Int. J. Sci. R. Tech., 2025 2(3)
A Multidisciplinary peer-reviewed Journal
www.ijsrtjournal.com [ISSN: 2394-7063]

Original Article

Current Advances in Pharmacotherapy for Diabetes Mellitus: A Comprehensive Review

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus poses a significant global health challenge, driving the need for ongoing advancements in pharmacotherapy. This review examines recent developments in the management of diabetes, focusing on innovative therapeutic agents and emerging technologies. Notably, tirzepatide, a first-in-class medication approved by the FDA, targets both GLP-1 and GIP receptors, enhancing insulin production and improving glycemic control while also addressing weight management and cardiovascular risks. We explore the potential of gene therapy and stem cell interventions, which aim to address the underlying causes of diabetes, particularly in Type 1 diabetes, by restoring endogenous insulin production and preventing pancreatic beta cell destruction. The integration of machine learning in clinical practice is also discussed, highlighting its role in personalizing diabetes management through accurate predictions of treatment responses and patient risk stratification. Furthermore, the shift from a glucose-centric approach to a more holistic, patient-centered model is emphasized. This new paradigm prioritizes individual patient needs, preferences, and overall health, moving beyond mere glycemic control to enhance quality of life. In summary, advancements in pharmacotherapy for diabetes reflect a commitment to improving treatment outcomes through innovative and personalized strategies. Continued research and collaboration are essential for transforming diabetes management and enhancing the quality of life for patients globally.

Keywords: Diabetes mellitus, Pharmacotherapy, Emerging technologies

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a diverse collection of metabolic diseases marked by persistently high blood sugar levels brought on by deficiencies in either the action or production of insulin, or production of insulin, or both. The international Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that approximately 537 million adults aged 20-79 years were living with diabetes in 2021 [1]. This epidemic poses significant public health challenges, including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, neuropathy, and retinopathy, leading to substantial morbidity and mortality. Diabetes is primarily classified into two main types: type 1 diabetes (T1D) and type 2 diabetes (T2D). T1D is an autoimmune condition resulting in the destruction of insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas, typically diagnosed in childhood or adolescence. In contrast, T2D, the more prevalent form of the disease, often develops in adulthood and is associated with insulin resistance and eventual beta-cell dysfunction. While lifestyle interventions such as diet and exercise remain fundamental in managing T2D, pharmacotherapy plays a critical role, particularly as the disease progresses [2].

The pharmacological management of diabetes has undergone significant evolution over the last few decades. Traditional therapies like insulin and sulfonylureas have been supplemented by newer classes of agents, each with distinct mechanisms of action, benefits, and safety profiles. Metformin, the cornerstone of T2D management, is praised not only for its glucose-lowering effects but also for its cardiovascular benefits and potential to aid in weight management. Meanwhile, the introduction of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists and sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors has transformed the treatment landscape by offering additional advantages, including weight loss and improved cardiovascular outcomes [3,4].

Relevant conflicts of interest/financial disclosures: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The recent focus on personalized medicine has further shifted the paradigm in diabetes management. Clinicians now consider individual patient characteristics, such as age, comorbidities, and preferences, when choosing pharmacotherapy. This tailored approach aims to maximize therapeutic efficacy while minimizing adverse effects. Moreover, advancements in technology, including continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) and insulin delivery systems, have enhanced patient engagement and glycemic control. Despite these advancements, challenges remain in achieving optimal glycemic control across diverse populations. Disparities in access to care, medication adherence, and health literacy continue to affect outcomes. Furthermore, ongoing research is exploring novel therapeutic targets, such as the gut microbiome, and the role of emerging agents like dual GIP and GLP-1 receptor agonists [5-7].

This review aims to provide an updated overview of the pharmacotherapy options available for diabetes mellitus, emphasizing the latest developments in drug classes, clinical evidence supporting their use, safety considerations, and future directions in diabetes management. By synthesizing current knowledge, this article aims to inform healthcare professionals and enhance the understanding of effective diabetes management strategies in the ever-evolving landscape of pharmacotherapy [8-10].

TYPES OF DIABETES MELLITUS

Diabetes mellitus (DM) includes several types, each with distinct characteristics and management strategies. Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune condition that results in the destruction of insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas, typically diagnosed in childhood or adolescence, necessitating lifelong insulin therapy.

In contrast, Type 2 diabetes (T2D), which accounts for the majority of diabetes cases, is characterized by insulin resistance and a gradual decline in insulin production, often linked to obesity and sedentary lifestyles, with management focused on lifestyle changes and various oral and injectable medications [11,12].

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) occurs during pregnancy and is marked by glucose intolerance that develops when the body cannot accommodate the increased insulin demands, requiring careful monitoring and management to protect both maternal and fetal health. Additionally, rare forms of diabetes, such as Maturity Onset Diabetes of the Young (MODY) and Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults (LADA), present unique challenges and are often misdiagnosed, necessitating tailored therapeutic approaches. Understanding these diverse types of diabetes is essential for effective treatment and prevention of complications [13].

Figure 1: Types of Diabetes Mellitus

CURRENT UPDATE OF PATHOLOGY: DIABETES MELITUS

Over the past 160 years, significant focus on the morphological and clinical aspects of diseases has resulted in established diagnostic criteria and a standardized nomenclature for efficiently describing changes linked to newly identified conditions. Diagnoses are made based on specific genotypic and phenotypic characteristics of patients, which indicate a predictable disease course and help optimize treatment by comparing outcomes among similarly affected individuals. In clinical medicine, the diagnosis of a disease becomes a key factor in managing patient care, guiding the daily operations of clinics and hospitals across the country. Pathologists play a crucial role in integrating clinical, gross, morphological, and molecular data to provide a coherent and accurate diagnosis. Signs and symptoms are identified through patient examination, and the clinical team, including the pathologist, develops a differential diagnosis based on these findings. The subsequent evaluation often involves gathering patient history, conducting physical exams, performing imaging studies, analyzing bodily fluids (such as blood, urine, sputum, and stool), and potentially obtaining tissue biopsies [14].

A NEW THERAPY FOR TYPE FIRST DIABETES MELITUS

Recent studies indicate that ongoing research at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute (HSCI) may lead to new treatments for Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1D). The Melton Lab at Vertex Pharmaceuticals has developed VX-880, an investigational therapy involving the replacement of pancreatic islet cells, which shows promise when combined with immunosuppressive therapy. In a Phase 1/2 clinical trial, the first patient treated with a single infusion of VX-880 administered at half the target dose experienced significant restoration of islet cell function by Day 90. This patient, diagnosed with T1D 40 years ago and reliant on exogenous insulin, achieved successful engraftment and showed rapid improvements across multiple clinical measures [15].

Vertex Pharmaceuticals is a global biotechnology firm dedicated to scientific innovation aimed at creating transformative treatments for serious diseases. The company has several approved therapies addressing the root causes of cystic fibrosis (CF), a rare and life-threatening genetic condition, and it is actively engaged in various clinical and research initiatives in CF [16-18]. Additionally, Vertex has a strong pipeline of investigational therapies, including small molecules, mRNA, cell and genetic therapies (such as gene editing), targeting other severe conditions where it has deep insights into human biology, including sickle cell disease, beta thalassemia, APOL1-mediated kidney disease, acute and neuropathic pain, Type 1 diabetes, and alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency [19-21].

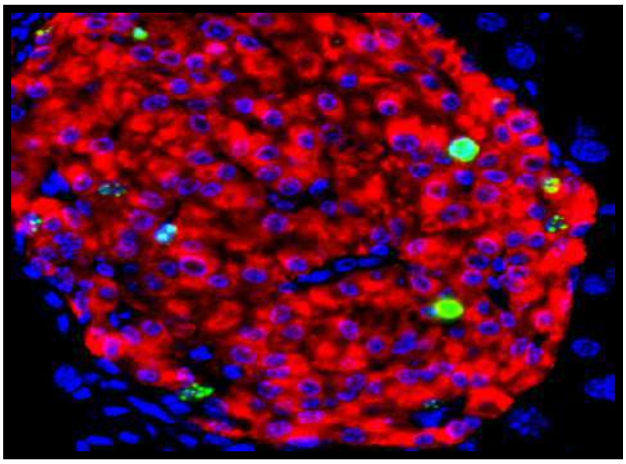

Figure 2: VX-880 (Stem cell)

The VX-880 Vertex clinical trial is an experimental stem cell therapy designed to restore endogenous insulin production and stabilize blood sugar levels in individuals with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D). By volunteering for clinical research, participants play a vital role in advancing the search for a cure by testing new medications, technologies, and innovative therapies such as VX-880. For more information about the VX-880 trial and the Vertex-VX-264 trials, please visit the relevant resources [22-24].

VITAMIN-D

There is a growing prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, which is often referred to as the "sunshine vitamin." This liposoluble vitamin is naturally present in very few foods and is synthesized in the skin when exposed to ultraviolet (UV) rays. The primary dietary sources of vitamin D include fatty fish and cod liver oil, the latter also being a significant source of vitamin A. Research indicates that vitamin D deficiency may be associated with the onset and progression of diabetes mellitus (DM), highlighting a clear connection between vitamin D, insulin secretion, insulin sensitivity, and pancreatic beta-cell dysfunction. Vitamin D plays a role in glucose homeostasis, as evidenced by the presence of vitamin D receptors (VDR) in pancreatic beta cells and skeletal muscle cells. Additionally, individuals with obesity often exhibit vitamin D deficiency, which may be explained by volumetric dilution in those with a high body mass index (BMI) Some experts believe that vitamin D is necessary for the generation and release of insulin sensitivity, allowing the body to use insulin more efficiently [25,26].

Figure 3: Vitamin-D Capsule

HERBAL THERAPY TYPE II DIABETES

ZINGIBER OFFICINALE ROSCOE

Dietary ginger has been shown to possess hypoglycemic, antidiabetic, and antioxidant properties, contributing to lower blood cholesterol and lipid levels. A study involving Type 2 diabetic patients who took a powdered ginger supplement (3 g/day) for three months demonstrated improvements in glycemic control and antioxidant status. Another study found that ginger supplementation (2 g/day) in Type 2 diabetic patients reduced insulin levels without significantly affecting fasting plasma glucose or glycosylated hemoglobin [27].

Ginger (Zingiber officinale Roscoe) is a herbaceous perennial plant from the Zingiberaceae family, widely used as a spice due to its unique pungency and aroma. It has a long history as a medicinal herb in traditional Chinese medicine and the Indian Ayurvedic system. Ginger is regarded as a safe complementary therapy that can reduce inflammation, a key risk factor for various diseases, benefiting both healthy individuals and those with chronic conditions, particularly gastrointestinal disorders [28].

In relation to patients with Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), some studies have reported that ginger can lower fasting blood sugar (FBS), total cholesterol (TC), fatty substances (TG), low-thickness lipoprotein (LDL), systolic pulse (SBP), and diastolic circulatory strain (DBP). However, other studies have shown no significant effects. The Zingiberaceae family includes many species recognized for their culinary use and their antidiabetic and hypoglycemic properties. This review aims to update the scientific literature on the antidiabetic and hypoglycemic potential of ginger [29,30].

Figure 4: Zingiber

THE EFFECT OF GARLIC ON DIABETES MELITUS

Garlic is known to lower blood sugar levels primarily due to the presence of allicin and various sulphur compounds, such as 2-propenyl disulphide and 2-propenyl propyl disulphide. It contains high concentrations of non-protein sulphur amino acids, which are linked to its medicinal benefits. Over the past two decades, the antidiabetic effects of garlic have garnered considerable interest. Most studies have focused on its impact on blood glucose regulation in healthy animals, animal models, and diabetic patients [31].

In these studies, diabetes has typically been induced in animal models using chemical agents like alloxan or streptozotocin (STZ). Taking note of that is significant while these agents can induce diabetes-like conditions, they do not replicate true Type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1D) due to differences in the immunological mechanisms involved, nor do they effectively model Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2D) as they do not create genuine insulin resistance. Instead, in such experimental settings, diabetes is induced through the administration of a toxic substance that specifically targets the pancreatic beta cells [32].

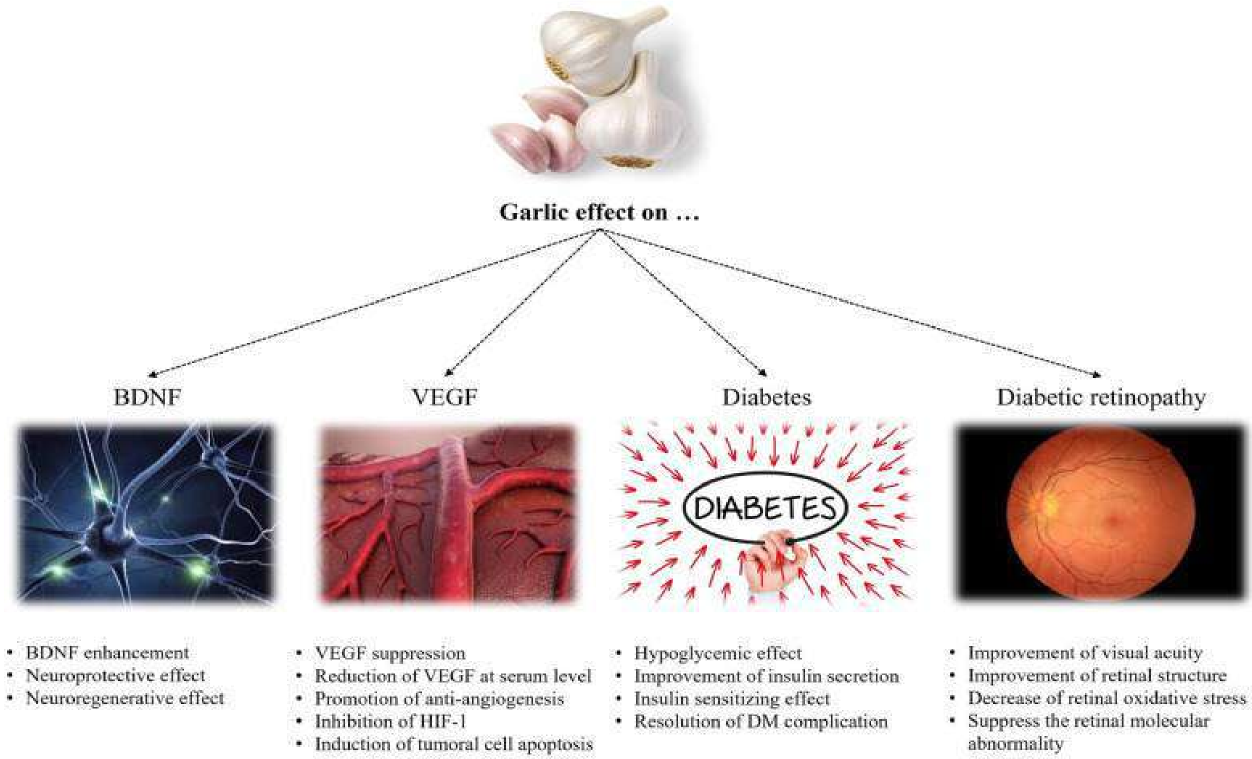

Figure 5: Effect of Garlic on Diabetes Melitus

NEW THERAPY OF GESTATIONAL DIABETES

The initial phase of the study involved feature selection to identify the most significant predictors of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). Techniques such as correlation analysis, univariate analysis, and recursive feature elimination were employed, leading to the removal of clinical and biochemical features with low correlation. The selected features were then utilized to train a machine learning (ML) model aimed at predicting GDM risk, serving as an innovative tool to aid healthcare professionals in this endeavour [33,34].

A populace-based companion study was conducted to assess whether clinical information collected at various phases of pregnancy could effectively anticipate the treatment approach for GDM. This study focused on identifying the risks associated with pharmacological therapy past clinical sustenance treatment (MNT) for pregnant ladies determined to have GDM.The findings indicated a reasonably high level of consistency for GDM treatment modalities at the hour of conclusion, which remained consistent one week after diagnosis [35].

Accumulating evidence suggests that models incorporating multiple risk factors can enhance predictive capabilities. Machine learning algorithms, a form of artificial intelligence, can manage high-dimensional predictors and are particularly effective with smaller datasets, minimizing the risk of overfitting while uncovering complex relationships among predictors [36-38].

Notably, the study tests at the hour of conclusion near-infrared (NIR) spectroscopy as demonstrative help apparatuses for GDM for the first time. It creates and assesses a book, straightforward, furthermore, quick bioanalytical technique for early recognition and elective screening of GDM, circumventing some disadvantages of the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT), like its disagreeable and tedious nature. The proposed ML model using serum NIR spectra demonstrates prescient power comparable to or better than existing methods, with the added benefit of reduced analysis time, making it an attractive alternative to the OGTT [39].

Additionally, the AI based definition framework distinguished patients in danger for high blood glucose levels, thereby enhancing tailored care interventions. The system showed moderate predictive performance for GDM risk at the onset of pregnancy and achieved great to-astounding prescient capacities toward the main trimester's end. Given that GDM is a significant contributor to the development of Type 2 diabetes mellitus T2DM) in the two moms and their posterity, effective management of blood glucose levels during pregnancy is crucial to preventing and reducing the pervasiveness of T2DM in people in the future [40].

Historically, GDM screening depended on clinical history, past obstetric results, and family background of T2DM, but this method had about a half disappointment rate in distinguishing GDM among pregnant ladies. The machine learning model enables predictive population risk stratification, identifying metabolites at 6-9 weeks postpartum that can predict the transition from GDM to T2DM in women [41].

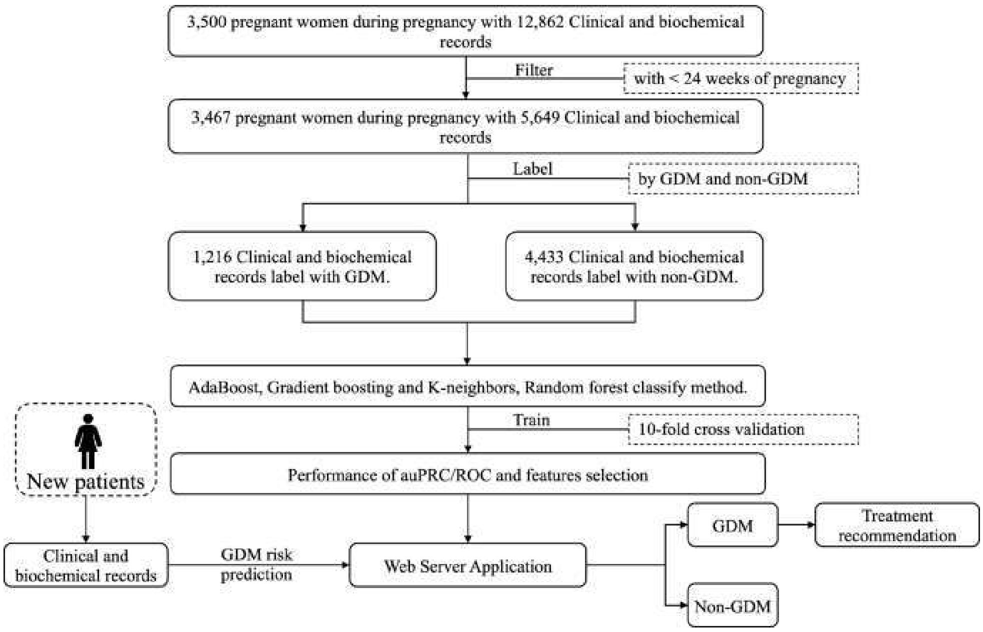

Figure 6: New Therapy of Gestational Diabetes

GENE THERAPY IN DIABETES MELITUS

Gene therapy is an emerging approach for treating diabetes mellitus by correcting or repairing defective genes responsible for the condition. This technique can involve the transfer of genes using either viral vectors or non-viral transduction methods. These strategies aim to suppress autoreactive T cells to prevent the destruction of islet cells or to replace the insulin gene [42].

Currently, there is no definitive prevention or cure for Type 1 diabetes (T1D); most treatments focus on managing symptoms and preventing complications through various insulin regimens, including injections, pumps, and dual-hormone artificial pancreas systems. These systems have been shown to better mimic the physiology of the endocrine pancreas and are being explored as alternatives in T1D management. Recent research is investigating gene therapy as a means to restore disrupted insulin-glucose metabolism in T1D patients [43].

Scientists have been studying gene therapy for over 40 years, and it shows promise for a wide range of conditions, including cancer, cystic fibrosis, heart disease, and diabetes. This innovative approach targets the fundamental level of human biology—our genes—which contain the instructions for producing the proteins that form our cells and tissues. Non-viral vectors present an opportunity to address challenges associated with viral gene delivery, offering versatility and the ability to be applied in biomaterial scaffolds commonly used in wound management. Chemical transfection methods, particularly those involving nanoparticles, are widely employed in these approaches, where polycationic materials interact with DNA to form lipoplexes or polyplexes [44].

Gene therapy has great potential for diabetes care, since it provides novel ways to transport and regulate the insulin gene across several organs. Insulin gene delivery techniques have included lentivirus, adenovirus and adeno-associated virus (AAV), as well as non-viral approaches such as liposomes and bare DNA [45].

Type 2 diabetes (T2D) is characterized by insulin resistance and impaired glucose metabolism, and past treatments have struggled to achieve optimal glucose control and minimize long-term complications. Recently, advances in gene therapy, including CRISPR-Cas9 mediated gene editing, have emerged as potential solutions to the challenges of T2D treatment. CRISPR-Cas9 technology allows precise modifications of specific genes associated with T2D pathogenesis. A world-first clinical trial at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, supported by the Australian Government's Targeted Translational Research Accelerator program for diabetes and cardiovascular disease, aims to transplant genetically engineered pancreatic islet cells into humans to treat T1D. This represents the first attempt to use genetically modified islet cells for this purpose.

In recent years, several gene addition and editing approaches have progressed into early and late-stage clinical trials, aiming to address the underlying causes of diabetes and offering potential one-time curative treatments. These methods rely on gene addition, editing, and silencing techniques, necessitating the mobilization, collection, selection, and modification of a patient's own hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) followed by autologous transplantation.

Quality treatment includes bringing a quality of interest into target cells to supplant or fix damaged qualities and right hereditary problems. The effectiveness of this treatment hinges on the choice of gene delivery vectors, which are categorized into viral and non-viral vectors. Currently, viral vectors constitute over 70% of those used in clinical trials, with successful examples including retroviruses, lentiviruses, adenoviruses, and AAVs. Retroviruses, for instance, are RNA viruses that can convert RNA into DNA and coordinate it into the host chromosome, facilitating gene therapy outcomes [46,47].

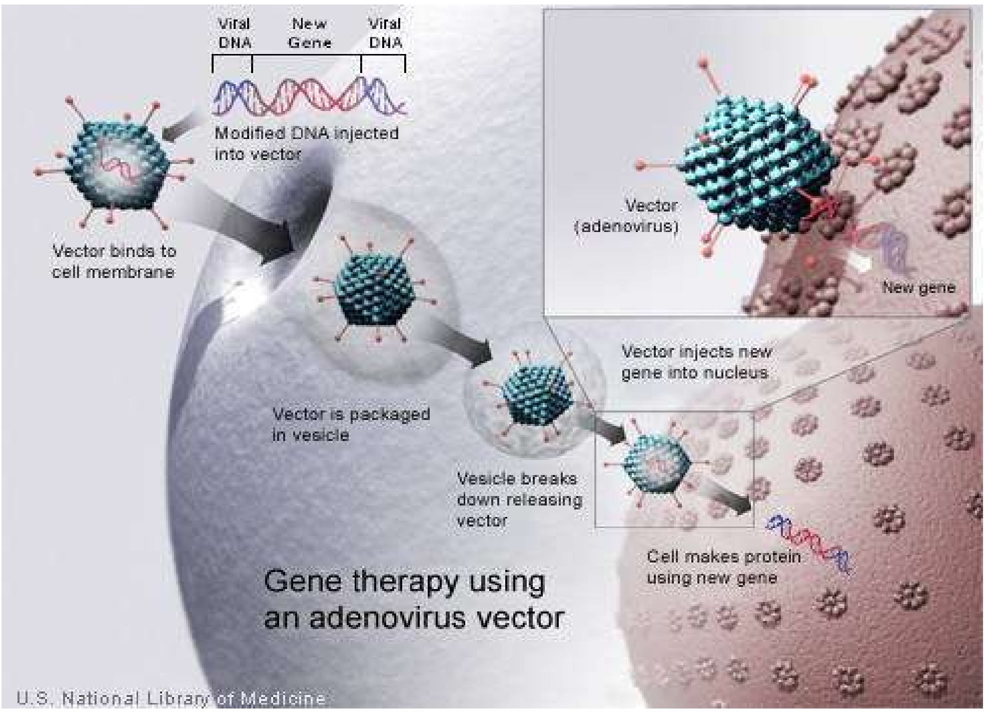

Figure 7: Gene Therapy in Diabetes Melitus

CLINICAL TRIAL FOR NERWER DIABETES MELITUS DRUG

Tripeptide

Many individuals with Type 2 diabetes struggle to achieve their blood sugar targets through diet and exercise alone. On May 13, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a ground breaking medication for Type 2 diabetes known as tripeptide. Patients with Type 2 diabetes often do not respond as effectively to certain hormones as those without the condition. Tirzepatide addresses this issue by activating the GLP-1 (Glucagon-Like Peptide-1) receptor in the body. Both GLP-1 and another hormone, GIP (Gastric Inhibitory Polypeptide), are released quickly after eating and are regulated by the nervous system. Research suggests that tirzepatide mimics the effects of natural GIP at its receptor while favoring cyclic AMP (cAMP) production over β-arrestin recruitment at the GLP-1 receptor. This mechanism results in a reduced tendency for GLP-1 receptor internalization compared to traditional GLP-1 therapies. Experiments in primary islets indicate that β-arrestin 1 reduces insulin responses to GLP-1 but not to GIP or tirzepatide, suggesting that tirzepatide's biased agonism enhances insulin production [48].

The management of Type 2 diabetes has shifted from a solely glucose-focused approach to a more individualized strategy that considers the unique needs and characteristics of patients. This includes setting specific blood sugar and weight goals, evaluating potential weight effects, assessing the risk of hypoglycemia, and preventing cardiovascular and kidney complications. Factors such as medication accessibility, cost, and availability are also crucial. The contemporary management approach emphasizes a holistic and patient-centred model aimed at improving outcomes and quality of life for those with Type 2 diabetes.

In early 2016, Eli Lilly and Company began using tirzepatide for glycaemic control. On May 14, 2022, the company achieved another milestone by receiving FDA approval for the anticipated anti-diabetic drug Mounjaro® (tirzepatide). This synthetic peptide acts as an agonist for both GIP and GLP-1 receptors, earning it the designation of an "incretin." Administered subcutaneously once a week, it has a half-life of approximately five days. The actions of these insulin-stimulating peptides are referred to as the "incretin effect," which describes the increased insulin response to oral glucose compared to intravenous glucose administration, despite similar plasma concentrations. This effect is believed to occur because nutrients stimulate the release of incretin hormones, which act on pancreatic beta cells in an insulin-promoting manner [49].

To effectively implement tirzepatide therapy, healthcare providers should:

- Identify suitable candidates for tirzepatide based on their clinical profiles and treatment objectives.
- Regularly monitor patient responses to tirzepatide therapy by assessing glycemic control and weight changes.
- Determine the best combination therapies or alternative treatments for patients with complex medical histories or treatment-resistant diabetes.
- Collaborate with interdisciplinary healthcare teams to ensure seamless care transitions and follow-up appointments, facilitating the continuity of tirzepatide therapy and monitoring long-term outcomes [50].

CONCLUSION

The landscape of pharmacotherapy for diabetes mellitus is rapidly evolving, with significant advancements that offer new hope for patients managing this chronic condition. Recent developments, including novel medications like tirzepatide, represent a shift towards more individualized treatment strategies that not only aim to control blood glucose levels but also consider weight management, cardiovascular health, and patient quality of life. Innovative therapies, such as gene therapy and stem cell interventions, hold the potential to address the underlying causes of diabetes, moving beyond mere symptom management. Moreover, the integration of machine learning and predictive modelling in diabetes care underscores the importance of personalized approaches, allowing healthcare professionals to tailor interventions based on individual risk profiles. This comprehensive review highlights the need for continued research and collaboration across disciplines to further enhance treatment options and improve patient outcomes. As we look to the future, the focus on holistic and patient-centered care will be paramount in the fight against diabetes mellitus. By embracing these current advances in pharmacotherapy, we can aspire to transform the management of diabetes, offering patients not only better control of their condition but also a pathway to improved health and well-being.

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HOW TO CITE: Shreyash Gugliya, Rinkesh Zanjari, Dr. Manojkumar Mahajan, Dr. Chandrashekhar Upasani, Current Advances in Pharmacotherapy for Diabetes Mellitus: A Comprehensive Review, Int. J. Sci. R. Tech., 2025, 2 (3), 252-261. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15038248