



## ***The Effect of Endurance Exercise on High-Sensitivity C - Reactive Protein in Serum of Inactive Allergic Asthma Participants***

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### ***Abstract***

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of endurance training on serum CRP (C-reactive protein) levels in adult asthma patients. For this purpose, pre and post aerobic training (3 times-weekly/ 3 months) blood samples were taken after overnight fast in 32 adult men with asthma patients that was randomly divided to exercise and control groups. Anthropometrical indexes were also monitored in two occasions. All data changes were compared by *t*-tests. At baseline, there were no differences in the serum CRP, body weight and other anthropometrical indexes between the two groups. Compared to pre-training, the CRP levels decreased significantly after aerobic training in the exercise group but not in the control subjects. We observed a significant decrease in all anthropometrical indexes in exercise group. All paper remained without any changes in the control group. Thus, we conclude that the endurance exercise activity improves systemic inflammation in asthma patients.

**Keywords:** Asthma Patients, Endurance Exercise, High-Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein.

### **Background and purpose**

To date, the current management of asthma focuses on the optimal control of airway inflammation as a central component of asthma control. Asthma is a disorder characterized by inflammation of the airways and inflammation cytokines plays an important role in this disease (12). Accumulating evidence indicates that asthma is a complex syndrome with many clinical phenotypes. Its major characteristics include a variable degree of airflow obstruction, bronchial hyper-responsiveness, and chronic airway inflammation. There is considerable evidence that circulating CRP has emerged as one of the most powerful independent predictors of cardiovascular disease risk and cardiovascular death (34). It has been long known that C-reactive protein (CRP) is a major inflammation sensitive plasma protein in humans, and its synthesis by the liver is regulated to a large extent by the pro-inflammatory cytokine interleukin (IL)-6. It was reported that after adjustment for age, smoking status, diabetes, blood pressure and the use of hormone replacement therapy, the relative risk in top CRP is more than others cardiovascular risk factors such as LDL (30). A large body of evidence suggests that Systemic inflammation is a possible element in the link between respiratory impairment and cardiovascular events. It was also reported that reduced lung function has been associated with various inflammation sensitive plasma proteins (24,25). In this area, some researchers suggests that systemic inflammation, as measured by using C-reactive protein (CRP) levels, might be important in the relationship between obesity and asthma (2,26). Several studies have found a high inverse relation between CRP and function such as forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV1) (31). Some studies have indicated a positive correlation between asthma and increased CRP levels (7,9,15,29). There are few longitudinal studies that physical activity or aerobic training decreases systemic inflammation in obesity or chronic diseases (4). But, there is limited literature on CRP responses to exercise training in asthma patients. Therefore, the present study aims to evaluate the significance of a long term aerobic exercise on serum CRP in adult men with asthma.

### **Materials and methods**

The study was approved by the Ethics Committees of Islamic Azad University, Parand Branch. The objective of this semi-experimental study was to evaluate serum CRP response to aerobic exercise program in group asthma patients. For this purpose, thirty two adult asthmatic men ( $39 \pm 5$  years,  $BMI = 29.06 \pm 3$   $Kg/m^2$ ) participated in this study by

accessible sampling and divided to exercise (3 days for 12 weeks) and control (no exercise) groups by randomly. Spirometry tests (Minispire model, Made in Italy) was performed in order to asthma diagnosis as well as to determine the asthma severity. FEV1 and forced expiratory volume in 1 s / forced vital capacity (FEV1/FVC) were measured. All patients were asked to avoid having tea or coffee as well as other airways dilator food for at least 4 hours prior to spirometry test. Before signing a consent form, all participants received written and verbal explanations about the nature of the study.

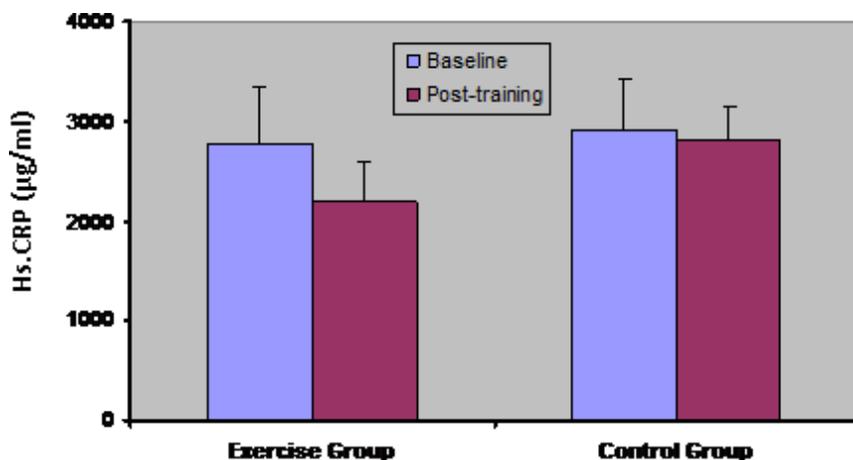
All subjects were inactive, and none reported engaging in systemic (more than one time per week) sport activities before the study. Inclusion criteria for study group were determined as existing asthma for at least 2 years. Exclusion criteria included medication that alter carbohydrate metabolism, diabetes, inability to exercise, and history of hypertension or heart disease (18-20). All participants of both groups completed the anthropometrical measurements, and blood samples before and after the exercise protocol. Measurements of height (m) and weight (kg) were performed with the barefoot and dressed in shorts and shirt. With these measures, the body mass index (BMI = weight/height<sup>2</sup>) was calculated. Visceral fat, and body fat percentage was determined using body composition monitor (OMRON, Finland). The subjects were advised to avoid any physical activity 48 hours before the blood sampling. Blood samples (5 ml) were taken between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. after 10 to 12 hours overnightfast to measure serum CRP from brachial vein in sitting position. Serums were immediately separated and stored at - 80 °C until the assays were performed. In fact, fasting blood samples were taken pre-training (pre-test) and 48 h after the training (post- test).

Serum CRP was determined by ELISA method (Diagnostics Biochem Canada Inc. HsCRP). Exercise training program was performed at 60 to 80 percent of maximum heart rate of the participants. Aerobic exercises included walking or running, and stationary cycling. The intensity of the activity of the participants was controlled by the heart rate monitor (Polar). All participants in the control group were barred from contributing in any other exercise. Finally, all measurements consist of fasting blood sampling; anthropometric measurements repeated 48 h after the last exercise trial.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the variables with normal distribution. Independent sample *t* test used to observe group mean difference at baseline. Pre- to post training changes were determined by two-tailed *t*-tests, and the level of significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.0).

## Results

Baseline and post training CRP levels, and anthropometrical indexes of two groups are presented in Table 1. The spirometric test showed that all patients in mild to moderate asthma severity (FEV1 =  $74 \pm 6.5$  (%), FEV1 / FVC =  $67.3 \pm 4.2$ ). The finding by independent *t* - test showed no differences in the age, spirometry markers, body weight and other anthropometrical indexes and serum CRP between the two groups ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).



**Fig. 1.** The changes pattern of serum Hs.CRP in baseline and by interventions in two groups

Compared to pre-training, serum CRP significantly reduced ( $p = 0.011$ ) after exercise training, but not in the control groups (Fig. 1). This finding indicates the positive role of endurance exercise training on CRP and inflammatory cytokine. Anthropometric variables improved significantly after the therapy in exercise group. Body mass index levels were significantly decreased in response to exercise program when compared with baseline levels ( $p = 0.021$ ). In addition, we found that endurance exercise reduced body fat percentage, body weight and visceral fat in exercise group ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

Our study showed that aerobic exercise training for three months decreases serum CRP in adult men with asthma patients. In present study, we also observed that a reduction in anthropometric variables after aerobic training in exercise group. Adipose tissue secretes a variety of bioactive mediators including adipocytokines such as adiponectin, leptin, resistin or classical cytokines such as the pro-inflammatory mediators TNF- $\alpha$  and interleukin 6 (IL-6) (13,35). On the other hand, reported studies have found an inverse relationship between lung function and markers of systemic inflammation (1). So that, impaired respiratory function such as FEV1 is strongly related with cardiovascular risk factors, atherosclerosis, arterial stiffness, cardiovascular disease and mortality, although the mechanisms underlying this response are a matter of some debate. These changes are associated with disturbance in immune response in the lung. High sensitivity C-reactive protein is an inflammatory mediator known to be related to inflammation, and cardiovascular diseases (8). On the other hand, a positive relationship has been reported between raised CRP levels and current asthma (10,16), respiratory impairment (4,11), and bronchial responsiveness (26,27) intervention. A recent study has been reported positive association between raised hs-CRP levels, current asthma, respiratory impairment and bronchial hyper-reactivity (24,16). The relation between asthma and CRP is by no means clear, however, and could at least in part reflect the role of obesity in CRP production (31). Some recent study showed that CRP level in stable asthma is significantly higher compared to those without asthma state. These researchers support the hypothesis that not only local but also systemic inflammation exists in bronchial asthma. To support this data, Jousilhti et al (15-17) demonstrated that asthma increased gradually with increasing CRP. The finding of another showed an inverse linear relationship between CRP concentrations and measures of pulmonary function in subjects without pulmonary disease and in never-smokers (5). It was reported that exercise training for long time is associated with low systemic inflammation in chronic diseases (13,33), although the molecular mechanisms for this are less understood.

In current study, we observed a significant reduction in serum CRP by three months aerobic exercise program in asthma patients. On the other hand, decreased serum CRP was accompanied a reduction in all anthropometrical markers such as body weight, BMI, body fat percentage and visceral fat. Since most previous studies have emphasized the fact that amplified adipose tissues especially abdominal obesity is associated with increased inflammatory cytokine, it appears reduced body weight along with decreased body fat in the subjects caused by exercise is one of the main reasons of decline in serum levels of CRP. In fact, it appears that reduced levels of body fat through exercise may be attributed to reduced secretion of this inflammatory cytokine from adipose tissue into the bloodstream. In this context, some other studies on obese subjects or subjects with other chronic diseases such as diabetes or cardiovascular diseases have also reported that once physical activity is associated with a significant reduction in body fat levels it leads to the decrease of inflammatory cytokines, such as IL-6 - TNF- $\alpha$  and/or the rise of anti-inflammatory cytokine (30). Despite these findings, failure to measure other cytokines is one of the main limitations of this study which calls for evaluation in future studies (21-23).

## Conclusion

The CRP levels declined subsequent to the endurance activity in the exercise group but. Also the anthropometrical indexes in exercise group were significantly decreased. Hence, we conclude that the endurance exercise improves systemic inflammation in asthma patients.

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