

impact



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CELIAC
DISEASE CENTER

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH AWARENESS,
EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH

Celiac Disease Does Not Cause Infertility in the U.S. Or Does it?

By Stefano Guandalini, M.D.

Determining the cause of infertility in the absence of severe male factor infertility or tubal obstruction is a challenge in reproductive medicine. Some cases of so-called unexplained infertility may be due to systemic maternal or paternal diseases that have subtle effects on the reproductive system.

Research conducted in Europe has indicated that celiac disease (CD) is one of those systemic disorders and it may account for a significant percentage of unexplained infertility. In fact, some reports indicate a 4% to 8% prevalence of CD in women with unexplained infertility, and there is even evidence that treating CD with a gluten-free diet can improve fertility. However, this problem has never been investigated in the United States until recently, when a paper entitled "Prevalence of Celiac Disease in a Cohort of Women with Unexplained Infertility" (by Jackson and collaborators from the University of California in San Francisco), appeared in the medical literature. This paper reports the results of a study that enrolled patients presenting to the University of California, San Francisco Center for Reproductive Health with infertility over one year and, among other routine investigations, checked them for celiac disease with the usual serological tests (TTG and EMA). There were 121 women in this sample, and only one of them eventually proved to have celiac disease (giving a prevalence of approximately 1%, similar to the general population). The authors' conclusions were that screening for

celiac disease in women with infertility is unnecessary and too expensive.

Do I concur? Oh, no!

Firstly, many well conducted studies in large European populations of patients have convincingly shown a prevalence of CD in infertile women consistently around 6%, and we cannot ignore those data. Our own data at the University of Chicago collected several years ago and published in 2003 as part of the more general study that assessed the prevalence of CD in our country, again showed a prevalence of 6%. In addition, almost one third (28%) of the women in the San Francisco study were Asian, and we know celiac disease simply does not exist in Asians.

A worrisome corollary of this study is the implicit recommendation that we should continue not to screen for celiac disease in every pregnant woman. On this issue, a previous large study in Italy had concluded as follows: "the high incidence of abortion, of low birth weight babies, and of short breastfeeding periods is effectively corrected by gluten-free diet in women with celiac disease". We do currently screen pregnant women for conditions such as Rubella, practically extinct



Dr. Stefano Guandalini, M.D.

now since many years, and fail to screen for an easily recognizable and treatable condition such as celiac disease! It makes no sense, and our Ob-Gyn colleagues should take note of this.

What to Do if Serology is Positive?

If a pregnant woman is screened and has positive bloodwork, a biopsy would definitely not be advisable. Instead, the following steps should be taken, and the confirmation of the diagnosis should be postponed until later:

1. The pregnant woman should immediately start a strict gluten-free diet;
2. Once the baby is born, the mother should stay on the gluten-free diet until she finishes nursing;
3. At this point, a gluten challenge under a doctor's supervision is advisable, with a biopsy at the end of it;
4. If the mother chooses not to undergo the gluten challenge and biopsy, the doctor

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Stefano Guandalini, M.D.

Founder and Medical Director

University of Chicago Comer Children's
Hospital Chief, Pediatric Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and Nutrition

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The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center is dedicated to raising awareness rates and meeting the needs of people affected by celiac disease nationwide through education, research and advocacy.

The contents of this newsletter are not intended to diagnose or recommend treatment for celiac disease. Please consult your healthcare provider with questions about your condition.

For more information about the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center, please contact our office:

University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center
5839 S. Maryland Ave., MC 4069
Chicago, IL 60637-1470
Ph.: (773) 702-7593
Fax: (773) 702-0666
info@celiacdisease.net
www.celiacdisease.net

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should do a genetic test at that point to confirm compatibility with celiac disease.

And What About the Baby?

Most parents with celiac disease worry about their children's susceptibility to the disease, and many decide to commit their children to a gluten-free diet on the basis of family history. Unfortunately, these good intentions can actually backfire, and hurt the child in the long run. The latest research on this issue of when to introduce gluten to a baby, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2005, is to introduce gluten to babies between four and six months of age. This recommendation should also be followed for the baby of a mother found to have positive bloodwork for celiac disease during pregnancy. If the baby shows no symptoms, it should undergo blood testing for celiac disease every two to three years starting at age two, just like any other first degree relative of a person with celiac disease. Alternatively, the baby could undergo gene testing to determine compatibility with celiac disease. If it shows symptoms before then, the baby should be seen by its pediatrician and a pediatric gastroenterologist for further testing.

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center distributes a do-it-yourself genetic testing kits from Kimball Genetics.

For more information, or to have a kit sent to you, please refer to our website (www.celiacdisease.net) or call us at: (773) 702-7593.



ANNUAL CELIAC BLOOD SCREENING A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS

On October 6, 2007, hundreds of families and individuals, along with about 25 hardy volunteers, joined us in the atrium of the Duchossois Center For Advanced Medicine at the University of Chicago Medical Center to undergo blood testing for celiac disease. We tested approximately 400 individuals, and hundreds more joined us for the expert panel on celiac disease that took place at that morning. The panel, consisting of Dr. Guandalini, Dr. Carol Semrad, Dr. Louis Philipson, the Center's endocrinologist, and dietitians Lara Field and Beth Wall, fielded questions about all aspects of celiac disease. Attendees were also treated to samples of delicious gluten-free foods provided by our event sponsors, Wild Oats/Whole Foods, Swirlz Cupcakes, U.S. Mills, Breads from Anna, Ener-g and Do-It-Yourself Dinners. Cecelia's Marketplace also offered its newly published gluten-free product guide for sale. Prometheus Laboratories again generously donated their services to analyze the blood samples and a team of University of Chicago professional phlebotomists graciously gave their Saturday morning to draw the blood samples. Many thanks to all our sponsors, who make this incredible event a reality.



The Celiac Center's medical team: from left, Lara Field, RN, MS, Dr Bana Jabri, MD, PhD, Dr. Michelle Sullivan (preceptor), Dr. Guandalini, Doreen Berard, RN (preceptor), Dr. Semrad and Elizabeth Wall, RD.

The preceptor dinner at the Quadrangle Club.

Second Annual Preceptorship Program Brings Medical Professionals to the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center

Last December, the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center held its second annual Preceptorship Program, which brings medical personnel to the University of Chicago for two days of intensive study of all aspects of celiac disease. This year we were joined by Dr. Michelle Sullivan, a family practitioner, and Doreen Berard, a registered dietitian, both of whom work in the Chicago suburbs.

On the first morning of the program, both preceptors joined Dr. Guandalini in his clinic and in the adult gastroenterology clinic with Dr. Semrad and dietitian Beth Wall. They also participated in lectures and seminars given by the Center's experts including leading pathologist, John Hart, MD, who explained what he looks for in a biopsy to either confirm

or rule out celiac disease, Lara Field, RD and Beth Wall RD, who provided great detail on the intricacies of the gluten free diet, and our lead researcher, Dr. Bana Jabri. The preceptors were honored at a dinner on the evening of December 6, where Dr. Jabri shared the latest information on her research with the audience. The preceptors, Dr. Sullivan and Ms. Berard,

are now all set to go out and use their newfound knowledge on celiac disease in the wider community. They can now speak to their patients about celiac disease with greater confidence, and are keenly able to recognize when a patient needs to be tested for it. Perhaps, most importantly, they can share their newly acquired expertise with their colleagues, both raising awareness and diagnosis rates. Thanks to them, the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center took an important step in fulfilling one part of its mission: to educate medical professionals about celiac disease. If you are a medical professional (a doctor, nurse practitioner or dietitian) and you would like to attend the Preceptor Program in the fall of 2008, please check our website regularly for related information and the application form.

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR WEBSITE LATELY?

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center has redesigned its website. The new website is easier to navigate and contains useful and accurate information about celiac disease including printable fact sheets and easily digestible synopsis of the latest research from around the globe. The site is a great source to learn about the disease, the Center and our many events and happenings. To visit the website, go to: www.celiacdisease.net. Feel free to give us feedback on the website at: info@celiacdisease.net.

For more information about the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center, please consult our website, www.celiacdisease.net, or call us at (773) 702-7593. To make an appointment with Dr. Guandalini (pediatric gastroenterologist), please call (773) 702-6169. To make an appointment with Dr. Semrad (adult gastroenterologist), please call (773) 702-6140.



University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center Network of Specialists

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center has created a Network of Doctors within the University of Chicago Medical Center who specialize in the many conditions related to celiac disease. These physicians are both familiar with celiac disease and are well aware of the special needs and concerns of celiac patients.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CELIAC DISEASE CENTER MEDICAL LEADERSHIP:

Stefano Guandalini, M.D.

Professor of Pediatrics
Section Chief,
Pediatric Gastroenterology,
Hepatology, and Nutrition
Medical Director, University of
Chicago Celiac Disease Center



Carol Semrad, M.D.

Associate Professor of Medicine
Department of Medicine,
Division of Gastroenterology
Director, Adult Clinical Nutrition



Bana Jabri, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor,
Departments of Medicine,
Pathology and Pediatrics



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CELIAC DISEASE CENTER SPECIALISTS NETWORK

David P. Cohen, M.D.

Associate Professor of
Obstetrics/Gynecology Chief,
Reproductive Endocrinology
and Infertility



John Hart, M.D.

Professor of Pathology



Rebecca Lipton, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
Endocrinology
Community Health Sciences,
The Institute for Molecular
Pediatric Sciences



Vesna Petronic-Rosic, M.D., MSc

Assistant Professor and
Clinic Director
Section of Dermatology



Raymond P. Roos, M.D.

Marjorie and Robert E. Straus
Professor in Neurological Science
Department of Neurology



David Rubin, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Medicine
Department of Medicine,
Division of Gastroenterology
Program Director, Fellowship
in Gastroenterology, Hepatology,
and Nutrition



Mala Setty, M.D.

Instructor
Pediatric Gastroenterology,
Hepatology, and Nutrition



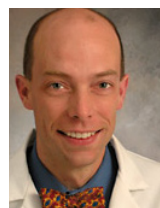
Peter Joseph Smith, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
Specializing in Downs Syndrome



Darrel Waggoner, M.D.

Assistant Professor Human
Genetics and Pediatrics
Medical Director Department
of Human Genetics



You can contact our office at (773) 702-7593 or at info@celiacdisease.net to be directed to any of the above specialists.



An exquisite view for the highest bidder.

SAVE THE DATE!

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center's annual benefit will take place on April 16 this year. Mark your calendars now. This year, we are launching an evening event to be held at the University Club in downtown Chicago. It promises to be a wonderful affair, featuring top chefs, gourmet gluten free food and a fabulous live and silent auction. Stay tuned for more information on our website in the months to come. And start planning your next vacation now! We'll be auctioning off a one-week stay in this exclusive private home in sunny Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The house sleeps 14 people, and comes with maid service, a private swimming pool and beach access. You'll have your chance to bid for it on April 16th!

RESEARCH REVIEW

For the latest on research in celiac disease around the world, please check our website at www.celiacdisease.net.