

INTERMITTENT FASTING IN NALFD: LIGHTENING AT THE END OF TUNNEL

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Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease has been the cornerstone of hepatology diseases for the last so many years. ¹It's an incidental finding on routine scans done for different symptoms such as epigastric pain, jaundice, deranged liver function tests, constipation and even weight loss.²The consequence of NALFD and NASH to full blown cirrhosis and even hepatocellular cancer has shaken experts across the world to a colossal extent and they are puzzled about what should be the best course of action for it as it seems a benign disease with mere fat infiltration in the liver.³Obesity has been found as the major culprit for it beside others such as diabetes and hypertriglycermia being components of metabolic syndrome which has own share of complications.⁴

There are a large no of treatments which have been under trial for NAFLD. One of the drugs The combination of intermittent fasting and exercise have dramatically transformed the prospect of NALFD patients with studies reporting it to be more effective than aerobic exercise alone and vice versa.⁵

Intermittent fasting (IF) is a novel weight loss regimen that has been steadily growing in popularity over the past decade .According to most of the studies alternate day fasting appears to be one of the most viable options for individuals with NAFLD causing weight loss and improvement of lipid level in few weeks though there are still question marks on long term effect on cardiovascular health of the person and that is the gap in the literature needing to be addressed by further investigations and multicentre trials involving a big study population .⁶

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which has been used traditionally as anti-diabetic drug for decades and still as first line drug in hyperglyceremia.⁵ Its utility for inducing weight loss in obese people has been quite known but it has got own side effects including bothersome gastrointestinal side effects and even life threatening lactic acidosis with renal impairment .The other class of drugs called statins for lowering increased cholesterol levels but can lead to deranged liver function tests and myopathies.

One of the effective modalities that is research proven and has revolutionised the management of Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease is intermittent fasting with excellent effect on liver function beside hugely beneficial for body mass index (BMI).⁶ Obesity that has been linked to insulin resistance that is cardinal in leading to metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes. There has been some concerns as well with risk of micronutrient deficiency reported with intermittent fasting and ketogenic diet. There is another diet called Mediterranean diet is recommended by many guidelines, it is not easily accessible for many patients.⁸ Secondly some individuals over eat in order to compensate for the loss of diet due to prolong fasting. This is also not a sensible choice for those people who have underlying diabetes and already on insulin which has its own attribute of regulating the weight of the patient. Nonetheless, there are multiple concerns of possible adverse events of these diet plans , which should be considered, before commencing them for treatment .The long term feasibility and safety of intermittent fasting in NAFLD is still a huge question mark .⁸ It's a fact that none of medications can result in reversal of it but this novel treatment is a lightening at the end of the tunnel for NAFLD patients which should be used after consulting the relevant expert in the field as self-treatment is not a safe option and not recommended by any means .

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