

World Journal of *Clinical Cases*

World J Clin Cases 2022 October 6; 10(28): 9970-10390



REVIEW

- 9970 COVID-19 and the heart
Xanthopoulos A, Bourazana A, Giamouzis G, Skoularigki E, Dimos A, Zagouras A, Papamichalis M, Leventis I, Magouliotis DE, Triposkiadis F, Skoularigis J
- 9985 Role of short chain fatty acids in gut health and possible therapeutic approaches in inflammatory bowel diseases
Caetano MAF, Castelucci P

MINIREVIEWS

- 10004 Review of the pharmacological effects of astragaloside IV and its autophagic mechanism in association with inflammation
Yang Y, Hong M, Lian WW, Chen Z

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Clinical and Translational Research**

- 10017 Effects of targeted-edited oncogenic insulin-like growth factor-1 receptor with specific-sgRNA on biological behaviors of HepG2 cells
Yao M, Cai Y, Wu ZJ, Zhou P, Sai WL, Wang DF, Wang L, Yao DF

Retrospective Study

- 10031 Analysis of the successful clinical treatment of 140 patients with parathyroid adenoma: A retrospective study
Peng ZX, Qin Y, Bai J, Yin JS, Wei BJ
- 10042 Efficacy of digital breast tomosynthesis combined with magnetic resonance imaging in the diagnosis of early breast cancer
Ren Y, Zhang J, Zhang JD, Xu JZ
- 10053 Prevention and management of adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination using traditional Korean medicine: An online survey of public health doctors
Kang B, Chu H, Youn BY, Leem J
- 10066 Clinical outcomes of targeted therapies in elderly patients aged ≥ 80 years with metastatic colorectal cancer
Jang HR, Lee HY, Song SY, Lim KH
- 10077 Endovascular treatment vs drug therapy alone in patients with mild ischemic stroke and large infarct cores
Kou WH, Wang XQ, Yang JS, Qiao N, Nie XH, Yu AM, Song AX, Xue Q

Clinical Trials Study

- 10085** One hundred and ninety-two weeks treatment of entecavir maleate for Chinese chronic hepatitis B predominantly genotyped B or C

Xu JH, Wang S, Zhang DZ, Yu YY, Si CW, Zeng Z, Xu ZN, Li J, Mao Q, Tang H, Sheng JF, Chen XY, Ning Q, Shi GF, Xie Q, Zhang XQ, Dai J

Observational Study

- 10097** Dementia-related contact experience, attitudes, and the level of knowledge in medical vocational college students

Liu DM, Yan L, Wang L, Lin HH, Jiang XY

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

- 10109** Link between COVID-19 vaccines and myocardial infarction

Zafar U, Zafar H, Ahmed MS, Khattak M

CASE REPORT

- 10120** Successful treatment of disseminated nocardiosis diagnosed by metagenomic next-generation sequencing: A case report and review of literature

Li T, Chen YX, Lin JJ, Lin WX, Zhang WZ, Dong HM, Cai SX, Meng Y

- 10130** Multiple primary malignancies - hepatocellular carcinoma combined with splenic lymphoma: A case report

Wu FZ, Chen XX, Chen WY, Wu QH, Mao JT, Zhao ZW

- 10136** Metastatic multifocal melanoma of multiple organ systems: A case report

Maksimaityte V, Reivytyte R, Milaknyte G, Mickys U, Razanskiene G, Stundys D, Kazenaite E, Valantinas J, Stundiene I

- 10146** Cavernous hemangioma of the ileum in a young man: A case report and review of literature

Yao L, Li LW, Yu B, Meng XD, Liu SQ, Xie LH, Wei RF, Liang J, Ruan HQ, Zou J, Huang JA

- 10155** Successful management of a breastfeeding mother with severe eczema of the nipple beginning from puberty: A case report

Li R, Zhang LX, Tian C, Ma LK, Li Y

- 10162** Short benign ileocolonic anastomotic strictures - management with bi-flanged metal stents: Six case reports and review of literature

Kasapidis P, Mavrogenis G, Mandrekas D, Bazerbachi F

- 10172** Simultaneous bilateral floating knee: A case report

Wu CM, Liao HE, Lan SJ

- 10180** Chemotherapy, transarterial chemoembolization, and nephrectomy combined treated one giant renal cell carcinoma (T3aN1M1) associated with Xp11.2/TFE3: A case report

Wang P, Zhang X, Shao SH, Wu F, Du FZ, Zhang JF, Zuo ZW, Jiang R

- 10186** Tislelizumab-related enteritis successfully treated with adalimumab: A case report

Chen N, Qian MJ, Zhang RH, Gao QQ, He CC, Yao YK, Zhou JY, Zhou H

- 10193** Treatment of refractory/relapsed extranodal NK/T cell lymphoma with decitabine plus anti-PD-1: A case report
Li LJ, Zhang JY
- 10201** Clinical analysis of pipeline dredging agent poisoning: A case report
Li YQ, Yu GC, Shi LK, Zhao LW, Wen ZX, Kan BT, Jian XD
- 10208** Follicular lymphoma with cardiac involvement in a 90-year-old patient: A case report
Sun YX, Wang J, Zhu JH, Yuan W, Wu L
- 10214** Twin reversed arterial perfusion sequence-a rare and dangerous complication form of monochorionic twins: A case report
Anh ND, Thu Ha NT, Sim NT, Toan NK, Thuong PTH, Duc NM
- 10220** Potential otogenic complications caused by cholesteatoma of the contralateral ear in patients with otogenic abscess secondary to middle ear cholesteatoma of one ear: A case report
Zhang L, Niu X, Zhang K, He T, Sun Y
- 10227** Myeloid sarcoma with ulnar nerve entrapment: A case report
Li DP, Liu CZ, Jeremy M, Li X, Wang JC, Nath Varma S, Gai TT, Tian WQ, Zou Q, Wei YM, Wang HY, Long CJ, Zhou Y
- 10236** Alpha-fetoprotein-producing hepatoid adenocarcinoma of the lung responsive to sorafenib after multiline treatment: A case report
Xu SZ, Zhang XC, Jiang Q, Chen M, He MY, Shen P
- 10244** Acute mesenteric ischemia due to percutaneous coronary intervention: A case report
Ding P, Zhou Y, Long KL, Zhang S, Gao PY
- 10252** Persistent diarrhea with petechial rash - unusual pattern of light chain amyloidosis deposition on skin and gastrointestinal biopsies: A case report
Bilton SE, Shah N, Dougherty D, Simpson S, Holliday A, Sahebjam F, Grider DJ
- 10260** Solitary splenic tuberculosis: A case report
Guo HW, Liu XQ, Cheng YL
- 10266** Coronary artery aneurysms caused by Kawasaki disease in an adult: A case report and literature review
He Y, Ji H, Xie JC, Zhou L
- 10273** Double filtration plasmapheresis for pregnancy with hyperlipidemia in glycogen storage disease type Ia: A case report
Wang J, Zhao Y, Chang P, Liu B, Yao R
- 10279** Treatment of primary tracheal schwannoma with endoscopic resection: A case report
Shen YS, Tian XD, Pan Y, Li H
- 10286** Concrescence of maxillary second molar and impacted third molar: A case report
Su J, Shao LM, Wang LC, He LJ, Pu YL, Li YB, Zhang WY

- 10293** Rare leptin in non-alcoholic fatty liver cirrhosis: A case report
Nong YB, Huang HN, Huang JJ, Du YQ, Song WX, Mao DW, Zhong YX, Zhu RH, Xiao XY, Zhong RX
- 10301** One-stage resection of four genotypes of bilateral multiple primary lung adenocarcinoma: A case report
Zhang DY, Liu J, Zhang Y, Ye JY, Hu S, Zhang WX, Yu DL, Wei YP
- 10310** Ectopic pregnancy and failed oocyte retrieval during *in vitro* fertilization stimulation: Two case reports
Zhou WJ, Xu BF, Niu ZH
- 10317** Malignant peritoneal mesothelioma with massive ascites as the first symptom: A case report
Huang X, Hong Y, Xie SY, Liao HL, Huang HM, Liu JH, Long WJ
- 10326** Subperiosteal orbital hematoma concomitant with abscess in a patient with sinusitis: A case report
Hu XH, Zhang C, Dong YK, Cong TC
- 10332** Postpartum posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome secondary to preeclampsia and cerebrospinal fluid leakage: A case report and literature review
Wang Y, Zhang Q
- 10339** Sudden extramedullary and extranodal Philadelphia-positive anaplastic large-cell lymphoma transformation during imatinib treatment for CML: A case report
Wu Q, Kang Y, Xu J, Ye WC, Li ZJ, He WF, Song Y, Wang QM, Tang AP, Zhou T
- 10346** Relationship of familial cytochrome P450 4V2 gene mutation with liver cirrhosis: A case report and review of the literature
Jiang JL, Qian JF, Xiao DH, Liu X, Zhu F, Wang J, Xing ZX, Xu DL, Xue Y, He YH
- 10358** COVID-19-associated disseminated mucormycosis: An autopsy case report
Kyuno D, Kubo T, Tsujiwaki M, Sugita S, Hosaka M, Ito H, Harada K, Takasawa A, Kubota Y, Takasawa K, Ono Y, Magara K, Narimatsu E, Hasegawa T, Osanai M
- 10366** Thalidomide combined with endoscopy in the treatment of Cronkhite-Canada syndrome: A case report
Rong JM, Shi ML, Niu JK, Luo J, Miao YL
- 10375** Thoracolumbar surgery for degenerative spine diseases complicated with tethered cord syndrome: A case report
Wang YT, Mu GZ, Sun HL

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- 10384** Are pregnancy-associated hypertensive disorders so sweet?
Thomopoulos C, Ilias I
- 10387** Tumor invasion front in oral squamous cell carcinoma
Cuevas-González JC, Cuevas-González MV, Espinosa-Cristobal LF, Donohue Cornejo A

ABOUT COVER

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Are pregnancy-associated hypertensive disorders so sweet?

Costas Thomopoulos, Ioannis Ilias

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Abstract

Worldwide, one in seven pregnancies is complicated by some form of diabetes, with a rising trend. Additionally, hypertension is one of the main causes of morbidity and mortality for both the pregnant woman and the fetus and also contributes to premature birth. In a cohort study of pregnant women with diabetes, which was recently published in this journal, at least 84.5% of the subjects had hypertension. This rate of hypertension might be among the highest reported thus far. In the medical literature, approximately 20% of women with diabetes during pregnancy have various pregnancy-associated hypertensive disorders. Racial/ethnic differences, apparently, were not implicated in this elevated rate of hypertension: Although black and Hispanic women have a twofold higher rate of hypertension in pregnancy compared to white women, 75% of the subjects in the study in question were white. Thus, the impressive finding delivered by this large study, merits additional clarifications.

Key Words: Pregnancy; Hypertension; Pre-eclampsia; Diabetes; Gestational diabetes; Human

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Core Tip: In a recent large study of pregnant women with diabetes, more than 84.5% of the subjects had hypertension, a rate which is fourfold higher than in the literature. Such a finding merits additional clarification.

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TO THE EDITOR

We read with interest the paper by Xaverius *et al*[1] focusing on the association between different phenotypes of diabetic pregnancies and birth outcomes. In this paper, the authors considered, reasonably, gestational or chronic hypertension to be a confounding factor, because hypertension in pregnancy was related to both the predictor and outcome of their investigation. It is striking that most pregnant women with diabetes included in this study had hypertension (with rates ranging from 84.5% to 95.0%)[1]. To the best of our knowledge, this rate of hypertension might be among the highest reported thus far. A tentative explanation could be that racial/ethnic differences were implicated in this elevated rate of hypertension: black and Hispanic women have a twofold higher rate of hypertension in pregnancy compared to white women[2]. Nevertheless, approximately 75% of the population which was included in the study by Xaverius *et al*[1] were white. In the Control of Hypertension in Pregnancy Study (CHIPS), which included women with gestational or chronic hypertension[3], only 6% had gestational diabetes at enrollment, while in the recent Chronic Hypertension and Pregnancy (CHAP) trial, which included only women with chronic hypertension[4], the reported gestational diabetes rate was 15%. Additionally, in the literature, approximately 20% of women with diabetes during pregnancy have various pregnancy-associated hypertensive disorders[5-7]. Thus, in the study by Xaverius *et al*[1] the rate of hypertension in pregnancy is fourfold higher than in the literature. This impressive finding, delivered by this large pregnancy cohort[1], merits additional clarifications.

FOOTNOTES

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