

## CLINICAL VIGNETTE

# A Case of Monogenic Diabetes Secondary to Glucokinase Mutation

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### Case Report

An 18-year-old female with prediabetes and a BMI 26 kg/m<sup>2</sup> presents with newly diagnosed diabetes with fasting glucose of 115 mg/dl and A1C of 6.7. She was diagnosed with prediabetes two years prior and was started on metformin without much effect on her blood glucose. She adheres to a low carbohydrate diet and exercises regularly. She denies polyuria, polydipsia, polyphagia, or weight loss. She is not on any medications and has no known medication allergies. Her initial physical exam is notable for body weight of 163 lbs. and BMI of 26.31 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Her family history is significant for diabetes in her mother and father who were both diagnosed in their thirties. Her maternal grandmother and grandfather were also diagnosed with diabetes in their forties. Her younger brother has prediabetes. None of these family members are overweight or obese and they have no known complications of diabetes. Given her clinical history and family history, maturity onset diabetes of the young (MODY) was suspected. Her MODY genetic panel was positive for Glucokinase (GCK) heterozygous missense mutation confirming the diagnosis of MODY-GCK also known as MODY2. Pancreatic autoantibodies tests were negative for Glutamic acid decarboxylase antibody <5 IU/ml (0.0 to 5.0 IU/ml), IA 2 autoantibody < 5.4 U/ml (0.0-7.4 U/ml), insulin antibody < 0.4 U/ml (0.0 to 0.4 U/ml), zinc 8 transporter Antibody < 10.0 U/ml (0.0 to 15.0 U/ml). Continuation of lifestyle modification and weight loss counseling were recommended.

### Discussion

MODY is a disorder characterized by noninsulin-dependent diabetes diagnosed at a young age (<25 years) with autosomal dominant inheritance and lack of autoantibodies.<sup>1</sup> It accounts for 2 to 5 percent of diabetes cases.<sup>2,3</sup> Several different genetic abnormalities have been identified causing disruption in pancreatic beta cells development and function leading to impaired insulin secretion.<sup>4</sup> Mutations in hepatocyte nuclear factor-1-alpha (HNF1A) and the GCK gene are the most commonly identified mutations, occurring in up to 65 and 32 percent of MODY cases.<sup>5,6</sup> MODY-GCK is characterized by a mild course and low risk of chronic diabetes complications.<sup>7</sup>

More than 30 pathologic variants of the GCK gene on chromosome 7 have been described.<sup>8</sup> GCK phosphorylates glucose to glucose-6-phosphate in the first step of glycolysis in both hepatic and pancreatic beta cells.<sup>7</sup> In pancreatic cells, it also acts as a glucose sensor, resulting in glucose-stimulated insulin

release.<sup>7</sup> A pathogenic variant in the GCK gene causes a higher threshold for insulin secretion.<sup>7</sup> The resulting hyperglycemia is often mild, and therefore not associated with the vascular complications common in other types of diabetes.<sup>7</sup> Patients with MODY-GCK can often be managed with lifestyle modifications alone.<sup>7</sup>

There are no defining features that are pathognomonic for MODY-GCK. Patients typically are diagnosed with diabetes at a young age, with asymptomatic fasting hyperglycemia (100-150 mg/dl), and lack the autoantibodies seen typically in type 1 diabetes.<sup>9</sup> They have only a mild increase in hemoglobin A1c within the range of 5.6–7.6.<sup>9</sup> The level of hyperglycemia in MODY-GCK is not high enough to exceed the renal threshold, avoiding the osmotic symptoms of polyuria, polydipsia, and weight loss. Therefore, most patients are diagnosed incidentally via mild hyperglycemia found at a health screening in an asymptomatic individual, or at admission to a hospital for a different condition.<sup>10</sup>

Genetic testing for monogenic diabetes should be considered in any of the following scenarios: 1) multigenerational family history of diabetes ( $\geq 3$  generations or history in one parent and at least one other first-degree relative of that parent) with other clinical characteristics described above and negative autoantibodies<sup>11</sup>; 2) a high probability of monogenic diabetes (>25 percent in people not treated with insulin) using the MODY Clinical Risk Calculator<sup>12</sup>; and 3) in individuals with presumed type 1 diabetes with preserved fasting C-peptide (>0.6 ng/mL when glucose is >72 mg/dL) three to five years after initial presentation.<sup>12</sup>

MODY-GCK is identified in about 1% of women with gestational diabetes during glycemic screening at 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> gestational weeks.<sup>12</sup> In pregnancy, management depends on the fetal genotype. If the fetus inherits the maternal GCK variant (which will prevent fetal hyperinsulinemia and excessive growth despite maternal hyperglycemia), maternal hyperglycemia does not require treatment.<sup>12</sup> However, if the fetus does not inherit the pathogenic variant, maternal insulin therapy is indicated to prevent excessive fetal growth.<sup>12</sup> Thus, when available, non-invasive prenatal genotyping with cell free DNA should be used to guide management of GCK-MODY during pregnancy.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

It is important to distinguish MODY-GCK from type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes because the optimal treatments and risks for diabetes complications are different. An accurate diagnosis of MODY-GCK allows earlier identification of at-risk family members due to autosomal dominant inheritance. A suspected diagnosis of MODY-GCK should be confirmed by genetic testing.

## REFERENCES

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