



# ABDOMINAL IMAGING IN GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

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# Assessing the Risk for Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease Development among Patients with Ulcerative Colitis

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**Background and aims:** Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a pathology of the gastrointestinal tract in which Ulcerative Colitis (UC) and Crohn’s Disease are the two major forms. A relatively common extraintestinal manifestation of IBD is non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), approximately 5% of these patients developing chronic liver disease overtime. The aim of this study was to evaluate UC as a risk factor in the development of NAFLD.

**Methods:** In total 56 patients with UC and 63 healthy controls were enrolled between June 2021 to November 2021. Both groups of patients were non-obese, with a body mass index < 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and had no known history of type 2 diabetes or metabolic syndrome (MetS). Anthropometric evaluation, biochemical parameters and personal medical history were collected. Each patient was evaluated using Vibration-Controlled Transient Elastography with Controlled Attenuation Parameter (CAP). The cut-off value of CAP score for liver steatosis was 248 dB/m.

**Results:** Of 56 UC patients, 31(55.4%) were diagnosed with NAFLD having a mean CAP score of 258±29 dB/m vs. 223±38 dB/m ( $p=0.003$ ) in the control group. Regarding liver stiffness, there were no significant statistical differences between the two groups (5.1±1.1 kPa vs 4.8±1.3 kPa,  $p=0.263$ ). Multivariate analysis showed that patients with UC had a 3-fold higher risk for the presence of NAFLD [odds ratio: (OR)-3.2, 95%, confidence interval (CI) 1.72–9.3,  $p < 0.001$ ]. In the univariate analysis severe steatosis was positively associated with extensive intestinal involvement of the disease ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ), older age ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ) and male gender ( $r = 0.273$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ).

**Conclusion:** NAFLD is a common finding among UC patients. When comparing to a group of healthy subjects, UC patients have a higher risk for developing NAFLD, even in the absence of classic risk factors like obesity and MetS.