liver fat fractions (FF%)

193 and fasted hepatic glycogen (GLYC) levels were also similar prior to both diets ($FF_{HGI}\% = 1.5$
194 $\pm 0.6\%$ and $FF_{LGI}\% = 1.5 \pm 0.5\%$, $P = 0.98$; $GLYC_{HGI} = 306 \pm 37$ mmol/l and $GLYC_{LGI} =$
195 290 ± 32 mmol/l, $P = 0.67$) indicating a successful washout period.

196 *Glycaemic and insulinaemic response of diets.* Acute changes in plasma glucose and insulin
197 in response to HGI and LGI test meals on visit 1 (prior to diet) are shown in **figure 1a-b**.
198 Plasma glucose rose significantly more following HGI compared with LGI test meal ($P <$
199 0.01). Postprandial insulin AUC was significantly more following the HGI compared with the
200 LGI test meal ($INSULIN_{HGI} - INSULIN_{LGI} = 19 \pm 3$ IU/l h, $P < 0.05$). There was no
201 significant change in HOMA-IR on visit 2 v visit 1 for either diet ($\Delta HOMA-IR_{HGI} = 0.42 \pm$
202 0.93 ; $\Delta HOMA-IR_{LGI} = 0.13 \pm 0.43$) and there were no significant differences in the glucose
203 and insulin response to the test meal between visit 1 and visit 2.

204 *Study Outcomes*

205 **Effect of dietary intervention on liver fat fraction.** There was a significant interaction
206 between diet and visit for fasted liver fat fractions ($P \leq 0.05$) with mean values increasing
207 following the HGI dietary intervention and decreasing following the LGI dietary intervention
208 ($\Delta FF_{HGI}\% = 1.3 \pm 2.0\%$ and $\Delta FF_{LGI}\% = -0.4 \pm 0.7\%$). In the LGI arm, the main effect of
209 diet on liver fat fraction was significant, and a subsequent pairwise comparison showed a
210 significant reduction in liver lipids at $t = 360$ minutes on visit 2 compared with visit 1
211 ($FF_{LGI}\% \text{ Visit 2} - \text{Visit 1} = 0.4 \pm 0.1$, $P \leq 0.001$) as shown in **figure 2**.

212 **Acute effect of test meal on hepatic glycogen.** The main effect of test meal on postprandial
213 glycogen concentration was significant on visit 1 (prior to diet), with values increasing from
214 fasted concentrations for the first 180 minutes and then beginning to decline until the end of
215 the test day, as shown in **figure 3a** ($P \leq 0.01$). In contrast, following the HGI test meal,
216 hepatic glycogen concentrations increased from fasted levels throughout all of the visit, but

217 the main effect of test meal on glycogen concentration did not reach significance due to
218 increased inter-subject variability. The coefficient of variation (CV) post consumption was
219 significantly greater during the HGI visit compared with LGI ($CV_{HGI} = 48\%$; $CV_{LGI} = 20\%$; p
220 ≤ 0.001). There was no significant interaction between test meal and time of day

221 **Longer term effect of dietary intervention on hepatic glycogen.** **Figure 3b** shows the
222 postprandial changes in hepatic glycogen on visit 2. There was no significant increase
223 following either test meal, and no significant change from visit 1 to visit 2. **Figure 3 d, e and**
224 **f** shows changes in hepatic glycogen at fasted, postprandial peak and AUC between visit 2
225 and visit 1 for HGI and LGI diets. There was no significant change in fasted glycogen stores
226 between visit 1 and visit 2 (**figure 3c**), but the main effect of diet on peak glycogen
227 concentration was significant ($P \leq 0.05$) with mean HGI values greater than LGI (**figure 3d**).
228 A subsequent pairwise comparison showed HGI peak glycogen concentration on visit 2 was
229 significantly greater than visit 1 ($P = 0.04$). The effect sizes of LGI diet on fasted glycogen
230 and peak glycogen values were small (0.06 and 0.38 respectively), whereas the effect sizes of
231 HGI diet on fasted glycogen and peak glycogen values were moderate to large (0.67 and 1.15
232 respectively). The main effect of diet on hepatic glycogen AUC was also significant, with
233 mean HGI AUC greater than mean LGI AUC ($P < 0.02$) as shown in **figure 3e**.

234 **Acute effect of test meal on GCV.** The main effect of test meal on GCV on visit 1 (prior to
235 diet) was significant (**figure 4**) and a subsequent pairwise comparison showed GCV_{LGI} was
236 significantly greater than GCV_{HGI} at $t = 20$ minutes (difference = 116 ± 23 ml, $P \leq 0.001$).

237 **Longer term effects of dietary intervention on GCV.** Visit 1 and visit 2 GCVs are shown
238 on **figure 4**. In the HGI arm, the main effect of diet on GCV was significant ($P < 0.03$) and a
239 subsequent pairwise comparison showed gastric content values were significantly greater on
240 HGI visit 2 compared with HGI visit 1 at $t = 20$ minutes ($P \leq 0.05$), 140 minutes ($P \leq 0.05$)

241 and 200 minutes ($P < 0.05$). In the LGI arm the main effect of diet on GCV was not
242 significant. There was also no significant interaction between diet and visit.

243 **DISCUSSION**

244 *Glycaemic Response.* The immediate glycaemic responses were as expected and blood
245 glucose levels were in strong agreement with Morgan *et al* [24] confirming a variation in
246 glycaemic index as intended. Plasma insulin responses were also as expected [29], with
247 greater plasma glucose levels prompting increased insulin secretion. There was no change in
248 fasting insulin resistance following the diet week (HOMA-IR) which is not surprising given
249 the short intervention period. Changes in liver fat are expected to precede insulin resistance,
250 and future studies should explore the longer term impact of HGI and LGI diets on insulin
251 sensitivity.

252 *Liver Fat Fraction.* Results from ^1H MRS were striking and of high clinical relevance.
253 Hepatic fat fractions increased after 1 week of HGI diet and decreased after LGI, suggesting
254 that reducing dietary glycaemic index has the potential of providing long term health benefits
255 in the prevention and management of NAFLD, obesity and type II diabetes.

256 Previous HGI v LGI dietary intervention studies have not controlled for macronutrient
257 content or total energy intake and energy balance; as such the present study provides new
258 evidence that glycaemic index and/or fibre content plays an important role in ectopic fat
259 deposition independent of nutritional composition. In a recent cross sectional analysis,
260 Valtuena *et al* reported a strong correlation between steatosis grading and dietary glycaemic
261 index specifically [30]. Whilst the smaller sample size of the present study limits its direct
262 applicability to the general population, it does provide preliminary data that supports the
263 findings of this previous study [30] and suggests that glycaemic index is indeed associated
264 with liver lipid storage even under iso-energetic conditions.

265 A recent 4 way trial comparing glycaemic index (High v Low) and carbohydrate content
266 (65% v 50%) during a period of weight gain found significant increases in liver fat following
267 a high carbohydrate diet but no association with glycaemic index [31]. However, in this study
268 the refeeding phase included excess energy, whereas the present study used a dietary
269 intervention that provided no energy surplus or deficit in participants and also had a greater
270 proportion of carbohydrates. Further studies should explore if the significant effects of
271 glycaemic index found in the present study are driven by the increased carbohydrate
272 consumption and how this relates to excess energy intake. These results indicate the potential
273 importance of type of carbohydrate consumed in the prevention of metabolic disorders, for
274 example in the pre-diabetic population. Whilst excess energy intake will provide the most
275 significant contribution to fat deposition and metabolic dysfunction [32], glycaemic index
276 should also be seen as relevant.

277 *Glycogen.* As far as the authors are aware, this study showed for the first time increased
278 hepatic glycogen storage following a HGI breakfast compared with an iso-energetic LGI
279 breakfast. During the visit prior to the diet, the increase in mean absolute glycogen levels
280 following the HGI test meal accounted for 25% of the ingested intake of carbohydrates, in
281 strong agreement with the literature [33, 34]. In contrast to this, the peak LGI hepatic
282 glycogen response was lower and declined from 180 minutes. Similar findings have been
283 reported in muscle in a number of studies [35, 36] in which HGI test meals prompted a
284 greater storage of muscle glycogen. This relationship may be due to increased insulin levels
285 driving an increased rate of glycogenesis and these effects may differ in patient populations,
286 such as people with insulin resistance or obesity. ¹³C MRS provides a powerful non-invasive
287 method for monitoring these effects in future studies and provides useful insight into
288 metabolic diseases. Related to this finding was the observation of increased peak glycogen
289 levels on the visit following the 7-day diet, which was only significant after the HGI

290 intervention, although this may be due to the larger proportion of carbohydrates in the dietary
291 intervention consumed compared with the standard UK diet. Whilst previous studies have
292 shown longitudinal glycogen MRS measurements have considerable variability [20], there
293 was a large effect size in fasted and peak measures following the HGI diet. This may be
294 accounted for by the increased postprandial glycogen levels from the evening HGI meal
295 before visit 2. Greater glycogen stores at the start of the day would seem beneficial to
296 individuals who need a sustained postprandial energy release, for example athletes or other
297 physically active individuals, but have the potential to be broken down through
298 glycogenolysis and enter lipogenesis for longer term energy stores in more sedentary
299 individuals. The significantly greater CV following the HGI compared with LGI test meal
300 also indicates a more variable glycogen response to high glycaemic index food in healthy
301 individuals and may be relevant to the prevention or treatment of patients with glycogen
302 storage disease.

303 *Gastric Contents Volume.* The present study also showed evidence of changes in postprandial
304 GCV following the diet week, though could be due to either changes in gastric emptying or
305 gastric secretion which were not distinguished here. During the visit prior to the diet week,
306 gastric content was greater for LGI compared with HGI despite meal volumes being matched,
307 which may be a result of slowed gastric emptying during LGI due to increased fibre content
308 [9]. However, during visit 2 this was reversed and gastric content was significantly smaller for
309 LGI visit 2 compared with LGI visit 1. Further work is needed to establish whether these
310 changes are an adaptive effect of the dietary interventions.

311 There were a number of limitations with this study. First, the study group was small; given the
312 multifactorial nature of the study, it would have been preferable to have allowed more for non-
313 compliance and cannulation difficulties while calculating sample size. Whilst eight participants
314 could be analysed for the proposed primary outcomes, problems with blood samples and

315 incomplete response to survey limited our ability to assess some of the secondary outcomes.
316 Secondly, it was difficult to account for the effect of the variation in fibre content between diets
317 and this cannot be ruled out as a factor independent of glycaemic index that influenced some
318 of the outcomes. In addition, obtaining information about eating habits of participants prior to
319 entry into the study would allow the investigators to more directly compare changes seen in
320 both diets rather than our assumption that intake reflected average UK dietary intakes. This
321 could also be used to exclude those with unusual eating habits or to normalize intake in a pre-
322 diet period. Thirdly, we recruited young healthy Caucasian males with the intention to limit
323 metabolic and hormonal variability and to improve statistical power given a small sample size.
324 However, this limits the generalisability of our findings and further work should explore if the
325 results can be extrapolated to a wider population.

326 In conclusion, this study provides preliminary data that suggest that iso-energetic HGI diets
327 compared with LGI diets lead to significant accumulations of liver fat without changes in
328 body weight. Therefore, low glycaemic index high fibre foods offer significant health
329 benefits in reducing liver fat fractions compared with high glycaemic index foods, and should
330 be considered in dietary interventions in NAFLD, obesity and related metabolic disorders.
331 Future studies should explore the impact of glycaemic index over a longer period, and also in
332 patients with obesity or metabolic syndromes to assess whether the findings of this study can
333 be used in the prevention and management of these conditions.

334

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. (a) Plasma glucose (n=5) and (b) plasma insulin (n = 6) results on visit 1 for high (▲) and low (●) glycaemic index test days; Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. *P < 0.05 between diets, † P < 0.005 between diets using matched pair Student's t-test.

Figure 2. Liver fat fractions at fasted state and end of day (t = 360 minutes) on visit 1 and visit 2 for HGI (■) and LGI (□) dietary interventions (n=7). Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. * P < 0.05 between diets using a two way repeat measures ANOVA; ‡ P < 0.05 FF% at t = 360 min on visit 2 compared with visit 1 using matched pair Student's t-test.

Figure 3. Hepatic glycogen concentration (% baseline) across the time course on (a) visit 1 (n=8) and (b) visit 2 (n=7) for HGI (visit 1 =▲, visit 2 =△) and LGI (visit 1 = ■, visit 2 = □) test days; (c), (d) and (e) are fasted, postprandial peak and AUC respectively (n=7). Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. * P ≤ 0.05 between visits using matched pair Student's t-test, † P ≤ 0.05 significant mains effect of diet using two way repeat measures ANOVA.

Figure 4. Gastric contents volume across the time course on visit 1 and visit 2 for HGI (visit 1 =▲, visit 2 = △) and LGI (visit 1 = ●, visit 2 = ○) test days; x and y-axis are scaled equally for both visits and grid lines are included to compare absolute values. † P ≤ 0.001 between diets using matched pair Student's t-test \$ P < 0.05 between visit 1 and visit 2 HGI using matched pair Student's t-test.

FIGURES

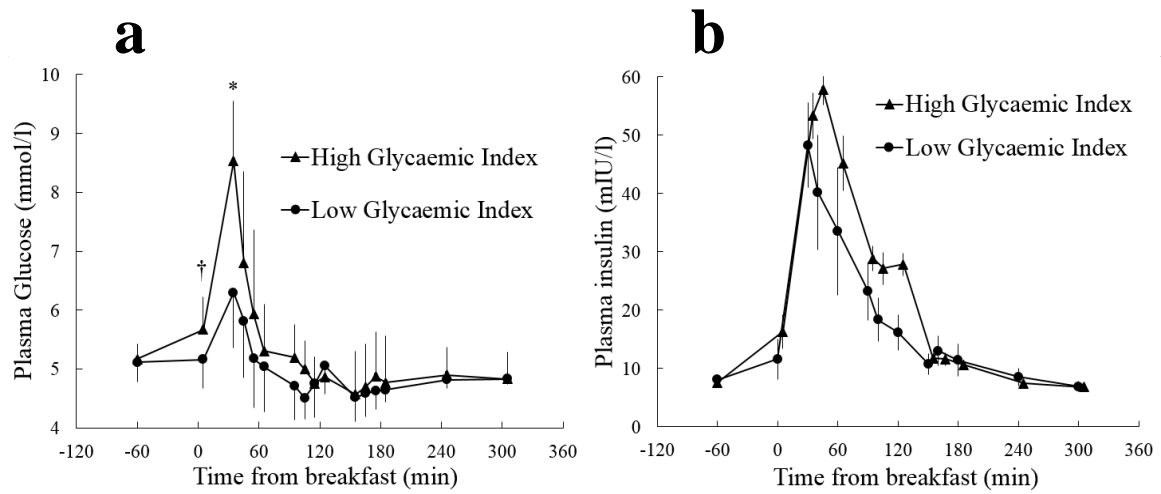


Figure 1

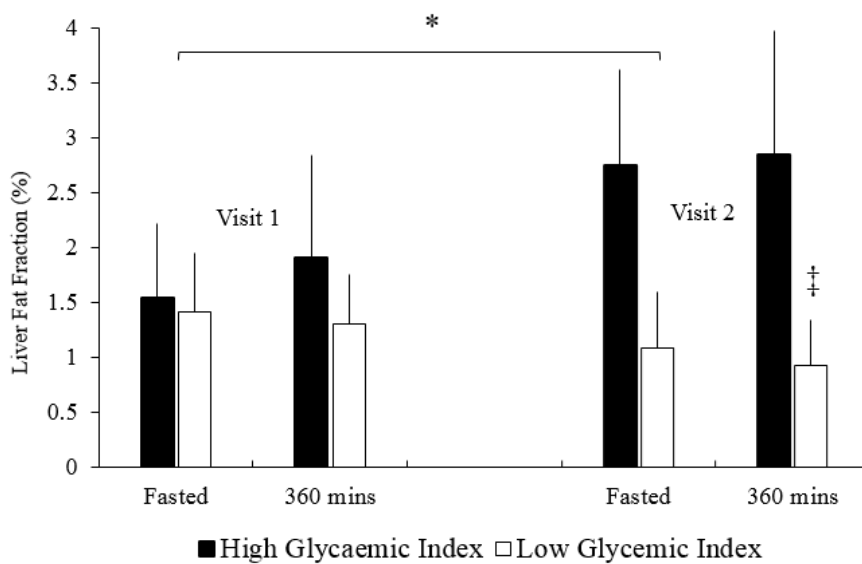


Figure 2

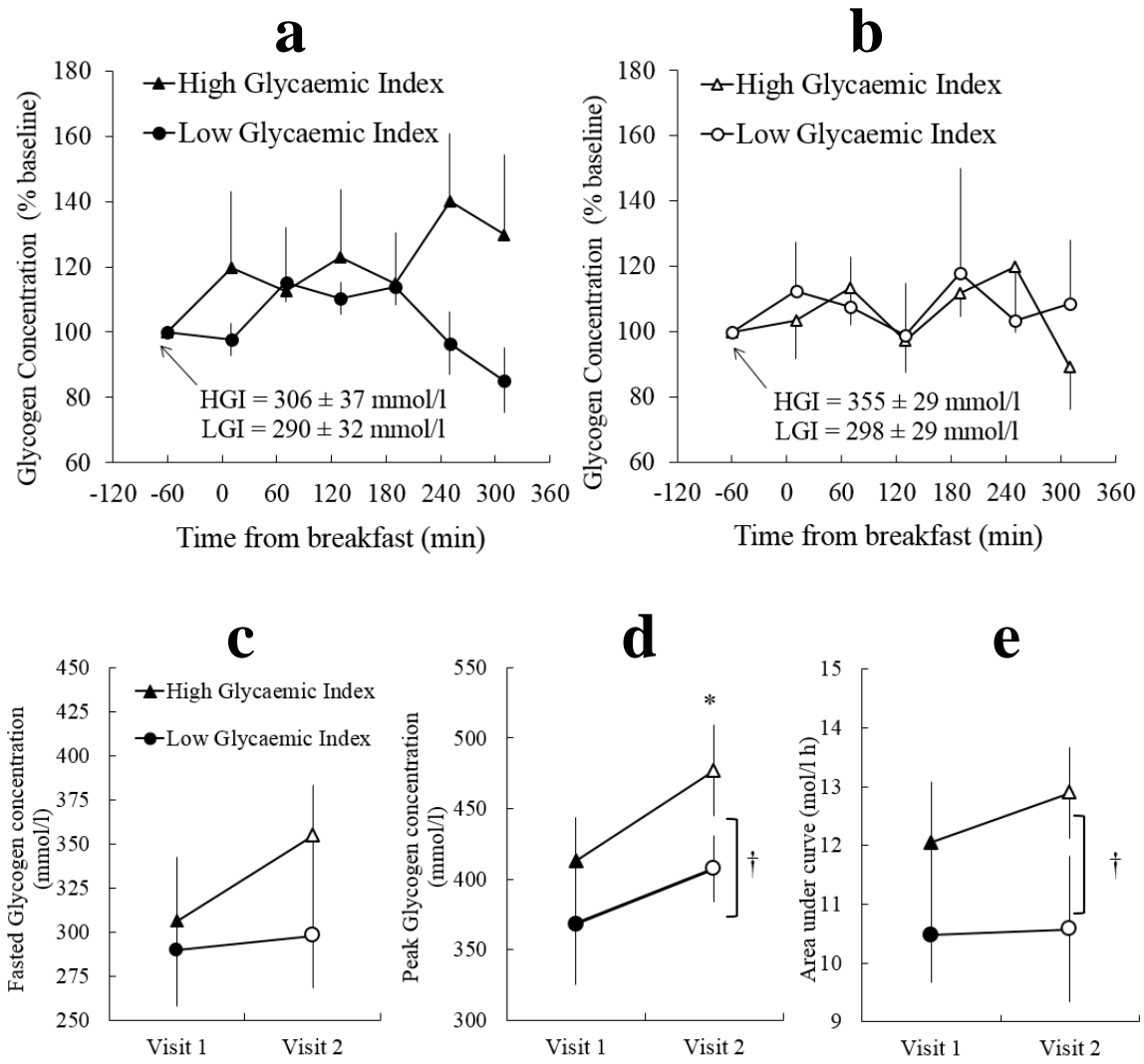


Figure 3

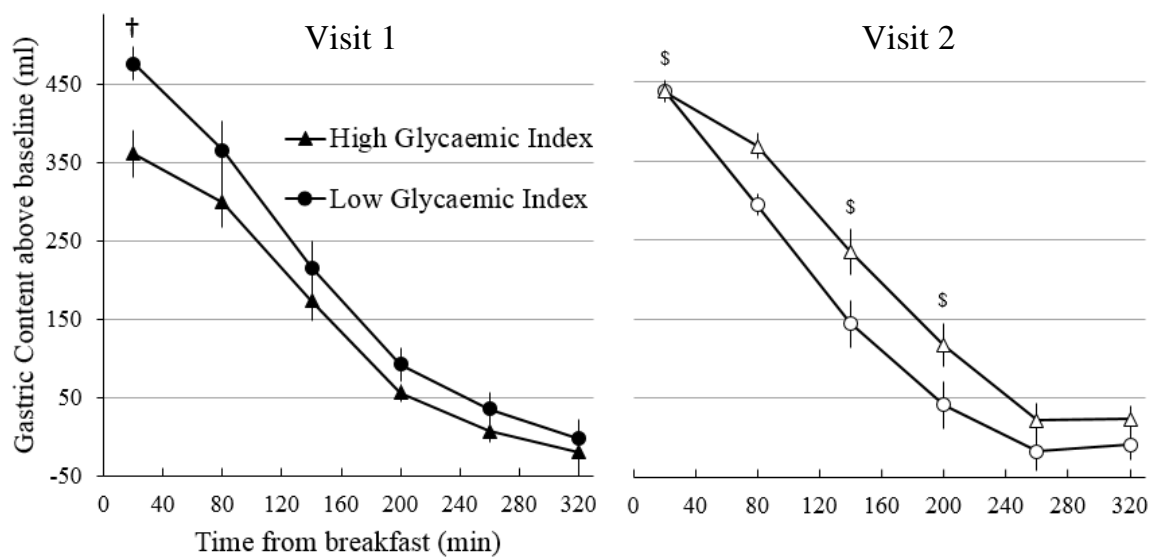


Figure 4

