How Diet Impacts IgA Nephropathy and FSGS Transcript

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Gluten and Kidney Disease

But what if the food on your plate could be part of the treatment? This is where exciting research comes in. A groundbreaking study published in Kidney International found that gluten can actually exacerbate I. G.

nephropathy. Research demonstrated that a component of gluten called gliadin interacts with a receptor called GD89, leading to increased mesenchial IgA1 deposits in the kidneys.

In simpler terms, gluten consumption may be directly contributing to the harmful antibody buildup that damages kidneys in this disease. This is Doctor Talks.

Real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. So today we are diving deep into a topic that's absolutely critical for anyone dealing with specific forms of kidney disease, especially IgNF property or FSGS.

We are going to explore cutting edge research on how and what you can eat that can dramatically impact these conditions. focusing on the science behind low protein, plant dominant and gluten free diets.

I'm particularly excited about this episode because it represents where medicine is heading, understanding the incredible connections between different systems in the body, especially the gut kidney access and how simple dietary changes might help manage conditions that were previously only treated with medications.

Understanding IgA Nephropathy and FSGS

Let's start by understanding what these conditions actually are. ITU nephropathy, sometimes called Burgess disease, is the most common form of glomerulonephritis worldwide.

It occurs when an antibody called immunoglobulin A builds up in the kidneys, causing inflammation that can eventually lead to kidney failure in some patients.

FSGS affects the kidney's filtering units causing scarring of the glomeruli. This condition can lead to significant protein loss in the urine, swelling and progressive kidney function decline.

Traditional kidney medicines has typically focused on medications that suppress the immune system or control blood pressure. But what if the food on your plate could be part of the treatment?

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Gut-Kidney Axis and Gluten-Free Diets

Even more fascinating, when mice in this study were placed on a gluten-free diet, there was a reduction in these harmful deposits and improvement in kidney function markers.

This connects to what we call the gut-kidney axis, which Dr. Rosana has extensively studied. In her research, she explains how our gut microbiota, the community of microorganisms living in our intestine, plays a crucial role in IGF-

ropathy.

Think of your gut as not just a digestive organ but as one of the largest immune organs in your body. When certain proteins like gluten pass through a comprehensive gut barrier, what we sometimes call leaky gut, they can trigger immune responses that lead to inflammation throughout the body including the kidneys.

In the case of IgA nephropathy, gluten seems to be particularly problematic. It can trigger the production of abnormal IgA antibodies that eventually deposit in the kidneys, causing damage over time.

By removing gluten from the diet, we may be able to reduce this harmful cascade effect. For FSGS, the dietary recommendations are slightly different, but equally important.

The most recent KDOKI guidelines from 2024 recommend Maintaining protein intake around 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. Too much protein, especially animal protein, can increase the workload on already damaged kidneys and potentially accelerate disease progression.

A plant dominant diet tends to be naturally lower in protein while providing anti-inflammatory components that may help reduce protein in the urine and inflammation.

Protein Intake and Plant-Based Nutrition

I do remember a patient who came to me in his early 40s who was constantly travelling and living on fast food and airport meals. He came to our clinic after being diagnosed with rapidly progressing IgA nephropathy and his kidney function at that time was 15%. His kidney function had dropped by 15% in just one year and he had alarming levels of protein in his urine.

Several doctors have told him that dialysis seemed inevitable. When we ran comprehensive testing and not just standard kidney panels but also food sensitivity testing, organic acid testing, gut microbiome analysis and toxic burden assessment, we uncovered multiple interconnected issues.

He has significant reactivity to gluten and dairy, severe imbalances in his gut microbiome, several nutrient deficiencies, evidence of mold exposure and signs of chronic infections.

We implemented a comprehensive protocol addressing all these factors. This included a personalized anti-inflammatory nutrition plan, targeted supplements to heal his gut barrier and support kidney function, strategies to improve detoxification, stress management techniques, and coordination with his workplace to address the mold issue.

Case Study: Reversing Kidney Decline

Four months later, the protein in his urine had decreased by over 60% and his kidney function not only stabilized but actually improved 20%. One year after implementing these changes, he hasn't lost any additional kidney function and has been able to reduce several of his medications.

From a functional medicine perspective, autoimmune diseases like IgA nephropathy develop due to complex interplay of factors. I like to think of it as a three-leg stool.

The first leg is genetic predisposition. The second leg is intestinal permeability or we call it as leaky gut. When tight junctions in your intestinal lining become compromised and larger food particles, toxins and pathogens can enter your bloodstream, triggering your immune response throughout the body.

And the third link represents the environmental triggers, food sensitivities, chronic infections, chemical toxins, heavy metals, chronic stress, hormone imbalance and nutrient deficiencies.

You need all three legs for the autoimmune process to take hold. This is why simply addressing one trigger like

removing gluten might help some patients dramatically while others see minimal benefit.

So what are some practical steps based on both the research and functional medicine principles? First, if you have iogenephropathy, consider an elimination diet that removes gluten and other common inflammatory foods.

Start with eliminating gluten completely for at least 30 days.

Functional Medicine Approach to Autoimmune Kidney Disease

That means wheat, barley, rye. Due to cross-contamination, sometimes oats as well. Focus on healing intestinal permeability by removing irritants, adding digestive support if needed, including gut-healing nutrients like L-glutamine and zinc, and repopulating beneficial bacteria.

Third, for both conditions, emphasize plant-based proteins rather than animal proteins when possible. Good sources include lentils, chickpeas, beans, organic tofu, tem.

Fourth, address inflammation comprehensively through optimizing sleep, implementing stress management techniques, regular physical activity, and targeted anti-inflammatory supplements under a physician.

What excites me most about this research is that it puts more control in your hands. While medications certainly play an important role, dietary changes represent something you can implement daily that can have a significant impact on your disease progression and quality of life.

If you're interested in exploring these dietary approaches, I recommend starting with a comprehensive assessment of your kidney function. protein levels in your urine, inflammatory markers and gut microbiome to assess the baseline.

Practical Diet Steps and Closing Advice

And remember these changes don't have to happen overnight. Even small consistent shifts in your diet can add up to significant benefits over time. So focus on progress not perfection.

The connection between our diet, gut health and kidney function represents one of the most exciting frontiers in functional nephrology and I'm thrilled to be sharing it with you.

If you have any questions or you're interested in a concert, visit our website, drbismar.com. Bye now. Thank you for tuning into Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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