EDITORIAL

635  Ex vivo liver resection and auto-transplantation and special systemic therapy in perihilar cholangiocarcinoma treatment
Tchilikidi KY

641  Indocyanine green: The guide to safer and more effective surgery
Fransvea P, Chiarello MM, Fico V, Cariati M, Brisinda G

MINIREVIEWS

650  Alcohol associated liver disease and bariatric surgery: Current perspectives and future directions
Cooper KM, Colletta A, Hebda N, Devani D

658  Applications of gastric peroral endoscopic myotomy in the treatment of upper gastrointestinal tract disease
Chang SY, Jin GH, Sun HB, Yang D, Tang TY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Retrospective Cohort Study

670  Evaluation of bacterial contamination and medium-term oncological outcomes of intracorporeal anastomosis for colon cancer: A propensity score matching analysis
Kayano H, Mamuro N, Kamei Y, Ogimi T, Miyakita H, Nakagohri T, Koyanagi K, Mori M, Yamamoto S

681  Rescue from complications after pancreaticoduodenectomies at a low-volume Caribbean center: Value of tailored peri-pancreatectomy protocols
Cawich SO, Dixon E, Shukla PJ, Shrikhande SV, Deshpande RR, Mohammed F, Pearce NW, Francis W, Johnson S, Bujhawan J

689  Comparison of prognosis and postoperative morbidities between standard pancreaticoduodenectomy and the TRIANGLE technique for resectable pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma
Hang HX, Cai ZH, Yang YF, Fu X, Qiu YD, Cheng H

700  Analysis of the impact of immunotherapy efficacy and safety in patients with gastric cancer and liver metastasis

Retrospective Study

710  Clinical observation of extraction-site incisional hernia after laparoscopic colorectal surgery
Fan BH, Zhong KL, Zhu LJ, Chen Z, Li F, Wu WF

717  Predicting short-term major postoperative complications in intestinal resection for Crohn’s disease: A machine learning-based study
Wang FT, Lin Y, Yuan XQ, Gao RY, Wu XC, Xu WW, Wu TQ, Xia K, Jiao YR, Yin L, Chen CQ
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>731</td>
<td>Analysis of factors impacting postoperative pain and quality of life in patients with mixed hemorrhoids: A retrospective study</td>
<td>Sun XW, Xu JY, Zhu CZ, Li SJ, Jin LJ, Zhu ZD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751</td>
<td>Clinical study on the relationship between liver cirrhosis, ascites, and hyponatremia</td>
<td>Li XJ, Meng HH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>759</td>
<td>Comparison of the clinical effects of dual-modality endoscopy and traditional laparotomy for the treatment of intra- and extrahepatic bile duct stones</td>
<td>Wang W, Xia H, Dai B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>768</td>
<td>Role of ablation therapy in conjunction with surgical resection for neuroendocrine tumors involving the liver</td>
<td>Ostapenko A, Stroever S, Eyasu L, Kim M, Aploks K, Dong XD, Seshadri R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Trials Study</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>816</td>
<td>Clinical study of enhanced recovery after surgery in laparoscopic appendectomy for acute appendicitis</td>
<td>Li ZL, Ma HC, Yang Y, Chen JJ, Wang ZJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observational Study</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>823</td>
<td>Reinforced tissue matrix to strengthen the abdominal wall following reversal of temporary ostomies or to treat incisional hernias</td>
<td>Lake SP, Deeken CR, Agarwal AK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Randomized Controlled Trial</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>833</td>
<td>Whole-process case management effects on mental state and self-care ability in patients with liver cancer</td>
<td>Ju MD, Qin Q, Li M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical and Translational Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

### World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery

**Monthly Volume 16 Number 3 March 27, 2024**

#### Basic Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>860</td>
<td>Influence of different magnetic forces on the effect of colonic anastomosis in rats</td>
<td>Tian BY, Zhang MM, Ma J, Lyu Y, Yan XP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>871</td>
<td>Inflammatory responses in esophageal mucosa before and after laparoscopic antireflux surgery</td>
<td>Ergun P, Kipcak S, Selvi Gunel N, Yildirim Sozmen E, Bor S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### META-ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>921</td>
<td>Clinical efficacy and safety of erlotinib combined with chemotherapy in the treatment of advanced pancreatic cancer: A meta-analysis</td>
<td>Liu XY, Pan HN, Yu Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CASE REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>944</td>
<td>Mucinous neoplasm of the appendix: A case report and review of literature</td>
<td>Chang HC, Kang JC, Pu TW, Su RY, Chen CY, Hu JM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>955</td>
<td>Abdominal cocoon syndrome-a rare culprit behind small bowel ischemia and obstruction: Three case reports</td>
<td>Vipudhamorn W, Juthasilaparat T, Satharat P, Sannee S, Supatrakul E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT COVER
Editorial Board Member of World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery, Jia-Gang Han, MD, Professor, Department of General Surgery, Beijing Chaoyang Hospital, Capital Medical University, Beijing 100020, China. hjg211@163.com

AIMS AND SCOPE
The primary aim of World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery (WJGS, World J Gastrointest Surg) is to provide scholars and readers from various fields of gastrointestinal surgery with a platform to publish high-quality basic and clinical research articles and communicate their research findings online.

WJGS mainly publishes articles reporting research results and findings obtained in the field of gastrointestinal surgery and covering a wide range of topics including biliary tract surgical procedures, biliopancreatic diversion, colectomy, esophagectomy, esophagostomy, pancreas transplantation, and pancreatectomy, etc.

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING
The WJGS is now abstracted and indexed in Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE, also known as SciSearch®), Current Contents/Clinical Medicine, Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, PubMed, PubMed Central, Reference Citation Analysis, China Science and Technology Journal Database, and Superstar Journals Database. The 2023 Edition of Journal Citation Reports® cites the 2022 impact factor (IF) for WJGS as 2.0; IF without journal self cites: 1.9; 5-year IF: 2.2; Journal Citation Indicator: 0.52; Ranking: 113 among 212 journals in surgery; Quartile category: Q3; Ranking: 81 among 93 journals in gastroenterology and hepatology; and Quartile category: Q4.

RESPONSIBLE EDITORS FOR THIS ISSUE
Production Editor: Zi-Hang Xu; Production Department Director: Xiang Le; Editorial Office Director: Jia-Ru Fan.

NAME OF JOURNAL
World Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery

ISSN
ISSN 1948-9366 (online)

LAUNCH DATE
November 30, 2009

FREQUENCY
Monthly

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Peter Schemmer

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

PUBLICATION DATE
March 27, 2024

COPYRIGHT
© 2024 Baishideng Publishing Group Inc

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/204

GUIDELINES FOR ETHICS DOCUMENTS
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/GerInfo/287

GUIDELINES FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/240

PUBLICATION ETHICS
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/288

PUBLICATION MISCONDUCT
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/208

ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGE
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/242

STEPS FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS
https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/239

ONLINE SUBMISSION
https://www.f6publishing.com

© 2024 Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved. 7041 Koll Center Parkway, Suite 160, Pleasanton, CA 94566, USA
E-mail: office@baishideng.com https://www.wjgnet.com
Retrospective Study

Pre-operative visceral adipose tissue radiodensity is a potentially novel prognostic biomarker for early endoscopic post-operative recurrence in Crohn’s disease

Phillip Gu, Shishir Dube, Norman Gellada, So Yung Choi, Susan Win, Yoo Jin Lee, Shaohong Yang, Talin Haritunians, Gil Y Melmed, Eric A Vasiliasuskas, Niru Bonthala, Gaurav Syal, Andres J Yarur, David Ziring, Shervin Rabizadeh, Phillip Fleshner, Cindy Kallman, Suzanne Devkota, Stephan R Targan, Dalin Li, Dermot PB McGovern

Abstract

BACKGROUND
Evidence suggests inflammatory mesenteric fat is involved in post-operative recurrence (POR) of Crohn’s disease (CD). However, its prognostic value is
uncertain, in part, due to difficulties studying it non-invasively.

**AIM**
To evaluate the prognostic value of pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for early endoscopic POR (ePOR).

**METHODS**
We conducted a retrospective cohort study of CD subjects ≥ 12 years who underwent ileocecal or small bowel resection between 1/1/2007 to 12/31/2021 with computerized tomography abdomen/pelvis ≤ 6 months pre-operatively and underwent ileocolonoscopy ≤ 15 months post-operatively. Visceral adipose tissue (VAT) volume (cm³), ratio of VAT:subcutaneous adipose tissue (SAT) volume, VAT radiodensity, and ratio of VAT:SAT radiodensity were generated semiautomatically. Mesenteric lymphadenopathy (LAD, largest lymph node > 10 mm) and severe vasa recta (VR) engorgement (diameter of the VR supplying diseased bowel ≥ 2 × VR supplying healthy bowel) were derived manually. The primary outcome was early ePOR (Rutgeert’s score ≥ i2 on first endoscopy ≤ 15 months post-operatively) and the secondary outcome was ePOR severity (Rutgeert’s score i0-i4). Regression analyses were performed adjusting for demographic and disease-related characteristics to calculate adjusted odds ratio (aOR) and 95% confidence interval (CI).

**RESULTS**
Of the 139 subjects included, 45% of subjects developed early ePOR (n = 63). VAT radiodensity (aOR 0.59, 95%CI: 0.38-0.90) and VAT:SAT radiodensity (aOR 8.54, 95%CI: 1.48-49.28) were associated with early ePOR, whereas, VAT volume (aOR 1.23, 95%CI: 0.78-1.95), VAT:SAT volume (aOR 0.80, 95%CI: 0.53-1.20), severe VR engorgement (aOR 1.53, 95%CI: 0.64-3.66), and mesenteric LAD (aOR 1.59, 95%CI: 0.67-3.79) were not. Similar results were observed for severity of ePOR.

**CONCLUSION**
VAT radiodensity is potentially a novel non-invasive prognostic imaging marker to help risk stratify CD patients for POR.

**Key Words:** Crohn’s disease; Surgery; Visceral adipose tissue; Mesenteric adipose tissue; Creeping fat; Computed tomography

©The Author(s) 2024. Published by Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved.

---

**Core Tip:** Risk stratification for post-operative recurrence of Crohn’s disease (CD) remains a clinical challenge. We evaluated the prognostic value of pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for post-operative recurrence of CD. Of the parameters evaluated, lower visceral adipose tissue radiodensity was independently associated with post-operative recurrence. Visceral adipose tissue radiodensity may be a novel imaging prognostic marker to help risk stratify for post-operative recurrence of CD during pre-operative work up.

---

**INTRODUCTION**

Crohn’s disease (CD) is a debilitating chronic immune-mediated inflammatory disease (IMID) of the gastrointestinal tract that is increasing in incidence and prevalence globally[1]. CD patients often undergo surgery for disease-related complications and/or medically refractory disease. Unfortunately, surgery is not curative, and many patients develop post-operative recurrence (POR) of CD with a significant proportion eventually requiring additional surgeries. With advances in early detection and therapeutics, the contemporary 10-year risk of surgery has improved from 50% to 26%, but the risk of recurrent surgery has remained unchanged at 30%, suggesting a need to improve post-operative management strategies[2].

Presently, there are two accepted strategies to mitigate POR, but each have potential limitations. Firstly, patients start early post-operative pharmacologic prophylaxis within 4-6 wk after surgery. This strategy can potentially overtreat a subset of patient who may not develop long-term disease recurrence off therapy. Consequently, these patients are at risk of medication-related adverse events and the direct and indirect costs associated with therapy with little or no benefit[3]. The second strategy is performing early colonoscopy within 6-12 months after surgery and escalating therapy based on
Evidence of endoscopic POR. This strategy risks delaying treatment if CD recurs before 6-12 months. Furthermore, in those who received an anti-TNF agent before surgery, the gap in drug exposure may increase the risk of drug reaction from re-exposure and/or failure from immunogenicity[4,5]. Because data about the comparative effectiveness of each strategy is lacking[6], societal guidelines recommend strategy selection based on stratifying patients into high or low risk for POR[7,8]. However, aside from active smoking, internal penetrating disease, and prior surgeries, many risk factors for POR are variably supported by the literature[9]. Also, many patients who require surgery for medically refractory disease do not strictly fit the high risk category. The pitfalls of our current POR risk-stratification models is highlighted by a recent study that found that CD patients at high-risk for POR (defined by ≥ 1 risk factor: Smoking, internal penetrating disease, and prior surgery) and low-risk for POR (no risk factors) had similar rates of early endoscopic POR at 36%[10]. These gaps in knowledge emphasize the need to identify additional risk factors. Finally, since most established POR risk factors reflect luminal disease, work is needed to evaluate if there are also extraintestinal components associated with or contributing to POR.

Historically, inflammatory mesenteric adipose tissue (MAT) was perceived as an inert pathognomonic feature of CD, but increasing evidence supports its active involvement in the pathophysiology of POR[11,12]. In fact, emerging data suggest intestinal resection with extended mesenteric excision can mitigate POR[13-16]. However, the prognostic utility of MAT is uncertain, in part, due to difficulties studying it non-invasively[12]. Most studies evaluating MAT rely on surgical resection specimens, which also limits the applicability of the findings. Several radiologic studies have provided indirect evidence that radiographic mesenteric parameters may harbor prognostic markers. For example, severe mesenteric lymphadenopathy and vasa recta engorgement (i.e., Comb’s sign) on CT enterography have been associated with large ulcers and greater proportion of ulcerated surfaces on endoscopy[17], which are risk factors for internal penetrating and medically recalcitrant CD[18]. Furthermore, increased visceral adipose tissue (VAT) on imaging, which is often used as a surrogate marker of MAT hypertrophy[12], is associated with anti-TNF response, greater anti-TNF dose requirements, and risk of surgery[19-21]. Two small studies also found increased VAT is associated with POR, but methodological limitations, such as sample size and study design, require further investigation is necessary[22,23]. Additionally, these studies did not evaluate other radiographic mesenteric parameters such as mesenteric lymphadenopathy, vasa recta engorgement, or VAT radiodensity. Considering surgical CD patients very often require diagnostic imaging and our current POR risk-stratification models are suboptimal, establishing the prognostic value of radiographic mesenteric parameters for POR has important implications for post-operative management of CD. Thus, we aim to establish the prognostic value of pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for early endoscopic POR (ePOR) as well as the severity of ePOR.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Study design and patient population**

We conducted a retrospective, single center study of adult and pediatric CD subjects who underwent ileocecal or small bowel resection at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (CSMC) between 1/1/2007 and 12/31/2021. Subjects with available computed tomography (CT) abdomen/pelvis performed for clinical indications ≤ 6 months pre-operatively and an endoscopic evaluation for POR performed ≤ 15 months post-operatively were included. For small bowel anastomoses that could not be evaluated via ileocolonoscopy, endoscopic evaluation for recurrence was performed by wireless capsule endoscopy or double balloon enteroscopy (n = 9). Figure 1 summarizes inclusion and inclusion criteria. To align with clinical practice, CTs performed within 6 months of surgery were selected because imaging within 6 months is clinically sufficient to make surgical decisions. Furthermore, magnetic resonance imaging was excluded because CT scans offer additional radiographic parameters, such as radiodensity, that is not possible with magnetic resonance imaging. All intestinal resections were performed with same standard surgical techniques across the study period using functional end-to-end anastomosis and preservation of as much mesentery as possible. Extended mesenteric resection was not performed during the study period. This study was approved by the CSMC IRB (IRB #3358).

Baseline demographics, disease-related characteristics, and CD medications at the time of surgery were recorded via manual chart review. Disease location and disease behavior were classified by the Montreal classification system. Postoperatively prophylaxis status was also recorded and was defined as CD-directed therapy started after the primary anastomosis or ileostomy reversal with restoration of bowel continuity but before the first post-operative endoscopic evaluation. Rutgeert’s scores were recorded from endoscopy procedure reports for both ileocecal and small bowel anastomoses as previously described[24]. When a Rutgeert’s score was not recorded, text and images of endoscopy reports were reviewed by a board-certified gastroenterologist with advanced IBD training (PG) to retrospectively assign a Rutgeert’s score. Rutgeert’s score i2 was not differentiated into i2a and i2b because this was not standard of practice during the early part of the study period and could not be reliably distinguished retrospectively based on text or images.

**Acquisition of radiographic mesenteric parameters**

The primary exposures were the radiographic mesenteric parameters of interest, which included visceral adipose tissue (VAT) volume (cm³), ratio of VAT:subcutaneous adipose tissue (SAT) volume, VAT radiodensity [Hounsfield units (HU)], ratio of VAT:SAT ratio, severity of vasa recta engorgement (VR), and mesenteric lymphadenopathy.

**VAT parameters:** To generate VAT parameters, all CT scans were processed with Vitrea® Advanced Visualization Platform (Canon Medical Systems), which performs semiautomated segmentation of the abdominal VAT and SAT compartments using attenuation thresholds between -50 and -150 HU. Supplementary Figure 1 illustrates an example of
VAT and SAT parameters were measured from the first lumbar vertebra (L1) to the fifth (L5), as previously described. The boundaries of automated CT outlined adipose tissue compartments were manually reviewed and corrected for any errors in each slice. After segmentation, VAT and SAT volumes and radiodensity were automatically calculated in Vitrea®, which were then used to calculate VAT:SAT volume and radiodensity. All VAT and SAT segmentation were performed by a certified advanced imaging analyst (NG) who was blinded to the clinical data and outcomes. Three subjects had significant image artifact that precluded VAT and SAT analysis and were excluded from the final analysis.

**Severe vasa recta engorgement:** severity of vasa recta engorgement was determined by calculating the ratio of the diameter of the vasa recta supplying the inflamed bowel intended for resection to the diameter of the vasa rectal supplying healthy bowel. Severe vasa recta engorgement was defined as diameter of vasa recta of the inflamed bowel ≥ 2 × the diameter of the vasa recta of the healthy bowel as previously described. Vasa recta diameters were manually measured in the transverse plane of the CT by a study investigator (PG).

**Mesenteric lymphadenopathy:** Each CT scan was reviewed by a study investigator (PG) to locate and measure the largest mesenteric lymph node in the region of the inflamed bowel intended for resection. Mesenteric lymphadenopathy was defined as the largest lymph node measuring > 10 mm along the short axis in the transverse plane of the CT as previously described.

Radiographic vasa recta and lymph node measurements from 48 images (32% of cohort) were reviewed and confirmed with a board-certified body imaging radiologist with over 20 years of experience (CK) to ensure accuracy and consistency.

**Outcomes**

The primary outcome was early ePOR defined as Rutgeert’s ≥ i2 on endoscopy performed ≤ 15 months post-operatively. The secondary outcome was severity of ePOR as determined by the Rutgeert's score i0-i4.
Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine baseline cohort demographics and disease-related characteristics. For variables not normally distributed based on visual assessment, a rank-based inverse normalized transformation was applied to the variable. Univariate regression was used to assess demographic and disease-related associations with radiographic mesenteric parameters. To determine independent associations between the radiographic mesenteric parameters and early ePOR and severity of ePOR, multivariable binomial and ordinal logistic regressions were performed, respectively. Adjustment for well-established POR risk factors were determined a priori and included age at surgery, sex, time from CD diagnosis to surgery, internal penetrating disease behavior, post-operative prophylaxis status, and prior CD-related surgery. BMI was not included in the multivariate regression models because BMI is not an established risk factor for POR. Active smoking was not included in the models because only 4.4% subjects were active smokers in the cohort. The accuracy of regression models that included radiographic mesenteric parameters significantly associated with ePOR and were assessed by receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve analysis and calculating the area under the curve (AUC). Subsequently, the thresholds of these radiographic mesenteric parameters to classify early ePOR were identified using hierarchical Bayes method. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (IBM Corp. Released 2016. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.) and R version 4.2.2 (R Core Team, 2022, R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing).

RESULTS

Patients and demographics

A total of 139 subjects were included in the final analysis (Figure 1). The median amount of time between CT and surgery was 0.93 (interquartile range 0.53-2.43) months. Table 1 summarizes cohort demographics. Only 4.4% (n = 6) were active smokers at the time of surgery. Pre-operatively, majority of patients had evidence of strictureing disease (69.5%, n = 96), and 52.5% (n = 73) were on a biologic agent before surgery. Additionally, 28.1% (n = 39) had at least one prior CD-related surgery. Post-operatively, 86.3% (n = 120) of subjects started post-operative prophylaxis with a biologic agent being the most common (78.3%, n = 94).

On univariate analysis, there were several notable associations with the radiographic mesenteric parameters of interest (Supplemental Table 1). VAT volume was associated with older age (β: 0.49, P = 2.10e-4), longer time to surgery from CD diagnosis (β: 0.23, p=0.008), and BMI (β: 0.68, P = 7.32e-4). VAT:SAT volume was associated with older age (β:0.26, P = 0.003), VAT radiodensity was not associated with age (P = 0.46) or sex (P = 0.66) but negatively associated with BMI (β: -0.21, P = 0.02). Finally, severe vasa recta engorgement was associated with prior surgery (OR: 0.43, P = 0.04). Strictureting/penetrating disease behavior (B2/3) was associated with VAT radiodensity (β: -0.38, P = 0.01) and VAT:SAT radiodensity (β: 0.31, p=0.04). Active smoking and disease location were not associated with any of the radiographic mesenteric parameters. Similarly, mesenteric lymphadenopathy was not associated with any demographics or disease-related factors.

Radiographic mesenteric parameters and early ePOR

Of the entire cohort, 45.3% (n = 63) developed early ePOR, and the median time between surgery and first post-operative ileocolonoscopy was 32.86 (IQR 26.14-43.29) weeks. On binomial logistic regression (Table 2), VAT radiodensity [adjusted odds ratio (aOR): 0.59, 95% confidence interval (CI): 0.38-0.90] and VAT:SAT radiodensity [aOR 8.54, 95% CI: 1.48-49.28] were associated with early ePOR. VAT volume [aOR: 1.23, 95% CI: 0.78-1.95], VAT:SAT volume [aOR: 0.80, 95% CI: 0.53-1.20], severe vasa recta engorgement [aOR: 1.53, 95% CI: 0.64-3.66], and mesenteric lymphadenopathy [aOR: 1.59, 95% CI: 0.67-3.79] were not associated with early ePOR.

The overall AUC for the multivariable regression models including the VAT radiodensity and VAT:SAT radiodensity was 0.72 (95% CI: 0.63-0.81) and 0.73 (95% CI: 0.64-0.81), respectively, showing the similar performance of classification (Supplementary Figure 2). Using the hierarchical Bayes method accounting for covariates, the estimated normalized VAT radiodensity to classify early ePOR was ≤-0.23 (95% credible interval: -0.53 to 0.03)) and the threshold for VAT:SAT radiodensity was ≥0.54 (95% credible interval: 0.50-0.59).

Radiographic mesenteric parameters and severity of ePOR

Of the subjects who did not develop ePOR, 34.5% (n = 48) and 20.1% (n = 28) had Rutgeert’s i0 and i1, respectively. Of the subjects who developed early ePOR, 30.2% had Rutgeert’s i2 (n = 42) while 9.4% (n = 13) and 5.8% (n = 8) had Rutgeert’s i3 and i4, respectively. On ordinal logistic regression (Table 2), VAT radiodensity (aOR 0.60, 95% CI: 0.42-0.87) and VAT:SAT radiodensity (aOR: 6.26, 95% CI: 1.43-27.42) were associated with severity of ePOR. VAT volume (aOR: 1.08, 95% CI: 0.72-1.53), VAT:SAT volume (aOR: 0.80, 95% CI: 0.56-1.14), severe vasa recta engorgement (aOR: 1.61, 95% CI: 0.75-3.46), and mesenteric lymphadenopathy volume (aOR: 2.10, 95% CI: 0.99-4.47) were not associated with ePOR severity.

DISCUSSION

POR of CD is a persistent clinical challenge, and current risk stratification models for POR remain suboptimal. Aside from active smoking, internal penetrating CD, and prior surgeries, many risk factors for POR are variably supported by the...
Gu P et al. VAT radiodensity is associated with POR in CD

Table 1 Cohort demographics (n = 139)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total (n = 139)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years, SD)</td>
<td>39.1 (17.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, n (%)</td>
<td>66 (47.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Ancestry, n (%)</td>
<td>121 (88.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean disease duration, (months, SD)</td>
<td>151.8 (136.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean body mass index (kg/m², SD)</td>
<td>23.3 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active smoking, n (%)</td>
<td>6 (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease location, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ileal (L1)</td>
<td>61 (43.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ileocolonic (L3)</td>
<td>78 (56.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper GI (L4)</td>
<td>12 (8.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease behavior, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fibrostenosing, non-penetrating (B1)</td>
<td>7 (5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibrostenosing (B2)</td>
<td>54 (39.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal penetrating (B3)</td>
<td>35 (25.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictures and internal penetrating (B2/3)</td>
<td>42 (30.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perianal disease, n (%)</td>
<td>23 (16.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-operative medication, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>33 (23.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corticosteroid</td>
<td>48 (34.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-aminosalicylic acid</td>
<td>21 (15.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunomodulator</td>
<td>32 (23.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biologic</td>
<td>73 (52.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior surgery, n (%)</td>
<td>39 (28.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-operative prophylaxis, n (%)</td>
<td>120 (86.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-aminosalicylic acid</td>
<td>7 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunomodulator</td>
<td>23 (19.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biologic</td>
<td>94 (78.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD: Standard deviation.

Emerging evidence indicates MAT is involved in POR, but its prognostic value is uncertain, in part, due to difficulties studying it non-invasively[12]. In the largest cohort of surgical CD subjects with available pre-operative CT scans and early post-operative endoscopic evaluation, we established the prognostic value of pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for early ePOR and severity of ePOR and found pre-operative VAT radiodensity is associated with ePOR and ePOR severity.

Radiodensity is an imaging parameter that can quantify the degree of attenuation of different types of tissue. With current technological capabilities, radiodensity can be measured on CT but not magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). On CT, adipose tissue conventionally has lower radiodensity relative to other tissue types, and organs with greater adiposity have lower radiodensity. For example, one of the radiographic criteria for severe fatty liver is hepatic radiodensity < 40 HU[27]. VAT radiodensity has been well-studied in cardiometabolic diseases, and decreased VAT radiodensity is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, and hypertension[28,29]. Additionally, in non-IBD subjects, VAT radiodensity is negatively associated with IL-6, TNF-α, C-reactive protein, adiponectin, and resistin serum levels, which have also been implicated in CD[12,30]. The literature suggests VAT radiodensity is an imaging biomarker that reflects “fat quality,” and poor fat quality could entail a variety of histologic alterations including macrophage infiltration[31-33], decreased vascularity[34], fibrosis[35-37], and adipocyte hypertrophy[38]. Interestingly, these histologic features have also been described in CD, supporting an overlap with metabolic diseases[12].

Since MAT is the largest component of VAT, imaging studies have used VAT as a surrogate marker for inflammatory alterations of MAT in CD because MAT is challenging to segment on imaging[12]. In our cohort, decreased VAT radiodensity on pre-operative CT images was associated with early ePOR as well as increased severity of ePOR. Our findings suggest MAT quality has important prognostic and mechanistic implications for POR in CD. Since surgical CD patients often require imaging, pre-operative imaging offers an accessible and cost-efficient opportunity to extract additional prognostic information to better inform post-operative management. VAT radiodensity can be semi-automatically calculated by many imaging analysis tools, so our finding potentially identifies a novel prognostic imaging biomarker for POR that can be rapidly employed into clinical practice if validated by larger, prospective studies. In addition to its potential as a new prognostic imaging biomarker for POR, VAT radiodensity may provide insight into the biologic underpinnings of POR. Preliminary data by our group suggest certain histomorphometric features of the MAT associated with resected uninvolved ileum is associated with POR, including adipocyte size and distance between adipocytes[38]. These histologic features are potentially reflected by VAT radiodensity on imaging but requires further data to confirm. Interestingly, on univariate analysis, VAT radiodensity was not associated with CD behavior or established clinical risk factors for POR, except prior surgery. This finding supports extra-luminal processes are likely involved in POR and provides further evidence that MAT could be a therapeutic surgical target for mitigating POR as implicated by recent studies evaluating extended mesenteric resection[13-16]. Moreover, given safety concerns with manipulating inflamed MAT, identifying pre-operative radiographic prognostic markers like VAT radiodensity can help identify candidates at high risk for POR and would derive the most benefit from extended mesenteric resection. This would also help avoid exposing patients at low risk for POR to potential complications of extended mesenteric resection. Finally, we also provide preliminary data demonstrating a multivariable regression model including radiographic mesenteric parameters yields an acceptable AUC and a possible VAT radiodensity threshold to identify high-risk POR patients, supporting larger studies to confirm our findings.

Conversely, we observed several radiographic mesenteric parameters that did not have prognostic value for POR. Contrary to two prior small studies[22,23], VAT and VAT:SAT volume was not associated with early ePOR. The discrepancies may be due to sample sizes and analytical methodologies used in the prior studies. Additionally, VAT volume can be influenced by several factors such as age, BMI, and sex, so differences in study settings amongst the studies (China vs Australia vs United States) could have contributed to the discrepancies. Similarly, severe vasa recta engorgement and mesenteric lymphadenopathy were not associated with ePOR. Clinically, these parameters are often reported to describe severe disease activity and are associated with deep ulcers on endoscopy, which has been associated with medically recalcitrant CD[18]. Thus, these parameters may have prognostic value for treatment response rather than POR.

This study has several notable strengths. First, we included a large cohort of surgical CD patients with available pre-operative imaging and early post-operative endoscopic evaluation in a US population. Prior published studies included subjects from China and Australia, and anthropomorphic composition can vary among different racial groups and countries. Moreover, practice patterns can differ among regions of the world, so findings from prior studies may not be applicable to the US patient population. Second, we used three-dimensional measures to calculate VAT metrics. This approach is more accurate compared to two-dimensional measurements because it accounts for variations in fat distribution among individuals. Additionally, the level where the inflamed mesentery is located varies between individuals, so a single slice two-dimensional measurement at a pre-specified vertebral level, which was commonly performed in prior studies, can miss the affected region. We also recognize limitations of this study. First, this was a retrospective, single center study. Second, the study only included subjects with available pre-operative CT scans, so there is a risk for selection bias. However, MRI has very limited imaging parameters that can be extracted retrospectively and measuring radiodensity is currently not technologically possible. CT has the advantage of more extractable parameters to provide more prognostic information about POR. Nonetheless, future studies with advanced imaging processing techniques with MRI are needed as CD patients often undergo MRI too. Finally, our cohort was predominantly European ancestry, so our findings must be interpreted with caution in surgical CD patients with non-European ancestry. Future studies in non-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAT Radiodensity (HU)</th>
<th>aOR (95%CI)</th>
<th>aOR (95%CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.59 (0.38-0.90)</td>
<td>0.60 (0.42-0.87)</td>
<td>0.60 (0.42-0.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT:SAT Volume</td>
<td>0.80 (0.53-1.20)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.56-1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT:SAT Radiodensity</td>
<td>8.54 (1.48-49.28)</td>
<td>6.26 (1.43-27.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe vasa recta engorgement</td>
<td>1.53 (0.64-3.66)</td>
<td>1.61 (0.75-3.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesenteric lymphadenopathy</td>
<td>1.59 (0.67-3.79)</td>
<td>2.10 (0.99-4.47)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted age at surgery, sex, time from Crohn’s disease (CD) diagnosis to surgery, internal penetrating disease behavior, post-operative prophylaxis status, and prior CD-related surgery. VAT: Visceral adipose tissue; SAT: Subcutaneous adipose tissue; POR: Post-operative recurrence; HU: Hounsfield units; aOR: Adjusted odds ratios; CI: Confidence interval.
European CD patients are also needed to validate our findings.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, in a cohort of surgical CD patients with available pre-operative CT imaging, we described the prognostic value of several pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for early ePOR and found decreased VAT radiodensity is associated with early ePOR and increased ePOR severity. If confirmed by larger, prospective studies, VAT radiodensity can potentially improve risk stratification for POR in CD. Additionally, further investigation is needed to evaluate if MAT histomorphology and dysregulated inflammatory pathways in MAT are associated with POR to better define the biologic link between MAT and POR.

**ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS**

**Research background**

Strategies for mitigating post-operative recurrence (POR) of Crohn’s disease (CD) require accurate risk stratification of patients for POR, but aside from smoking, internal penetrating disease, and prior surgeries, many risk factors are variably supported by the literature. Inflammatory mesenteric adipose tissue has been implicated in the pathogenesis of POR in CD, but its prognostic value is uncertain, in-part, due to difficulties studying it non-invasively.

**Research motivation**

Accurate risk stratification for POR of CD is important for informing post-operative management strategies to mitigate POR. Many prognostic markers have modest predictive accuracy. Thus, identifying new and accurate prognostic markers for POR is important.

**Research objectives**

The objective of this study was to establish the prognostic value of pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters for early endoscopic POR.

**Research methods**

We conducted a retrospective cohort study if CD patients undergoing ileocecal and/or small bowel resection with available CT abdomen/pelvis within 6 months prior to surgery and underwent endoscopic evaluation for POR within 15 months after surgery. The primary outcome was early endoscopic POR defined as Rutgeerts ≥ i2 on post-operative endoscopy within 15 months of after surgery. Multivariable regression analyses were performed to determine the independent association between pre-operative radiographic mesenteric parameters and POR.

**Research results**

Analysis of 139 subjects found lower visceral adipose tissue (VAT) radiodensity was independently associated with early endoscopic POR (adjusted odds ratio: 0.59, 95% confidence interval: 0.38-0.90).

**Research conclusions**

VAT radiodensity is a potentially novel imaging prognostic marker for POR in CD.

**Research perspectives**

While larger studies are needed to validate our findings, VAT radiodensity is potentially a novel prognostic marker for POR that can be easily extracted from available CT imaging and help inform risk of POR. Lower VAT radiodensity has been suggested to reflect poor fat quality, so translational studies are required to understand possible underlying mechanisms of poor mesenteric fat quality that may contribute to POR and are reflected in VAT radiodensity.

**FOOTNOTES**

**Author contributions:** Gu P is the guarantor of the article and was involved in concept and design, data collection, statistical analysis, drafting of manuscript, and final approval of manuscript; Dube S and Choi SY were involved in statistical analysis, drafting of the manuscript, and final approval of manuscript; Gellada N, Win S, Lee YJ and Yang S were involved in the data collection, drafting of the manuscript, and final approval of manuscript; Haritunians T and Li D were involved in data analysis and interpretation, drafting of manuscript and final approval of manuscript; Melmed GY, Yarur AJ, Fleshner P, Kallman C and Devkota S were involved in study concept and design, data interpretation, drafting of manuscript and final approval of manuscript; Vasiliauskas EA, Bonthala N, Syal G, Ziring D and Targan SR were involved in data interpretation, drafting of manuscript and final approval of manuscript; Rabizadeh S was involved in study concept and design, drafting of manuscript and final approval of manuscript; McGovern DPB was involved in concept and design, statistical analysis, drafting of manuscript and final approval of manuscript.
Supported by American College of Gastroenterology, Clinical Research Award 2022, No. ACG-040-2022; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, U01, No. 2299170; and Helmsley Charitable Trust, No. 2352240.

Institutional review board statement: This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (IRB #3358).

Informed consent statement: Because this was a retrospective study, informed consent was not required by the IRB.

Conflict-of-interest statement: Li D has received consulting fees from Prometheus Biosciences Inc; Syal G has received research support from Pfizer; Yarur AJ has received consulting fees from Bristol Myers Squibb, Arena, Pfizer, Takeda and Landos; Targan SR serves on the scientific advisory board for Seaver Foundation for Austim, and has stock options in Promethus Biosciences Inc; Ziring D is on the speaking bureau for AbbVie, Prometheus Labs, and Regeneron; Rabizadeh S has advised for Prometheus and Janssen; Melmed GY has received consulting fees from Abbvie, Arena Pharmaceuticals, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Colgene, Dieta, Entasis, Fresenius Kabi, Genentech, Gilead, Janssen, Medtronic, Merck, Oshi, Prometheus Labs, Pfizer, Takeda, Teclahl; Fleshner P has received consulting fees from Takeda; McGovern DPB has received consulting fees from Takeda, Prometheus Biosciences Inc; Prometheus Labs; Other authors have no conflicts of interests to disclose.

Data sharing statement: Data available on request.

Open-Access: This article is an open-access article that was selected by an in-house editor and fully peer-reviewed by external reviewers. It is distributed in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial (CC BY-NC 4.0) license, which permits others to distribute, remix, adapt, build upon this work non-commercially, and license their derivative works on different terms, provided the original work is properly cited and the use is non-commercial. See: https://creativecommons.org/Licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Country/Territory of origin: United States

ORCID number: Phillip Gu 0000-0003-4819-8979; Yoo Jin Lee 0000-0003-1799-0146; Talin Haritunians 0000-0002-9005-7750; Gil Y Melmed 0000-0002-2591-5165; Dalin Li 0000-0003-4738-0074; Dermot PB McGovern 0000-0001-5621-759X.

Corresponding Author's Membership in Professional Societies: American College of Gastroenterology, No. 44884; American Gastroenterological Association, No. C-1362610; Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, No. 8-13469898.

S-Editor: Gong ZM
L-Editor: A
P-Editor: Zhao S

REFERENCES


Chun TH. Peri-adipocyte ECM remodeling in obesity and adipose tissue fibrosis. *Adipocyte* 2012; 1: 89-95 [PMID: 23700517] DOI:
Gu P et al. VAT radiodensity is associated with POR in CD

10.4161/adip.19752

