Letter to the Editor

Lipoprotein (a) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Dear Sir,

We read with great interest the paper by Basili et al. [1] assessing the lipoprotein (a) (Lp(a)) serum levels in patients affected by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The authors found significantly lower serum Lp(a) and Apolipoprotein B-100 levels in COPD patients than in healthy subjects. However, they state that the serum was stored at $40^\circ$C. Furthermore, they mention that the patients were studied between March 1997 and January 1999, which suggests that the serum was stored for a long period. Many studies have shown that measurement of Lp(a) in old frozen samples is likely to result in a preferential decrease and false lower Lp(a) concentrations in patient groups compared with control groups, especially when the temperature of storage is not $-80^\circ$C [2–4]. Therefore, we believe that the differences observed in the study of Basili et al. may be artificial. Moreover, the authors state as a possible explanation a moderate liver failure. However, this cannot be substantiated by their findings, as no other laboratory tests were performed.

References


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