Author's reply to comment on review article: Treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease—Current perspectives

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To the editors,

We thank Ajit Venniyoor for his keen interest in our review “Treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease—Current perspectives” [1]. An important point has been raised regarding the risk of hepatic and extrahepatic cancers associated with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). It is well known that cancers (hepatic and extrahepatic) are among the top three causes of mortality in NAFLD [2]. The extrahepatic cancers associated with NAFLD include uterine, breast, stomach, pancreas, and colon [3].

The risk factors for the development of extrahepatic cancers are not clear and may include obesity, metabolic syndrome, and NAFLD. Future prospective studies need to address these issues and also to assess the mechanistic aspects. The risk differences in patients with NAFLD and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) is unclear.

The incidence of hepatic and extrahepatic cancers in Indian patients with NAFLD is not known. We agree that a subset of NAFLD patients have a normal body mass index (BMI) and are not obese as per the BMI criteria. Such individuals may also have metabolic risk factors such as visceral adiposity, insulin resistance, hypertension, and dyslipidemia [4]. The presence of metabolic syndrome, hyperinsulinemia, and inflammatory milieu might be the drivers of carcinogenesis in NAFLD. This causality association is worth exploring.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest AE, and S declare that they have no conflict of interest

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