

Evidence of a link between resting energy expenditure and bone remodelling, glucose homeostasis and adipokine variations in adolescent girls with anorexia nervosa

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Low areal bone mineral density (aBMD) is a well-known consequence of anorexia nervosa (AN). However, the impact of reduced energy expenditure on bone metabolism is unknown. This study assessed the effects of energy deficiency on bone remodelling and its potential interactions with glucose homeostasis and adipose tissue-derived hormones in AN, a clinical model for reduced energy expenditure.

Methods: Fifty women with AN and 50 age-matched controls (mean age 18.1±2.7 and 18.0±2.1 yrs, respectively) were enrolled. aBMD was determined with DXA. Resting energy expenditure (REEm), a marker of energy status, was indirectly assessed by calorimetry. Bone turnover markers, undercarboxylated osteocalcin (ucOC), parameters of glucose homeostasis, adipokines and growth factors were concomitantly evaluated.

Results: AN patients presented low aBMD at all bone sites. REEm, bone formation markers, ucOC, glucose, insulin, HOMA-IR, leptin and IGF-1 were significantly reduced, whereas the bone resorption marker, leptin receptor (sOB-R), and adiponectin were elevated in AN compared with CON. In AN patients, REEm was positively correlated with weight, BMI, whole body (WB) fat mass, WB fat-free soft tissue, markers of bone formation, glucose, insulin, HOMA-IR, leptin, and IGF-1, and negatively correlated with the bone resorption marker and sOB-R. Biological parameters, aBMD excepted, appeared more affected by the weight variation in the last 6 months than by the disease duration.

Conclusions: The strong interrelationships between REEm and bone remodelling, glucose homeostasis and adipokines underscore the importance of preventing energy deficiency to limit short- and long-term bone demineralisation and hormonal alterations in AN patients.

INTRODUCTION

A recent hypothesis suggested that bone remodelling is energetically costly for the rest of the body and may therefore be affected by the energy disposal of the organism [1]. The hypothesised link between energy status and bone remodelling in humans is further supported by the observations of low bone mass acquisition in patients with anorexia nervosa (AN) [2], and the increased bone mass in young obese individuals [3]. Moreover, based on experimental studies, bone is now considered to be an endocrine organ that contributes to the regulation of glucose metabolism and energy expenditure [4]. Murine knockout models (Ocn^{-/-}) have clearly shown that osteocalcin (OC), a protein specifically secreted by osteoblasts, is involved in this process [4].

AIM

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between energy metabolism measured by calorimetry and bone status in a condition of dramatic undernutrition in adolescents and young women with AN. Moreover, the potential interactions between energy status, bone metabolism, glucose homeostasis and adipose tissue-derived hormones were concomitantly evaluated.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

A total of 100 adolescent and young women with ages ranging from 14.4 to 23.8 years (mean 18.1 ± 2.3) were enrolled in this study. Fifty of them had been diagnosed with anorexia nervosa. Patients were consecutively recruited from the Endocrinology Department at Montpellier University Hospital (France) in 2009-2012. They fulfilled the criteria for the diagnosis of AN as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) IV, i.e. amenorrhoea, body mass index (BMI) <18 kg/m², fear of gaining weight and alteration in body size perception (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The aBMD was determined using dual-X-ray absorptiometry (Hologic QDR-4500A, Hologic, Inc., Waltham, MA) at whole body (WB), total proximal femur (TPF), lumbar spine (LS) and Radius. Measured REE (REEm) was assessed over a period of at least 30 min by indirect calorimetry (Quark RMR, Cosmed, Rome, Italy) after an overnight fast in the patients with AN.

CONCLUSION

The strong interrelationships between REEm and bone remodelling, glucose homeostasis and adipokines underscore the importance of preventing energy deficiency to limit short- and long-term bone demineralisation and hormonal alterations in AN patients.

RESULTS

aBMD at all bone sites was significantly lower in patients with AN compared with CON (whole body [-4.7%], lumbar spine [-14.8%], hip [-15.6%], FN [-14.9%] and radius [-4.6%]). Concerning biological parameters, markers of bone formation [osteocalcin (OC) and PINP], leptin, free leptin index (FLI), ucOC, glucose, insulin, HOMA-IR, IGF-1, and IGF-1/IGFBP-3 were significantly lower in AN whereas marker of bone resorption (CTX), sOB-R and adiponectin levels were significantly higher. The values of REEm (992.3 ± 154.8) indicated hypometabolism in AN.

REEm in the AN patients was significantly and positively correlated with weight, BMI, WB FM, WB FFST, PINP, OC, glucose, insulin, HOMA-IR, leptin, FLI, IGF-1 and IGFBP-3, and negatively with CTX and sOB-R. In the multivariate model, increases in WB FFST (p<0.01), PINP (p<0.01), and HOMA IR (p<0.01) and a decrease in CTX (p<0.001) were associated with an increase of REEm. These variables explained respectively 14%, 13%, 19% and 21% of the REEm variance, with a total explained variance of 67%.

No correlation was found between the duration of the disease and REEm, bone parameters, glucose metabolism or anthropometric factors. A negative correlation was found only between the duration of AN and aBMD at hip (r=-0.39; p<0.01) and the CTX level (r=-0.3, p=0.03).

Table 1. Main anthropometric and biological data in patients with anorexia nervosa and in controls

Parameters	Controls (n=50)	Patients with AN (n=50)	Difference, % ^a	p-value
Age, yr	18.1 ± 2.7	18.0 ± 2.1		0.69
Duration of AN, yr		2.1 ± 1.8		
Weight, kg	58.8 ± 8.1	42.2 ± 5.4		<0.001
Whole body fat mass, %	24.5 ± 5.6	15.9 ± 5.6		<0.001
Areal Bone Mineral Density (g.cm⁻²)				
Whole body	1.076 ± 0.075	1.025 ± 0.089	-4.7	<0.01
Lumbar spine	0.990 ± 0.115	0.843 ± 0.101	-14.8	<0.001
Hip	0.965 ± 0.103	0.813 ± 0.123	-15.6	<0.001
FN	0.876 ± 0.102	0.745 ± 0.118	-14.9	<0.001
Radius	0.542 ± 0.031	0.517 ± 0.045	-4.6	<0.01
Biological Parameters				
CTX, ng/ml	0.580 ± 0.210	0.895 ± 0.365	+55.2	<0.001
PINP, ng/ml	108.9 ± 83.9	60.2 ± 35.6	-44.8	<0.001
OC, ng/ml	39.0 ± 20.1	24.5 ± 10.5	-37.2	<0.001
ucOC, ng/ml	6.2 ± 3.7	2.4 ± 2.6	-61.3	<0.001
Glucose, mmol/l	4.69 ± 0.55	4.16 ± 0.79	-11.3	<0.001
Insulin, µU/ml	10.7 ± 3.7	4.8 ± 3.3	-55.1	<0.001
HOMA-IR	2.24 ± 0.88	0.92 ± 0.70	-59.1	<0.001
Leptin, ng/ml	9.61 ± 5.95	1.27 ± 1.47	-86.8	<0.001
sOB-R, ng/ml	24.0 ± 8.5	39.6 ± 12.1	+65.0	<0.001
FLI	0.51 ± 0.48	0.04 ± 0.05	-92.2	<0.001
Adiponectin, µg/ml	12.0 ± 5.8	19.0 ± 7.7	+58.3	<0.001
IGF-1, ng/ml	317.0 ± 109.3	183.8 ± 76.1	-42.0	<0.001
IGFBP-3, ng/ml	5420.7 ± 1094.1	5005.7 ± 1178.8	-7.7	0.07
IGF-1/IGFBP-3 ratio	5.9 ± 1.9	3.6 ± 1.1	-39.0	<0.001
Energy metabolism				
REEm, kcal/d	-	992.3 ± 154.8	-	-
REEp, kcal/d	1432.5 ± 83.7	1276.8 ± 57.2	-10.9	<0.001
Predicted REE values, %	-	-22.4 ± 10.7	-	-

^aValues are presented as mean ± SD. Resting energy expenditure predicted (REEp).

Table 2. Correlation analysis between REEm and REEp and different parameters in patients with AN and CON.

Parameters	Patients with AN REEm	Patients with AN REEp	Controls REEp
Weight, kg	0.59***	a	a
BMI, kg/m ²	0.64***	a	a
Duration of AN, yr	0.21	0.07	-
Amenorrhoea duration, mo	-0.004	-0.03	-
WB aBMD, g.cm ²	-0.01	0.33*	0.22
L1-L4 aBMD, g.cm ²	-0.03	0.37**	0.38**
hip aBMD, g.cm ²	-0.01	0.28*	0.19
FN aBMD, g.cm ²	-0.07	0.55**	0.15
Radius aBMD, g.cm ²	-0.04	0.09	0.16
WB FM, kg	0.51***	0.61***	0.88***
WB FFST, kg	0.45**	0.86***	0.83***
CTX, ng/ml	-0.46***	-0.22	-0.06
PINP, ng/ml	0.50***	0.24	-0.13
OC, ng/ml	0.47***	0.30*	-0.21*
ucOC, ng/ml	0.24	0.18	-0.05
Glucose, mmol/l	0.36*	0.29*	0.21
Insulin, µU/ml	0.46***	0.24	0.09
HOMA-IR	0.52***	0.34*	0.11
Leptin, ng/ml	0.57***	0.46**	0.56***
sOB-R, ng/ml	-0.29*	-0.38**	-0.25(p=0.09)
FLI	0.59***	0.49***	0.52***
Adiponectin, µg/ml	0.04	-0.10	-0.27
IGF-1, ng/ml	0.63***	0.54***	0.22
IGFBP-3, ng/ml	0.45**	0.57***	0.18

* for p <0.05, ** p<0.01 and *** p<0.001