

# **The Role of Campylobacter in Reactive Arthritis**

Thesis  
Submitted for partial fulfillment of  
MD degree in Internal Medicine

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( 1995 )



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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وكذلك الهيئات الأتية :

- ..... (١)
- ..... (٢)
- ..... (٣)

## Acknowledgment

*I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. M. Fathy Tamara, Professor of Internal Medicine and Head of Rheumatology Unit, Ain-Shams University, for his kind guidance and constant help which made this work possible. It is a great honor to have this work under his supervision.*

*I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. M. Medhat El-Shafei, Professor of Internal Medicine, Ain-Shams University, for his fatherly guidance, his continuous encouragement and his moral support.*

*I am deeply thankful to Prof. Dr. Rasha M. Khalil, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, Ain-Shams University, for her worthy experience and valuable advises throughout the practical part and the rest of this work.*

*I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. Emad A. Barakat, Professor of Internal Medicine, Ain-Shams University, for his close supervision, valuable instructions, great support and gentleness throughout this work.*

*I am greatly indebted to Prof. Dr. Moshira H. Fayek, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, Ain-Shams University who had been kind enough to spare no effort or time to advise willingly.*

*I wish to thank Dr. Zynab Ali Galal, Dr. Of Clinical Pathology; Dr. Manal Hoseen A. Halawa, Chemist, and the Chemist, Khalid M, and all the staff of the Rheumatology Unit Lab., Ain-Shams University, for their kind help in completing the practical part of this work. I wish to extend my appreciation and thankfulness to all staff members, colleagues of the Immunology Laboratory, University Specilized Hospital, Ain-Shams University whose noble characters and their unlimited help impressed me very much.*

*Dr. Adel Mahmoud.*

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# Introduction and Aim of work

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## *The Role of Campylobacter in Reactive Arthritis*

### **INTRODUCTION :-**

Reactive arthritis refers to the occurrence of an acute non-suppurative sterile, inflammatory arthropathy arising after an infectious process, but at a site remote from the primary infection (*Cush and Lipsky, 1993*). After the infectious onset, an immunologically mediated reactive inflammation occurs (*Aho et al., 1985*). There is no microbial invasion of the synovial space (*Calin, 1992*).

HLA-B<sub>27</sub> is strongly associated with reactive arthritis and the duration of symptoms is longer and the manifestations are more severe among HLA-B<sub>27</sub>-positive patients (*Aho, 1989*).

The arthritis is mainly mono- or pauci-articular, and asymmetrical. Enthesopathies and dactylitis have been described in about 10% of patients. Extra-articular features are common and mainly affect skin and eyes together with manifestations due to the triggering infection (*Mielants and Veys, 1993*).

Arthritis following intestinal bacterial infections was first reported in 1916 by Reiter and Fiessinger and LeRoy. Certain bacteria have been more commonly found to cause reactive arthritis e.g. certain strains of

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Salmonella, Shigella, and Yersinia enterocolitica. More recently, an association between reactive arthritis and intestinal infection with Campylobacter jejuni has been reported (*Bremell et al., 1991*).

### **AIM OF THE WORK :-**

The aim of this work is to study the role of Campylobacter jejuni in reactive arthritis and to investigate its association with HLA-B<sub>27</sub> in Egyptian patients. Also, to study the relation between Campylobacter jejuni induced reactive arthritis to rheumatoid factor and hidden rheumatoid factor.

# Review of Literature

## *Bacteriology of Campylobacter*

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND :-**

Campylobacter species have been known to cause abortion in cattle and sheep since the initial isolation of *Vibrio fetus* (now called *Campylobacter fetus*) in 1909 (*Simbert, 1978*).

In 1947, *Vibrio fetus* were first cultured from a person, and over the next ten years these organisms were occasionally isolated from blood, cerebrospinal fluid and other body fluids, and from abscesses. Most of the affected patients were elderly or were debilitated by alcoholism, malignant disease, diabetes mellitus, or cardiovascular diseases. Because *Campylobacter fetus* caused systemic illness predominantly in compromised hosts, it was considered an opportunist (*Blaser and Keller, 1981*).

*King, (1957)* recognized that there were two groups of *Vibrio fetus* isolated, each with distinct serologic and biochemical characteristics. She called the organisms that grew best at 42°C “related Vibrios” and noted that although the organisms were isolated from blood cultures, in each case, the patient had had a preceding diarrheal illness. King postulated that the related Vibrios caused acute diarrheal illness but could not be isolated from fecal specimens because they were slowly growing and fastidious.

Using a selective medium, *Dekeyser et al., (1972)* succeeded in isolating related *Vibrios* from stools of patients with diarrhea.

Because, *Vibrio fetus* and the related *Vibrios* did not ferment glucose and differed fundamentally in DNA composition from *Vibrio* species, Véron and Chatelain proposed the new genus *Campylobacter* ("Campylo" means curved and "bacter" means rod) (*Véron and Chatelain, 1973*). Under their schema, King's related *Vibrios* became *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli*, and the opportunistic organisms became *Campylobacter fetus* subsp. *fetus* (*Blaser and Reller, 1981*).

### **TAXONOMY OF CAMPYLOBACTER :-**

Since *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli* differ only slightly in phenotypic characteristics (*Skirrow and Benjamin, 1980*) and *Campylobacter jejuni* is found more commonly in human beings, both are referred to collectively as *Campylobacter jejuni*. King's related *Vibrios* have also been called *Campylobacter fetus* subspecies *jejuni*, whereas the opportunists were termed *Campylobacter fetus* subsp. *intestinalis*, but these names are no longer approved (*Blaser and Reller, 1981*).

*In 1973, Véron and Chatelain* described a system of classifying *Campylobacteria* that forms the bases of the current

classification system. They reported that the genus *Campylobacter* family spirillaceae contains three species;

- *C. fetus*
- *C. jejuni / coli*.
- *C. sputorum*.

• The first species (*Campylobacter fetus*);

*Campylobacter fetus* included three subspecies.

- A) *C. fetus* subspecies *fetus* (the same as *Vibrio fetus* subspecies *intestinalis* of *Florent 1960*).
- B) *C. fetus* subspecies *venerealis* (the same as *Florent 1960*).
- C) *C. fetus* subspecies *venerealis* biotype *intermedius*.

• The second species (*Campylobacter jejuni/coli*):-

*Campylobacter jejuni / coli* included two subspecies, *C. jejuni* and *C. coli*, both represented the related *Vibrios* of *King, (1957)*.

• The third species (*Campylobacter sputorum*):-

*Campylobacter sputorum* included two subspecies, *C. sputorum* subspecies *sputorum* and *C. sputorum* subspecies *bubulus*.

In 1977, *Skirrow* confirmed that one species, *C. jejuni* is a major etiological agent of human enteritis. This constituted the stimulus for an