

Assessment of the serum levels of chemerin and Omentin in among Iraqi patients as early Predictors markers of the Severity COVID-19

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ABSTRACT— Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a worldwide epidemic generated by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 coronavirus ((SARS-CoV-2)). The cell entry system of COVID-19 is stimulated by the viral spike protein bonded to the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 receptor. Adipokines' actions contribute to infection pathogenesis. The researchers wanted to look at levels of chemerin and omentin in COVID19 patients, including linkage among both adipokine, the severity of disease (mild, severe, critical). Chemerin and omentin are reported to have inflammatory and metabolic effects, and have been implicated in the development of chronic diseases. However, results are still limited regarding role of chemerin in chronic diseases. Chemerin and omentin in COVID19 patients suggest that these adipokines have a role in influencing disease severity. Chemerin and omentin are reported to have inflammatory and metabolic effects, and have been implicated in the development of chronic diseases. However, results are still limited regarding the role of chemerin in chronic diseases. Our study focused on Chemerin, and Omentin levels in COVID-19 patients to demonstrate a roles in influencing disease severity. This is a case-control study design consisting of COVID-19 patients before any treatment was recruited from the Intensive Care Unit hospitalization ICU department of the AL-Amal Hospital in AL-Najaf City, Iraq compared with apparently healthy volunteers as control group. The patients were divided into three groups: mild/moderate, severe, and critically ill cases. The enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) kit used to measure plasma chemerin and Omentin levels in all patient groups. COVID-19 patients' clinical symptoms, diagnostic tests, and outcomes were studied chronologically. Serum chemerin was significantly increased in COVID-19 patients but Omentin concentrations was significantly decreased compared to healthy volunteers (2.1 ± 0.48 and 5.65 ± 2.7 ; $P < 0.05$ vs. 1.36 ± 0.49 and 11.43 ± 2.42 ; ($P < 0.050$) respectively). The serum chemerin was significantly higher but and Omentin levels was significantly lower in critically ill patients than that in severe patients cases ($P < 0.00010$). Circulating chemerin and omentin levels are early predicators markers It has been linked to the severity of COVID-19 disease, may be risk of death in COVID-19 patients.

KEYWORDS: Chemerin, Omentin, COVID-19, severity

1. INTRODUCTION

The (2019) Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has evolved into a major threat to modern healthcare systems, with over 177 million cases reported and approximately 4 million deaths [1], [2]. SARS-CoV-2

disease can spread and attack multiple organs resulting in a wide range of symptoms [3], [4].

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 was the name given to the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). As a result, the World Health Organization designated the virus-caused disease as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) [5], [6].

One of the COVID-19 clinical features is the cytokine storm or cytokine release syndrome (CRS). The release of proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines is involved in the development of critical cases, multiple organ damage and functional failure [7].

Chemerin (molecular mass=14-kDa) is one of the chemoattractant protein released during certain diseases such as infections. It is a known immunomodulator acting by binding to the its receptor (chemerin receptor 23 or ChemR23) [8]. after being released as It is liberated as an inactive form (prochemerin), it is activated. Activation of prochemerin is mediated by the effect of serine protease through cleavage of the C-terminus. The main tissues responsible for secretion include visceral adipose tissue, placenta and liver. In addition, it can be released -in a lesser extent- from lungs, heart, ovaries, kidneys and pancreas [9], [10].

As a proinflammatory adipokine, chemerin is involved in immunity, inflammation and obesity-related pathophysiological conditions. It acts as a chemoattractant and participated in both adaptive and innate immunity [11]. In addition, chemerin is one of molecules that regulate angiogenesis, adipogenesis, and energy metabolism [12].

Omentin is a novel 313 amino acid that is hydrophilic (35 kDa), contains a secretory signal sequence and a fibrinogen-associated domain, and occurs as a glycosylated trimer with a molecular weight of 120 kDa as negative. Omentin1 is the major circulating form with human plasma concentrations and has been studied more extensively than omentin2. Omentin1 is the primary circulating form. It also has the reciprocal design of omentin2 [13].

Substantial progress has been achieved in determining and characterizing the effects of omentin on various diseases in recent years [14]. Omentin/intelectin-1, on the other hand, is an adipocytokine found in the blood [15]. Omentin is highly expressed in visceral fat tissue. As a result, obese people have lower levels of circulating omentin [16].

2. Materials and Methods

A total of 90 Iraqi volunteers as case-control study design in age range (min.-max.:45-60 years), 60 COVID-19 patients divided into three groups. (30) had mild/moderate symptoms, (18) had severe symptoms, and (12) had critical cases. Those patients were matched to 30 apparently healthy individuals in age and BMI, and sex as control group. During the period from December 2021 to January 2022, samples were taken. The research was carried out in the laboratories of the AL-Amal Teaching Hospital in Najaf.

After receiving clearance from the Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment's Ethics Committee, and all participants gave informed consent before the study began. According to the inclusion criteria, were included in the sample COVID-19 diagnosis was defined as a SARS-CoV-2 positive real-time reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) from a nose and/or throat swab specimen of patients combined with a chest X-ray or chest tomography (CT) scan that suggested COVID-19 infection. Before the therapy procedure, blood samples were taken from the patients after the investigation of the subjects' blood samples.

COVID-19 patients were clinically diagnosed criteria for inclusion: COVID-19 cases with no other disease. They were then categorized based on their severity (mild/moderate, severe and critical) [17].

The following are some of the study's exclusion criteria: Diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, renal disease, hepatic disorders, and autoimmune disease, smoker, and pregnant women.

The body mass index (BMI) was calculated by: $BMI = \text{Weight}/(\text{height m})^2$

Patients and control groups had their venous blood samples taken. Two tubes were used to separate blood sample. 3ml allowed to clot at room temperature for 10-15 minutes before centrifugation at (3000X g) for 10 minutes to get serum. The serum samples were then divided into three tubes and kept at -80°C for future examination. Complete blood count (CBC) was tested using an autohematology analyzer with the remaining blood (2ml) (linear, Spain). Fluorescence immunoassay was used to quantify serum ferritin and D-dimer levels (ichroma™) Human CHEM (Chemerin) ELISA Kit, Catalog No. E-EL-H0698, is a double-antibody sandwich enzyme-linked immunosorbent test kit.) Human ITLN1 (Interlactin 1/Omentin) was estimated using an Elabscience USA (Catalog No.E-EL-H2028) commercial ELISA kit.

Data were analysed using SPSS program and presented as Mean±SD. Student's t-test was used to test the significance level (t-test is used to compare between two groups, for more than two groups we need to use One Way ANOVA with Post hoc test). Data with p value less than 0.05 was considered significantly different.

3. Results and discussion

The findings showed significant differences in PO₂, SBP (systolic blood pressure) and non significant in Age and BMI, DBP diastolic blood pressure) between group patient and healthy individual group as shown in Table 1.

Table (1) Comparison of the demographical and clinical characteristics of categories of patients with COVID-19 and healthy group.

| Parameters | Healthy control group mean± SD | COVID patients group | | | P-value |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Mild /Moderate(n=30) mean± SD | Sever(n=18) mean± SD | Critical (n=12) mean± SD | |
| Sex (F/M) | 15/15 | 12/18 | 10/8 | 7/5 | – |
| Age (years) | 55.7±3.61 | 53.51±3.54 | 54.6±2.21 | 57.1±4.22 | 0.064 |
| BMI (kg/m ²) | 24.5±1.69 | 24.33±1.12 | 24.21±1.12 | 27.42±1.11 | 0.060 |
| PO ₂ | 99.06 ±0.69 | 95.89 ±3.50 | 88.31 ±3.45 | 65.60 ±9.38 | 0.000 |
| SBP(mmHg) | 129.32 ± 5.13 | 122.33± 3.66 | 136.64± 5.48 | 137.92± 4.57 | 0.010 |
| DBP(mmHg) | 79.44± 9.47 | 80.11 ± 6.42 | 83.61± 6.74 | 83.81 ± 6.46 | 0.155 |
| NEUT% | 49.20±10.14 | 75.12±10.12 | 80.13±8.14 | 85.11±12.11 | 0.000 |
| LYM% | 21.81±9.60 | 15.21±1.104 | 41.124±1.1 | 10.22±1.105 | 0.000 |
| N/L Ratio | 2.25±1.05 | 7.35±9.15 | 7.12±5.77 | 5.59±10.96 | 0.32 |
| D.dimer ng/mL | 398.43±74.66 | 2252.4±2134.51 | 2212.8±2632.41 | 5212.6±2933.61 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|
| Ferretin ng/mL | 117.5±33.52 | 1416.23±182.41 | 1318.24±111.51 | 1519.22±193.31 | 0.000 |
| Chemerin ng/mL | 1.36± 0.49 | 1.7± 0.42 | 2.1± 0.60 | 2.7± 0.44 | 0.000 |
| Omentin ng/ml | 13.34± 2.42 | 11.24± 2.62 | 10.46± 1.22 | 9.33± 3.42 | 0.0001 |

The critical illness patients of COVID-19 have higher mean ages, BMI compared to patients with mild/moderate illness (57.1±4.2 vs. 54.51±3.1 years, respectively), (27.42±1.11 vs. 24.33±1.12 respectively).

The data of ferritin, D-dimer, NLR were significantly higher. but, significantly lower Lymphocytes percent in severe and critical covid-19 patient's groups when compared with mild cases in patients group.

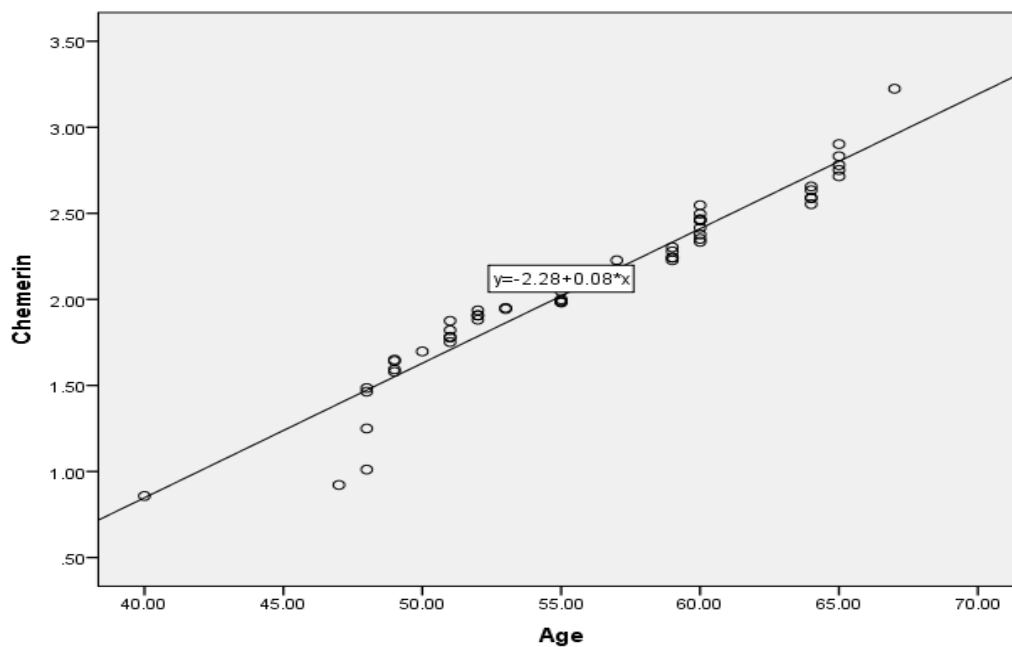
The mean serum chemerin and Omentin levels of the patients with mild/moderate and severe COVID-19 were (1.7±0.42 and 2.1±0.60 ng/mL, respectively (p=0.009) and (11.24±2.62 and 10.46±1.22 ng/mL, respectively (p=0.25) Comparison of all laboratory data of the patients with COVID-19 was demonstrated in table (1).

In the analyses, it was observed that serum chemerin positively correlated with Age, BMI, NUT% and negatively with LYM% (p<0.05) were shown in table (2) , fig (1)

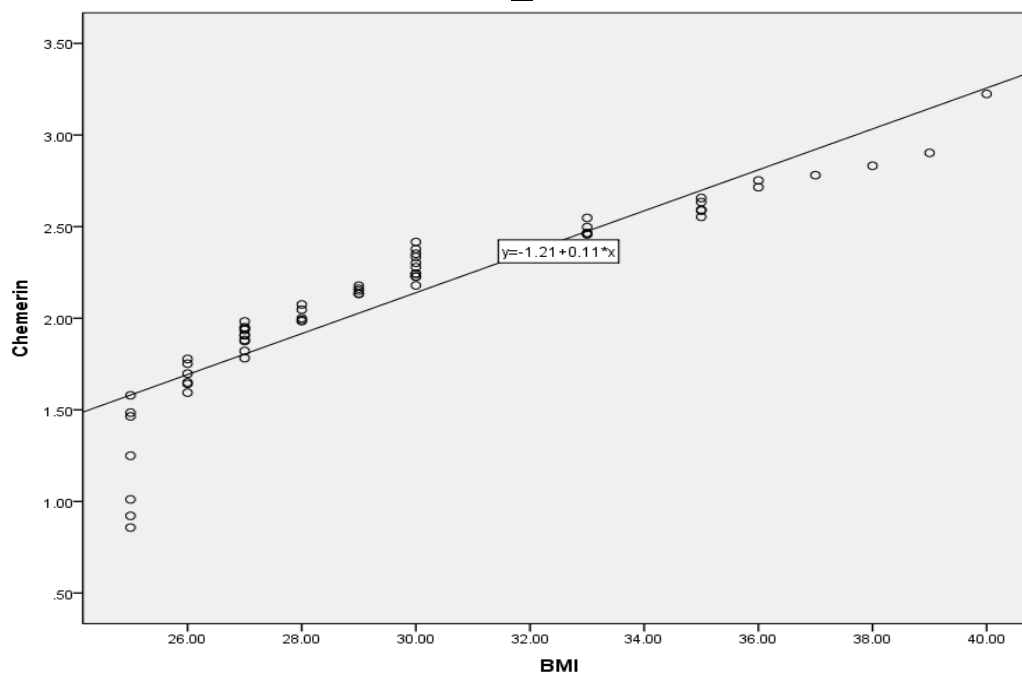
Table (2) the Correlations between serum chemerin with clinical parameters in COVID-19 patients group.

| Parameters | r | p-value |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Age(years) | 0.525 | 0.000 |
| BMI(kg/m ²) | 0.514 | 0.000 |
| SPO ₂ | 0.378 | 0.041 |
| SBP(mmHg) | -0.063 | 0.75 |
| DBP(mmHg) | -0.0463 | 0.841 |
| NEUT% | 0.398 | 0.035 |
| LYM% | -0.671 | 0.000 |
| NLR | 0.964 | 0.0001 |
| D. dimer (ng/ml) | 0.082 | 0.533 |
| ferritin (ng/mL) | 0.042 | 0.748 |
| Omentin (ng/mL) | - 0.001 | 0.992 |

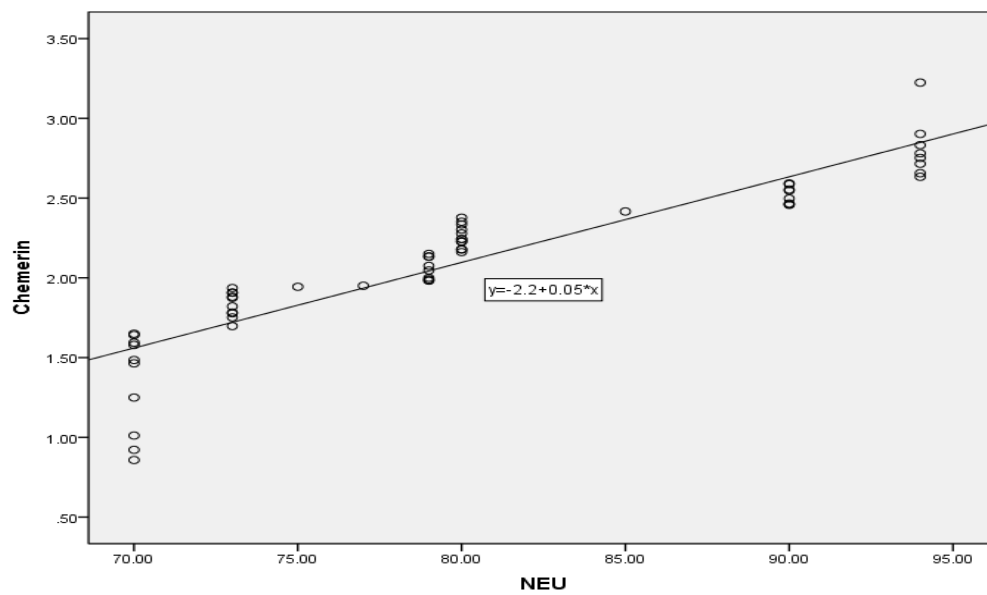
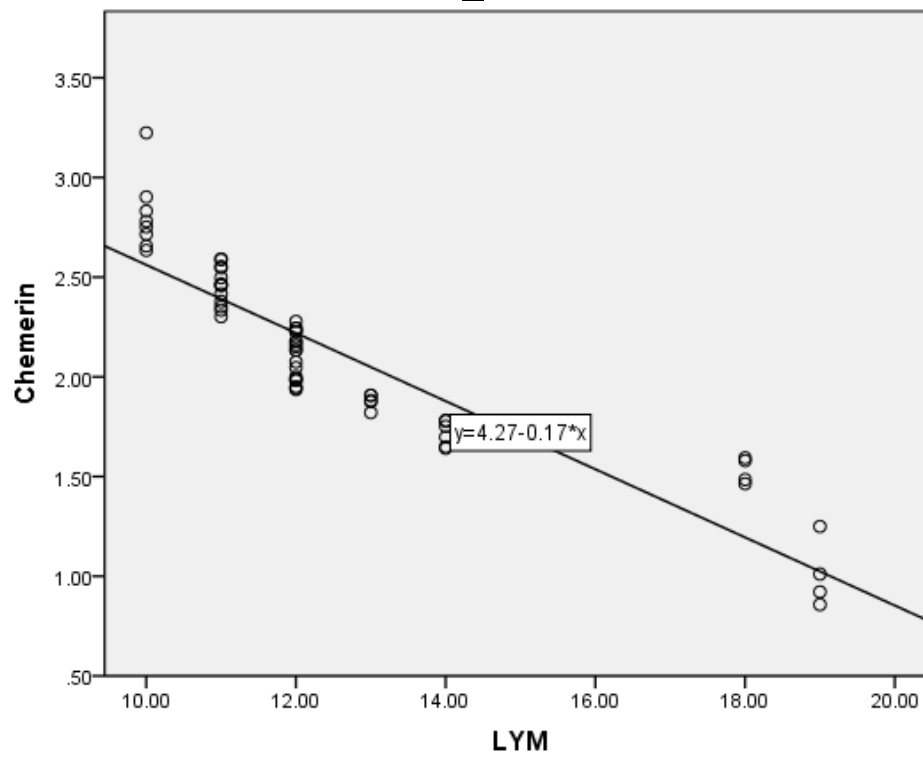
Data represented as Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r): BMI: Body Mass Index, SPO₂: Saturated Partial Oxygen SBP: Systolic Blood Pressure, DBP: Diastolic Blood Pressure, NEUT: neutrophil. LYM: Lymphocyte, NLR:

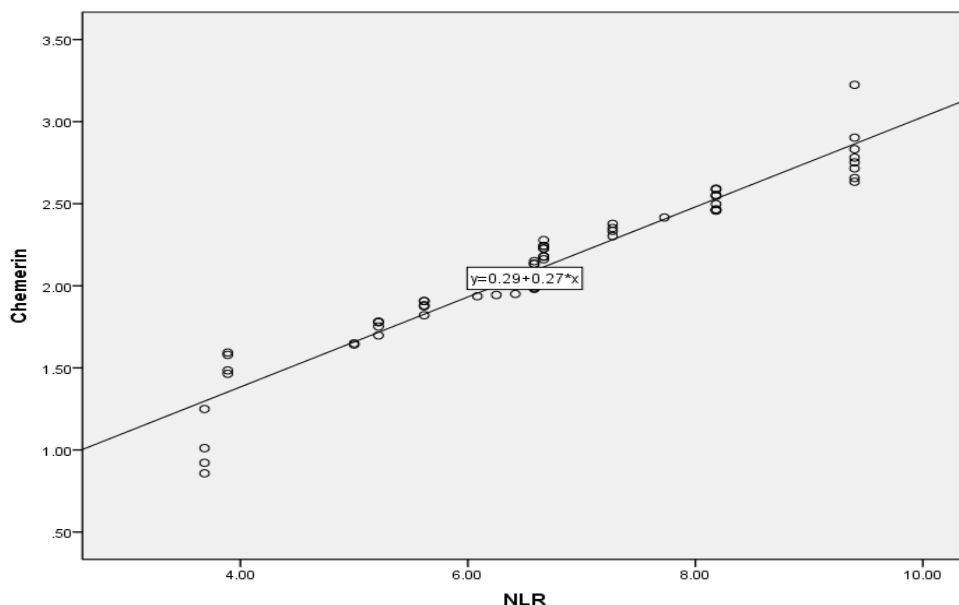


A



B

CD



E

Figure (1) linear regression analysis between serum level of Chemerin with A (Age), B (BMI), C (NUET), D (LYM) and E (NLR)

Table (3) The Correlations between serum Omentin with clinical parameters in COVID-19 patients group.

| Parameters | r | p-value |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|
| Age(years) | -0.036 | 0.785 |
| BMI(kg/m ²) | -0.069 | 0.602 |
| SPO ₂ | 0.273 | 0.06 |
| SBP(mmHg) | -0.170 | 0.377 |
| DBP(mmHg) | -0.087 | 0.655 |
| NEUT% | -0.248 | 0.056 |
| LYM% | 0.004 | 0.978 |
| NLR | -0.381 | 0.042 |
| D-dimer(ng/mL) | -0.129 | 0.325 |
| Ferritin(ng/mL) | -0.120 | 0.362 |
| Chemerin (ng/mL) | -0.001 | 0.992 |

Data represented as Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r): BMI: Body Mass Index, SPO₂: Saturated Partial Oxygen SBP: Systolic Blood Pressure, DBP: Diastolic Blood Pressure, NEUT: neutrophil. LYM: Lymphocyte, NLR: Neutrophil/ Lymphocyte Ratio

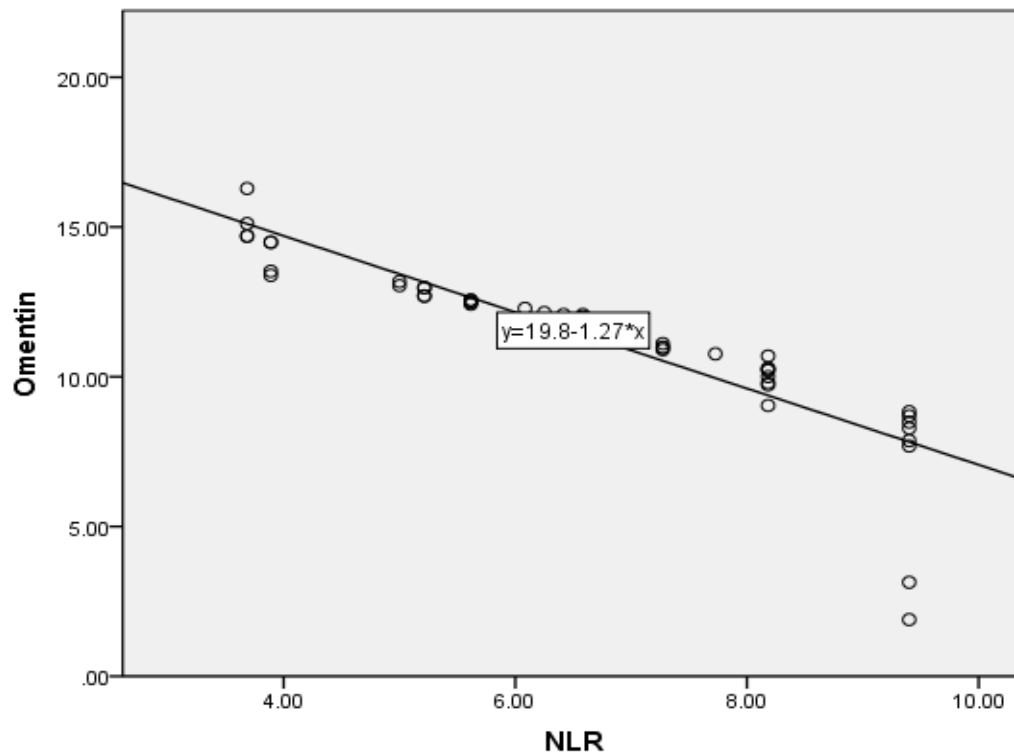


Figure (2) linear regression analysis between serum level of Omentin with NLR

Chemerin is an adipokine chemokine and growth factor [18- 20]. it is involved in inflammation. It has been suggested that adipokines are involved in the link between excess fat mass, adipose tissue inflammation and chronic diseases. Our findings are consistent with those in the previous works as they found high levels of chemerin in obese persons compared to non-obese [21] where similar link between chemerin and BMI was observed. High levels of these circulating biomarkers were noticed in inflammation and obesity [22], [23] and act in a pro-inflammatory fashion [24], [25].

It has been found that adipose tissue is one of the important sources of immune factors such as adipokines, chemokines, and cytokines, molecules that perform an important role in metabolism and immune system [26].

In both obesity and and severe COVID-19 there is a hypercoagulable state due to elevated levels of prothrombin along with reduced levels of anti-thrombin molecules [27], [28].

According to recent studies, COVID-19 is associated with dysregulation of pro-inflammatory cytokines that may result in chronic diseases/ inflammation secondary to obesity and lead to more severe disease [29].

SARS Cov-2 pathogenesis is dependent on the angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2) receptor for entry into cells in a variety of tissues, such as the nose lining, lungs, pancreas, kidneys, GIT, adipose, as well as the lining of blood vessels, heart muscle, and blood cells. Furthermore, ACE-2 has been found to play a significant role in obesity [30], [31].

Chemerin also encourages DCs to migrate from the circulatory system to the reactive lymph nodes [32], [33].

Therefore, chemerin not only regulates the recruitment of DC to the site of inflammation, but also plays a central role in activating innate immunity [34].

In particular, many studies have been reported on the anti-inflammatory effect of Chemerin CMKLR1 axis. Previous reports of, including a peritonitis model, showed that chemerin inhibits neutrophil and monocyte aggregation and reduces proinflammatory cytokine expression [35].

Chemerin-induced anti-inflammatory cytokine expression in MFs has also been reported [36], though this contradicts the study showing that active chemical stimulation increases inflammatory cytokine expression in MF [37].

Macrophages are classified as M1 or M2 based on their polarization type. The former is primarily responsible for the production of proinflammatory cytokines, whereas the latter is responsible for the production of anti-inflammatory cytokines. These two polar macrophages coexist in atherosclerotic lesions [38], implying that abnormal lipid metabolism may result in the transformation of M2 to M1 [39].

Adipokine omentin may be involved in the etiology of asthma. However, it may also protect lung endothelial function and reduce lung permeability and inflammation. Decreased levels of omentin, ghrelin, and adiponectin have been observed in people who suffer from obstructive sleep apnea [40].

The present study is the first that links between the low level of circulating omentin and a number of metabolic risk factors. Omentin is produced by several types of human tissues, among them is the visceral adipose tissue which produces a large amount of it. In addition, reduced gene expression of omentin has been reported obese patients [41]. Low levels of omentin may be linked to other metabolic disorders such as insulin resistance and glucose intolerance [42]. Omentin may perform other effects such as vasodilation suppression of adhesion molecule expression, and attenuation of inflammatory response in vascular endothelial cells [43].

According to our findings suggest a beneficial effect of omentin in several pathologies including infections and insulin sensitivity. Future studies are required to investigate the role of omentin in other metabolic diseases.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, serum chemerin rates were increased in patients with severe and critical COVID-19 patients compared to mild/moderate patients and were relevant to disease severity in this investigation. But the omentin levels were decreased with critical severity than mild cases in COVID-19.

5. Acknowledgements

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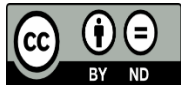
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