

UMBILICAL CORD GHRELIN IN PRETERM AND TERM NEWBORNS AND ITS RELATION TO SOME METABOLIC HORMONES AND ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS

THESIS

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List of Abbreviation

- GH: growth hormone.
- GHS: growth hormone secretagogue.
- GHRP: growth hormone releasing peptide.
- GHS-R1a: growth hormone secretagogue receptor 1a.
- GHRH: growth hormone releasing hormone.
- GH-IGF-1 axis: growth hormone –insulin growth factor 1 axis.
- GLP-1: glycoprotein 1.
- IGF-I: insulin growth factor 1.
- STAT: signal transducers and activators of transcription 1.
- EAE:
- SCN: suprachiasmatic nucleus.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
List of Abbreviations	--
List of Figures	--
List of Tables	--
Introduction	1
Aim of the Work	3
Review of Literature	-
Fetal Growth	4
Ghrelin	14
Leptin	53
Insulin	73
Subjects and Methods	79
Results	89
Discussion	109

Summary	117
Conclusion	119
Recommendations	120
References	121
Arabic Summary	--

List of Tables

<i>Table</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Review of Literature</i>		
(1)	Stages of fetal growth.	5
(2)	Genetic disorders characterized by prenatal growth deficiency are shown in.	8
(3)	Problems Associated With Premature Infants.	12
(4)	Factors and conditions that increase or decrease insulin secretion.	75
(5)	Effects of Insulin on Target Tissues.	76
<i>Results</i>		
(6)	Descriptive analysis of the quantitative data of the studied group.	89
(7)	Descriptive analysis of the qualitative data of the studied group.	90
(8)	Comparison between Full term and Preterm Group as regards anthropometric parameters.	90
(9)	Comparison between Full term and Preterm Group as regards laboratory parameters.	93
(10)	Comparison between the both sexes in full term group as regards anthropometric parameters.	95
(11)	Comparison between the both sexes in full term group as regards laboratory parameters.	97
(12)	Comparison between both sexes in preterm group as regards anthropometric parameters.	98
(13)	Comparison between both sexes in preterm group as regards laboratory parameters.	99
(14)	Correlation study between umbilical cord Ghrelin and gestational age, anthropometric parameters.	100

List of Tables (Cont.)

<i>Table</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
(15)	Correlation study between umbilical cord Ghrelin and other laboratory parameters.	103
(16)	Correlation study between umbilical cord Leptin and gestational age, anthropometric parameters.	105
(17)	Correlation study between umbilical cord Leptin and other laboratory parameters.	108

List of Figures

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Review of Literature</i>		
(1)	The extensive growth in length that occurs during the early fetal period.	6
(2)	Structures of human and rat ghrelins.	15
(3)	Dendrogram alignment of ghrelin receptor (GHS-R) and other GPCRs.	19
(4)	Possible interaction between GHRH, Ghrelin/GHS and SIRF at hypothalamic and pituitary levels.	24
(5)	The regulation of secretion and actions of ghrelin on the gut-brain axis.	29
(6)	Schematic representation of the main signalling pathways activated by the leptin receptor.	55
<i>Results</i>		
(7)	Comparison between skin fold thicknesses in full term and preterm groups.	91
(8)	Comparison between abdominal and head circumferences in full term and preterm groups.	92
(9)	Comparison between laboratory parameters in full term and preterm groups.	94
(10)	Comparison between triceps, biceps and subscapular skin fold thicknesses in males and females of full term group.	96
(11)	Correlation between Ghrelin and weight in preterm group.	101
(12)	Correlation between Ghrelin and subscapular skin fold thickness in full term group.	101

List of Figures (Cont.)

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
(13)	Correlation between Ghrelin and abdominal circumference in full term group.	102
(14)	Correlation between Ghrelin and Leptin in full term group.	104
(15)	Correlation between Leptin and weight in preterm group.	106
(16)	Correlation between Leptin and length in preterm group.	106
(17)	Correlation between Leptin and Abdominal circumference in preterm group.	107

INTRODUCTION

Ghrelin and Leptin are newly discovered metabolic hormones that play an important role in the regulation of appetite, carbohydrate, lipid metabolism and energy balance of the human body (**Ng et al., 2005**).

Ghrelin is a 28-amino acid peptide secreted by the fundus of the stomach, the hypothalamus and the placenta in rats and humans. Ghrelin stimulates GH secretion and has orexigenic effects and also increases adiposity by decreasing fat utilization (**Farquhar et al., 2003**).

In adult humans, plasma ghrelin increases and decreases to a nadir 90 min after the meal, suggesting that it plays a physiological role in meal initiation (**Cummings et al., 2001**). Ghrelin is closely associated with glucose metabolism and body mass. It induces hyperglycemia and decreases plasma insulin concentration. Conversely, hyperglycemia and insulin (in absence of hypoglycemia) decrease plasma ghrelin (**Farquhar et al., 2003**).

Leptin is single chain proteohormone secreted by white adipocytes and acts on leptin receptor of the hypothalamus to suppress the appetite and stimulates energy expenditure (**Kojima et al., 1999**).

Recent evidence suggests that both ghrelin and leptin follows a similar diurnal pattern and may interact in providing important adiposity signals from the periphery to the central nervous system (**Traebert et al., 2002**).

Previous studies on leptin in preterm infants demonstrated a significant temporal relationship between

increase in circulating leptin levels and rapid accumulation of body fat mass, especially during the latter half of the third trimester (Ng et al., 2005).

Whether ghrelin follows the same pattern of increase as Leptin with increasing gestational age is unknown. So, we will discuss that in our study.

Aim of the Work

This study aims to investigate plasma ghrelin concentration at birth, the relationship of ghrelin with metabolic hormones including Leptin and insulin and its association with anthropometric parameters, in appropriately grown preterm and term newborns.

Fetal Growth

Growth is the process of increasing size (body dimensions) over a period of time (*Lubchenco and Koops, 1987*). Normal fetal growth depends on genetically predetermined growth potential that can be predicted from parental characteristics. This growth potential is further modulated by fetal, placental, maternal and external factors (*Bascha and Wiener, 2004*).

Fetal Development

- **Embryonic period**

The human embryonic period represents the first 8 weeks of intrauterine life. The first week of human development begins with fertilization followed by early cell division forming the blastocyst. This is then followed by a series of cell divisions without cytoplasmic growth. At the end of the first week and into the second week the implantation occurs.

By the second week rapid growth/differentiation of the extraembryonic tissue (trophoblast) occur. The cavity within the blastocyst and the inner cell mass that forms the embryo begin early differentiation. During the third week trophoblast cells continue to invade uterine wall in the process of early placentation (villi formation). Also axial process formation (notochord), mesoderm differentiation (somites, heart, vascular) ectoderm differentiation (neuralation), the embryonic disc begins to fold, on the embryo surface sensory placodes and limb buds appear. This period of organogenesis is usually extended to cover until 8 weeks of development. Folding of the embryo continues and the earliest functioning organ is the heart. Other systems such as the circulatory, digestive, urogenital and nervous system begin to all take shape (*Hill, 2007*).

During WK 4-8, lateral folding of the embryonic plate, followed by growth at the cranial and caudal ends and the budding of arms and legs, produces a human like shape. Precursors of skeletal muscles and vertebrae (somites) appear, along with the branchial arches. By the end of WK 8, the rudiments of all major organ systems have developed (*Needlman, 2004*).

Table (1): Stages of fetal growth

<i>Week</i>	<i>Developmental Events</i>
1	Fertilization and implantation; beginning of embryonic period
2	Endoderm and ectoderm appear(bilaminar embryo)
3	First missed menstrual period; mesoderm appears (trilaminar embryo); somites begin to form.
4	Neural folds fuse; folding of embryo into human-like shape; arm and leg buds appear; crown-rump length 4-5 mm
5	Lens placodes, primitive mouth, digital rays on hands
6	Primitive nose, philtrum, primary palate; crown-rum length 21-23 mm
7	Eyelids begin
8	Ovaries and testes distinguishable
9	Fetal period begins; crown-rump length 5 cm; weight 9 g
10	External genitals distinguishable
20	Usual lower limit of viability; weight 460 g; length 19 cm
25	Third trimester begins; weight 900g; length 25 cm
28	Eyes open; fetus turns head down; weight 1,300 g
38	Term

(Needlman et al., 2004)