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ANALYSIS OF EXCRETION FRACTION OF URIC ACID

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□ *Excretion fraction of uric acid (EF_{UA}), is one of the most important hallmarks for diagnosis of familial juvenile hyperuricemic nephropathy (FJHN) and hereditary renal hypouricemia. EF_{UA} was measured in 20 patients with FJHN. However, low excretion fraction ($<6\%$) was found also in healthy FJHN family members and healthy controls (ref. ranges EF_{UA} : men 6–12%, women 6–20%). Similar finding of low EF_{UA} was reported recently. Distribution of EF_{UA} was further studied in 2,416 healthy controls, which were selected from 6,000 samples and divided according to age. In conclusion, finding of low EF_{UA} in family members is a risk factor for renal damage and indication for purine metabolic investigations with subsequent molecular biology analysis. As EF_{UA} could be found also in healthy controls—it should be interpreted with care and other features of FJHN (such as hyperuricemia, progressive renal disease in family) should be taken to account.*

Keywords Excretion fraction; Familial juvenile hyperuricemic nephropathy; Uric acid

INTRODUCTION

It has been well documented that the most important single test in the hyperuricemic patient is determination of urinary urate excretion.^[1] It allows to identify under- and overexcretors of uric acid. Excretion fraction of uric acid (EF_{UA} —expressed as ratio of uric acid clearance and creatinine clearance), is one of the most important hallmarks for diagnosis of familial juvenile hyperuricemic nephropathy (FJHN) and hereditary renal

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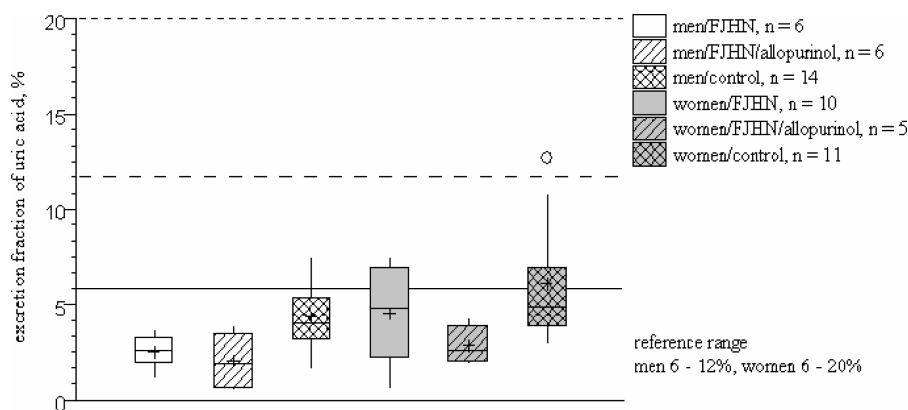


FIGURE 1 Levels of excretion fraction of uric acid in FJHN patients. The control men and women are healthy and unrelated family members.

hypouricemia. FJHN is a dominant disorder with high penetrance, hyperuricemia, low EF_{UA} and progressive renal disease. Gout and hypertension are inconsistent features.^[2] Hereditary renal hypouricemia is characterized by abnormal elevation of EF_{UA} . Novel identification of the urate transporter in the kidney (URAT1) led to the molecular elucidation of this idiopathic renal hypouricemia.^[3] In consideration of our finding of low EF_{UA} in healthy controls and in family members of FJHN, found also in a recent report,^[4] we have performed, therefore, detailed analysis of EF_{UA} in a larger number of patients with FJHN and healthy controls.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Uric acid in serum and urine was measured by a specific enzymic method. Creatinine in plasma and urine was measured by the Jaffé reaction adapted to the autoanalyser. Excretion fraction of uric acid was evaluated as uric acid clearance factored by creatinine clearance $\times 100$. EF_{UA} was measured in 20 patients with FJHN and in 2,416 healthy controls selected from 6,000 samples. Normal renal function was defined as a creatinine clearance of glomerular filtration rate greater than 80 ml/min per 1.73 m². Diagnosis of FJHN was based on family history with progressive renal disease with autosomal dominant mode of inheritance, detailed purine metabolic, and molecular biology investigations. Linkage analysis in our FJHN families have been described in detail previously.^[5]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The values of EF_{UA} in patients with FJHN are presented on the Figure 1. The mean, median, range, S.D., and S.E.M. are shown. Low excretion

TABLE 1 Measured New Reference Range of EF_{UA}

Age, sex	n	Median	Average \pm SD	Range
0–6 weeks	63	27.2	29.1 ± 11.7	17.4–40.8
6 weeks–1 year	744	22.0	23.9 ± 10.4	13.5–34.3
1–3 years	373	14.0	15.2 ± 6.2	9.0–21.4
3–13 years	961	11.3	12.2 ± 5.5	6.7–17.7
>13 men	145	7.1	8.0 ± 3.7	4.3–11.7
>13 women	130	9.9	10.3 ± 4.2	6.1–14.5

fraction (<6%) was found also in healthy and unrelated FJHN family members. Similar finding was reported.^[4] Therefore, distribution of EF_{UA} according to age in large group of 2,416 samples of healthy controls was further studied and is given at the Table 2. Low excretion fraction was found in a part of healthy men. Value EF_{UA} of $8.0\% \pm 3.7$ was found in collection of men older than 13 years; value of $10.3\% \pm 4.2$ was found in women (>13 years). These results are in accord with excretion fraction of urate in healthy UK population, in men being $8.1\% \pm 3.2$; in women being $12.8\% \pm 2.9$.^[6]

The evaluation of uric acid levels in blood and urine is essential for recognizing overproduction or underexcretion in several rare metabolic disorders of purine metabolism. Moreover, recent studies in both humans and experimental animals have led to renewed interest in uric acid and its association with frequent diseases such as cardiovascular events, hypertension, and renal disease progression.^[7] It was found that soluble uric acid has important biological roles. There is evidence that uric acid has pro-inflammatory and proliferative effects on vascular smooth muscle cells, and causes dysfunction of endothelial cells. This cellular mechanism may translate into why uric acid has a role as a true cardiovascular risk factor, particularly for the development of hypertension and renal disease.^[8] Therefore, assessment of blood and urinary concentrations of uric acid will be more important than previously thought. The proper evaluation of EF_{UA} could be a first and easy step in diagnosis of new patients with under—or overexcretion of uric acid.

The primary cause of low EF_{UA} found in healthy subjects seems to be unknown and further studies are needed. Different values in patients with FJHN are probably due to genetic heterogeneity of this disease. In conclusion, finding of low EF_{UA} in family members is a risk factor for renal damage and indication for purine metabolic investigations with subsequent molecular biology analysis. As low EF_{UA} could be found also in healthy controls—it should be interpreted with care and other features of FJHN (such as hyperuricemia, progressive renal disease in family, and eventually gout) should be taken to account.

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