



Assessment of bone quality in patients with diabetes mellitus

N. Jiang¹ · W. Xia¹

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Abstract

Substantial evidence exists that diabetes mellitus is associated with an increased risk of osteoporotic fractures. Low bone strength as well as bone extrinsic factors are probably contributing to the increased bone fragility in diabetes. Bone density and quality are important determinants of bone strength. Although bone mineral density (BMD) and the fracture risk assessment tool (FRAX) are very useful clinical tools in assessing bone strength, they may underestimate the fracture risk in diabetes mellitus. Through advances in new technologies such as trabecular bone score (TBS) and peripheral quantitative computed tomography (pQCT), we can better assess the bone quality and fracture risk of patients with diabetes mellitus. Invasive assessments such as microindentation and histomorphometry have been great complement to the existing bone analysis techniques. Bone turnover markers have been found to be altered in diabetes mellitus patients and may be associated with fractures. This review will give a brief summary of the current development and clinical uses of these assessments.

Keywords Bone quality · Diabetes mellitus · Osteoporosis · Quantitative computed tomography · Trabecular bone score

Introduction

Diabetes mellitus is a common disease throughout the world [1]. Diabetes-related complications, such as cardiovascular and renal diseases, are becoming a huge health care and financial burden [1]. Osteoporosis is a common skeletal disorder characterized by reduced bone strength predisposing to an increased risk of fracture, which results in pain, impaired function, reduced quality of life, institutionalization, and death [2]. A number of previous studies have revealed the association between diabetes mellitus and osteoporosis, and it is now well established that both type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) and type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) are associated with an increased risk of osteoporotic fractures [3–5].

The mechanisms underlying increased bone fragility in diabetes mellitus are complex. Low bone turnover, accumulation of advanced glycation endproducts (AGEs), micro- and macro-architecture abnormalities, and tissue material damage

lead to abnormal biomechanical properties may contribute to the impaired bone fragility [6]. Other factors associated with bone fragility in patients with diabetes mellitus include inflammation response, oxidative stress, adipokine alterations, WNT dysregulation, and increased marrow fat [6]. Bone extrinsic factors, such as increased frequency of falls, a factor that is closely related to diabetic complications and treatment-induced hypoglycemia, also contribute to the increased fracture risk [6–8]. However, after being adjusted for fall frequency, diabetes remains an independent risk factor of increased fracture risk [9–11]. Therefore, low bone strength is probably contributing to the increased bone fragility in diabetes. Both bone density and quality are important factors in the determination of bone strength. Multiple methods have been used to assess bone quantity and bone quality of diabetes mellitus patients, including bone mineral density (BMD), trabecular bone score (TBS), quantitative computed tomography (QCT), bone histomorphometry, microindentation, and bone turnover markers. This review will give a brief summary of the current development and clinical uses of these assessments.

We conducted a literature search for English language articles that was published before Mar 15th, 2018 or earlier in the PubMed and Embase online using the following keywords in various combinations: “diabetes”, “diabetes mellitus”, “type 1 diabetes mellitus”, “type 2 diabetes mellitus”, “bone”,

✉ W. Xia
xiaweibo8301@163.com

¹ Department of Endocrinology, Key Laboratory of Endocrinology, Ministry of Health, Peking Union Medical College Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Shuaifuyuan No. 1, Wangfujing, Dongcheng District, Beijing 100730, China

“fracture”, “fracture risk”, “skeletal fragility”, “osteoporosis”, “bone mass”, “structure”, “microarchitecture”, “bone quality”, “strength”, “turnover”, “dual x-ray absorptiometry”, “DXA”, “bone mineral density”, “BMD”, “Fracture Risk Assessment Tool”, “FRAX”, “trabecular bone score”, “TBS”, “quantitative computed tomography”, “QCT”, “peripheral quantitative computed tomography”, “pQCT”, “cortical”, “trabecular”, “histomorphometry”, “microindentation”, “cyclic microindentation”, “impact microindentation”, “bone turn over”, “turnover”, “mechanism”, “advanced glycation end-products”, “AGEs”, “insulin”. Approximately 100 relevant articles were reviewed to discuss the current evidence for the use of BMD, FRAX, TBS, QCT, bone histomorphometry, and microindentation in assessment of bone quality in patients with diabetes mellitus. Only publications in English were included.

BMD and FRAX

BMD measured by dual x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) is currently the gold standard for both osteoporosis diagnosis and the monitoring of treatment efficacy.

Research indicates that BMD is lower in patients with T1DM [12–36]. A recent meta-analysis that includes 23 cross-sectional studies and 2 cohort studies shows a significant association between T1DM and decreased BMD values of total body with pooled mean differences of -0.06 g/cm² (95% CI -0.11 , -0.01) [37].

However, patients with T2DM usually show BMD values above average [10, 33, 38–50]. A meta-analysis which is based on 15 observational studies (3437 T2DM patients and 19,139 control) shows that BMD in patients with T2DM is significantly higher with pooled mean differences of 0.04 g/cm² (95% CI: 0.02 , 0.05) at the femoral neck [51]. Therefore, T2DM may be associated with a reduction of bone quality, which cannot be reflected by BMD measurement.

Fracture risk assessment tool (FRAX) is widely used in estimating individualized 10-year probability of hip and major osteoporotic fracture. The FRAX algorithm consists of femoral neck BMD T-score, age, sex, weight, height, previous history of hip fracture, current smoking, recent use of corticosteroids, presence of rheumatoid arthritis, and ≥ 3 alcoholic beverages per day. FRAX is currently widely used for the estimation of fracture risk in patients with diabetes mellitus. In older patients with T2DM, both femoral neck BMD T-score and FRAX score are significantly related to hip and non-spine fracture risk [52].

Although BMD and FRAX are important in assessment of fracture risk, they are limited in application in patients with diabetes mellitus. As parameters related to diabetes mellitus are not included in FRAX, it may underestimate the fracture risk in specific population. In 2011, using data from three

prospective observational studies, the Study of Osteoporotic Fractures, the Osteoporotic Fractures in Men study, and the Health, Aging and Body Composition Study, Schwartz et al. demonstrated that among older adults with T2DM, fracture risk was higher than those without diabetes even with similar BMD T-score and age or FRAX score [52]. For a given hip fracture risk, patients with T2DM have a 0.59 (95% CI, 0.31 – 0.87) higher T-score for women and 0.38 (95% CI, 0.09 – 0.66) for men [52]. Therefore, it is suggested that fragility fractures in diabetes mellitus may also be associated with diabetes-related changes in bone quality, which are not reflected in BMD. Although BMD and FRAX are very useful tools for the assessment of fracture risk in older adults, interpretation of T-score of FRAX score in patients with diabetes mellitus should be careful enough to take into account the higher fracture risk associated with diabetes [52].

TBS

TBS is a new texture parameter that analyzes pixel gray-level variations in the DXA image and reflects bone microarchitecture. As TBS is based on DXA, it can be widely accessible without introducing new equipment. A meta-analysis which includes individual-level data from 17,809 subjects in 14 prospective population-based cohorts shows that TBS can serve as a significant predictor of fracture risk independent of FRAX [53]. The gradient of risk (GR; hazard ratio per 1 SD change in risk variable in direction of increased risk) of TBS for major osteoporotic fracture is 1.44 (95% CI 1.35 – 1.53). When adjusted for FRAX 10-year probability of major osteoporotic fracture, TBS is still an independent predictor of fracture risk (GR = 1.32 , 95% CI 1.24 – 1.41). Moreover, when the FRAX probability is adjusted for TBS, there is a slight increase in the GR (1.76 , 95% 1.65 – 1.87 vs 1.70 , 95% CI 1.60 – 1.81) [53]. The Manitoba BMD Cohort also demonstrated a small but significant improvement in overall net reclassification improvement (NRI) for all individual FRAX interventional criteria (range 0.007 to 0.018) and all three national clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) (range 0.008 to 0.011) [54]. Almost all of the improvement was found in individuals close to the intervention threshold [54].

Diabetes mellitus is significantly associated with lower TBS in unadjusted and adjusted models [55]. Moreover, TBS is negatively related to levels of HbA1c, fasting plasma glucose, and fasting insulin [56]. Recent studies show the potential of TBS in predicting the fracture risk in diabetes mellitus patients [53–57]. Studies that assess bone quality in DM with TBS are summarized in Table 1. In a recent cross-sectional study in which 119 T1DM patients (mean age 43.4 ± 8.9 years) and 68 gender, age, and BMI matched controls are included, TBS values are significantly lower in T1DM patients with prevalent fractures (1.309 ± 0.125 versus $1.370 \pm$

Table 1 Assessment of bone quality in diabetes mellitus with TBS

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Neumann et al. [57]	T1DM	2016	Cross-sectional	TBS	43.4	119 M 59/F 60	LS	TBS values are lower in T1DM with prevalent fractures. The AUC of TBS was similar to that of total hip BMD in discriminating T1DM with or without prevalent fractures.
Shah et al. [58]	T1DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	45.3 M DM; 43.65 F DM; 47.2 M NDM; 44.1 F NDM	55	LS	Trabecular bone score is lower in adults with T1DM and is related to visceral and pericardial fat but not body mass index or subcutaneous fat
Syversen et al. [59]	T1DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	42.7 DM 41.8 NDM	33 M 33	TBS: Spine	TBS was lower in the T1DM group.
Shah et al. [60]	T1DM	2018	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	43.4 DM; 44.7 NDM	47	TBS: LS	TBS was significantly lower in adults with T1DM compared to controls after adjusting for age, sex, current smoking status, and lumbar spine BMD. Diastolic blood pressure, BMI, triglycerides, and insulin resistance were negatively correlated with TBS among patients with T1DM.
Gilmour et al. [61]	T1DM	2018	Descriptive study	DXA, TBS	34.9	43 M 13/F 30	TBS: LS	TBS did not correlate with age, gender, HbA1C, pre-pubertal DM onset, or duration of T1DM. BMI was the only variable that appeared to influence TBS. There was an inverse association between TBS and any microvascular complication ($P > 0.05$).
Dhalwaj et al. [62]	T2DM	2014	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	65.82 DM; 64.09 NDM	57 F 57	TBS: LS	In T2DM, TBS is lower and associated with poor glycaemic control.
Choi et al. [63]	T2DM	2016	Retrospective	DXA, TBS	135 without VF; 34 VF	169 F 169	TBS: LS	The group with VFs had lower TBS and higher TBS-adjusted FRAX scores compared to the group without VFs. TBS and TBS-adjusted FRAX algorithm showed significant ORs for VFs. The AUC of TBS-adjusted FRAX for VFs was significantly higher than the original FRAX scores.
Zhuokouskaya [64] et al.	T2DM	2016	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	65.7 DM; 64.5 NDM	99 F 99	DXA: LS, FN TBS: LS	TBS did not differ. In fractured T2DM patients, TBS was reduced than in nonfractured T2DM. The combination of TBS \leq 1.130 and FN-BMD less than -1.0 may be useful for detecting T2DM fractured patients (SP 73.8%, SN 63.6%, NPV 78.9%, PPV 56.8%).
Bonaccorsi et al. [65]	T2DM	2017	Case-control	DXA, TBS	68 DM; 68 NDM	80 F 80	Spine, FN, total hip	Diabetic and control groups differed in the value of TBS. TBS alone (AUC = 0.71) had no significantly lower discriminative power for fracture prediction in T2DM than FRAX major adjusted for TBS (AUC = 0.74; $p = 0.65$).
Iki et al. [66]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	72.9	313	TBS: LS	TBS did not differ. FPG, HbA1c and HOMA-IR levels were significantly inversely correlated with TBS.
De Araujo et al. [67]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	48 Control 55 DM	22 M 11/F 11	TBS: LS	T2DM showed a trend to have higher BMD in lumbar spine than the control groups.
Buni et al. [68]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	63	64 M 16/F 48	TBS: LS	TBS was significantly lower in the diabetic group compared to control. AUC of ROC indicated that LS-TBS provided better ability than LS-BMD to discriminate between control subjects and those with

Table 1 (continued)

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Payer et al. [69]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	50.3 DM 52.2 Control	56 F 56	TBS: LS	diabetes. When separated by gender, males with diabetes had higher LS-BMD but TBS was not different. Female subjects with diabetes had lower TBS. LS-TBS was lower in T2DM than in control group (1.172 ± 0.120 vs 1.304 ± 0.018, $p < 0.001$). Patients with a cut-off of HbA1c < 7.4% had significantly higher TBS (1.203 ± 0.089 vs 1.117 ± 0.065, $p < 0.05$). T2DM patients had lower TBS. No significant differences in TBS values according densitometric diagnosis of osteoporosis or history of prior fracture. Relationship with glycemic control or duration of diabetes in T2DM group was not found.
Torres et al. [70]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS		31		Diabetes was associated with lower TBS in unadjusted and adjusted models. TBS was a BMD-independent predictor of fracture and predicted fractures in those with diabetes and without diabetes.
Leslie et al. [55]	DM	2013	Retrospective cohort	DXA, TBS	65.4	2356 F 2356	TBS: LS	Diabetes was associated with lower TBS in unadjusted and adjusted models. TBS was a BMD-independent predictor of fracture and predicted fractures in those with diabetes and without diabetes.
Kim et al. [56]	DM	2015	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	62.5 M NDM; 64.2 M DM; 63.8 F NDM; 66.6 F DM	695 M 325/ F 370	TBS: LS	TBS was lower in men with DM. TBS was lower in women with DM only in an unadjusted model. Women < 65 years with diabetes had a lower TBS than those without diabetes, even after adjusted for covariates. TBS was negatively correlated with HbA1c, fasting glucose, fasting insulin, and homeostasis model assessment for insulin resistance.
Xue et al. [71]	DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	72.24 DM; 68.79 NDM	17	TBS: LS	TBS was lower in the diabetic group when both men and women. TBS was also lower in diabetic women than in nondiabetic women. ROC and AUC indicated that TBS provided better ability than LS-BMD to discriminate between control subjects and those in the DM, GC, or GC + DM groups.
Jain et al. [72]	DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	NA	341 F 341	TBS: LS	Both African Americans and Caucasians with DM and poor glycemic control had similar reductions in TBS. Men and women with diabetes had lower mean TBS compared to those with normoglycemia, in models adjusted for age, height and weight/waist circumference.
Holloway et al. [73]	DM	2018	Cross-sectional	DXA, TBS	62.0 M; 68.7 F	113 M 65/ F 48	NA	

DM diabetes mellitus, T1DM type 1 diabetes mellitus, T2DM type 2 diabetes mellitus, FN femoral neck, AUC area under the curve, VF vertebral fracture, FRAX fracture risk assessment tool, LS lumbar spine, GC glucocorticoid, NDM patients without diabetes mellitus

0.127, $p = 0.04$) [57]. In this set-up, a TBS cutoff < 1.42 discriminates the existence of fractures with a sensitivity of 91.7% and a specificity of 43.2% [57]. Another retrospective study which includes 169 postmenopausal women with T2DM evaluates the distinguishing performance of TBS, BMD, original and TBS-adjusted FRAX scores [63]. The result shows that TBS ($p = 0.008$) are significantly lower and TBS-adjusted FRAX score (OR = 2.0, 95% CI 1.1–2.7) is significantly higher in the group with vertebral fractures compared with the group without vertebral fractures [63]. Moreover, the AUCs of TBS-adjusted major FRAX for overall vertebral fracture risk stratification are significantly higher than that of major FRAX (0.717 versus 0.687; $p = 0.043$) [63]. There is a lack of clinical study directly comparing differences in TBS between T1DM and T2DM.

Multiple interventional studies have been done to investigate the response of TBS to osteoporosis treatment, though the study population is not limited to patients with DM (reviewed in [74, 75]). To summarize, current studies suggest that TBS tends to increase after treatment in parallel with the change of BMD, but the magnitude of increase of TBS is smaller than that of BMD [74, 75]. There is a lack of evidence in to what extent TBS increase after treatment predicts a reduction of fracture risk. The effect of diabetes treatment on TBS is still not fully known, though some studies demonstrate that HbA1c, fasting glucose, fasting insulin, and homeostasis model assessment for insulin resistance are negatively associated with TBS [56, 62, 66].

QCT

QCT is a noninvasive assessment of bone microarchitecture at the distal radius and tibia [76]. The high resolution of three-dimensional bone images generated by high-resolution peripheral quantitative computed tomography (HRpQCT) allows the measurement of volumetric BMD (vBMD) and other parameters. Mechanical properties of the bone can also be estimated from QCT images using microstructural finite element analysis (μ FEA) [77].

QCT has been used in a number of studies to investigate the microarchitecture of bone in patients with diabetes mellitus [78–82]. Studies that assess bone quantity and quality in DM with QCT are summarized in Table 2. A cross-sectional study that includes 17 male T1DM patients aged from 18 to 49 years and 18 sex-matched healthy controls shows that T1DM patients have significant lower cortical vBMD in the femoral neck and significant lower vBMD, cortical thickness, and cortical area in the intertrochanter [78]. The bone strength estimated by pQCT was also lower in T1DM group [78]. Another cross-sectional study that includes 48 adolescents with T1DM also shows that T1DM is associated with reduced bone mineral content and small bone cross-sectional area and

cortical strength [79]. In 2015, a cross-sectional study that includes 55 T1DM patients finds that diabetic microvascular disease is associated with deficits in cortical and trabecular vBMD and microarchitecture, while T1DM patients without diabetic microvascular disease show similar HR-pQCT parameters with controls [80]. Further investigation is needed to determine if this relationship between the presence of MVD and bone deficits is causal and impacts fracture risk, and whether diabetic bone disease is an extension of the spectrum of diabetic microvascular diseases.

QCT is also used to assess bone quality in patients with T2DM, but the study results are inconsistent among different studies. In the Framingham HR-pQCT Study which includes 1069 subjects (129 with T2DM, 940 without T2DM) with a mean age of 64 ± 8 years, researchers compare cortical and trabecular microarchitecture, bone density, bone area, and bone strength in T2DM and non-T2DM subjects [81]. After adjusting for age, sex, weight, and height, T2DM group has significantly lower cortical vBMD ($p < 0.01$), higher cortical porosity ($p = 0.02$), and smaller cross-sectional area ($p = 0.04$) at the tibia [81]. Moreover, lower cortical vBMD at the tibia and cortical thickness at the radius is seen in T2DM only among those with a prior fracture [81]. However, in the cross-sectional Gothenburg Study which includes 1053 women (99 with T2DM, 954 without T2DM) aged from 75 to 80 years, ultradistal tibial and radial trabecular volume fraction, distal cortical volumetric BMD, cortical area, and failure load are higher in patients with diabetes than in controls [82]. The different results between two studies may partly be due to the differences in characteristics of subjects and differences in study design [81]. It is also not fully known how well pQCT parameters could predict the fracture risk in T2DM patients.

Microindentation

Microindentation is a technique that can directly assess the mechanical characteristics of cortical bone in vivo. By inserting a probe assembly into a cortical bone's surface at the anterior tibia and inducing microscopic fractures, microindentation measures bone mechanical strength at the tissue level. There are two approaches of microindentation, cyclic microindentation, and impact microindentation. In cyclic microindentation, relatively low forces (2–10 N) are applied over several seconds, and parameters such as first indentation distance (ID), total indentation distance (TID), indentation distance increase (IDI), creep ID, unloading slope (US) (ave of 3-last cycle), energy (ave of 3-last cycle) are output (reviewed in [104]). Impact microindentation is a single impulse indentation to a higher force within up to 0.25 ms (reviewed in [104]). Using the technique of impact microindentation, a ratio called bone material strength index

Table 2 Assessment of bone quality in diabetes mellitus with QCT

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Roe et al. [83]	T1DM	1991	Cross-sectional	QCT	12.8 DM; 12.8 NDM	48 M 25/F 23	LS	T1DM had lower Ct BMD. Tb BMD did not differ.
Lettgen et al. [84]	T1DM	1995	Cross-sectional	pQCT	12.6 T1DM; 12.8 NDM	21 M 13/F 8	Radius	There was a decrease of Tb BMD, total BMD and Ct BMD in T1DM. Tb BMD was inversely correlated with disease duration and HbA1c. Total BMD correlated inversely with HbA1c.
Heap et al. [29]	T1DM	2004	Cross-sectional	pQCT/DXA	M 14.6 DM; 14.5 NDM; F 14.7 DM; 14.8 NDM	55 M 30/F 25	pQCT: Tibia DXA: hip, spine, whole body	T1DM had lower tibia Tb and FN BMD and whole body BMC and BMD. The mean HbA1c was inversely related to tibia Tb BMD and whole body BMC.
Moyer-Mileur et al. [85]	T1DM	2004	Cohort	pQCT/DXA	M 14.9 DM; 15.0 NDM; F 14.1 DM; 15.1 NDM	42 M 26/F 16	pQCT: Tibia DXA: Spine, whole body	Adolescents with T1DM continue to have smaller bone mass and bone size despite normal growth and maturation. Poor metabolic control appears to negatively influence bone mineral acquisition.
Bechtold et al. [86]	T1DM	2007	Longitudinal	pQCT	9.87 first evaluation/15.44 reevaluation	41 M 22/F 19		T1DM with manifestation at an early age had transient impaired bone development. In adolescence, these patients had a normal bone size and appropriate adaptation of bone on muscle because of a greater increase in bone size during the follow up period.
Saha et al. [79]	T1DM	2009	Cross-sectional	pQCT/DXA	M 15.1 DM; 15.5 NDM; F 15.2 DM; 15.9 NDM	48 M 22/F 26	pQCT: Radius DXA: Tibia, LS, proximal femur	Diabetes was associated with reduced BMC and smaller bone cross-sectional size. Diabetic boys seemed to be more affected than diabetic girls.
Roggen et al. [87]	T1DM	2013	Cross-sectional	pQCT	M 17.9 DM; 19.1 NDM; F 18.1 DM; 18.8 NDM	56 M 33/F 23	Radius	Tb BMD was similar between T1DM and controls. The mean CSA was smaller in T1DM.
Shanbhogue et al. [80]	T1DM	2015	Cross-sectional	DXA/HR-pQCT	45.6 DM; 45.8 NDM	55 F 55	HR-pQCT: Radius and tibia	The presence of MVD was significantly associated with deficits in Ct and Tb vBMD and microarchitecture in T1DM.
Ishikawa et al. [78]	T1DM	2015	Cross-sectional	QCT	38.2 DM; 35.7 NDM	17 M 17	FN and intertrochanter	T1DM had lower Ct vBMD in the FN, and lower total vBMD, Ct Th and Ct CSA in the intertrochanter. Bone strength estimated by buckling ratio of the intertrochanter was higher in T1DM.

Table 2 (continued)

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Starup-Linde et al. [88]	T1DM T2DM	2016	Cross-sectional	DXA/HR-pQCT	60.7 T1DM; 65.2 T2DM	197	Radius and tibia	HR-pQCT parameters were not different between T1DM and T2DM in the adjusted analyses except for an increased stiffness at the tibia in T2DM.
Kuroda et al. [89]	T1DM	2017	Cross-sectional	QCT	38.2 DM; 35.7 NDM	17 M 17	FN	T1DM had a thinner Ct Th in the superoposterior quadrant and a significantly lower Ct vBMD in the superanterior quadrant of the FN.
Verroken et al. [90]	T1DM	2017	Cross-sectional	DXA/pQCT	41.1 DM; 41.4 NDM	64 M 38/F 26	QCT: Radius; DXA: whole body, LS, FN, and total hip Tibia	T1DM patients presented with decreased aBMD, Tb vBMD and Ct size deficit.
Maratova et al. [91]	T1DM	2018	Cross-sectional	pQCT	16.6 DM	95 M 59/F 36	Tibia	T1DM had decreased Tb BMD and Ct Th whereas Ct BMD was increased.
Register et al. [92]	T2DM	2006	Cross-sectional	QCT/DXA	62.6 DM; 60.0 NDM	775 M 365/F 410	QCT: thoracic spine and LS; DXA: spine, proximal femur, forearm, whole body QCT: LS, FN; pQCT: Radius	T2DM is not independently associated with spinal Tb vBMD.
Melton et al. [93]	T2DM	2008	Cross-sectional	QCT/DXA	72.2 DM; 72.2 NDM	49 M 21/F 28		Hip aBMD was greater in T2DM, but this was accounted for by greater Tb vBMD. Ct vBMD was similar, as was bone CSA and Ct Th. Bone strength measures were generally better in T2DM, but load to strength ratios were similar.
Petit et al. [94]	T2DM	2010	Cross-sectional	pQCT	76.9 DM; 77.3 NDM	190 M 190	Tibia, radius	At both the distal tibia and radius, T2DM had greater vBMD and a smaller bone area. Estimated compressive bone strength did not differ at the distal Tb regions. At the midshaft sites, T2DM had lower total bone area, resulting in lower bone bending strength after adjusting for body weight despite the lack of difference in Ct vBMD at these sites.
Burghardt et al. [95]	T2DM	2010	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT	62.9 DM; 62.6 NDM	19 F 19	Radius, tibia	T2DM patients had higher Tb vBMD and higher Tb Th in the tibia. Ct Po differences alone were consistent with impaired bone strength and were significant in

Table 2 (continued)

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Shu et al. [96]	T2DM	2012	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT/DXA	63.4 DM; 60.4 NDM	25 F 25	HR-pQCT: Radius, tibia DXA: LS, FN, distal radius	the radius, whereas pore volume approached significance in the tibia. Ct area at the tibia tended to be lower in T2DM, while other HR-pQCT did not differ.
Patsch et al. [97]	T2DM	2013	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT/DXA	61.3	40 F 40	HR-pQCT: Radius, tibia DXA:	Diabetic postmenopausal women with fragility fractures exhibited significantly higher pore-related deficits in stiffness, failure load and Ct load fraction at the ultradistal and distal tibia, and the distal radius than diabetic women without fracture.
Farr et al. [11]	T2DM	2014	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT/DXA/microindentation	65.4 DM; 65.7 NDM	30 F 30	HR-pQCT: Radius, Tibia DXA: Hip, radius, LS and total body	After adjustment for BMI, bone microarchitectural parameters that did not differ between T2DM and controls. Radial Ct Po tended to be higher in the T2DM patients.
Kiyohara et al. [98]	T2DM	2015	Cross-sectional	QCT/DXA	65.6 M; 63.4 F	146 M 92/F54	LS	The presence of vertebral fractures in T2DM was not significantly associated with the vertebral strength index calculated by FEM based on an established standard protocol.
Yu et al. [99]	T2DM	2015	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT/DXA	60.1 DM; 59.4 NDM	22 F 22	HR-pQCT: Radius, tibia DXA: Spine, hip	At the radius, Ct Po was 26% greater, while Ct vBMD and TMD were lower in women with T2DM. Radius total vBMD and Tb vBMD. FEA-estimated failure load, tibia vBMD and tibia microarchitecture were similar. There were no significant associations between Ct parameters and duration of T2DM. Higher fasting glucose levels were associated with lower Ct vBMD
Heilmeier et al. [100]	T2DM	2015	Cross-sectional	QCT	57.7 Co; 64.7Fx; 59.6 DM; 63.3 DMFx	39 F 39	QCT: proximal femur	DMFx subjects exhibited up to 33% lower femoral neck vBMD than DM subjects. DMFx subjects showed significantly thinner cortices and a trend toward larger bone volume relative to DM women.
Shanbhogue et al. [101]	T2DM	2016	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT	51.4 MVD-; 51.3 Control MVD-;	51 M 21/F30	Radius, tibia	T2DM with MVD displayed lower Ct vBMD and Ct Th and higher

Table 2 (continued)

Investigator	Disease	Year	Design	Method	Age	N DM	Sites studied	Conclusion
Patsch et al. [102]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT	65.3 MVD; 65.1 Control MVD 57	43 M 17/F 26	Radius, tibia	Ct Po at the radius and a trend toward higher Ct Po at the tibia. HR-pQCT parameters did not differ between MVD- and control MVD-. These were no significant correlations between disease duration, glycemic control and HR-pQCT parameters. At the radius and tibia, T2DM exhibited Tb hypertrophy and higher Tb numbers. At the radius, Ct Th was higher in T2DM. Ultradistal tibial and radial Tb bone volume fraction, distal Ct vBMD, Ct area, and failure load were higher in T2DM. Ct Po was lower in T2DM in the distal radius but not in the ultradistal radius or the tibia.
Nilsson et al. [82]	T2DM	2017	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT	77.6 DM; 77.7 NDM	99 F 99	Radius, tibia	T2DM had lower Ct vBMD, higher Ct Po, and smaller CSA at the tibia, but not radius. Tb indices were similar or more favorable in T2DM than non-T2DM. Ct vBMD at the tibia and Ct Th at the radius were lower in T2DM, but only among those with a prior fracture. Ct Po at the radius was higher in T2DM, but only among those without a prior fracture. Higher Ct Po and Ct pore volume at the distal tibia in men with DM and higher Ct pore volume at the distal radius in women with a non-significant tendency for higher Ct Po.
Samelson et al. [81]	T2DM	2017	Longitudinal	HR-pQCT	64	129 M 75/F 54	Radius, tibia	
Paccou et al. [103]	DM	2016	Cross-sectional	HR-pQCT	76.4 F; 76.1 M	29 M 18/F 11	Radius, tibia	

DM diabetes mellitus, T1DM type 1 diabetes mellitus, T2DM type 2 diabetes mellitus, N DM number of patients with diabetes mellitus, DXA dual X-ray absorptiometry, pQCT peripheral quantitative computed tomography, Tb trabecular, Ct cortical, BMD bone mineral density, vBMD volumetric BMD, MVD microvascular disease, FN femoral neck, Ct BMDPo cortical porosity, CSA cross-sectional area, Ct Th cortical thickness, Tb Th trabecular thickness, BMC bone mineral content, FEA finite element analysis, TMD tissue mineral density, LS lumbar spine, DMFx T2DM group with prior history of fragility fractures

(BMSi) can be derived, and a lower BMSi indicates lower fracture resistance [105]. The details of the two techniques are reviewed by Allen et al. [104].

Impact microindentation has been used in several clinical studies to investigate the bone quality in DM patients [11, 82, 106]. The Gothenburg Study finds that BMSi is lower in T2DM (74.6 ± 7.6 versus 78.2 ± 7.5 , $p < 0.01$) [82]. In a series of cases and control study, 60 postmenopausal women including 30 patients with a T2DM history for more than 10 years and 30 age-matched non-diabetic controls received impact microindentation. Compared to controls, T2DM patients had significantly lower BMSi while their BMD were similar to controls [11]. This study also finds that the level of glycated hemoglobin over the past 10 years is negatively associated with BMSi ($r = -0.41$; $p = 0.026$) [11]. In another cross-sectional study, BMSi is also found to be negatively associated with T2DM status [106]. Moreover, advanced glycation end product accumulation is negatively related to BMSi [106]. Though the invasive procedure restricts its wide use as a clinical tool, microindentation helps to shed light upon bone quality change in diabetes mellitus population.

Histomorphometry

Bone histomorphometric analysis of bone biopsies provides a direct approach to assess bone remodeling rates at tissue level [107]. Moreover, bone microarchitecture can also be evaluated using micro-computed tomography (micro-CT) [107]. A number of studies in rodent models have shown reduced bone turnover rate, worse microstructure, and lower strength in rodent models of T1DM and T2DM [108–111]. However, as bone biopsy is an invasive test, only a few clinical studies have investigated the bone quality of diabetes mellitus patients using bone histomorphometry. A cross-sectional case-controlled study which includes 23 T1DM subjects (8 males and 15 females) and 23 age- and sex-matched controls does not find deterioration in bone histomorphometric or micro-CT variables in those patients without manifesting complications of T1DM [107]. However, T1DM patients with fracture history may have defects in bone microarchitecture [107]. A histomorphometric study published in 1964 finds an increase of cortical area of ribs in T2DM [112]. Another more recent study obtains iliac crest bone samples from 26 patients (13 male and 13 female) with an average age of 67.42 ± 2.74 years [113]. The control group consists of 20 non-diabetic subjects (11 male and 9 female) with a mean age of 57.95 ± 3.96 years that have suffered sudden or violent death [113]. As a result, significant lower bone volume ($p < 0.0001$), osteoid volume ($p < 0.005$), osteoid thickness ($p < 0.0001$), cortical thickness ($p < 0.05$), and osteoblast surface ($p < 0.05$) volume are found in the diabetic group [113]. The discrepancy of different studies may come from the relative low subject volume, the disease course, and

complications. More high-quality clinical studies are needed to determine the histologic changes of diabetic bone.

Bone turnover markers

In patients with DM, the levels of multiple bone turnover markers are altered. A meta-analysis that includes 22 studies shows that osteocalcin (OC) and C-terminal telopeptide of type I collagen (CTX-1) are significantly lower in people with DM, while alkaline phosphatase (ALP), N-telopeptide of type I collagen (NTX), and hydroxyproline (HYP) do not differ [114]. The meta-analysis also reports decreased OC levels in T1DM compared to controls [114]. Some studies indicate that bone turnover markers are lower in children T1DM or at the onset of the disease [25, 115], but do not differ between T1DM adults and controls [116].

Levels of parathyroid hormone (PTH) tend to be 20–50% lower in T2D subjects than in controls [117–119] (reviewed in [120]). Most studies support that bone turnover markers, such as CTX, OC, P1NP, TRAP, and NTX, are reduced in patients with T2DM [11, 118, 119, 121–123]. Moreover, low P1NP and OC levels and high CTX, NTX, and sclerostin levels seem to be associated with increased fracture risks in T2DM, while are associated with [118, 121, 124, 125]. Further studies are needed to uncover whether bone turnover markers could predict alterations in bone quality and fracture risk.

Discussion

As is discussed in the introduction, multiple mechanisms contribute to the increased fracture risk in patients with DM. Some of these mechanisms have adverse effects on bone metabolism thus lead to declined bone quantity and quality.

High glucose levels in DM can lead to the accumulation of AGE collagen crosslinks in bone, which leads to biomechanically fragile bone [6]. AGEs can also be specifically recognized by AGE receptors (RAGE), which express in multiple bone-derived cells [126]. The AGE-RAGE interaction induces activation of nuclear factor κ B (NF- κ B) in RAGE-expressing cells [126]. As a result, the production of proinflammatory cytokines and reactive oxygen species (ROS) are increased in these cells which activate osteoclastogenesis and suppress osteoblast differentiation [127, 128]. Pentosidine is one of the best studied AGEs. Pentosidine levels were significantly higher in DM patients with fractures than those without fractures [129–131]. In patients with T2DM, urinary pentosidine levels negatively associate with trabecular bone scores [129]. This indicates that AGEs may play a role in the deterioration in bone microstructure, and this microstructure change can be estimated by methods like TBS.

Although T1DM and T2DM share many mechanisms in inducing osteoporosis and osteoporotic fractures, these mechanisms may affect bone metabolism differently in two diseases, and the two diseases may each have its special mechanisms. As is reviewed, compared those with T1DM, patients with T2DM have higher BMD [132, 133]. Young patients with T1DM, even only a few years after the onset of diabetes mellitus, have a lower BMD score [134–136], though decreased BMD are more frequent in patients with longer disease courses [16, 34]. Decreased BMD observed in T1DM is found to be associated with the presence of microvascular complications such as diabetic nephropathy, retinopathy, neuropathy [133]. Also as is reviewed in the main text, the presence of microvascular disease is associated with deficits in bone microstructure. These results indicate that microvascular disease, which may lead to inadequate blood flow in bone tissue, adversely affects bone formation in young T1DM patients and causes the deterioration in both bone quantity and quality. BMI has been found to be significantly greater in patients with T2DM compared to T1DM. BMI is positively associated with BMD and negatively associated with fracture risk [137, 138]. Therefore, high BMI may partly explain the relatively high BMD and low fracture risk in T2DM patients compared with T1DM patients.

Recent studies indicate that T1DM and T2DM differ in levels of bone turnover markers. Recently, Starup-Linde et al. find that compared to T2DM, T1DM has lower levels of P1NP, osteocalcin (OC), and s-receptor activator of nuclear factor kappa beta ligand (RANKL) [139]. The differences between T1DM and T2DM in biomarkers may be interpreted with insulin resistance status in T2DM [139]. How these differences affect bone health has not been fully known.

Patients with T1DM suffer from low levels of insulin and IGF1 since the stage of onset, while T2DM is characterized by insulin resistance, though in the advanced stage of T2DM, there is a relative insulin deficiency. Low levels of insulin and IGF1 have an adverse effect on osteoblasts during growth and can result in low peak bone mass at an early age [124, 140–142]. Though insulin mainly plays an anabolic role in the bone formation in physiological concentration, the relationship between hyperinsulinaemia and insulin resistance and bone metabolism is complex, and current clinical studies show conflicting results [45, 143–147]. Moreover, studies also suggest that hyperinsulinaemia and insulin resistance may contribute to reduced bone turnover even in the absence of hyperglycaemia [148].

Conclusion

In summary, diabetes mellitus is closely associated with increased risk of fracture. Therefore, assessment of bone quantity and bone quality may benefit DM patients, especially those

with other factors of fractures. Although BMD and FRAX are very useful clinical tools in assessing bone quantity, they may not accurately account for extra fracture risk in diabetes mellitus. Through advances in new technologies, physicians can better assess the bone quality of patients with diabetes mellitus. Apart from BMD and FRAX, recent clinical evidence demonstrates that incorporating TBS brought a moderate improvement to currently used FRAX tool. Therefore, TBS can serve as a useful method in assessing bone quality in patients with DM. As TBS is based on DXA, it can be widely accessible without introducing new equipment. HR-pQCT is also a useful noninvasive method to discriminate bone quality change in DM patients but its association with fracture risk is far from being illustrated. Although the invasive procedures restrict the clinical use of microindentation and bone histomorphometry, they are useful in the research of bone quality in diabetes mellitus. Bone turnover markers have been found to be altered in diabetes mellitus and may be associated with fractures, but more studies are needed. In addition, fracture risk of DM patients is also associated with complications of DM. Further large-scale prospective studies about risk factors of fractures in DM may be needed to bring a special tool for fracture risk assessment in DM patients and identify high-risk population.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflicts of interest Ning Jiang and Weibo Xia declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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