**Casual Friday Series** 

# Functional Blood Chemistry Series Pt. 12: Proteins (I)

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## Disclaimer

- Information in this presentation is not intended to diagnose, treat, reverse, cure, or prevent any disease. While this presentation is based on medical literature, findings, and text, The following statements have not been evaluated by the FDA.
- The information provided in this presentation is for your consideration only as a practicing health care provider. Ultimately you are responsible for exercising professional judgment in the care of your own patients.

# Proteins

- Total protein
- Albumin
- Globulin
- Albumin/Globulin ratio



## Total Protein

Total protein levels reflect the albumin and globulin content of blood.

Therefore, a shift in either albumin, globulin or both will alter total protein levels.

Marker has limited clinical value as it is possible for albumin to drop, globulin to elevate, leading to a normal total protein

Albumin/Globulin ratio helps to compensate for this however

Traditional Reference Range:

60-85 g/dL

Optimal Reference Range 6.5-7.5 g/dL

# Total Protein

## Elevated by:

Chronic liver disease, dehydration, immune system issues (increased globulins)

### Decreased by:

Poor protein intake, digestion and absorption (lack of amino acids to synthesize proteins)?

Crohn's and ulcerative colitis

Alcoholism and/or liver cirrhosis (poor liver function)

Hypothyroidism



## Albumin

Albumin, synthesized in the liver, is the most abundant plasma protein in the serum.

60% of plasma protein is albumin

Small protein that can be lost into extravascular spaces (eg kidney dysfunction)

### It has two major functions

Binding – free fatty acids, minerals (calcium, magnesium), some hormones, medications, wastes, etc

Osmotic gradient – primary contributor to the plasma osmotic gradient, which helps keep fluid in the circulatory system

Also acts as a buffer and has recently been found to have antioxidant properties as well

Life span of approximately 20 days



# Albumin

Transcription of albumin gene is down-regulated by:

Cytokines (TNF, interleukins, transforming growth factor)

Vitamin (vitamin A, B6)

Colloid-osmotic pressure

Amino acid deficiency



# Albumin - Elevated

Cause	Reason	Additional Inquiry
Dehydration	Hemoconcentration. Albumin appears elevated but is relatively elevated due to low plasma volume.	Evaluate other markers of dehydration.



# Albumin - Decreased

Cause	Reason	Additional Inquiry
Infection and/or	Albumin is a negative acute phase reactant,	Evaluate other inflammatory makers.
inflammation	which will decrease during some infections and	Client history. CIRS
	inflammatory processes.	
Liver disease	Includes alcoholism and cirrhosis. Poor liver	Evaluate other liver markers.
	function can lead to poor synthesis of plasma	
	proteins, such as albumin.	
Kidney disease	Due to albumin's small size, if there are issues in	Evaluate kidney markers.
	the glomerular filtration membrane of the	
	kidneys, albumin can be lost in the urine.	
Poor protein intake,	Poor protein intake or absorption limits the	Evaluate intake and digestive function.
digestion and	amount of amino acids present for protein	
absorption	synthesis.	



#### Reassessment of Albumin as a Nutritional Marker in Kidney Disease

The decision by nephrologists, renal dietitians, federal agencies, health care payers, large dialysis organizations, and the research community to embrace serum albumin as an important index of nutrition and clinical performance is based on numerous misconceptions. Patients with analbuminemia are not malnourished and individuals with simple malnutrition are rarely

hypoalbuminemic.

Viewed in this manner, hypoalbuminemia may offer an opportunity to improve patient well-being by identifying and treating the underlying disorder.

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Kidney disease is closely associated with protein-calorie malnutrition. The World Health Organization defines malnutrition bumin is typically low in patients with as "bad nourishment" characterized by CKD, these patients should be consid-"inadequate or excess intake of protein, energy, and micronutrients such as vitamins, and the frequent infections and disorders and, because hypoalbuminemia is strongly that result."1 The definition implies that protein-calorie malnutrition (henceforth referred to as "malnutrition") will improve prove patient outcomes. This review exwhen missing nutrients are provided.

Serum albumin is the principal nutritional marker used to identify malnu- an alternative vision to interpreting serum trition in patients with chronic kidney albumin. disease (CKD). Through endorsements by nephrologists, renal dietitians, the research community, federal agencies, health care payers, and large dialysis organizations, it has also become a de facto index of clinical performance. The use of General Population

sumptions: Serum albumin is a reliable index of malnutrition; because serum alered malnourished; replacing missing nutrients will raise low albumin levels; associated with mortality, replacing missing nutrients to raise albumin will also impands on previous viewpoints2 by critically examining these assumptions and offering

#### **DETERMINANTS OF SERUM** ALBUMIN

serum albumin as a nutritional and qual- Albumin is a negatively charged, waterity care marker involves the following as-soluble protein (molecular weight 65

ulating hepatic albumin synthesis are nutritional intake-specifically protein consumption-and illness.5 Reduced protein consumption slows mRNA synthesis of albumin and results in lower serum levels,3,6-11 although only in the setting of negligible dietary protein intake. Protein restriction also slows albumin degradation, although to a lesser degree than reductions in the synthesis rate.3,12 Refeeding with amino acids or protein induces an immediate rise in albumin synthesis,7,10

It is also well established that albumin levels fall in patients with inflammatory disorders and other illnesses. Possible contributory mechanisms include downregulated production of albumin mRNA by the liver, leading to re-

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### MEN STARVE IN MINNESOTA

Above:

Conscientious objectors during starvation experiment. Life magazine - July 30, 1945. Volume 19, Number 5, p. 43. Credit: Wallace Kirkland/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.

Dr Ancel Keys measures the chest width of James Plaugher.

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#### Reassessment of Albumin as a Nutritional Marker in **Kidney Disease**

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The decision by nephrologists, renal dietitians, federal agencies, health care pay- kD) that is synthesized in the liver. Its

Albumin's widespread use as a nutritional marker is understandable in light of the desire of clinicians for a convenient, widely applicable, easily interpretable, and accurate indicator of nutritional status. Unfortunately, no such indicator exists or probably will for the foreseeable future. This does not mean that serum albumin lacks utility. Although we have demonstrated that serum albumin is not a good nutritional index in the great majority of cases, it is a powerful way to detect underlying illness; that is, the higher the serum albumin, the more intact is overall health.

> referred to as "malnutrition") will improve when missing nutrients are provided.

Serum albumin is the principal nutritional marker used to identify malnutrition in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD), Through endorsements by nephrologists, renal dietitians, the research community, federal agencies, health care payers, and large dialysis organizations, it has also become a de facto index of clinical performance. The use of serum albumin as a nutritional and quality care marker involves the following as- soluble protein (molecular weight 65

prove patient outcomes. This review expands on previous viewpoints<sup>2</sup> by critically examining these assumptions and offering an alternative vision to interpreting serum

#### DETERMINANTS OF SERUM ALBUMIN

#### General Population

Albumin is a negatively charged, water-

min levels fall in patients with inflammatory disorders and other illnesses. Possible contributory mechanisms include downregulated production of albumin mRNA by the liver, leading to re-

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#### Atherosclerosis





Serum albumin levels predict vascular dysfunction with paradoxical pathogenesis in healthy individuals

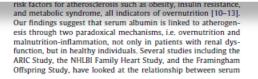
Mayuko Kadono a.\*, Goji Hasegawa a, Masako Shigeta b.c., Atsuko Nakazawa c, Miho Ueda c, Masahiro Yamazakia, Michiaki Fukuia, Naoto Nakamura

A U-shaped relationship between serum albumin and PWV was statistically significant when albumin level was treated as a continuous variable in g/dl and centered at 4.4g/dl. The highest tertile of albumin level (4.6-5.4g/dl) was associated with increased odds ratios for hyperglycemia compared to the middle tertile (4.4-4.5g/dl), whereas the lowest tertile (3.3-4.3g/dl) was associated with reduced odds ratios for hyperglycemia. The highest tertile was also associated with increased odds ratios for metabolic syndrome compared to the middle tertile, whereas the lowest tertile was associated with reduced odds ratios. Furthermore, the lowest tertile was associated with increased prevalence of inflammation.

> lar, it is speculated the presence of the "malnutrition-inflammation" complex syndrome" (MICS) may partly explain these paradoxical

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b Department of Epidemiology for Community Health and Medicine, Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, Graduate School of Medical Science, Kyoto, Japan

# Albumin

Traditional Reference Range:

3.5-5.5 g/dL

Optimal Reference Range:

4.3-4.7 g/dL



# Globulin

Serum globulin refers to a number of different plasma proteins synthesized in different locations of the body:

#### α-Globulin

- 1 antitrypsin, alpha 1-lipoprotein
- 2 ceruloplasmin, haptoglobin, thyroid binding globulin, angiotensinogen, Protein C

### **β-Globulin**

Plaminogen, sex hormone binding globulin, transferrin

#### γ-Globulin

Immunoglobulins (antibodies)

Thus an increase or decrease in serum globulin levels can indicate a variety of changes within these subtypes

Protein electrophoresis identifies these subtypes on a blood chemistry

# Globulin

- lgG >
- beta-globulin (i.e. SHBG, plasminogen, complement) >
- alpha-2-glubulin (i.e. TBG, ceruloplasmin, angiotensinogen) >
- alpha-1-globulin (i.e. antitrypsin) >
- IgA
- IgM
- IgE
- IgD



# Globulin

Traditional Reference Range: 1.5-4.5 g/L

Optimal Reference Range 2.3-2.7 g/L



# Globulin - Elevated

## In general:

- Cancer
- Autoimmunity
- Elevated estrogen
  - Increase in SHBG and thyroid binding globulin



# Globulin - Elevated

### Alpha globulins

- Acute phase reactant response infection, inflammation
- Gall bladder dysfunction (biliary cirrhosis, obstructive jaundice check bilirubin levels)
- Ulcerative Colitis
  - "Digestive inflammation" used by other practitioners

### Beta globulins

Gall bladder dysfunction (biliary cirrhosis, obstructive jaundice – check bilirubin levels)

### Gamma globulins

Autoimmune diseases, chronic infections, some liver diseases



# Globulin - Decreased

## Alpha globulins

- Acute hemolytic anemia
- Nephrosis

## Beta globulins

Nephrosis

## Gamma globulins

Immune system compromise



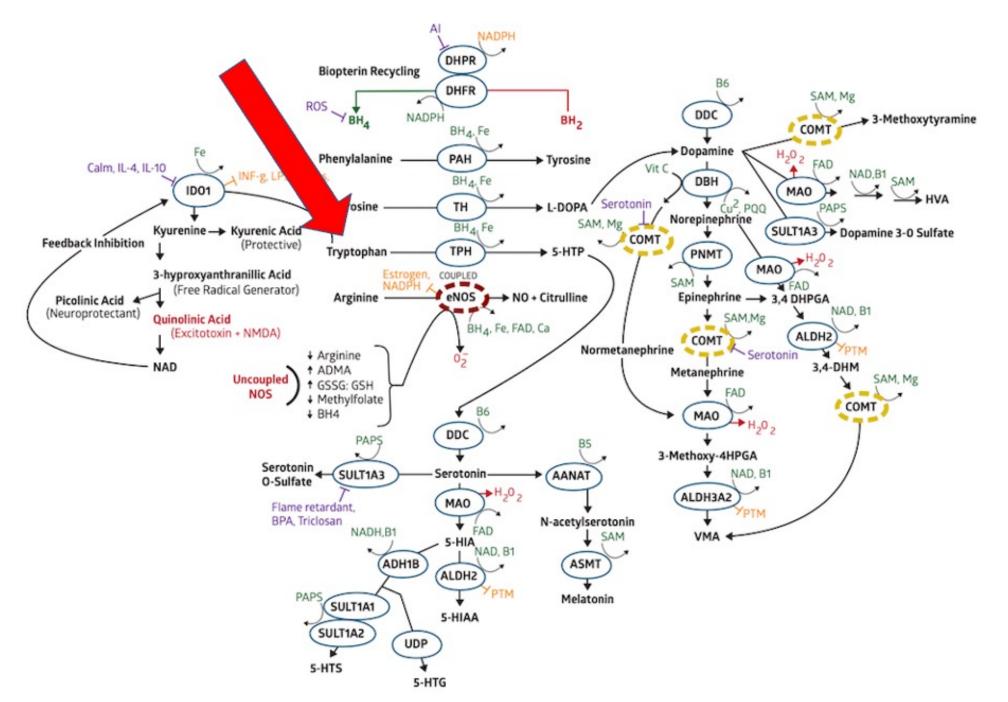
# Globulin – Quick Thought

Contain 10x as much tryptophan as albumin

If increased globulin is observed, ask patients about depressive tendencies

• As globulin synthesis increases, serum tryptophan may decrease, thus limiting the availability for serotonin synthesis







# Albumin/Globulin Ratio

Optimal Range: 1.8-2.0

• Example: Albumin of 5.0 and Globulin of 2.5 is a 2:1 ratio or 2.0



# Albumin/Globulin Ratio - Elevated

## High albumin/globulin ratio is either:

- Increased albumin dehydration
- Decreased globulin (blank food tests)
- Both



# Albumin/Globulin Ratio - Decreased

### Low albumin/globulin ratio is either:

- Decreased albumin
- Increased globulin
- Both

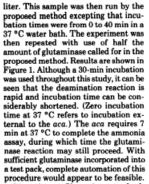
Possibly caused by liver dysfunction, chronic inflammation/infection, loss of albumin via the kidneys, autoimmunity



#### A note regarding Alk Phos and Protein...

#### Table 1. Probabilities of Assigning Samples to Either the Liver or Bone Group

	Probab	litty, %
Range	Liver	Bone
$\gamma$ GT, U/L		
10-16	12	88
16-25	19	81
25-40	31	69
40-63	49	51
63-100	70	30
100-158	87	13
158-251	95	5
251-398	99	1
over 398	100	_
Albumin/ globulin		
0.6-1.0	80	20
1.0-1.2	71	29
1.2-1.4	56	44
1.4-1.6	35	65
1.6-1.8	14	86
1.8-2.0	6	94
over 2.0		100



Linearity. L-Glutamine standards from 0.68 to 6.80 mmol/liter, run by the Leijnse, B., Evaluation of the DuPont aca ammonia procedure. Clin. Chem. 24, 489 (1978).

> John J. Moore, Sylvan M. Sax Arthur B. Blackburn, Jr.

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Economical Single Cellulose Acetate/Plastic Sandwich for Developing and Scanning CPK/ LDH isoenzymes

To the Editor:

I have slightly modified isoenzyme electrophoresis by replacing one of the

in a small bin, then gently blotted before scanning in the plastic casing.

CPK. Peel off the plastic cover, blot, and air dry for a few minutes or until some protein fraction becomes visible. Place between blotters on a clean glass plate and dry in a 55 °C oven for 10 min or until dry (3). Cool, then observe under a longwave ultraviolet light, in a dark room.

#### References

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According to the data obtained here, if the albumin/globulin ratio is less than 1.1, there is an almost 80% chance that the liver is the predominant source of the increased alkaline phosphatase. Equally, if the albumin/globulin ratio exceeds 1.6, there is a better than 80% chance that bone is the course.

previous studies of patients without liver disease (2, 4).

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air and ensure good and even soaking of the central area by causing the substrate to ooze out through the holes. Cover with another plastic sheet 1 cm away from the narrow edge of the plastic base (this helps draining). Now squeeze out excess substrate by gently pressing a squeegee across the sandwich. Repeat this procedure in the opposite direction (avoid scratching the plastic cover). Blot, trim away extra plastic, place the preparation between two blotters, then between two glass plates, and incubate, supported in a 37 °C water bath, for 30 min for CPK or 20 min for LDH. The "sandwiches" can be stacked between the glass plates. A flat weight of about 0.5 kg is placed on the top of the stack to ensure contact.

LDH. Scan immediately, while wet and inside the plastic (2). I use a Beckman R110 Densitometer 580-mm filter (2), slit length 0.3 mm and filter holder 0.4 cal, or visually examine the bands. If not scanned immediately, and to avoid extensive diffusion of the bands, the cellulose strip is rinsed and kept in water

serum alkaline phosphatase value, several additional enzyme analyses have been gvaluated. These have included γ-glutamyltranspeptidase (γGT; EC 2.3.2.1) (I, 2), 5'-nucleotidase (EC 3.1.3.5) (3, 4), leucine aminopeptidase (EC 3.4.1.1), and alanine and aspartate aminotransferases (EC 2.6.1.2 and EC 2.6.1.1) (2). The ideal situation is that they should be normal when only the bone isoenzyme is increased in concentration and above normal when the liver isoenzyme is present in increased amounts.

On each of a series of 96 routine specimens sent to the laboratory for "alkaline phosphatase isoenzymes," the following assays were done: (a) polyacrylamide disc electrophoresis of alkaline phosphatase by the method of Smith et al. (5), (b)  $\gamma$ GT at 37 °C with 3-carboxy-4-nitroanilide as substrate (6), and (c) total alkaline phosphatase by continuous-flow analysis (SMA 12/60), also at 37 °C, with phenyl phosphate as substrate.

Of the 96 samples, electrophoresis



### 46yo female DM2 Depression HBP Fatigue

### Comp. Metabolic Panel (14)

	Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
<b>A</b>	Glucose 01	185	High		mg/dL	70-99
	BUN 01	11			mg/dL	6-24
	Creatinine 01	0.87			mg/dL	0.57-1.00
	eGFR	83			mL/min/1.73	>59
	BUN/Creatinine Ratio	13			500 000	9-23
	Sodium 01	137	l l		mmol/L	134-144
	Potassium 01	4.3			mmol/L	3.5-5.2
	Chloride 01	102			mmol/L	96-106
	Carbon Dioxide, Total 01	23			mmol/L	20-29
	Calcium 01	9.2			mg/dL	8.7-10.2
	Protein, Total <sup>01</sup>	7.2			g/dL	6.0-8.5
•	Albumin 61	3.7	Low		g/dL	3.8-4.8

#### Comp. Metabolic Panel (14) (Cont.)

Globulin, Total	3.5		g/dL	1.5-4.5
▼ A/G Ratio	1.1	Low		1.2-2.2
Bilirubin, Total <sup>01</sup>	0.2		mg/dL	0.0-1.2
Alkaline Phosphatase <sup>01</sup>	78		IU/L	44-121
AST (SGOT) 01	23		IU/L	0-40
ALT (SGPT) 01	18		IU/L	0-32

	Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
	Lipids 01					
	Cholesterol, Total 01	148			mg/dL	100-199
A	Triglycerides 01	156	High		mg/dL	0-149
	HDL Cholesterol 01	41			mg/dL	>39
	VLDL Cholesterol Cal	27			mg/dL	5-40
	LDL Chol Calc (NIH)	80			mg/dL	0-99
	T. Chol/HDL Ratio	3.6			ratio	0.0-4.4

Please Neter 91



### 46yo female DM2 Depression HBP Fatigue

	Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
<b>A</b>	Hemoglobin A1c 01	7.3	High		%	4.8-5.6
	Estim. Avg Glu (eAG)	163			mg/dL	

1	Test	Current Resul	t and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval	
•	C-Peptide, Serum 01	4.9	High		ng/mL	1.1-4.4	
	14 W	C-Peptide refer	ence interval	is for fasting patients.	1373		

Test		Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
▲ C-Reactive Protein, Cardiac <sup>01</sup>	9.24	High	100	mg/L	0.00-3.00	
				tive Risk for Future Cardio	ovascular Event	
				Low	<1.00	
				Average	1.00 - 3.00	
				High	>3.00	

	Test	Current Result a	and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
•	Uric Acid <sup>□1</sup>	7.5	High		mg/dL	2.6-6.2
			Th	erapeutic target for gout pat	ients: <6.0	

### Fibrinogen Activity

Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
▲ Fibrinogen Activity <sup>01</sup>	684	High		mg/dL	193-507

### Ferritin

Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
▲ Ferritin <sup>01</sup>	154	High		ng/mL	15-150



46yo female DM2 Depression HBP Fatigue

High (>95th percentile)					坐	Mycotoxins 🏗	Environmental Toxins
TEST NAME	CURRENT RESULT	PREVIOUS RESULT		CURRENT	RESULT	PREVIOUS RESULT	REFERENCE
∳ Fumonisins B3	29.6		0	6.08	10.8		≤10.8 ng/g
Glyphosate	17.46		0	1.65	7.6	•	≤7.6 ug/g

Moderate (75th-95th perc	entile)	<b>曼 N</b>	fycotoxins	ф He	avy Metals	Environmental Toxins
TEST NAME	CURRENT RESULT	PREVIOUS RESULT	CURRENT	RESULT	PREVIOUS RESULT	REFERENCE
Enniatin B1(ENN B1)	0.16	0	0.13	0.22		≤0.22 ng/g
Fumonisins B2	7.19	0	4.05	7.2		≤7.2 ng/g
Ochratoxin A (OTA)	3.99	0	3.83	6.8		≤6.8 ng/g
© Tin*	2.18	0	1	3.72		≤3.72 ug/g
Bisphenol A (BPA) *	2.79	0	2.12	5.09		≤5.09 ug/g
Mono-(2-ethyl-5-oxohexyl) phthalate (MEOHP) *	15.36	0	8.99	23.4		≤23.4 ug/g

<sup>\*</sup> Indicates NHANES population data reference ranges.



### 52 yo female DM2 Obesity Chronic UTI Fatigue

### Comp. Metabolic Panel (14)

	Test	Current Resu	lt and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
A	Glucose 01	147	High		mg/dL	70-99
	BUN 01	8			mg/dL	6-24
	Creatinine <sup>01</sup>	0.63	- 4		mg/dL	0.57-1.00
	eGFR	107			mL/min/1.73	>59
	BUN/Creatinine Ratio	13				9-23
	Sodium 01	138			mmol/L	134-144
	Potassium 01	4.4			mmol/L	3.5-5.2
	Chloride 01	98			mmol/L	96-106
	Carbon Dioxide, Total 01	28			mmol/L	20-29
	Calcium 01	9.2			mg/dL	8.7-10.2
	Protein, Total <sup>01</sup>	7.7			g/dL	6.0-8.5
	Albumin <sup>01</sup>	4.2			g/dL	3.8-4.9
	Globulin, Total	3.5	Д. Д. Д		g/dL	1.5-4.5
	A/G Ratio	1.2				1.2-2.2
	Bilirubin, Total <sup>®1</sup>	1.0			mg/dL	0.0-1.2
A	Alkaline Phosphatase 01	129	High		IU/L	44-121
A	AST (SGOT) 01	60	High		IU/L	0-40
A	ALT (SGPT) ©1	59	High		IU/L	0-32

	Test	Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
	Lipids <sup>61</sup>					
	Cholesterol, Total 01	198			mg/dL	100-199
A	Triglycerides 01	164	High		mg/dL	0-149
•	HDL Cholesterol 01	36	Low		mg/dL	>39
	VLDL Cholesterol Cal	30			mg/dL	5-40
•	LDL Chol Calc (NIH)	132	High		mg/dL	0-99
	T. Chol/HDL Ratio	5.5	High		ratio	0.0-4.4



### 52 yo female DM2 Obesity Chronic UTI Fatigue

### Fibrinogen Activity

Test	Current Result and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
Fibrinogen Activity <sup>01</sup>	444		mg/dL	193-507

#### Ferritin

Test	Current Resul	t and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
▲ Ferritin <sup>01</sup>	199	High		ng/mL	15-150

#### LDH

Test	Current Result	t and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
▲ LDH 01	307	High		IU/L	119-226

#### GGT

Test	Current Result and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
GGT 01	51		IU/L	0-60

### C-Reactive Protein, Cardiac

Test	Current Res	ult and Flag	Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
C-Reactive Protein, Cardiac 01	19.14	High		mg/L	0.00-3.00
		Rela	tive Risk for Future Cardio	ovascular Event	
			Low	<1.00	
			Average	1.00 - 3.00	
			High	>3.00	

Test		Current Result and Flag		Previous Result and Date	Units	Reference Interval
Hemoglob	oin A1c 01	7.0	High		%	4.8-5.6
Please Not	te:01					
			betes: 5.7 - ( es: >6.4	5.4		
		Glycem	ic control fo	r adults with diabetes: <7.0		
Estim. Avg	Glu (eAG)	154			mg/dL	



52 yo female DM2 Obesity Chronic UTI Fatigue



<sup>\*</sup> Indicates NHANES population data reference ranges.



<sup>\*</sup> Indicates NHANES population data reference ranges.



