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Objective: To measure the extent of subclinical atherosclerosis in patients with systemic sclerosis, and to evaluate any potential vascular risk factors including blood sugar, blood pressure, adverse lipid profile, and steroids and other medications usage.

Methods: Thirty systemic sclerosis (SSc) patients and twenty healthy individuals were included as a control in this study. Non-invasive vascular tests including; carotid duplex scanning measuring internal and common carotid arteries intima-media thickness (IMT), and ankle brachial pressure index (ABPI) were performed. Traditional vascular risk factors as blood pressure, blood sugar, lipid profile, steroids usage and other immunosuppressive medications were assessed.

Results: Mean IMT of carotid arteries was higher in SSc patients when compared with control group. Carotid plaques were found in 4 SSc patients. Mean IMT was correlated positively with patients' age, disease duration, systolic blood pressure, and dyslipidemia. ABPI was significantly lower in SSc patients when compared with controls. No difference was found between limited and diffuse disease subtypes in mean IMT, nor in mean ABPI. There was not any positive correlation between mean IMT and cumulative steroid dose or any other immunosuppressive intake.

Conclusion: Increased risk of subclinical vascular disease in SSc patients. Systolic blood pressure, adverse lipid profile, long disease duration and older age of patients were of the potential risk factors in SSc.

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