(International Print/Online Journal)

SJIF IMPACT FACTOR: 5.565
PUBMED-National Library of Medicine ID-101739732

ISSN (Print): 2209-2870
ISSN (Online): 2209-2862

International Journal of Medical Science and Current Research (IJMSCR)
Available online at: www.ijmscr.com
Volume 5, Issue 1, Page No: 924-931
January-February 2022

IJMSCR

Study Of Serum Calcium To Magnesium Ratio In Patients Of Acute Coronary Syndrome In Tertiart Care Hospital Of Madhyapradesh

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Type of Publication: Original Research Paper
Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

Introduction: There is still uncertainty about the pathophysiological role of magnesium (Mg) in the course of acute coronary syndrome. Since Mg is considered to be natural physiologic 'calcium (Ca) antagonist', the balance between Ca and Mg seems to be more important to reflect its homoeostasis rather than the measurement of serum Mg level.

Material and methods: A total of 92 patients (67 male, mean age 61.19 ± 13.64 years) with the diagnosis of acute coronary syndrome were enrolled into this study. Patients were divided into 2 groups by non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction to ST- segment elevation myocardial infarction. Clinical and demographic characteristics, and the results of blood samples within 24 hour of admission were evaluated.

Results: The mean Ca/Mg ratio for the entire subject cohort on admission was 4.28 ± 0.53. Although serum Ca level was not statistically significantly different between two groups, the patients with ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction were found to have significantly low levels of serum Mg as compared to the non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction group (p = 0.004). Consistently, ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction was associated with higher Ca/Mg ratio as compared those with non-ST- segment elevation myocardial infarction. In multivariate linear regression analysis, acute coronary syndrome presentation (ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction or non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction) (Unstandardized Coefficients B = 0.262; 95%CI= 0.048 - 0.476; p= 0.017) and serum triglyceride (Unstandardized Coefficients B = -0.002; 95%CI= -0.001 – 0.000; p= 0.027) were found as independent predictors of serum Ca/Mg ratio.

Conclusion: The serum Ca/Mg ratio is higher in ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction patients compared those with non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction. This could be because of a greater decrease in the levels of Mg than in those of Ca.

Keywords: Serum Ca/Mg ratio, acute coronary syndrome, ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction, and non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction

Introduction

Mg (Mg) is an activator of more than 300 enzymatic reactions in the human body and helps in continuing stable intra- and extracellular concentra- tions of serum electrolytes throughout its ion stabi- lizing effect(1). Hypomagnesaemia is a common electrolyte

abnormality, predominantly in the elder- ly and patients receiving diuretic therapy(2).

The frequency of hypomagnesaemia in hospi- talized patients ranges from 8 to 30% and a higher incidence (60-65%) among patients in the intensive care unit(3). Nonetheless, it has been shown that hypomagnesaemia present on admission to the intensive care unit was associated with prolonged hospitalization duration and increased mortality rate compared with normomagnesemic patients(2).

Mg deficiency is a well-rounded causative fac- tor to cardiovascular diseases. Mg has β adrenore- ceptor blocking action, antiplatelet action, reduces the release of Calcium (Ca) from and into the sar- coplasmic reticulum and protects the cells against Ca overload under conditions of ischemia and inhibitory effect on the cardiac conducting system (4). Through these effects, Mg provides to the regu- lation of vascular tone, heart rhythm, and platelet- activated thrombosis, and regarded as a cardio-pro- tective element. Mg deficiency causes vascular endothelial injury, increases low-density lipoprotein concentration and oxidative modification, and therefore stimulates the development and progres- sion of atherosclerosis(5). Nonetheless, healthy sub- jects with the lowest serum Mg level had higher risk for coronary artery disease (CAD) compared to high Mg concentration, even after adjustment for traditional cardiovascular risk factors(6).

The term acute coronary syndrome (ACS) covers the spectrum of clinical conditions ranging from unstable angina to non–ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI) to ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). Although risk factors, in-hospital and long-term prognoses are quite similar, STEMI and NSTEMI are some- what different from each other. Since they do not share the same pathophysiology, different therapeutic goals and approaches are required.

Although studies have documented significant decreases in serum Mg and other electrolytes in patients with ACS, there is still uncertainty about the pathophysiological role of Mg in the course of ACS. Nonetheless, since it should be noted that Mg and Ca compete with one another for the same binding sites on plasma protein molecules, Mg is considered to be natural physiologic 'Ca antago- nist'(7). Thus, the measurement of serum Mg, which commonly used in clinical practice, does not fully reflect its homoeostasis. Instead, the balance between Ca and Mg seems to be more important. The aim of the study was to investigate the status of serum Ca/Mg ratio as a means to understand the underlying pathophysiology of ACS.

Material And Methods

We retrospectively investigated 151 patients, who admitted emergency department with chest pain and hospitalized in coronary intensive care unit with the diagnosis of ACS defined by the cur- rent guidelines. Among subjects with ACS, patients with a diagnosis of STEMI and NSTEMI were enrolled to this study. Clinical and demographic characteristics were obtained from the computer- ized hospital database. The results of blood samples which drawn from the antecubital vein within 24 hour of admission were evaluated. Complete blood count analysis and biochemical measurements including cardiac biomarkers, renal function, elec- trolytes and lipid panel were measured using stan- dard laboratory methods. The estimated glomerular filtration rate values (ml/min/1.73m2) were calcu- lated using the four variable MDRD (Modification of Diet in Renal Disease) equation. Exclusion crite- ria included diagnosis of unstable angina, active blood loss, excessive sweating, drug and/or alcohol abuse, certain chronic medication use such as loop diuretics and thiazides, aminoglycosides and steroids, liver cirrhosis, thyroid and parathyroid dis- eases, chronic gastrointestinal and renal diseases, and lack of biochemical and basal demographical data of patients. 59 patients were excluded and the final 92 patients were enrolled into this study.

Statistical Analysis

The data were tested for normal distributions using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Continuous variables were presented as mean ± standard devia- tion (SD) and categorical variables as percentages. Chi-square test was used for comparison of categor- ical data. Independent samples t test and Mann- Whitney U test were used to compare quantitative data with normal distribution and without normal distribution, respectively, between groups. Univariate correlation was performed with Spearman and Pearson's correlation coefficients. Following univariate correlations, a multivariate linear regression model with a backward selection process was applied.

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Differences were considered statistically significant when the p value was <0.05. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Chicago, Illinois, USA) version 28 was used for all calculations and statistical analyses.

Results

We included 92 patients with ACS (67 male, mean age 61.19 ± 13.64 years). The clinical fea- tures of patients are in Table 1 and the baseline demographic and clinical data were similar between two groups. As expected, there was a significant increase in the serum creatine kinase muscle-brain fraction (CK-MB) and Troponin-T levels in the STEMI group. Mean serum Ca and serum Mg con- centrations, were 9.04 ± 0.56 mmol/L and 2.14 ±0.29 mmol/L, respectively.

The mean Ca/Mg ratio for the entire subject cohort on admission was 4.28 ± 0.53, significantly higher than the normal range published in the previ- ous studies(4, 8).

For further analysis, patients were divided into 2 groups by the type of ACS: NSTEMI and STEMI. Although serum Ca level was not statistically sig- nificantly different between two groups, the patients with STEMI were found to have signifi- cantly low levels of serum Mg as compared to the NSTEMI group (p = 0.004). Nonetheless, the Ca/Mg ratio was differed by clinical presentation. STEMI was associated with higher Ca/Mg ratio as compared those with NSTEMI (Table 2). Also, the K to Mg and the Na to Mg ratios were significantly higher in the STEMI patients compared to those with NSTEMI (Table 2)..

Table 1: Baseline demographical, clinical and laboratory data of patients with acute coronary syndrome according to clinical presentation at admission.

	All	NSTEM	STEMI	P
Male, n	67 (72.8)	35 (71.4)	32	0.466
Age, years	61.19 ±	62,53 ±	59,67 ±	0.319
SBP,	131.50 ±	132.61 ±	130.23	0.636
DBP,	81.44 ±	81.22 ±	81.69 ±	0.870
Previous	42 (45.7)	25 (51)	17	0.186
Diabetes	19 (20.7)	10 (20,4)	9 (20.9)	0.576
Hypertensi	44 (47.8)	26 (53.1)	18	0.194
Hyperlipid	14 (15.2)	10 (20,4)	4 (9.3)	0.117
Hospitaliza	5 (5)	5 (7.50)	5 (4)	0.880
In-Hospital	5 (5.4)	4 (8,2)	1 (2.3)	0.224
Fasting				
eGFR	77.47	76.92	81.15	0.268
Serum	6.04 ±	6.30 ±	5.75 ±	0.200
LDL-C,	126.72 ±	132.53 ±	120.11	0.407
HDL-C,	42.59 ±	44.65 ±	40.25 ±	0.802
Total	195.50	196.00	195.00	0.471
Triglycerid	120.50	128.00	112.00	0.173
Neutrophil	3.07 (3.19)	2.58	3.67	0.043
Hemoglobi	13.70 ±	13.57 ±	13.84 ±	0.577
Platelet	237.51 ±	230.40 ±	245.60	0.316
Mean	9.48 ±	9.42 ±	9.54 ±	0.646

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Red Cell Distributed				
hs-CRP,	23.98 ±	25.28 ±	23.03 ±	0.691
Peak	66.50	44.00	128.00	0.003
Peak				
LVIDd,	47.00	47.00	47.00	0.875
IVSd,	10.39 ±	10.39 ±	10.38 ±	0.970
LVEF, (%)	50.00	55.00	45.00	<

Table 2: . Comparison of serum electrolytes, Ca/Mg, K/Mg, Na/K ratios between cases with NSTEMI and STEMI

	All	NSTEM	STEMI	P
Serum Na,	140.00	141.00	140.00	0.151
Serum K,	4.03	3.98	4.08	0.757
Serum	3.58	3.83	3.56	0.255
Serum Ca,	9.04	9.11	9.03	0.340
Serum Mg,	2.12	2.17	2.05	0.004
Ca / Mg	4.31	4.18	4.40	0.015
K / Mg	1.90	1.85	1.97	0.019
Na / Mg	66.11	65.09	67.63	0.012
Na / K	34.62 ±	34.74 ±	34.48 ±	0.776

There were significant correlations of the Ca/Mg ratio with ACS presentation (STEMI or NSTEMI), left ventricular ejection fraction, serum triglyceride and total cholesterol as has been described in univariate correlation analysis (p val- ues of <0.05) (Table 3). Then, we performed a backward multivariate linear regression analysis to determine the independent variables likely to affect the Ca/Mg ratio including variables, which were clinically important, found significant in univariate correlation analysis and significantly differed between two groups. ACS presentation (STEMI or NSTEMI) (Unstandardized Coefficients B = 0.262; p= 0.017) and serum triglyceride level (Unstandardized Coefficients B = -0.002; p= 0.027) continued significant association with Ca/Mg ratio in multivariate analysis (Table 3).

Table 3: The variables significantly correlated with Ca/Mg ratio in univariate and multivariate analyses.

	Univariate		Multivariate analysis	
			Unstandardized Coefficients	
Clinical presentation (NSTEMI or STEMI)	0.28	0.007	0.262 ((0.048) - (0.476))	0.017
In-hospital mortality	0.04	0.704	0.051 ((-0.463) - (0.565))	0.844
LVEF	-	0.01	-0.007 ((-	0.166
eGFR	0.069	0.51	0.003 ((-	0.141

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Triglyceride	-	0.01	-0.001 ((-	0.027
Total Cholesterol	-0.212	0.043	0.000 ((-0.003) - (0.002))	0.85
Neutrophil / Lymphocyte Ratio	0.19	0.07	0.014 ((-0.012) -	0.294
Peak CK-MB	0.111	0.291	0.000 ((-0.001) - (0.001))	0.93

Discussion

The main finding of our study is that serum Ca/Mg ratio was significantly higher in ACS patients and this increase seems to be due to a greater decrease in the levels of Mg rather than increase in Ca level. Nonetheless, higher serum Ca/Mg ratio was significantly associated with the clinical presentation of ACS, as higher in STEMI patients compared to NSTEMI.

The pathogenesis of ACS involves a multifac- eted interaction among the endothelium, the lipid and tissue factor content of the plaque, the inflam- matory cells, and the thrombogenicity of the blood(9).

Since it regulates hundreds of enzyme sys- tems, Mg may also play a critical role in the patho- physiology of ACS(3). The data showing the poten- tial importance of Mg in acute myocardial infarc- tion (AMI) patients is mostly based on observations in Mg deficient animals. In animal models, experi- mental hypomagnesemic state induces an exagger- ated pro-inflammatory response marked by eleva- tions in C-reactive protein, leukocyte and macrophage activation, release of inflammatory cytokines, acute phase proteins and nuclear factor kappa B(10, 11). Mg deficiency also promotes oxida- tive stress throughout the release of free oxygen radicals and impairs the release of nitric oxide (NO) from coronary endothelium(12). Since NO is a potent endogenous vasodilator and inhibitor of platelet aggregation and adhesion, hypomagnesemia may promote vasoconstriction and platelet-dependent coronary thrombosis, for possible involvement in the setting of AMI(13). Nonetheless, low Mg level affects endothelial fibrinolytic activity by overex- pressing of plasminogen activator inhibitor-1(14). Ravn et al.(15) proposed that the increased arterial thrombus formation in patients with low Mg levels is related to effects on platelet activity rather than to effects on the coagulation cascade. Consequently, this hypomagnesemic state disrupts the endotheli- um, and promotes thrombosis and contributes to consequent influences on plaque vulnerability throughout impairing the balance between extracel- lular matrix production and degradation(16, 17). On the contrary, some Mg reduction in the acute phase of AMI has been mainly attributed Mg binding to free fatty acids released by catecholamines, and thereby, it has been suggested that lower blood concentra- tions of Mg may be a result of AMI(18).

The normal adult total body Mg content is approximately 25g(7). Almost 60% of Mg in bones, 35% is located in high metabolic tissues such as muscles, brain, heart, kidneys and liver. Simply 1% of total body Mg is present in extracellular fluids, and only 0.3% of total body Mg is found in serum(7). Serum Mg concentration is strictly continued with- in the physiological range in healthy individuals and is valuable for rapid assessment of acute changes in clinical medicine(7). However, individu- als still may have a deficit in total body Mg, even when serum Mg levels are within the reference range(19). On the contrary, some individuals have low serum Mg levels but a physiological Mg body content(19). Since most Mg is found intracellular, the measurement of serum Mg cannot completely reveal its homoeostasis. In addition, serum Mg should be measured more than once, because of variations in Mg levels depending upon diet, med- ication and physical activity(20).

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Although the intracellular Mg concentration reflects the total Mg status more exactly compared to the serum Mg levels, measuring the intracellular Mg is inconvenient, as this is a very sophisticated and time-consuming method. Consequently, for this reasons, many studies could not ascertain the exact role of the serum Mg measurement in the setting of AMI.

Mg has complicated effects on myocardial ion fluxes such as Ca channels and the Na-K-ATPase pump(21). Therefore, the status of intracellular Mg is closely linked to the cellular ionic balance through its association with Ca, sodium (Na), and potassium (K). The Mg deficiency caused by the reduction of the Na/K ATPase activity is leading to Na accumu- lation in the myocytes(4). Elevated myocardial Na levels would yield the reverse of the Na+/K+ exchange and a increase in the intracellular Ca lev- els(21). Although Mg and Ca share similar chemical properties, they compete with each other for the same binding sites on plasma protein molecules, depending on their concentrations(1). Mg acts as a mild physiological Ca blocker, primarily through mainly the L-type and N-type Ca channels(22). Thus, a deficiency in Mg will lead to an increase in intra- cellular Ca level.

The mechanisms by which Mg might protect the myocardium in the setting of ischemia and infarction are not fully elucidated. Recent some experimental studies on animal models of AMI have demonstrated that Mg can inhibit the forma- tion of thrombi by reducing platelet aggregation and prolonging blood-clotting time, rescue the physiological activities of endothelial cells by increasing NO production and decrease free radical formation(17, 23, 24). These favorable effects of Mg somewhat might be a consequence of its competi- tion with Ca ions. Since Ca promotes coagulation, Mg inhibits Ca-induced coagulation process(7). The formation and destruction of blood clots is accepted as healthy when Ca and Mg are balanced at a ratio below 4-to-1, whereas pathological blood clot for- mation results when the ratio is above 4-to-1(25). Since platelet activation is a key element in the pathogenesis of STEMI, checking the ratio of serum Ca/Mg rather than only serum Mg level seems to be more important for assessing the bioavailability of Mg. Speich et al.(26) demonstrated an alteration in the serum Ca/Mg ratio in heart mus- cles after an AMI. Ramasamy et al.(4) investigated the levels of Mg with those of other routine elec- trolytes. They found that Ca/Mg, the K to Mg and the Na to K ratios were comparatively higher in the AMI patients than in the control groups, and the Ca/Mg and the K to Mg ratios showed significant correlations with other established cardiac markers such as CK-MB and troponin. They stated that the optimum cut-off of 3.43 for the Ca/Mg ratio had a sensitivity of 96% and a specificity of 78% for the diagnosis of AMI(4). Similar to these studies, we found that serum Ca/Mg ratio was 4.28 ± 0.5, which is significantly higher than the value indicated in the previous studies, and it was higher in STEMI patients rather than NSTEMI patients. We suggested that this elevation could be primarily because of a greater decrease in the levels of serum Mg level than in those of Ca. Although benefits of Mg therapy in AMI patients have been investigated over two decades, no firm guidelines do not support the routine use of oral Mg in patients with AMI. However, treatment strategies for maintaining the serum Ca/Mg ratio within the physiological range through increasing the intracellular Mg levels might theoretically prevent endothelial dysfunction and pathological formation of blood clots in the course of STEMI/NSTEMI. Future studies should address this issue.

While Ca is accepted as a powerful 'death trigger', Mg has anti-apoptotic activity in mito- chondrial permeability transition and antagonizes Ca-overload-triggered apoptosis(7). Also, hypomag- nesaemia may adversely effect the reendothelial- ization of vascular injuries and result in deferred or insufficient angiogenesis and collateral develop- ment, and infarct expansion(27).

In our study, we found a statistically signifi- cant correlation between left ventricular ejection fraction and serum Ca/Mg ratio in univariate analy- sis. However, the value was not statistically signifi- cant in multivariate linear regression analysis likely possibly due to the small sample size of the study.

Mg is an important cofactor of two enzymes that are essential in lipid metabolism: lecithin-cho- lesterol acyltransferase and lipoprotein lipase(28). Therefore, hypomagnesaemia induces a proathero- genic lipid profile by decreasing HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and increasing total serum cholesterol, LDL (low-density-lipoprotein) and triglycerides, especially in diabetic patients(29). However, Niemela et al.(30)

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showed that intracellular platelet Mg levels significantly inversely correlated with serum total cholesterol level. Similarly, we found statistically significant inverse correlations between serum triglyceride level and serum Ca/Mg ratio in univari- ate and multivariate analyses.

Limitations

The present study has a number of limitations. First, this study was limited by its modest size and retrospective design, which may affect the study generalizability. Second, we did not attempt to clar- ify the factors affecting serum concentrations of Mg or serum Ca/Mg ratio in ACS patients. Third, Ueshima et al.(8) showed that recovery of serum Mg concentration was relatively rapid in the acute phase of STEMI compared with NSTEMI. However, we measured Mg and Ca only within 24 h of admission and did not evaluate the time course of serum Mg and Ca levels. These could be the scope of future studies, to further document the util- ity of Ca/Mg ratio in the day-to-day management of ACS. Fourth, although serum Mg level plays a piv- otal role in platelet dependent thrombosis, we did not assess it using an ex vivo model. Despite these limitations, our results propose a need for further studies with larger numbers of patients.

In conclusion, we found that serum Ca/Mg ratio is higher in ACS patients compared to the nor- mal range published in the previous studies. Nonetheless, the serum Ca/Mg ratio is higher in STEMI patients compared those with NSTEMI, probably due to the effect of serum Ca/Mg ratio on platelet-dependent coronary artery thrombosis. This could be because of a greater decrease in the levels of Mg than in those of Ca. This study is already a preliminary report, and we strongly believe that the results will be more accurate when we reach a high- er number of patients.

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