

Insights into risk factors of the Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease development among patients with schizophrenia

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Abstract

Introduction: The global burden of the Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) constitutes a significant clinical problem for healthcare systems worldwide. Apparently, a subgroup of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia appears to be particularly vulnerable to the MASLD development. However, exact risk factors in schizophrenia subjects remain unclear to date.

Material and methods: The article is a literature narrative review concentrating on the particular risk factors identification for MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia. Internet scientific bases were searched by three independent investigators throughout February-July 2024 for relevant original and review articles from 2000-2024 using different combinations of MeSH terms: "antipsychotics", "diabetes", "dietary habits", "dyslipidemia", "inflammation", "intestinal permeability", "insulin resistance", "metabolic-associated fatty liver disease", "metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease", "metabolic syndrome", "non-alcoholic fatty liver disease", "obesity", "prevention", "socioeconomic status", "treatment". Furthermore, a reference search was conducted to find other important manuscripts. Articles in other language than English were excluded from the search. The Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles was used to ensure the appropriate quality of this review.

Results: Socioeconomic conditions, improper dietary habits, lack of physical activity, smoking addiction issue, gut microbiota dysfunction or the use of antipsychotics may act as trigger points for the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia.

Conclusions: The identification of particular risk factors of MASLD development among schizophrenia subjects may help to establish a multidisciplinary healthcare programme primarily aimed at MASLD and its complications prevention, early detection and proper treatment.

Keywords: metabolic syndrome, psychiatry, schizophrenia, risk factors, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease

Streszczenie

Wstęp: Stłuszczeniowa Choroba Wątroby Związana z Dysfunkcją Metaboliczną (Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease, MASLD) stanowi istotny klinicznie problem dla systemów opieki zdrowotnej na całym świecie. Wydaje się, że subpopulacja pacjentów ze schizofrenią jest szczególnie narażona na jej rozwój. Jednakże, poszczególne czynniki ryzyka rozwoju MASLD wśród pacjentów ze schizofrenią pozostają niejasne.

Materiał i metody: Artykuł stanowi narracyjny przegląd literatury koncentrujący się na identyfikacji czynników ryzyka rozwoju MASLD wśród pacjentów ze schizofrenią. W okresie luty-lipiec 2024 r. trzech badaczy niezależnie przeszukało internetowe bazy naukowe pod kątem odpowiednich artykułów oryginalnych i przeglądowych z lat 2000-2024, stosując różne kombinacje terminów MeSH: "antipsychotics", "diabetes", "dietary habits", "dyslipidemia", "inflammation", "intestinal permeability", "insulin resistance", "metabolic-associated fatty liver disease", "metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease", "metabolic syndrome", "non-alcoholic fatty liver disease", "obesity", "prevention", "socioeconomic status", "treatment". Ponadto dokonano sprawdzenia list referencyjnych poszczególnych artykułów w celu identyfikacji dodatkowych publikacji powiązanych z tematyką niniejszego manuskryptu. Z przeglądu wykluczono artykuły w języku innym niż angielski. Aby

zapewnić odpowiednią jakość publikacji, zastosowano The Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles.

Dyskusja: Czynniki socjoekonomiczne, nieprawidłowe nawyki żywieniowe, niedostateczna ilość aktywności fizycznej, nikotynizm, dysfunkcja mikrobioty jelitowej oraz stosowanie leków przeciwpsychotycznych mogą przyczyniać się do rozwoju MASLD wśród pacjentów ze schizofrenią.

Wnioski: Identyfikacja poszczególnych czynników ryzyka rozwoju MASLD u chorych na schizofrenię może pomóc w ustaleniu multidyscyplinarnego programu opieki zdrowotnej, którego głównym celem będzie zapobieganie MASLD i jej powikłaniom, wczesne wykrywanie oraz właściwe leczenie.

Słowa kluczowe: psychiatria, schizofrenia, czynniki ryzyka, zespół metaboliczny, stłuszczeniowa choroba wątroby związana z dysfunkcją metaboliczną

1. Introduction

1.1. Disease overview

Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD), formerly known as a Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) or Metabolic-associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD), is the latest term describing Steatotic Liver Disease (SLD) associated with the presence of metabolic syndrome (MetS) components [1]. It is the most common chronic liver disease worldwide – epidemiological studies conducted so far indicated that even 32.4% of a general population may be affected by this condition. Furthermore, fatty liver disease is associated with numerous hepatic and extra-hepatic complications, resulting in significant premature mortality [2,3]. Therefore, the diagnosis and the management of MASLD has become one of the crucial challenges for clinicians in everyday practice (Table 1).

Table 1. MASLD diagnostic criteria [1].

detection of hepatic steatosis (imaging techniques, liver biopsy)
plus the presence of minimum 1 out of 5 cardiometabolic criteria:
BMI ≥ 25 kg/m ² (23 in Asian population) or WC > 94 cm in males or WC > 80 cm in females or ethnicity adjusted
FSG ≥ 5.6 mmol/L (100 mg/dl) or 2-hour post-load glucose levels ≥ 7.8 mmol/L (≥ 140 mg/dl) or HbA1c $\geq 5.7\%$ (39 mmol/l) or t2DM or the treatment of t2DM
BP $\geq 130/85$ mmHg or antihypertensive drug treatment
plasma TGs ≥ 1.70 mmol/L (150 mg/dl) or lipid lowering treatment
plasma HDL-C ≤ 1.00 mmol/L (40 mg/dl) in males or ≤ 1.3 mmol/L (50 mg/dl) in females or lipid lowering treatment

Abbreviations: BMI, body mass index; BP, blood pressure; FSG, fasting serum glucose; HbA1c, haemoglobin A1c; HDL-C, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; t2DM, type 2 diabetes mellitus; TGs, triglycerides; WC, waist circumference.

In the last few years, emerging data have shown that specific subpopulations of patients are particularly vulnerable to the MASLD development. One of them are subjects with schizophrenia. Several studies revealed that the prevalence of fatty liver disease in this group of patients may even reach 70.8% [4].

Thus, it seems necessary for healthcare professionals to identify particular risk factors, which may contribute to the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia, to ensure proper diagnostic process and effective forms of treatment.

1.2. Objective of the study

We aimed to perform a comprehensive literature review concentrating on possible risk factors for the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia (Figure 1).

2. Material and Methods

A narrative literature review, focusing on the possible risk factors of the MASLD occurrence among patients with schizophrenia, was conducted. Internet scientific databases, Google Scholar, Medline, PubMed and Science Direct, were searched by three independent investigators throughout February-July 2024 for relevant original and review articles from 2000-2024 using different combinations of MeSH terms: “antipsychotics”, “diabetes”, “dietary habits”, “dyslipidemia”, “inflammation”, “intestinal permeability”, “insulin resistance”, “metabolic-associated fatty liver disease”, “metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease”, “metabolic syndrome”, “non-alcoholic fatty liver disease”, “obesity”, “prevention”, “socioeconomic status”, “treatment”. Furthermore, a reference search was conducted to find other important manuscripts. Articles in other language than English were excluded from the search. The Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles was used to ensure the appropriate quality of this review [5].

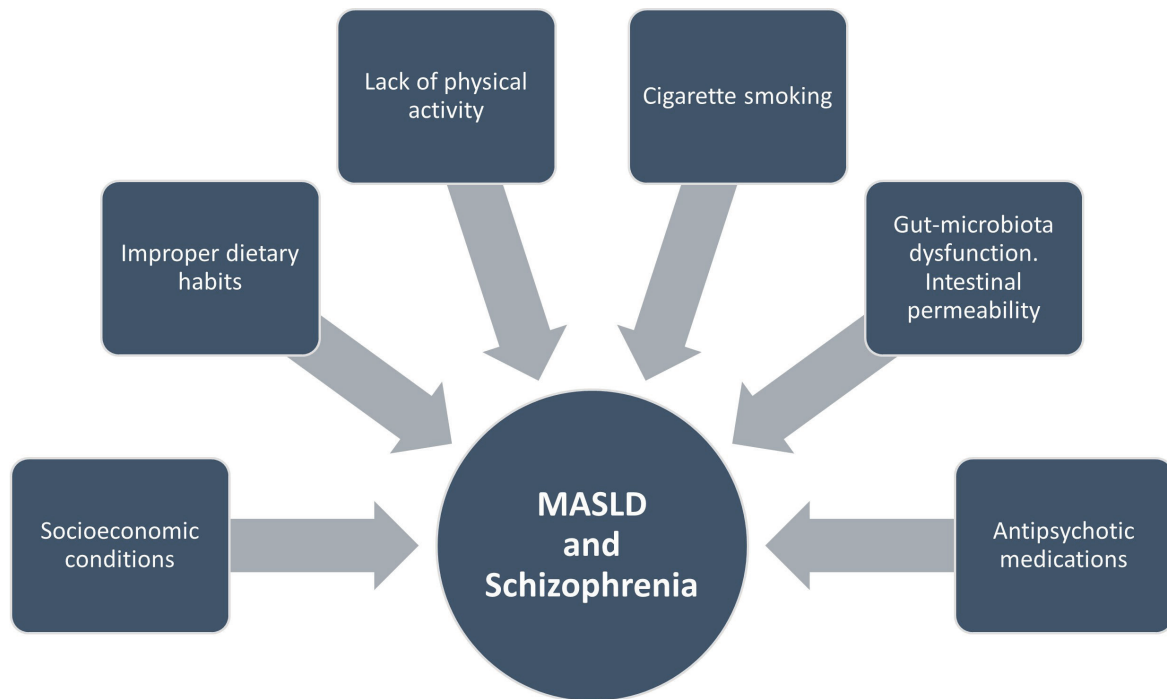


Figure 1. Possible risk factors of the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia.

3. Possible risk factors of the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia

3.1. Socioeconomic conditions

Studies suggest that the low socioeconomic status (SES) is a separate risk factor for both schizophrenia and MASLD [6–8]. In this context, particular attention has been paid to the limited healthcare system access and presence of poor dietary habits (described below).

As it has been revealed recently, the issue of improper dietary patterns is the main factor modifying the relationship between the fatty liver disease and SES [9,10]. Schizophrenia subjects often do not follow healthy eating habits or recommendations, and such an attitude may be a consequence of the positive symptoms presence, low cognitive performance, insufficient level of education in this field or lack of financial resources to maintain a healthy diet pattern [11,12]. As a result of this state, numerous metabolic disorders, including MASLD, may occur.

On the other hand, patients with schizophrenia do not receive the proper level of medical care, resulting in the lack or insufficient schizophrenia and other somatic comorbidities management [13]. It may be partially caused by the presence of delusions or cognitive impairment, which limit their social drive. Moreover, a stigma toward mental illness among healthcare professionals may also lead to the avoidance of medical services and less adherence to the treatment regimen [14]. Finally, it should not be forgotten that low wealth index of schizophrenia subjects may potentially limit their access to the private sector healthcare, which plays a complementary role in

national health services structures [15]. All in all, these above-mentioned issues may contribute to the delay in the diagnosis and proper treatment of various metabolic comorbidities contributing to the fatty liver disease incidence, as well as the same MASLD.

3.2. Improper dietary habits

As it was mentioned previously, food insecurity is perceived as one of the most important features contributing to the MASLD development. MASLD metabolic risk factors, such as overweight/obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes mellitus (t2DM) or dyslipidemia, are often linked with Western dietary patterns, including excessive caloric intake and high fructose consumption [16–19]. Besides its contribution to the metabolic abnormalities' occurrence, improper dietary habits (e.g. high intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and processed red meat, as well as low consumption of nuts/seed or milk) have been also found to independently drive the global burden of NAFLD-related liver mortality [20].

In the context of schizophrenia, numerous abnormalities regarding diet composition and appetite-satiety dysregulation have been already observed. In the light of above-mentioned findings, it seems that these factors may make schizophrenia subjects particularly vulnerable to the MASLD development.

3.2.1. Diet composition

A systematic review conducted by Dipasquale et al. revealed that the diet of patients with schizophrenia is mainly characterized by a high intake of saturated fats,

accompanied by a low fibre and fruit consumption [21]. Similar findings were observed by Jakobsen et al. and Firth et al., who additionally indicated that the intake of carbohydrates, sugar, protein, as well as alcohol is higher among schizophrenia subjects in comparison to healthy controls, or even exceed the recommended amounts [22,23]. Moreover, Stefańska et al. revealed that food rations of patients with schizophrenia were characterized by a deficiency in particular microelements (iron and iodine in women), macroelements (potassium, calcium, magnesium in men) and vitamins (B9, C, D and E) [24]. Interestingly, the diet of schizophrenia subjects has been also found to have more pro-inflammatory properties compared to controls [23,25,26].

It is hypothesized that poverty can significantly affect the access to healthy or high-quality food. Therefore, subjects with schizophrenia may have serious problems with healthy diet maintenance. Moreover, the presence of schizophrenia psychopathological symptoms – positive and negative ones, as well as cognitive deficiencies or mood problems – leads to reduced interest in food and struggles with its preparation [27].

3.2.2. Appetite and satiety dysregulation

A systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Misiak et al. showed a dysregulation of the adipoinular axis in terms of elevated insulin and decreased leptin levels (both act as anorexigenic hormones), occurring in early stages of psychosis, even before the antipsychotic treatment initiation. It is suspected that this state may predispose patients with schizophrenia to gain weight after the initiation of antipsychotic treatment [28].

Another cause which may contribute to the appetite and satiety dysregulation among subjects with schizophrenia are abovementioned antipsychotic drugs. Nowadays, second-generation antipsychotics (SGAs) and dopamine receptor partial agonists (DRPAs) are the most common medication groups used in the schizophrenia treatment regimen. A large number of scientific evidence has already revealed that hyperphagic effect and lack of satiety during their application is relatively often observed, both in clinical practice, as well as on rodent models [29,30]. Most of antipsychotic drugs, through their antagonism to dopamine receptors, interfere with dopaminergic pathways in specific central nervous system structures such as ventral tegmental area, nucleus accumbens or arcuate nucleus. Therefore, hyperphagic effect in terms of dysregulated hedonic feeding behaviors may occur [29,31,32]. In turn, an antagonism of SGA towards serotonin receptors, especially 5-HT_{2c}, leads to the increase in the expression of Neuropeptide Y (NPY) and Agouti-related Peptide which activate brain hunger centre [33,34]. On the other hand, a postsynaptic

H₁-receptor antagonism in hypothalamus may also contribute to the appetite stimulation mainly through two processes: (1) causing an increase in AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) and NPY pathways activity, (2) decreasing histamine release via presynaptic H₃-receptors, with subsequent reduction in serotonergic, cholinergic and noradrenergic transmission [35,36]. Additionally, some antipsychotics, such as olanzapine or clozapine, block muscarinic acetylcholine receptors, particularly M₃ receptors (M₃R), in hypothalamic regions, which also results in increased food intake and weight gain [37–41]. Moreover, M₃R have been pointed out to play a significant role in terms of peripheral hormonal and metabolic dysregulation, probably via the vagus nerve activity regulation [29]. Apart from that, some antipsychotics interfere with endocannabinoid system signalling, resulting in the increased appetite and weight gain [42–44].

Another aspect is a dysregulation of the adipoinular axis occurring after the antipsychotic treatment initiation. It has been found that during the neuroleptic's treatment, an increase in the concentration of leptin, in terms of leptin resistance, is observed [45]. Albeit there are some inconsistencies in the context of serum leptin levels among schizophrenia patients comparing to the controls [46]. Leptin resistance, despite the anorexigenic properties of the same leptin, contribute to the feeling of hunger with subsequent increased food intake [47]. This state may be caused by the antipsychotics impact on the leptin receptor gene expression or leptin receptor signalling pathways [29].

In turn, adiponectin and ghrelin also seem to play a significant role in the feeding behaviors disorders occurrence. However, results of already conducted studies are inconclusive. It is suspected that antipsychotics can affect their serum concentrations in time-dependent, biphasic manner [48,49]. Therefore, the assessment of serum concentrations of these hormones and their role in the appetite increase and weight gain associated with neuroleptics use remains controversial.

3.3. Sleep disorders

Sleep disorders are relatively quite often observed among patients with schizophrenia, probably due to the increased dopamine release and sensitivity, impaired melatonin secretion, as well hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis function disturbances [50,51]. Numerous studies conducted so far revealed that insomnia, eveningness chronotype or impaired sleep quality are associated with the higher risk of the obesity and Metabolic Syndrome occurrence [52,53]. Although the exact mechanisms conditioning this relationship remain unclear to date, it is suspected that obstructive

sleep apnea may be an interplaying factor mediating systemic metabolic alternations, as well as some of sleep disturbances [54]. Moreover, it is perceived that disturbed circadian host rhythms may affect the timing of meal consumption, as well as the quality of the dietary regimen [27,55]. Additionally, receptor binding profiles of particular antipsychotic drugs (e.g. quetiapine) also lead to sleep-related eating disorder, a specific form of parasomnia, with recurrent, involuntary, amnesic eating episodes during sleep [56].

3.4. Lack of physical activity

Stubbs et al. revealed that people with schizophrenia engage in significantly less moderate and vigorous physical activity (PA) in comparison to healthy controls [57]. Similar findings were observed by Andersen et al. who additionally indicated that cardiorespiratory fitness level among patients with schizophrenia is poorer compared with the general population [58]. In turn, Lee et al. observed that only 26% of schizophrenia subjects meets the World Health Organization recommendations guidelines on PA [59]. In this context, the presence of depressive and negative symptoms or extrapyramidal side effects associated with neuroleptics use were identified as risk factors of low PA level [57,59–61].

Lack of PA is a well-documented risk factor for the numerous cardiometabolic diseases occurrence. On the one hand, it leads to disturbances of the body's energy homeostasis in terms of insufficient expenditure of food energy supply, resulting in fat accumulation or insulin resistance development [62]. Additionally, sedentary lifestyle is associated with various immune cells activation, pro-inflammatory cytokines production and reactive oxygen species accumulation, which promote the occurrence of abnormal inflammatory and metabolic changes in various tissues [63]. Therefore, lack of PA may contribute to the obesity, dyslipidemia, hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, as well as MASLD development [64–68]. On the contrary, vigorous PA appears as a possible protective factor for noncommunicable civilization diseases, including NAFLD [69,70]. Moreover, exercising has been pointed out as a one of possible non-pharmacological methods of fatty liver disease treatment [71].

3.5. Cigarette smoking

A significant association between the fatty liver disease development and smoking (both active and passive) was confirmed in the plethora of studies [72]. Moreover, smoking has been pointed out as an independent risk factor for the liver fibrosis occurrence among subjects already diagnosed with NAFLD [73]. Nevertheless, exact pathogenetic pathways linking smoking cigarettes with

NAFLD have not been fully revealed yet. Firstly, it is postulated that tobacco smoking disturbs carbohydrate-lipid metabolism (Table 2.)

In addition, smoking contributes to the hypertension development through sympathetic nervous system stimulation, intima media thickening and atherogenesis, as well as kidneys function impairment [82,83]. The role of low-grade inflammation and circulating ROS is also emphasized. Furthermore, metabolic repercussions in terms of dysregulated carbohydrate-lipid metabolism also contribute to the arterial stiffness occurrence [84].

Moreover, sidestream whole smoke was found to induce lipid accumulation within hepatic tissue through 5'-AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) and sterol response element binding protein-1 (SREBP-1) activity modulation [85]. Other studies indicate that nicotine (similarly as other cytotoxic chemicals present in cigarette smoke) is responsible for hepatocytes injury, in this case through nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChR) activation, with the subsequent Transforming Growth Factor β production and hepatic stellate cells differentiation into myofibroblasts, which produce fibrillar collagens [86,87]. It is also believed that smoking contributes to the gut dysbiosis development with intestinal bacteria translocation through portal vein, enhancing reactive inflammatory and fibrosis processes within liver tissue [86]. Additionally, cigarettes smoking may disturb the organism's oxidant and antioxidant balance, reducing total antioxidant capacity, as well as promote systemic inflammation state [88,89]. Thus, all these abovementioned processes may contribute to the non-alcoholic steatohepatitis occurrence, with the consecutive liver fibrosis [90].

Interestingly, tobacco smoking constitutes a significant clinical problem among patients with schizophrenia. It is estimated that 60% of them is reported to be current smokers – these rates are higher in comparison to the healthy controls [91]. Several complementary hypotheses have been formulated to explain the phenomenon of simultaneous coexistence of both states. It is suspected that nicotine may interplay with midbrain dopaminergic pathways as well as compensate central nAChRs hypofunction observed in the course of schizophrenia [92]. A shared genetic propensity in terms of both tobacco smoking addiction and schizophrenia development is also emphasized as an explanation for their co-occurrence [93]. Moreover, there is some evidence that tobacco smoking may even contribute to the development of schizophrenia [94,95].

All in all, considering abovementioned findings, it seems that patients with schizophrenia may be particularly vulnerable to the MASLD development with subsequent liver fibrosis, at least partially due to smoking.

Table 2. Impact of tobacco smoking on carbohydrate-lipid metabolism.

Type of the metabolic disorder	Examples of metabolic abnormalities	Possible mechanisms leading to the metabolic disorders occurrence	References
Insulin resistance, Diabetes Mellitus	- IFG - IGT - t2DM	- smoking-induced central obesity development - nicotine-mediated pancreatic β cells apoptosis through oxidative stress exacerbation - direct cytotoxic effect of chemicals present in tobacco smoke on pancreatic β cells - systemic inflammation state mediation with subsequent chronic pancreatitis and its exo- and endocrine functions impairment - decreased insulin sensitivity through increased saturation of intramyocellular triglyceride and diacylglycerol as well as increased serine-phosphorylation of the insulin-receptor substrate-1 - increased skeletal muscle FFAs generation - decreased peripheral glucose metabolism - impaired gluconeogenesis - an increase in insulin antagonistic hormones levels - shared genetic propensity to both smoking and schizophrenia - DNA methylation changes	[74–77]
Dyslipidemia	- \uparrow TC - \uparrow VLDL, LDL-C - \uparrow TGs - \uparrow ApoB - \downarrow HDL-C	- increased lipolysis - Lipoprotein Lipase activity reduction - an increase in Sterol Regulating Element Binding Protein activity - an increase in 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA Reductase activity - an increase in Glucose-6-phosphatase Dehydrogenase activity - hyperinsulinemia, IR	[74,75,78–81]

Symbols: \uparrow , an increase; \downarrow , a decrease.

Abbreviations: ApoB, apolipoprotein B-100; CoA, coenzyme A; FFAs, free fatty acids; HDL-C, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; IFG, impaired fasting glucose; IGT, impaired glucose tolerance; IR, insulin resistance; LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; TC, total cholesterol; t2DM, type 2 diabetes mellitus; TGs, triglycerides; VLDL, very-low-density lipoprotein.

What is more, drug resistance in schizophrenia may result from cigarette smoking – substances contained in cigarette smoke (especially polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) act as enzymatic inducers of various cytochrome P450 isoenzymes [96]. Thus, therapeutic serum concentrations of neuroleptics, such as haloperidol, clozapine or olanzapine, may be reduced by up to even 50%. This condition often requires increasing the doses of applied antipsychotic drugs or using several neuroleptics at the same time [97]. Subsequently, it contributes to the metabolic repercussions (obesity, dyslipidemia, impaired fasting-glucose levels etc.) aggravation [98–100]. Therefore, the risk of the MASLD development increases.

3.6. Gut microbiota dysfunction. Intestinal permeability.

In recent years, particular attention has been paid

to the gut dysbiosis and intestinal permeability issue in the development and clinical course of various diseases, including neuropsychiatric and gastrointestinal ones.

3.6.1. Gut microbiota dysfunction.

Gut microbiome dysfunction, in terms of reduced bacterial diversity with less abundant short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) releasing bacteria, has been already observed among patients with schizophrenia [101,102]. Nevertheless, it is still unknown, whether these alternations contribute to the development and clinical course of schizophrenia, or rather are a consequence of other somatic comorbidities, poor dietary habits and applied therapies [103].

In the context of the MASLD development, intestinal dysbiosis may significantly alter the bile acid metabolism

pathway and disrupts the balance between the primary and secondary bile acids, leading to the increased hepatic lipogenesis and gluconeogenesis [104,105].

In turn, a decrease in SCFAs-releasing bacteria may also promote lipid accumulation within the liver tissue in terms of insufficient inhibition of carbohydrate-responsive element-binding protein (ChREBP) and SREBP-1, down-regulation of the expression of glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) and peptide YY (PYY), as well as gluconeogenesis and adipogenesis stimulation [106–109]. In addition, lack of SCFAs may lead to disrupted feeding behaviours, interfering with particular hormones release and the activity of hypothalamic regions responsible for the appetite regulation. Propionate acid has been found to modulate the release of PYY and GLP-1, which affect the food intake and satiety-hunger feeling [108, 110–112]. Similar findings have been also revealed in terms of cholecystokinin, as the lack of SCFAs may contribute to its insufficient secretion, which activates afferent vagus nerve fibers and provides the feeling of fullness after the meal [113].

Moreover, there is emerging data suggesting that intestinal dysbiosis may contribute to the t2DM, dyslipidemia or hypertension development, which act as risk factors for the MASLD occurrence [114–116]. It is postulated that products of bacterial metabolism may, at least partially, contribute to the development and progression of plethora of cardiometabolic diseases. For example, choline metabolites (trimethylamine, trimethylamine N-oxide) may be transferred through the portal vein to the liver, initiating or aggravating lipid's accumulation within the liver tissue, as well as atherosclerotic changes development through low-grade inflammation burnout, cholesterol accumulation in macrophages and foam cell formation [117,118]. There are also some studies indicating that other gut microbiota-derived metabolites, branched-chain amino acids or indole derivatives, may increase the cardiovascular/cardiometabolic risk [119]. Branched-chain amino acids may mediate hepatic lipogenesis, skeletal muscle lipid accumulation and cardiac dysfunction, interfering with various molecular and metabolic pathways [120,121]. In turn, indole is transformed in the liver to the indoxyl sulfate, which has been found to impair the function of endothelium with an increase in vascular calcification and stiffness [122]. Nevertheless, exact pathogenic pathways linking bacterial metabolism derivatives with cardiometabolic diseases, including MASLD, remain unclear to date.

3.6.2. Intestinal permeability

On the other hand, an intestinal permeability, a state in which a disruption of the integrity of the gut epithelial

barrier with subsequent bacterial endotoxemia occur, has been also found to be significantly more often observed among patients with schizophrenia in comparison to healthy controls. It is suspected that the dysfunction of the immune system, abovementioned gut microbiome dysbiosis or poor dietary habits may lay at the core of this state [123,124]. Interestingly, a “leaky” gut syndrome has been described as an important component in the pathogenesis of NASH and liver cirrhosis [125]. It is postulated that circulating through portal vein bacterial components or metabolites may trigger the low-grade inflammation and exacerbate oxidative stress within the hepatic tissue, thus, contributing to the lipid accumulation, NASH and liver fibrosis occurrence [126].

3.7. Applied psychopharmacotherapy

Antipsychotic medications stand at the core of the schizophrenia treatment regimen. As it was mentioned above, neuroleptics may contribute to the MASLD occurrence through affecting hunger-satiety balance – it is suggested that hyperphagia, as a consequence of antipsychotic medications use, is the main stimulus contributing to the weight gain, adipose tissue and insulin resistance development [29]. Additionally, an antagonism towards particular receptors (D2/3, α 1, H1, 5-HT_{2c} and M3) in peripheral tissues may mediate hepatic steatosis, NASH and liver fibrosis occurrence via various immunometabolic effects, including the autonomic nervous system dysfunction, hepatic insulin resistance or systemic low-grade inflammation state initiation/aggravation [127]. Furthermore, sedation and extrapyramidal symptoms as side effects of applied psychopharmacotherapy are also pointed out to limit energy expenditure. Moreover, their role in the carbohydrate and lipid metabolism disruption is unquestionable (reviewed in [128]). Thus, they have a potential to cause overweight/obesity, insulin-resistance, t2DM, dyslipidemia and other cardiometabolic diseases, which presence is linked with the MASLD occurrence. In this context, the risk of MASLD development during the antipsychotic treatment should be stratified via the potential effect of particular neuroleptics to cause these metabolic alternations (Figure 2.).

Two atypical antipsychotics, quetiapine and clozapine, have been found to stimulate glucagon secretion and inhibit GLP-1 synthesis, thus, contributing to glucose homeostasis disturbances [130,131]. Moreover, some antipsychotics impair cellular glucose uptake and affect the expression of glucose transporters (GLUT), resulting in systemic glucotoxicity [132].

In addition, clozapine, olanzapine and risperidone activate SREBPs, leading to the increased lipogenesis in hepatocytes [133]. A decreased level of lipolysis was


The risk of metabolic alternations occurrence	Weight gain	Glucose level	Total cholesterol level	TGs level
	Haloperidol	Lurasidone	Cariprazine	Brexipiprazole
	Ziprasidone	Amisulpride	Iloperidone	Lurasidone
	Aripiprazole	Asenapine	Ziprasidone	Cariprazine
	Lurasidone	Ziprasidone	Sertindole	Sertindole
	Cariprazine	Risperidone, Paliperidone	Lurasidone	Ziprasidone, Aripiprazole
	Amisulpride		Aripiprazole	Risperidone, Paliperidone
	Brexipiprazole	Quetiapine	Brexipiprazole	Amisulpride
	Flupenthixol	Aripiprazole	Risperidone, Paliperidone	Brexipiprazole
	Asenapine	Haloperidol		Haloperidol, Iloperidone
	Risperidone, Paliperidone	Olanzapine	Haloperidol	Quetiapine
	Quetiapine	Cariprazine	Amisulpride	Olanzapine
	Iloperidone	Iloperidone	Quetiapine	Zotepine
	Sertindole	Zotepine	Olanzapine	Clozapine
	Zotepine	Clozapine	Clozapine	
	Clozapine			
	Olanzapine			

Figure 2. The risk of metabolic alternations during the neuroleptics use [129]. The direction of arrow represents the higher risk of the metabolic repercussions occurrence.

also observed [134]. In turn, the use of olanzapine was associated with the overgrowth of adipocytes, probably also through lipogenesis enhancing [135]. Moreover, particular second-generation antipsychotics have been linked with mitochondrial dysfunction and ROS generation, which may have a role in glucose and lipid homeostasis disruption, as well as in NASH and liver fibrosis development [136,137]. There is also increasing evidence that neuroleptics may disturb body's iron homeostasis, contributing to the iron overload with possible ferroptosis of hepatocytes, hepatic steatosis aggravation and liver fibrosis occurrence [138,139].

4. Conclusions

Various factors, including socioeconomic conditions, improper dietary habits, lack of physical activity, smoking addiction issue, gut microbiota dysfunction or the use of antipsychotic medications, may act as trigger points for the MASLD development among patients with schizophrenia. Better understanding of this phenomenon and particular risk factors among mentally ill patients may help to establish a multidisciplinary healthcare programme primarily aimed at MASLD and its complications prevention, early detection and proper treatment (Figure 3.). Furthermore, next empirical studies in this field would enrich the current knowledge of the MASLD issue among mentally ill population, especially among those diagnosed with schizophrenia.

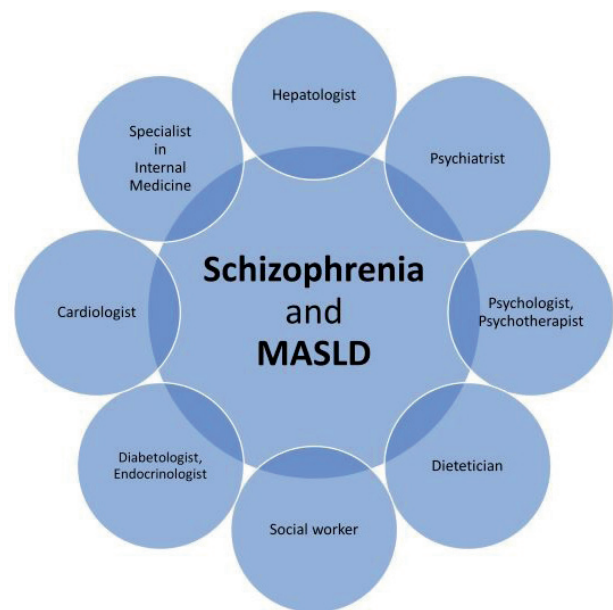


Figure 3. A proposal for the multidisciplinary healthcare programme aimed at prevention, early diagnosis and proper treatment of MASLD among patients with schizophrenia.

Conflict of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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