Assessing the Impact of **Sitagliptin and Glimepiride Combination Therapy** on Glycemic Control

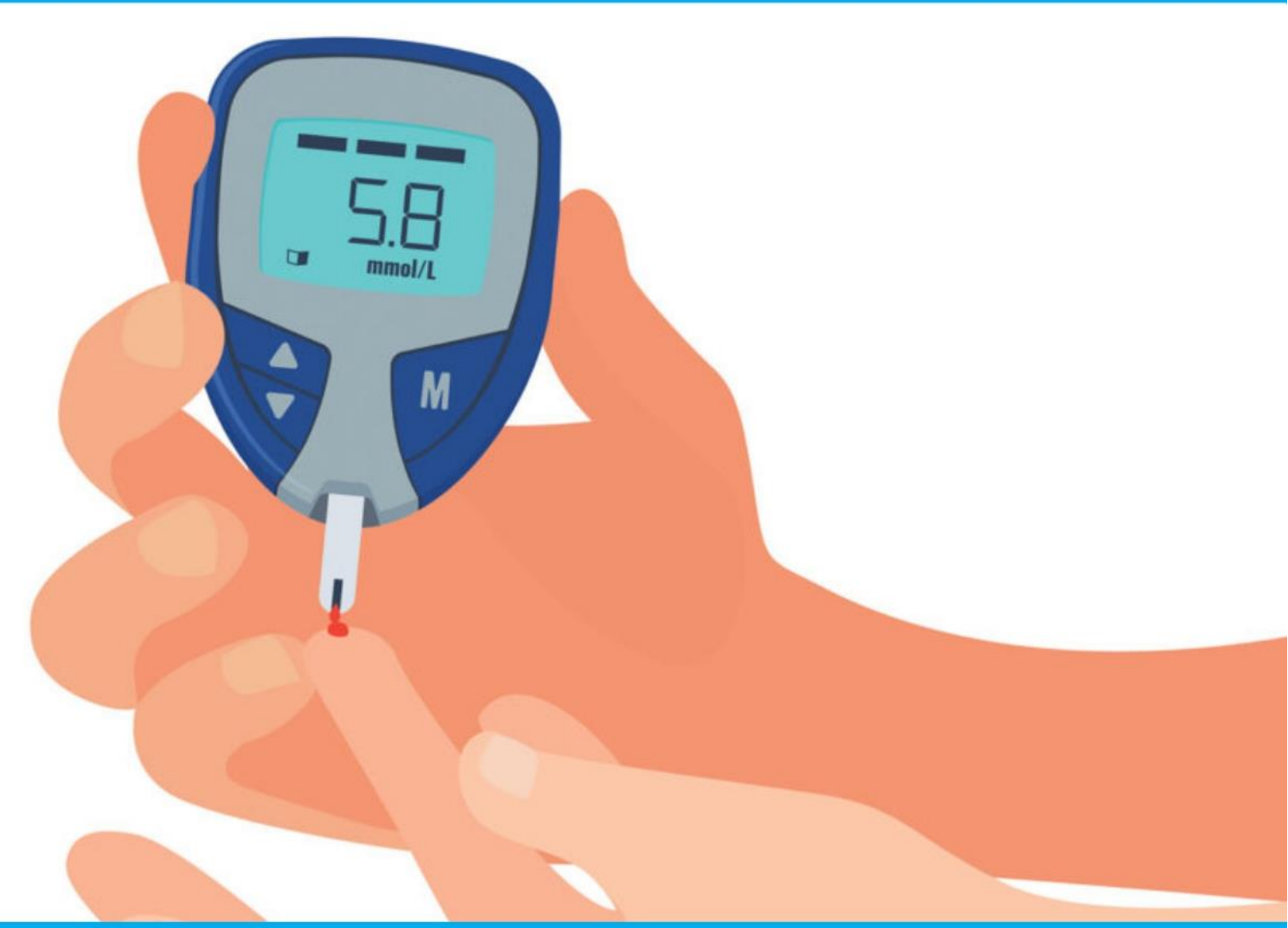


Table of Content

INTRODUCTION

The management of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) has evolved significantly over the past few decades, with various pharmacological interventions becoming available to help achieve glycemic control. Among these, the combination therapy of Sitagliptin, a Dipeptidyl Peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitor, and Glimepiride, a sulfonylurea, has garnered attention due to its potential synergistic effects on blood glucose regulation (1). This combination aims to address the limitations of monotherapy by leveraging the unique mechanisms of action of both drugs, ultimately improving patient outcomes (2).

The increasing prevalence of T2DM necessitates effective treatment strategies. According to the International Diabetes Federation, approximately 537 million adults were living with diabetes in 2021, a number projected to rise to 783 million by 2045 (3). As such, healthcare providers face the challenge of not only managing blood glucose levels but also minimizing adverse effects and enhancing patient adherence to treatment regimens (4). The role of combination therapies, including Sitagliptin and Glimepiride, becomes particularly relevant in this context, as they may offer better control with fewer side effects compared to higher doses of a single agent (5).

In clinical practice, the choice of pharmacotherapy is influenced by various factors, including the patient's clinical profile, potential side effects, and overall treatment goals. The combination of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride presents a compelling option due to their complementary actions: Sitagliptin enhances incretin levels, promoting insulin secretion and reducing glucagon release, while Glimepiride stimulates pancreatic β-cells to secrete insulin (6). This dual approach may not only improve glycemic control but also contribute to better preservation of pancreatic function over time (7).

Moreover, patient adherence to prescribed therapies remains a crucial factor in achieving long-term glycemic control and minimizing the risk of diabetes-related complications. Combination therapy may enhance adherence by simplifying regimens and reducing pill burden, which is often a barrier for patients managing multiple medications (8). Furthermore, the potential for improved metabolic outcomes associated with the use of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride may bolster patient motivation and compliance, fostering a more proactive approach to diabetes management.

Despite the potential benefits, there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding among healthcare providers regarding the rationale, dosing, and clinical implications of this combination therapy. As treatment paradigms continue to shift, the need for evidence-based guidelines becomes critical to inform clinical decision-making (9). This study aims to explore healthcare professionals' perspectives on the Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy, focusing on its efficacy, safety, and practical application in the management of T2DM. By examining clinician experiences and insights, the study seeks to identify best practices and highlight areas where additional education and resources may be beneficial for optimizing diabetes care.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale behind this study stems from the increasing prevalence of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) and the need for effective therapeutic strategies to manage the disease. With an estimated global diabetes prevalence projected to rise sharply, there is an urgent requirement to explore combination therapies that can optimize glycemic control while minimizing side effects. The combination of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride presents a potential solution, offering complementary

mechanisms that could enhance patient outcomes by addressing insulin secretion and glucose regulation more effectively than monotherapy.

Current treatment guidelines emphasize the importance of individualized therapy in managing T2DM. Many patients struggle with achieving optimal glycemic targets on monotherapy alone, often necessitating the introduction of additional medications. Given the high incidence of adverse effects associated with sulfonylureas, including hypoglycemia and weight gain, it is critical to investigate how combining these agents can mitigate such risks while providing robust glycemic control. Understanding healthcare providers' perspectives on this combination therapy will illuminate current practice patterns and inform future treatment guidelines.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to assess healthcare providers' opinions regarding the combination therapy of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride for glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Specific aims include:

1. To evaluate the perceived efficacy and safety of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy compared to monotherapy.
2. To identify the most commonly prescribed starting doses for each medication in combination.
3. To explore the clinical circumstances under which healthcare providers prefer this combination therapy.
4. To assess the barriers to adopting Sitagliptin and Glimepiride therapy in clinical practice, including patient preferences and familiarity with the medications.

By achieving these objectives, the study aims to provide insights that can enhance the understanding and implementation of combination therapies in the management of T2DM.

METHODS

This study will employ a cross-sectional survey design targeting healthcare provider who manage patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. The survey will be distributed booklet format to a diverse group of healthcare professionals, including endocrinologists, primary care physicians, and diabetes educators.

1. **Survey Design:** The survey will consist of multiple-choice questions designed to capture respondents' opinions and experiences with Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy. Topics will include the rationale for combination therapy, preferred dosing regimens, perceived efficacy and safety, and barriers to implementation.
2. **Sample Size and Selection:** A sample size of approximately 100 healthcare providers will be targeted to ensure adequate statistical power for the analysis. Participants will be recruited from various healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and private practices.
3. **Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, with responses categorized and analyzed to identify trends and patterns in healthcare providers' opinions. Statistical software will be employed for data analysis, and results will be presented as percentages and frequencies.
4. **Ethical Considerations**: The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving Informed consent was obtained from all participants clinicians for the study.

RESULTS

A total of 79 HCPs participated in the survey. Below is the summary of the responses.

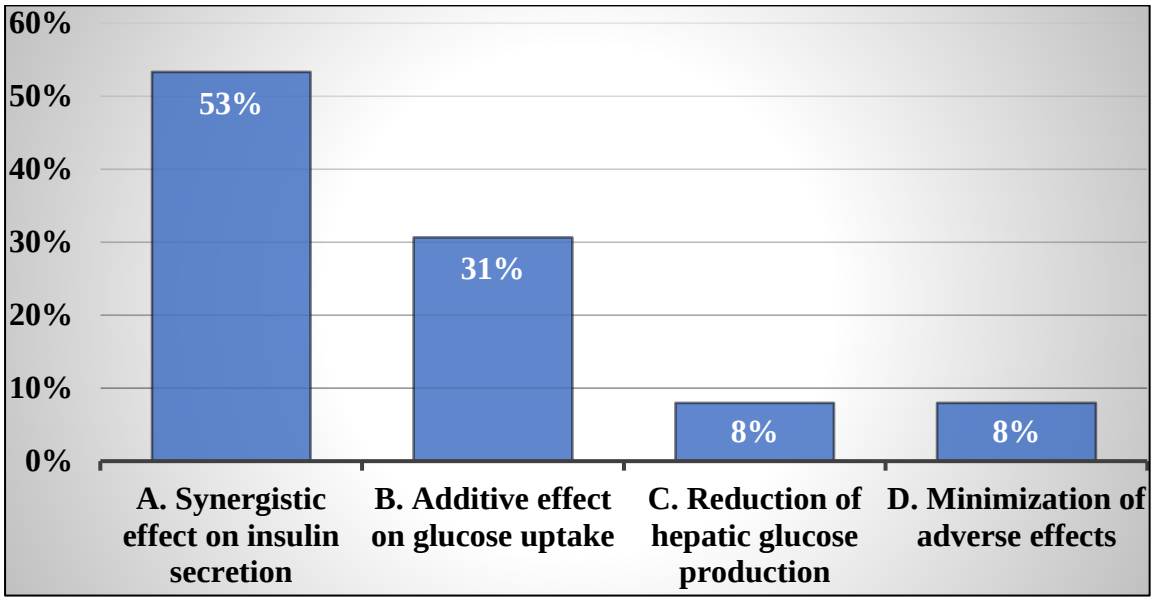
1. According to your opinion, what is the rationale behind combining Sitagliptin and Glimepiride?

A. Synergistic effect on insulin secretion

B. Additive effect on glucose uptake

C. Reduction of hepatic glucose production

D. Minimization of adverse effects



- **Synergistic Effect on Insulin Secretion (53%):** A majority of clinicians believe that the primary rationale for combining Sitagliptin and Glimepiride is their synergistic effect on insulin secretion, making this the dominant clinical perspective.
- **Additive Effect on Glucose Uptake (31%):** A notable portion of respondents also see value in the additive effect on glucose uptake, further supporting combination use.
- **Reduction of Hepatic Glucose Production (8%) & Minimization of Adverse Effects (8%):** These were less commonly mentioned as the rationale behind combination therapy.

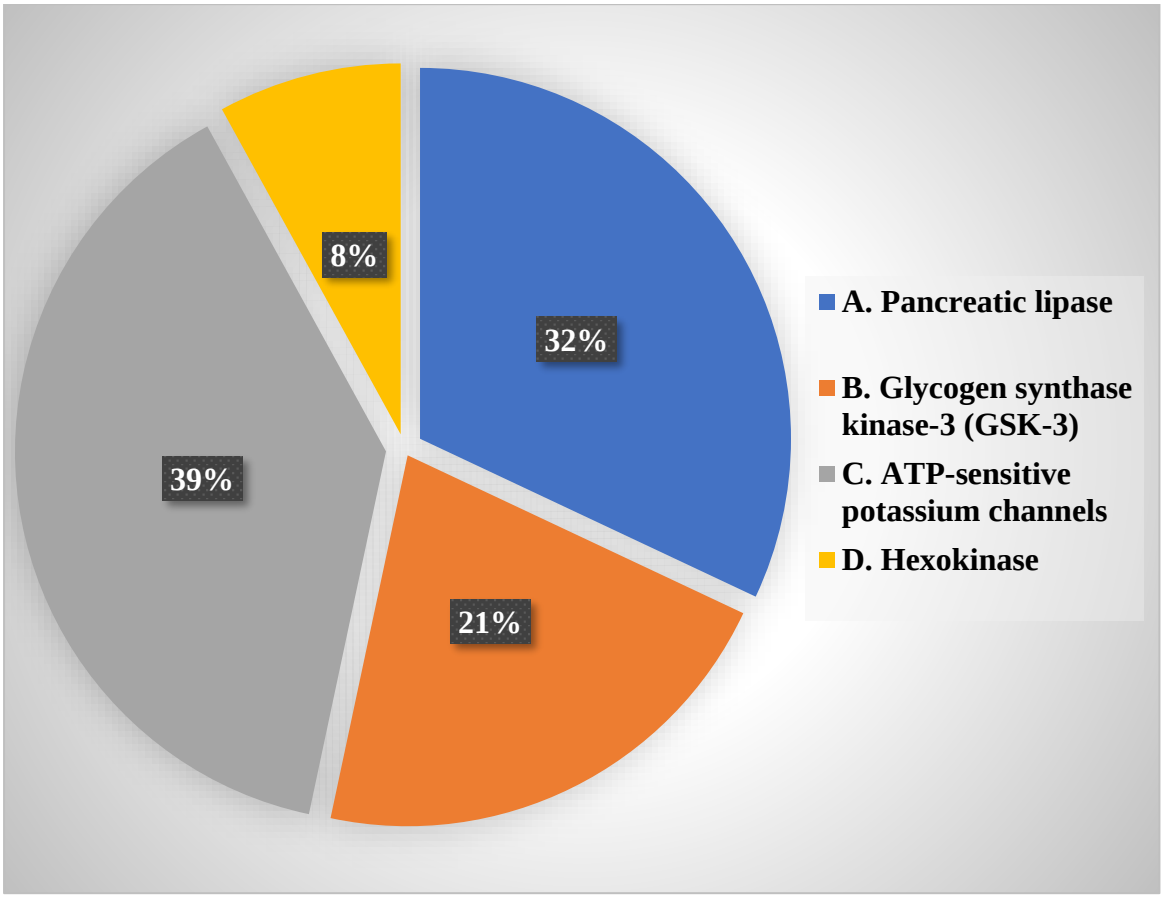
2. In your opinion, which enzyme does Glimepiride primarily target?

A. Pancreatic lipase

B. Glycogen synthase kinase-3 (GSK-3)

C. TP-sensitive potassium channels

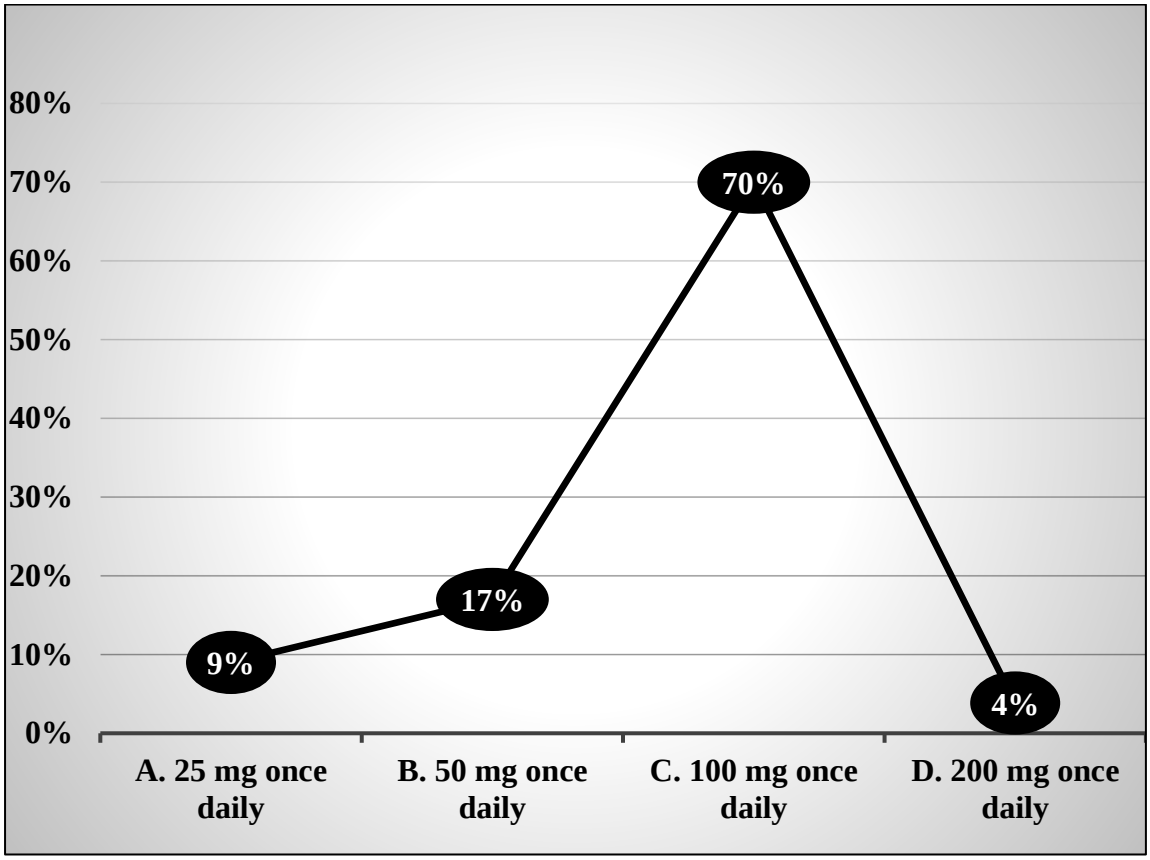
D. Hexokinase



- **ATP-sensitive potassium channels (39%):** The majority believe Glimepiride acts here.
- **Pancreatic lipase (32%):** A sizable portion also considers this enzyme as a target.
- **Glycogen synthase kinase-3 (21%) and Hexokinase (8%):** Less commonly identified targets.

3. **According to your opinion, what is the recommended starting dose of Sitagliptin in combination therapy with Glimepiride for patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus?**

A. 25 mg once daily
B. 50 mg once daily
C. 100 mg once daily
D. 200 mg once daily



- **100 mg Once Daily (70%)**: A • **100 mg once daily (70%)**: Most clinicians agree on this as the standard starting dose.
- **50 mg once daily (17%) and 25 mg once daily (9%):** Less frequent but viable options.
- **200 mg once daily (4%):** Rarely chosen.

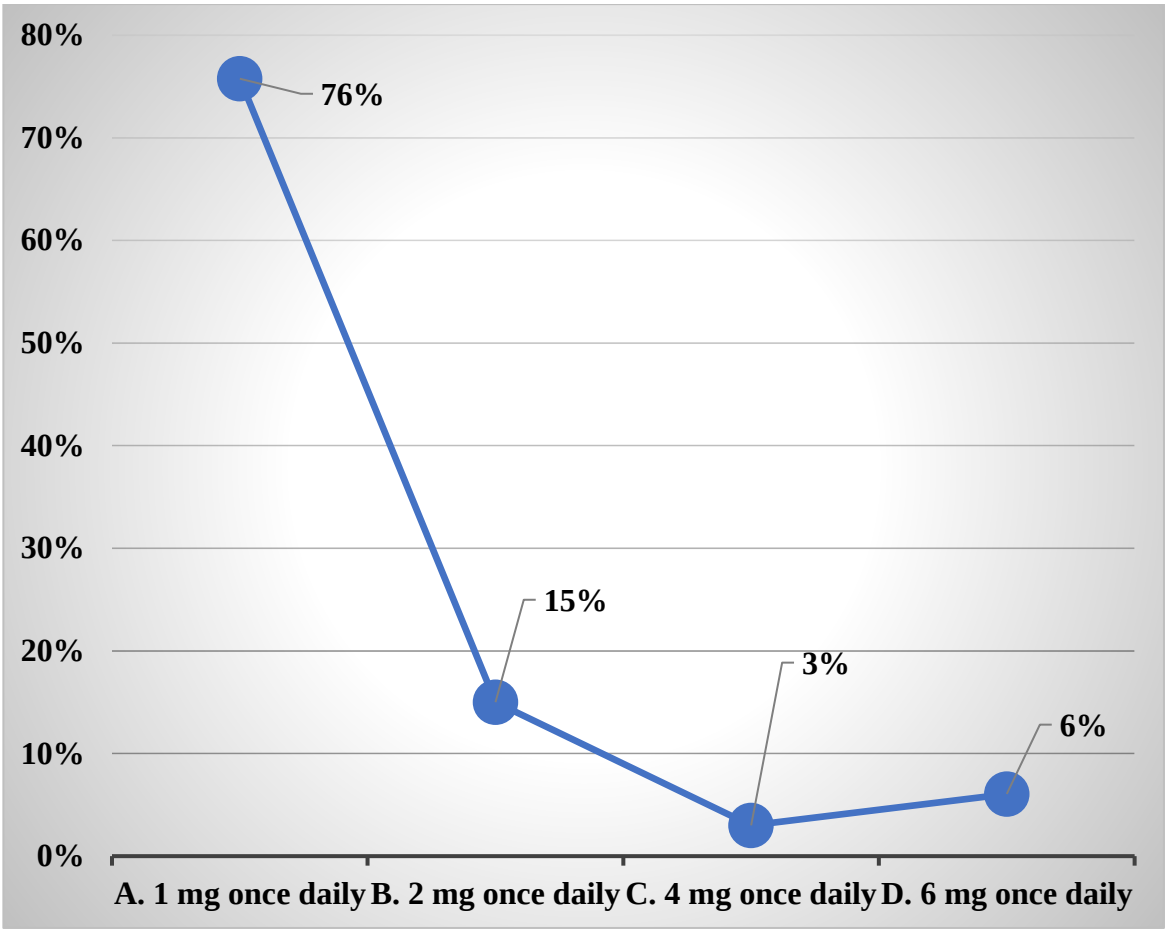
4. According to your opinion, what is the typical starting dose of Glimepiride when combined with Sitagliptin for patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus?

A. 1 mg once daily

B. 2 mg once daily

C. 4 mg once daily

D. 6 mg once daily



- **1 mg once daily (76%):** A strong preference for starting at the lowest effective **dose.**
- **2 mg once daily (15%):** A minority opt for a slightly higher starting dose.
- **4 mg once daily (3%) and 6 mg once daily (6%):** Rarely selected as starting doses.

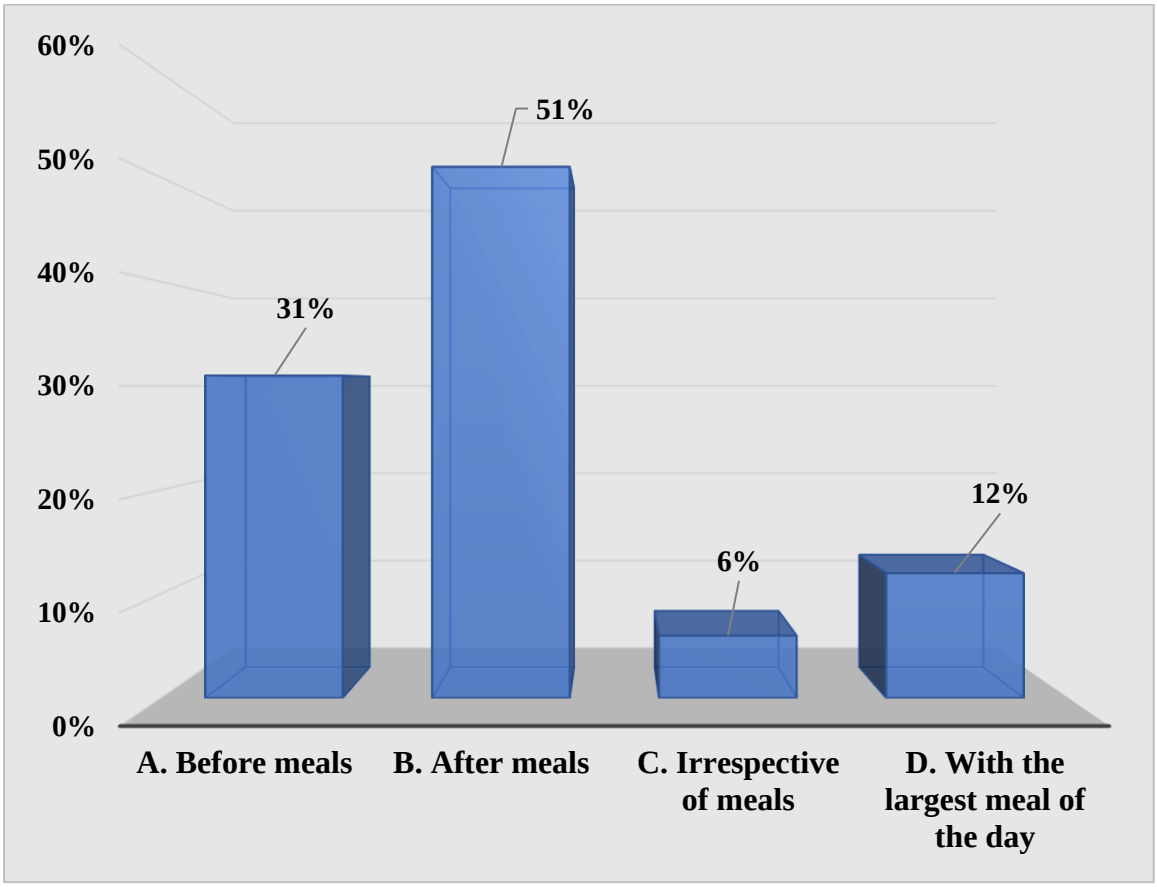
5. In your clinical practice, how do you prefer to prescribe Sitagliptin + Glimepiride combination in relation to meals?

A. Before meals

B. After meals

C. Irrespective of meals

D. With the largest meal of the day



- **After meals (51%):** The most common preference for dosing time. **Before meals (31%):** A significant number favor this approach.
- **With the largest meal of the day (12%) & irrespective of meals (6%):** Less commonly selected.

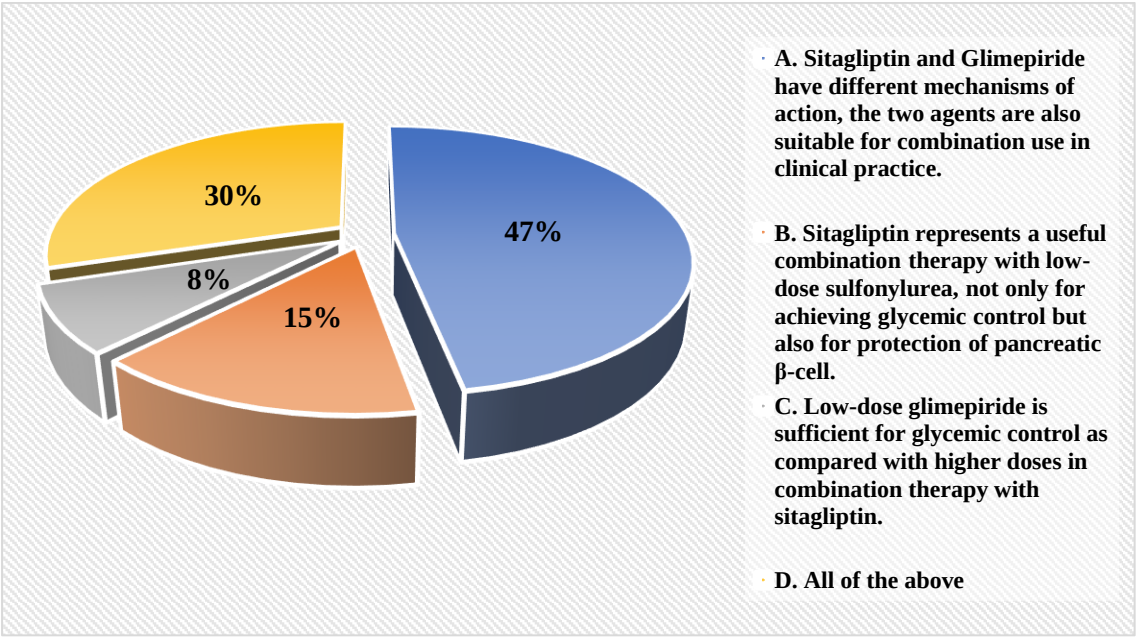
6. According to your opinion, which of the following statement(s) is TRUE regarding Sitagliptin + Glimepiride Combination?

A. Sitagliptin and Glimepiride have different mechanisms of action, the two agents are also suitable for combination use in clinical practice.

B. Sitagliptin represents a useful combination therapy with low-dose sulfonylurea, not only for achieving glycemic control but also for protection of pancreatic β-cell.

C. Low-dose glimepiride is sufficient for glycemic control as compared with higher doses in combination therapy with sitagliptin.

D. All of the above



- **Sitagliptin and Glimepiride have different mechanisms (47%):** Clinicians emphasize the complementary mechanisms.
- **All of the above (30%):** Many acknowledge the multifaceted benefits of the combination.
- **Sitagliptin for β-cell protection (15%) and Low-dose Glimepiride sufficiency (8%):** Less emphasized benefits.

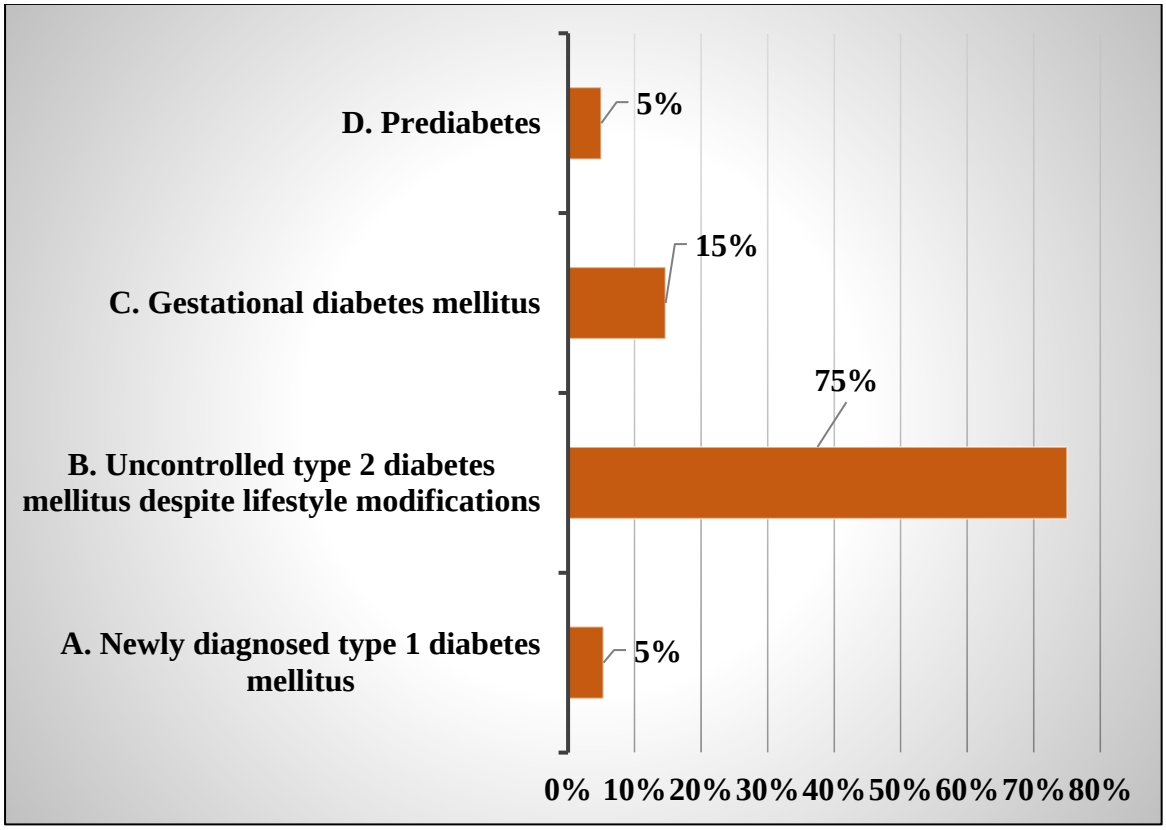
7. **According to your clinical practice, in which patients would Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy be most appropriate?**

A. Newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes mellitus

B. Uncontrolled type 2 diabetes mellitus despite lifestyle modifications

C. Gestational diabetes mellitus

D. Prediabetes



- **Uncontrolled type 2 diabetes despite lifestyle modifications (75%):** A strong consensus for targeting poorly controlled T2DM.
- **Gestational diabetes mellitus (15%):** A small subset considers this suitable.
- **Newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes (5%) and Prediabetes (5%):** Rarely considered appropriate.

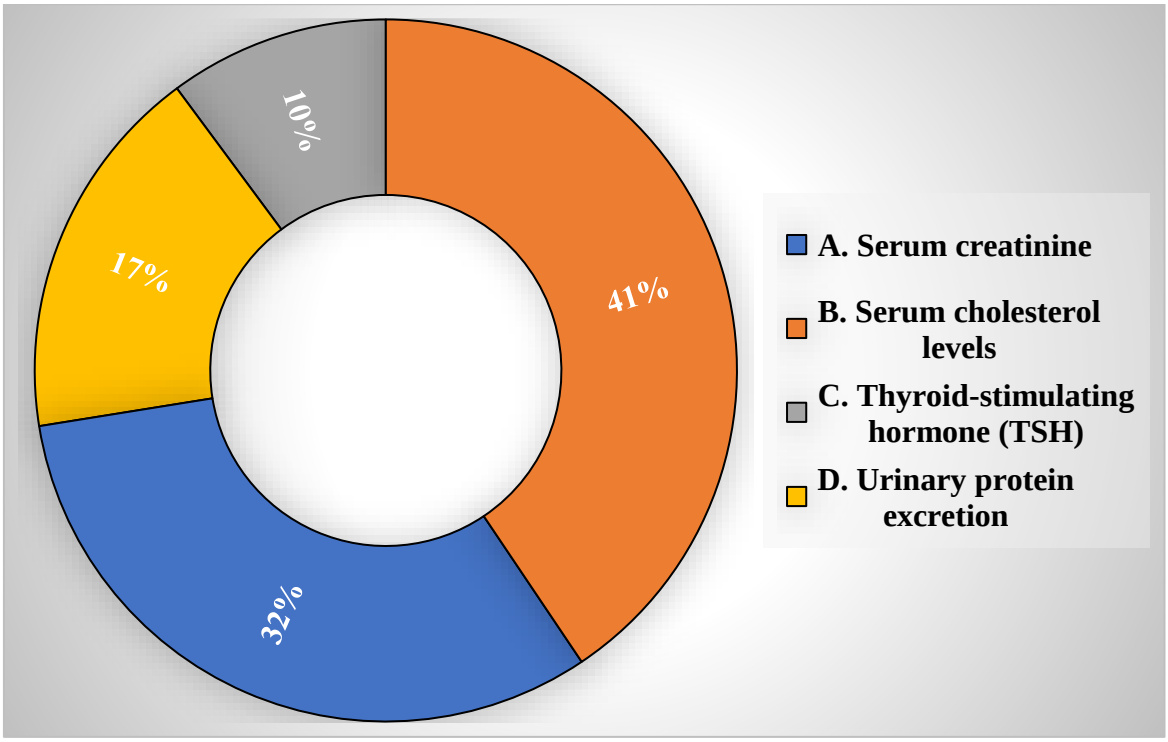
8. In your opinion, what laboratory parameter should be monitored before initiating Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy in diabetic patients?

A. Serum creatinine

B. Serum cholesterol levels

C. Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH)

D. Urinary protein excretion



- **Serum cholesterol levels (41%)**: The most commonly recommended lab parameter.
- **Serum creatinine (32%)**: Also widely monitored for kidney function.
- **Urinary protein excretion (17%)** and **Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) (10%)**: Monitored less frequently.

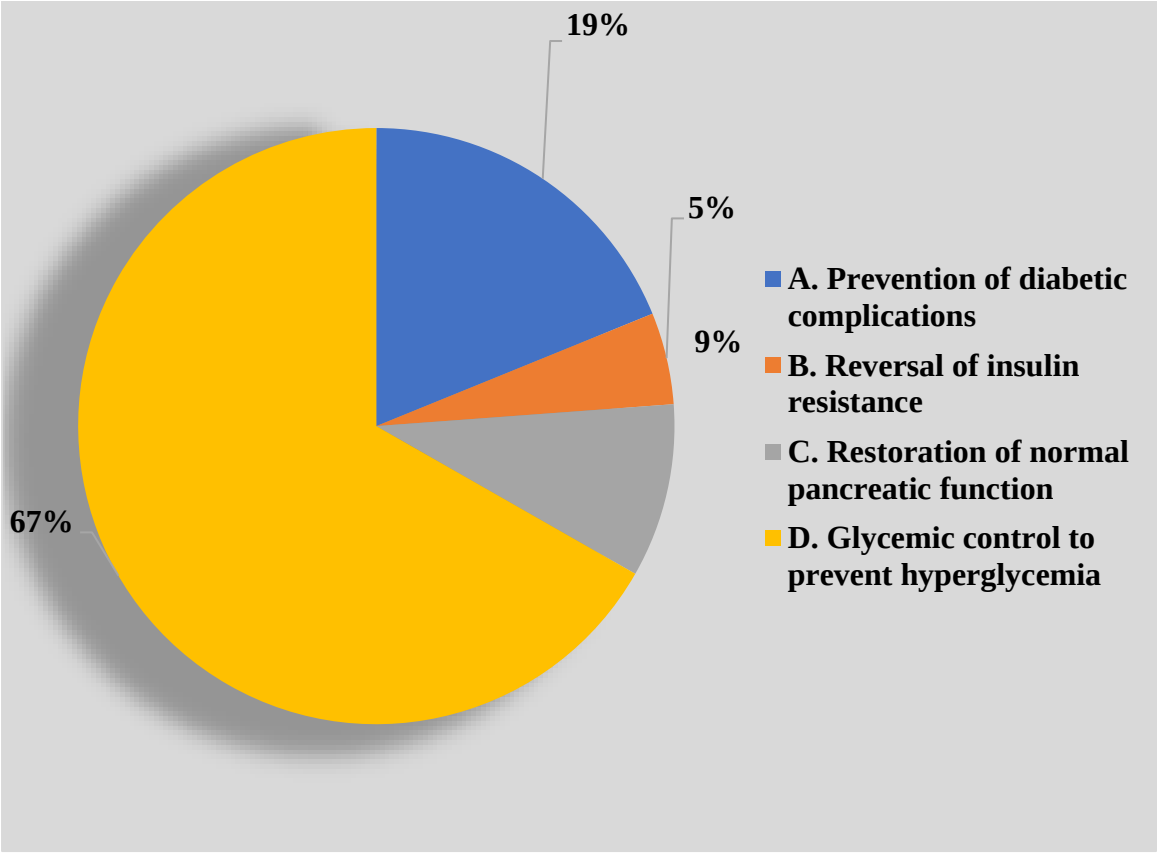
9. **According to you, what could be the primary goal of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy?**

A. Prevention of diabetic complications

B. Reversal of insulin resistance

C. Restoration of normal pancreatic function

D. Glycemic control to prevent hyperglycemia



- **Glycemic control to prevent hyperglycemia (67%)**: The overwhelming primary goal.
- **Prevention of diabetic complications (19%)**: Also seen as a significant objective.
- **Restoration of normal pancreatic function (9%)** and **Reversal of insulin resistance (5%)**: Less common goals.

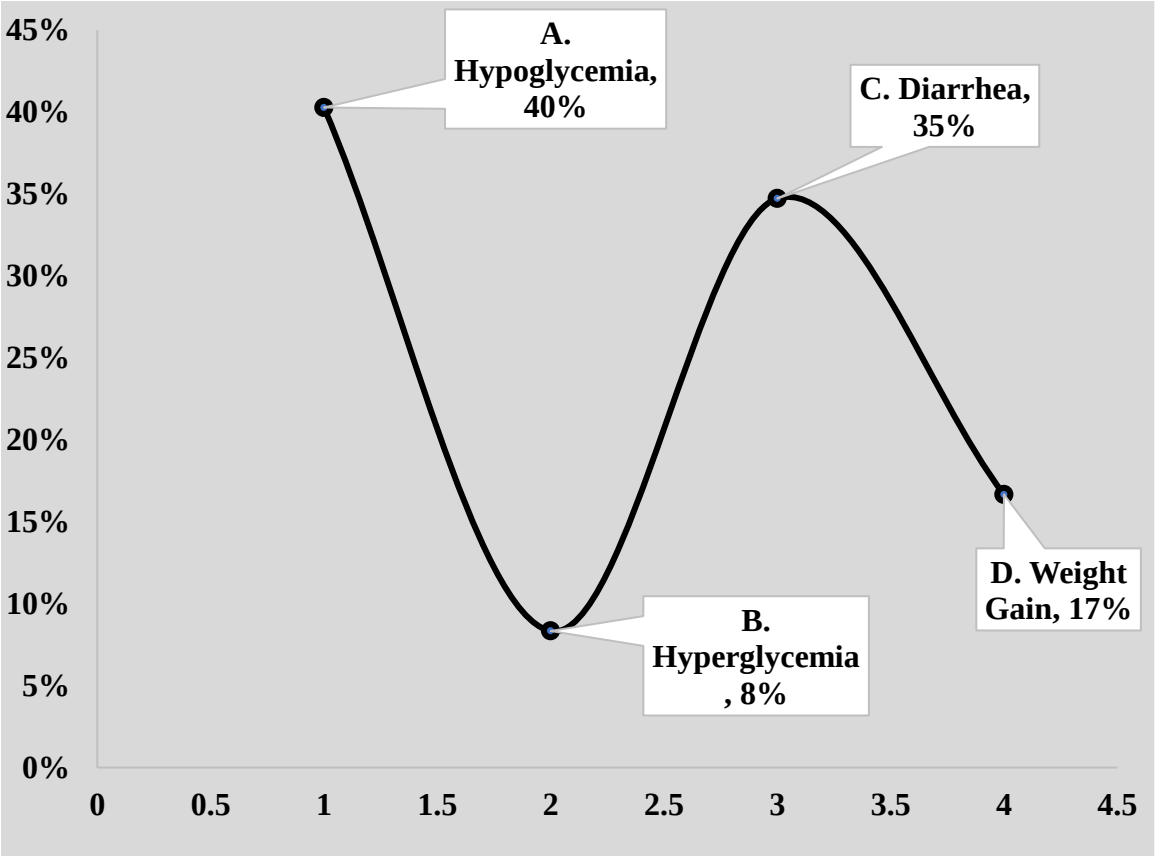
10. In your opinion, which adverse effect is most commonly associated with Glimepiride use?

A. Hypoglycemia

B. Hyperglycemia

C. Diarrhea

D. Weight Gain



- **Hypoglycemia (40%)**: The most frequently reported adverse effect.
- **Diarrhea (35%)**: Also commonly experienced by patients.
- **Weight gain (17%)** & **Hyperglycemia (8%)**: Less frequent concerns.

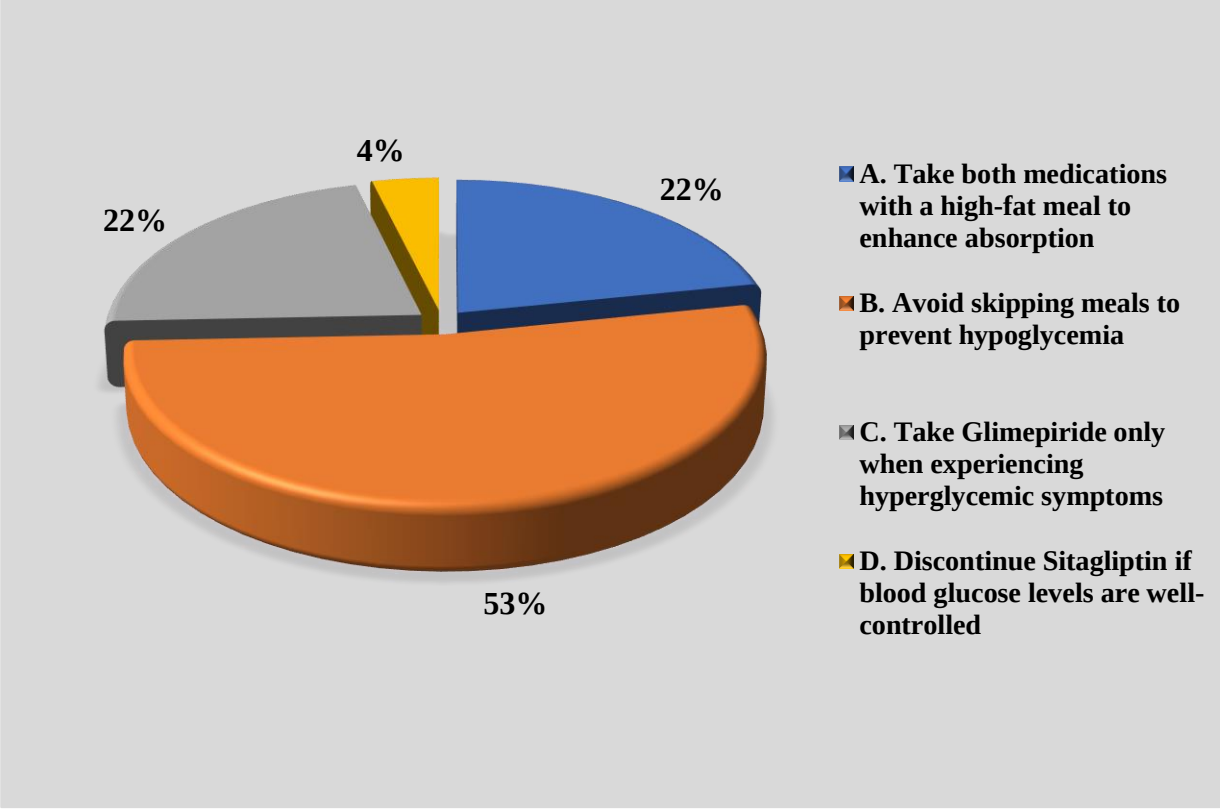
11. In your clinical practice, which of the following counseling point should be emphasized to patients regarding Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy?

A. Take both medications with a high-fat meal to enhance absorption

B. Avoid skipping meals to prevent hypoglycemia

C. Take Glimepiride only when experiencing hyperglycemic symptoms

D. Discontinue Sitagliptin if blood glucose levels are well-controlled



- **Avoid skipping meals to prevent hypoglycemia (53%)**: The most important counseling point emphasized.
- **Take both medications with a high-fat meal (22%)** and **Take Glimepiride only when experiencing hyperglycemic symptoms (22%)**: Less commonly emphasized.
- **Discontinue Sitagliptin if blood glucose levels are well-controlled (4%)**: Rarely advised.

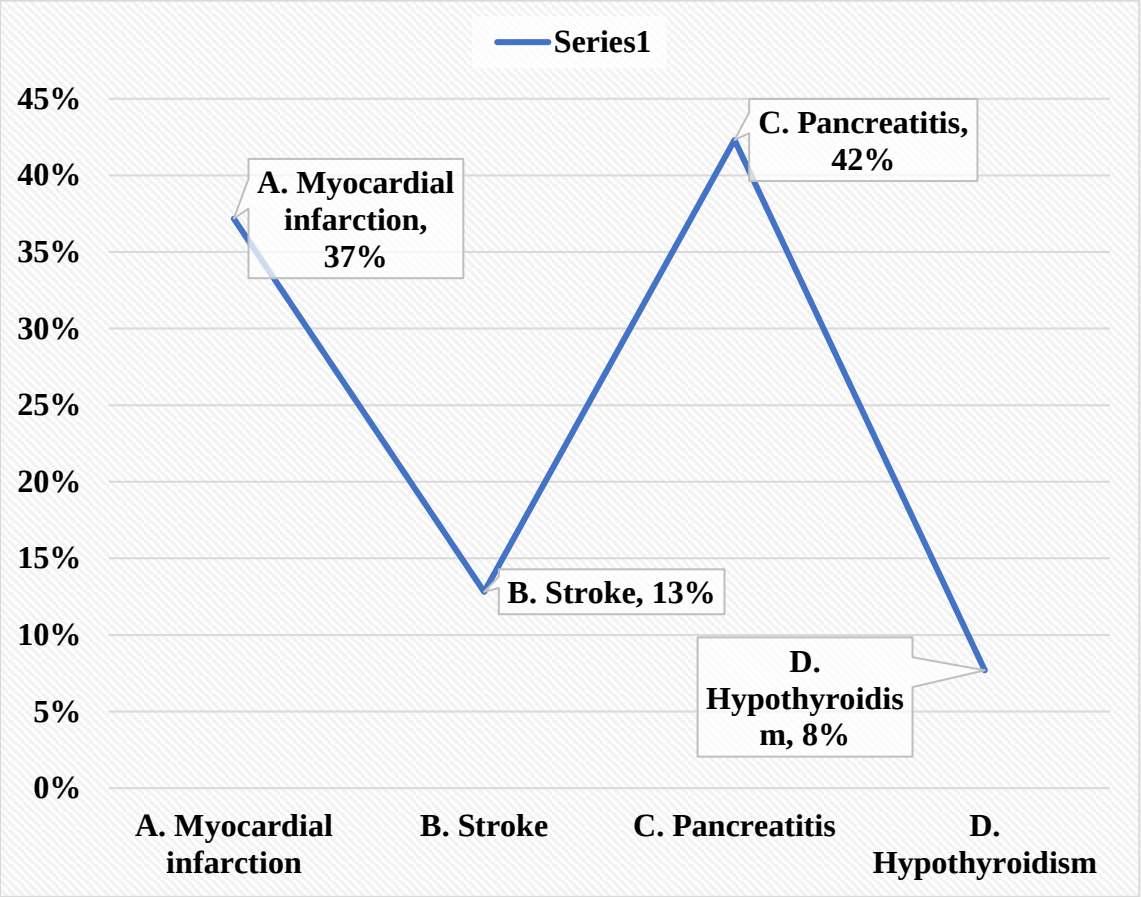
12. According to you, Sitagliptin is contraindicated in patients with a history of:

A. Myocardial infarction

B. Stroke

C. Pancreatitis

D. Hypothyroidism



- **Pancreatitis (42%)**: The most common contraindication cited by clinicians.
- **Myocardial infarction (37%)**: Frequently mentioned as well.
- **Stroke (13%)** and **Hypothyroidism (8%)**: Less common contraindications.

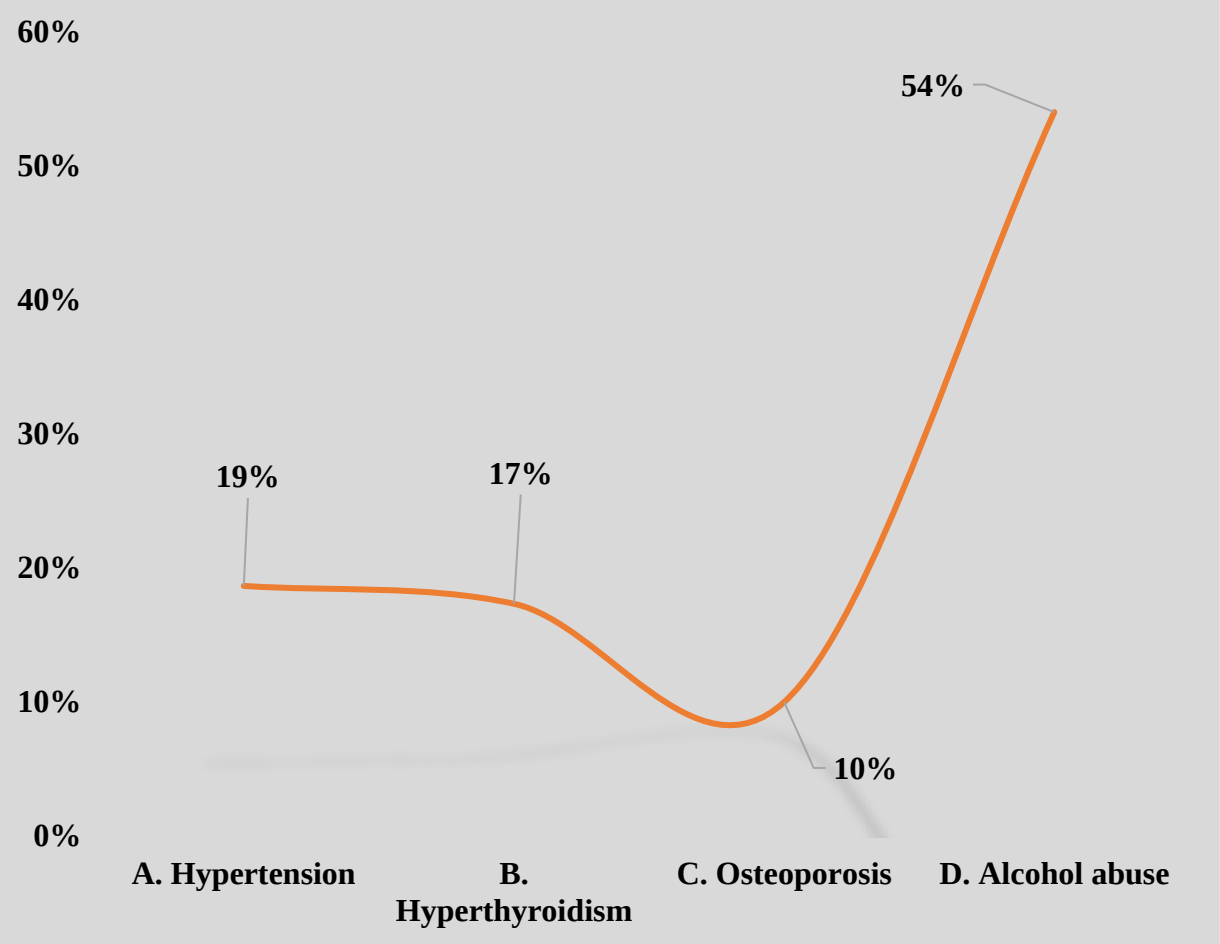
13. In your opinion, Glimepiride should be used with caution in patients with a history of:

A. Hypertension

B. Hyperthyroidism

C. Osteoporosis

D. Alcohol abuse



- **Alcohol abuse (54%)**: A strong consensus for caution with Glimepiride in this population.
- **Hypertension (19%)** and **Hyperthyroidism (17%)**: Less frequently seen as causes for caution.
- **Osteoporosis (10%)**: Rarely considered an issue.

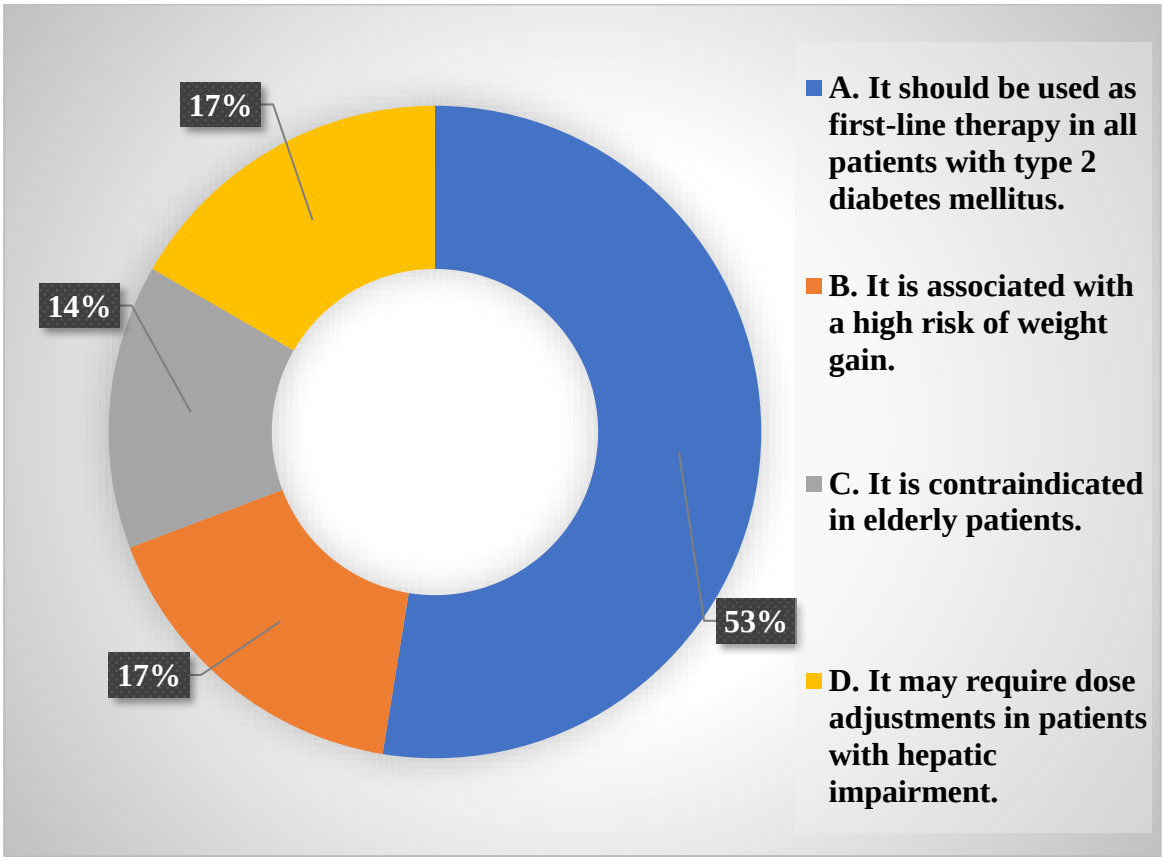
14. According to your opinion, which statement is TRUE regarding Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy?

A. It should be used as first-line therapy in all patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

B. It is associated with a high risk of weight gain.

C. It is contraindicated in elderly patients.

D. It may require dose adjustments in patients with hepatic impairment.



- **First-line therapy in all T2DM patients (53%):** A majority agree with its widespread use.
- **Dose adjustments in hepatic impairment (17%) and Weight gain (17%):** Also noted by some respondents.
- **Contraindicated in elderly patients (14%):** Less commonly cited.

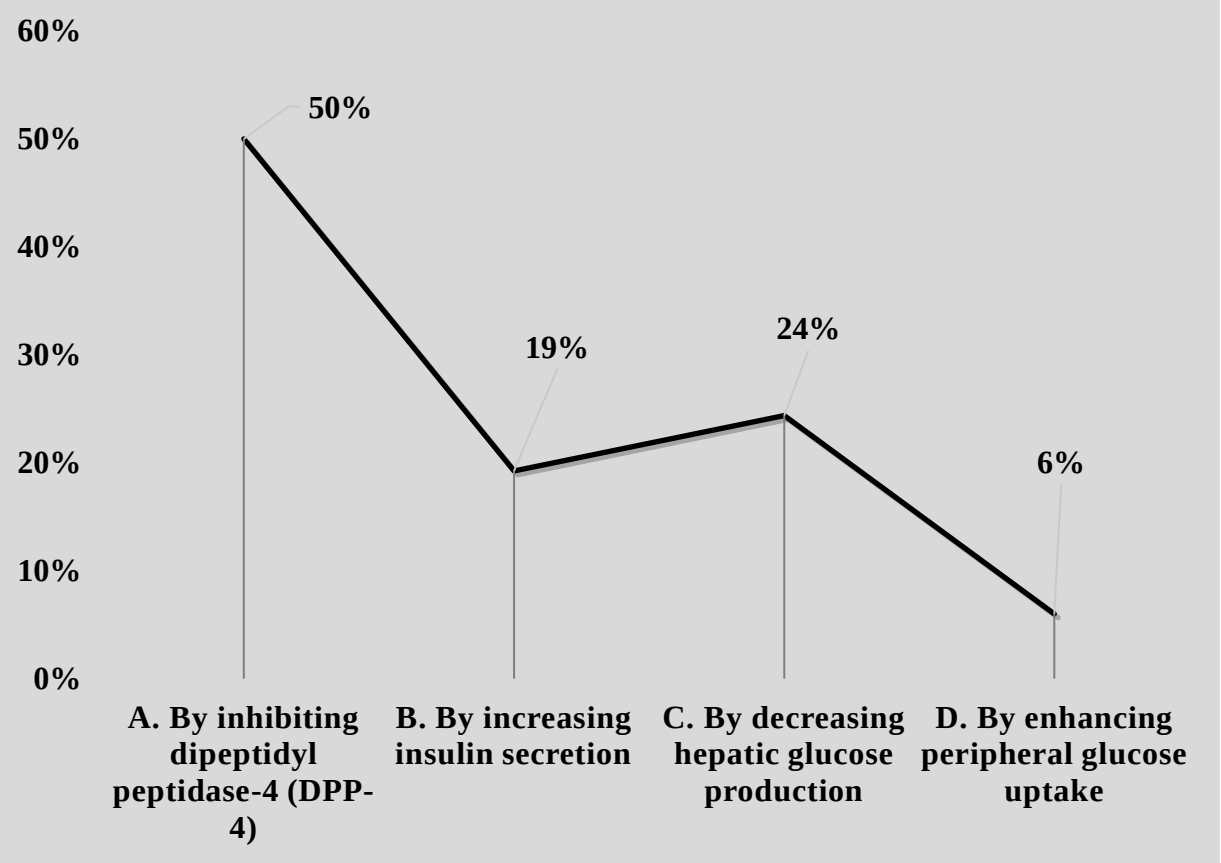
15. In your opinion, how does Sitagliptin contribute to glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus?

A. By inhibiting dipeptidyl peptidase-4 (DPP-4)

B. By increasing insulin secretion

C. By decreasing hepatic glucose production

D. By enhancing peripheral glucose uptake



- **DPP-4 inhibition (50%)**: The primary mechanism of action highlighted.
- **Decreasing hepatic glucose production (24%)** and **Increasing insulin secretion (19%)**: Secondary mechanisms noted.
- **Enhancing peripheral glucose uptake (6%)**: Rarely considered significant.

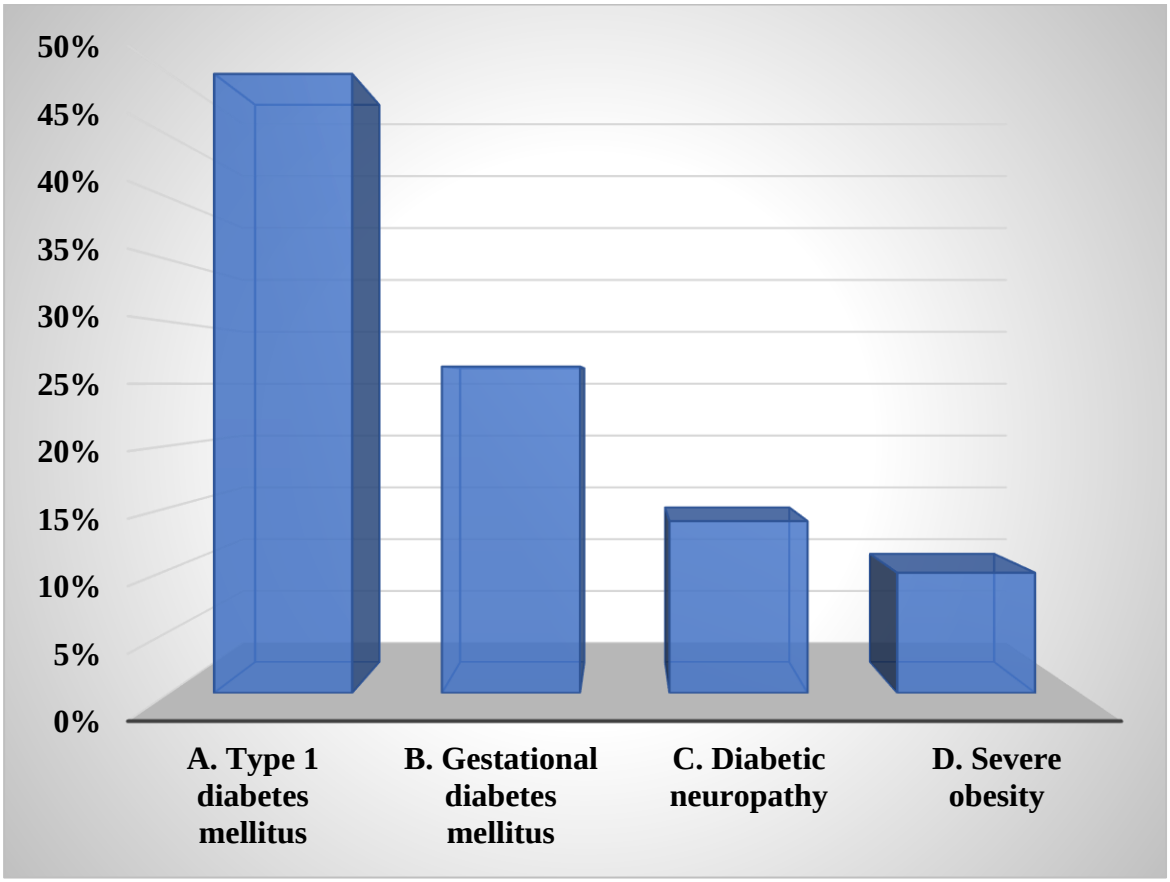
16. **In your opinion, Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy is contraindicated in patients with:**

A. Type 1 diabetes mellitus

B. Gestational diabetes mellitus

C. Diabetic neuropathy

D. Severe obesity



- **Type 1 diabetes mellitus (50%)**: The majority consider this combination contraindicated for T1DM.
- **Gestational diabetes mellitus (26%)**: Some view it as unsuitable here.
- **Diabetic neuropathy (14%)** and **Severe obesity (10%)**: Less frequently seen as contraindications.

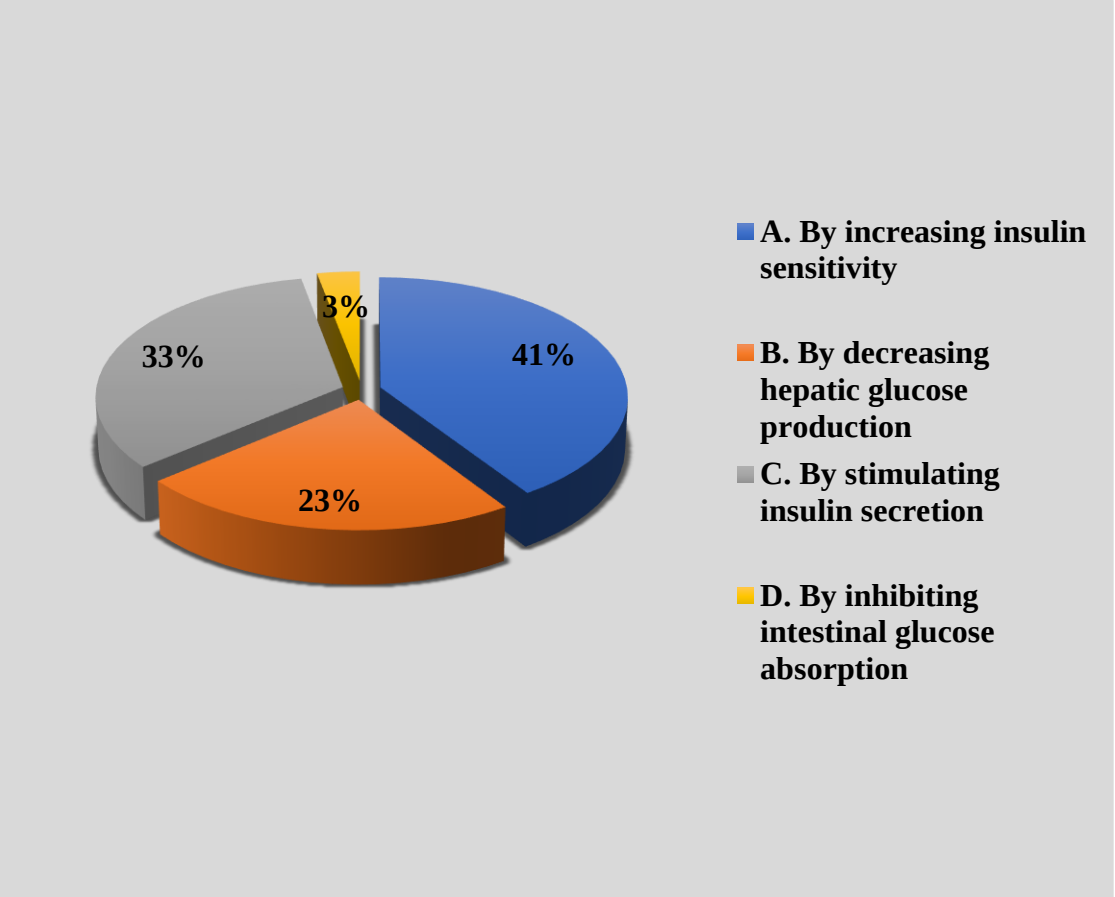
17. According to you, how does Glimepiride contribute to glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus?

A. By increasing insulin sensitivity

B. By decreasing hepatic glucose production

C. By stimulating insulin secretion

D. By inhibiting intestinal glucose absorption



- **Increasing insulin sensitivity (41%)**: The primary mechanism cited by clinicians.
- **Stimulating insulin secretion (33%)**: Also widely acknowledged.
- **Decreasing hepatic glucose production (23%)** and **Inhibiting intestinal glucose absorption (3%)**: Less frequently noted.

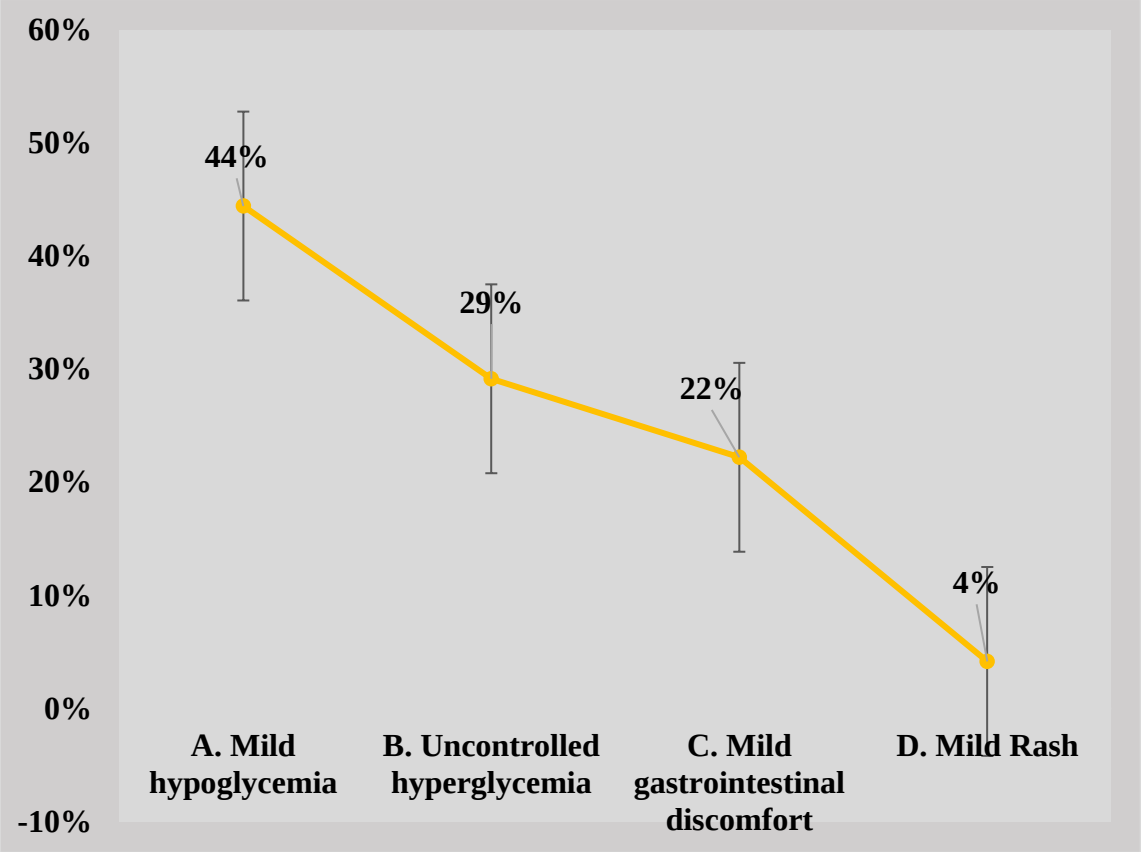
18. According to your opinion, Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy should be discontinued in patients with:

A. Mild hypoglycemia

B. Uncontrolled hyperglycemia

C. Mild gastrointestinal discomfort

D. Mild Rash



- **Mild hypoglycemia (44%)**: The most common reason for discontinuing therapy.
- **Uncontrolled hyperglycemia (29%)**: A notable cause for therapy cessation.
- **Mild gastrointestinal discomfort (22%)** and **Mild rash (4%)**: Less frequent reasons for discontinuation.

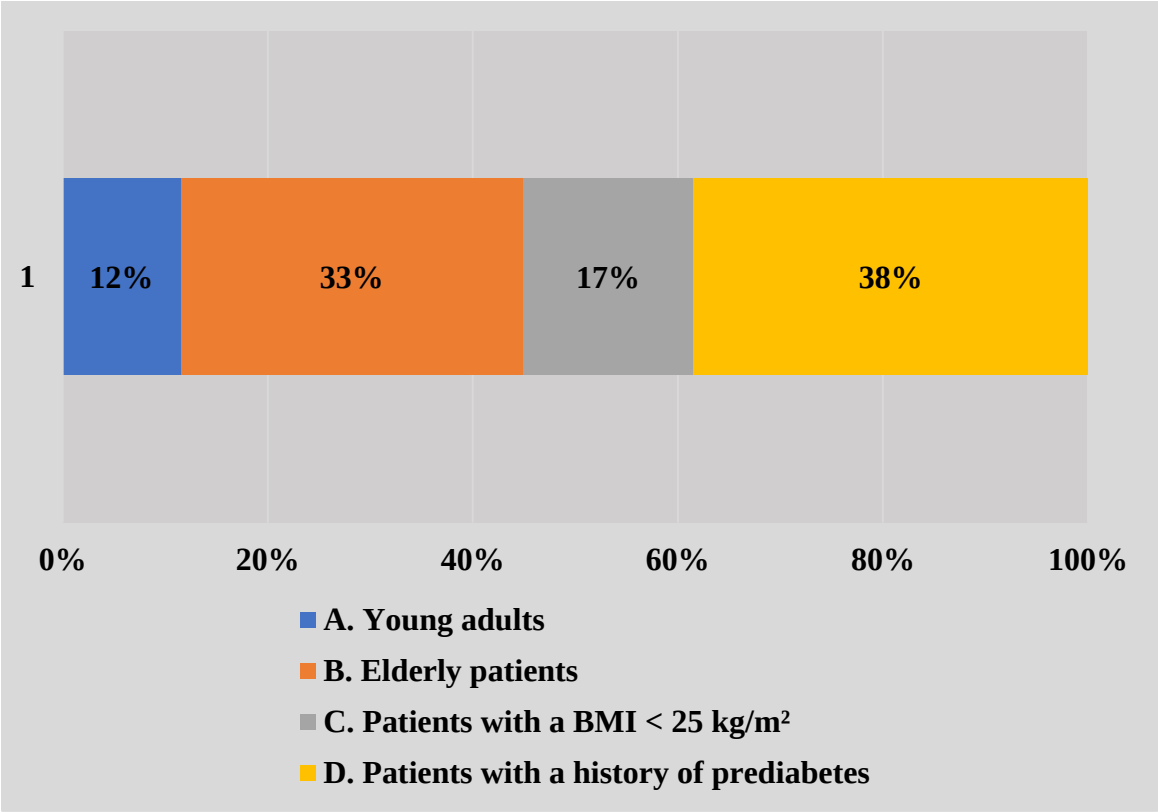
19. **In your clinical practice, for which type of patient population do you consider to have close monitoring regarding adverse effects during Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy?**

A. Young adults

B. Elderly patients

C. Patients with a BMI < 25 kg/m²

D. Patients with a history of prediabetes



- **Patients with a history of prediabetes (38%)** and **Elderly patients (33%)**: Groups requiring closer monitoring.
- **Patients with BMI < 25 kg/m² (17%)**: Monitored less frequently.
- **Young adults (12%)**: Rarely seen as needing close monitoring.

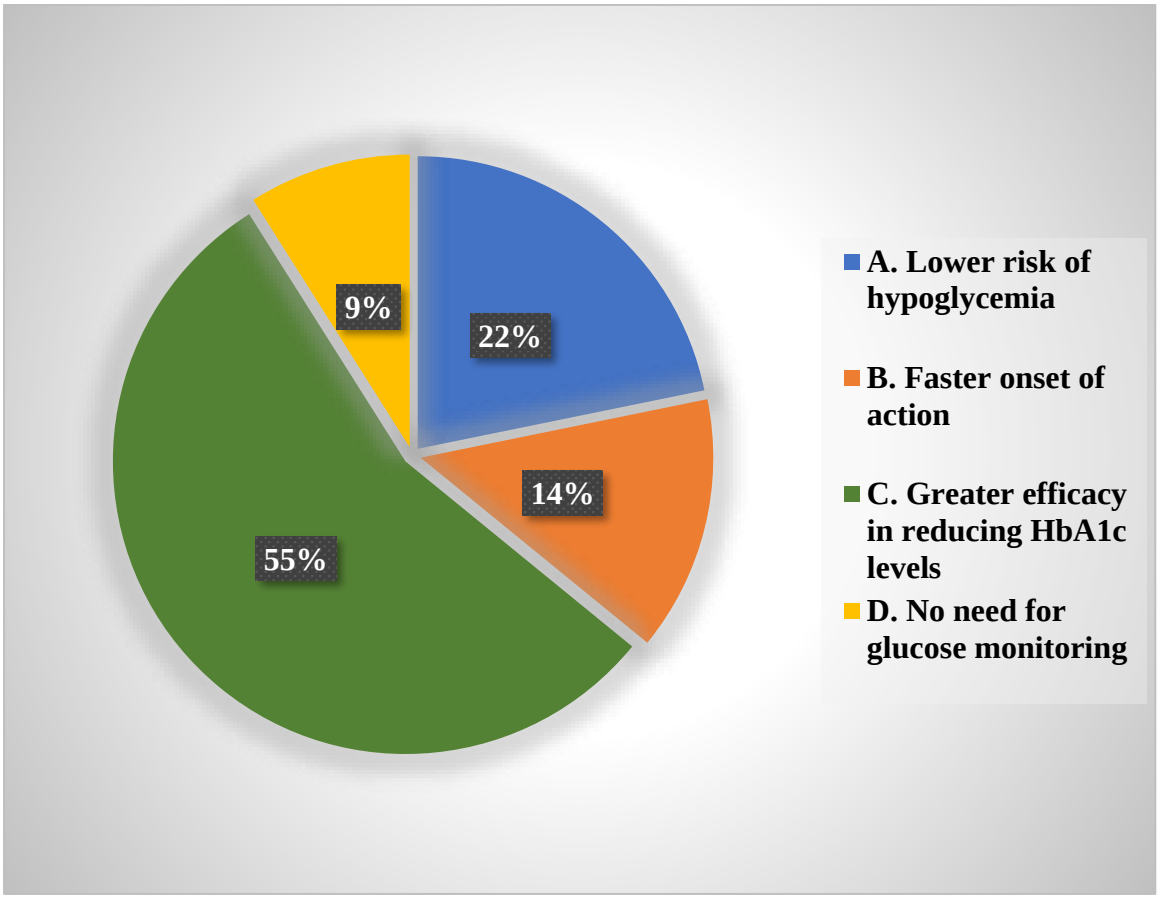
20. According to you, what could be the primary advantage of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy over insulin therapy?

A. Lower risk of hypoglycemia

B. Faster onset of action

C. Greater efficacy in reducing HbA1c levels

D. No need for glucose monitoring



- **Greater efficacy in reducing HbA1c levels (55%)**: The most cited advantage over insulin therapy.
- **Lower risk of hypoglycemia (22%)**: Also recognized as a key benefit.
- **Faster onset of action (14%)** and **No need for glucose monitoring (9%)**: Less frequently mentioned advantages.

SUMMARY

- The survey on Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy highlights clinicians' perspectives on its efficacy, safety, and prescribing considerations. 42% recognize its synergistic effect on insulin secretion, with additional benefits in reducing hepatic glucose production (23%) and enhancing glucose uptake (22%). The preferred starting doses are 100 mg Sitagliptin and 2 mg Glimepiride, though some opt for lower doses to minimize hypoglycemia risk. 55% recommend taking the combination after meals to enhance tolerability.
- Clinicians primarily prescribe this therapy for uncontrolled type 2 diabetes (49%), with key safety concerns including hypoglycemia, weight gain, and hepatic function. Pancreatitis (29%) is recognized as a contraindication for Sitagliptin, while caution is advised for Glimepiride in patients with alcohol abuse (17%) and osteoporosis (30%). Monitoring serum creatinine (45%) before initiation is a priority due to renal clearance considerations.
- Mechanistically, 40% correctly identify DPP-4 inhibition as Sitagliptin's primary action, while 44% recognize Glimepiride's role in stimulating insulin secretion via K_ATP channels, though misconceptions persist. While 41% acknowledge Type 1 diabetes as a contraindication, some uncertainty remains regarding its use in obesity (20%) and diabetic neuropathy (9%).

- Clinicians prefer the combination over insulin therapy due to its lower hypoglycemia risk (45%), HbA1c reduction efficacy (24%), and faster onset (18%). However, concerns about premature discontinuation arise, as some clinicians recommend stopping therapy for mild GI discomfort (30%) or hypoglycemia (23%) instead of adjusting doses. Elderly patients (39%) and those with BMI < 25 kg/m² (19%) are closely monitored due to hypoglycemia risks.
- These findings underscore broad clinical support for Sitagliptin-Glimepiride therapy, with a strong emphasis on glycemic control, patient safety, and appropriate patient selection.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this survey shed light on healthcare professionals' perceptions of the combination therapy of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride for managing type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). A significant majority of respondents acknowledged the synergistic effects of combining these two agents, reflecting a growing recognition of the need for more effective therapeutic strategies in the context of T2DM management. While many participants rated Sitagliptin and Glimepiride as effective for glycemic control, concerns about the adverse effects associated with Glimepiride, particularly hypoglycemia, were prevalent. This underscores the importance of balancing efficacy with safety when selecting treatment regimens.

The data revealed a strong preference for Sitagliptin's dosing, with most respondents favoring 100 mg as the starting dose. This preference aligns with existing guidelines that advocate for individualizing therapy based on patient characteristics and needs. Furthermore, the survey highlighted a notable gap in

the understanding of the mechanisms of action of both drugs, suggesting an opportunity for further education among healthcare professionals.

CLINICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey findings, the following clinical recommendations are proposed:

1. **Patient Selection:** Prioritize Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy for patients with uncontrolled T2DM who have not achieved adequate glycemic control with lifestyle modifications or monotherapy.
2. **Dosing Guidelines:** Initiate therapy with Sitagliptin at 100 mg and Glimepiride at 1 mg, with careful monitoring for efficacy and tolerability. Adjust doses based on individual patient response and tolerability.
3. **Monitoring:** Regularly monitor patients for potential adverse effects, particularly hypoglycemia, and educate them on recognizing symptoms. Serum creatinine and cholesterol levels should also be monitored before initiating therapy.
4. **Patient Education:** Emphasize the importance of adherence to medication schedules and dietary recommendations, particularly regarding meal timings for Glimepiride to minimize hypoglycemic episodes.
5. **Follow-Up:** Schedule regular follow-up appointments to assess glycemic control and adjust therapy as needed to achieve desired outcomes.

CONSULTANT OPINION

Expert Consultations with diabetes specialists indicate a favorable outlook on the use of Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy. Specialists emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach to diabetes management that includes lifestyle modifications alongside pharmacotherapy. They also highlight the necessity for ongoing education for healthcare providers to ensure optimal prescribing practices and patient safety. Overall, specialists believe that increased awareness and understanding of this combination therapy can lead to better patient outcomes.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The diabetes care landscape in India is evolving rapidly due to the rising prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM). As India becomes home to one of the largest diabetic populations globally, the demand for innovative, effective, and safe treatment options is surging. This presents a substantial market opportunity for Sitagliptin and Glimepiride combination therapy. The dual action of enhancing insulin secretion and improving glycemic control without the significant weight gain or hypoglycemia seen with other treatments positions this combination favorably in the market.

Growing Diabetic Population: India's estimated 77 million diabetic patients provide a broad target market. The rise in sedentary lifestyles and poor dietary habits increases the need for medications that offer more consistent blood sugar control. The Sitagliptin + Glimepiride combination, with its high efficacy, can cater to both urban and rural populations.

Affordability & Accessibility: As the combination therapy becomes more affordable, pharmaceutical companies can penetrate Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities where

access to advanced diabetes care remains limited. Price sensitivity in India necessitates affordable, yet effective treatments, making this combination therapy an attractive option for the Indian market.

Focus on Long-Term Outcomes: With the increasing focus on preventing long-term complications associated with diabetes, such as cardiovascular and renal diseases, this therapy's potential to offer protection of pancreatic β-cells and its relatively lower risk of hypoglycemia make it highly desirable for prolonged treatment.

Pharma Alliances and Collaborations: Collaborations between pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers can increase awareness and expand the reach of Sitagliptin + Glimepiride therapy. Educational initiatives, workshops, and campaigns can help promote the therapy as a first-line or second-line treatment option, especially in underpenetrated regions of India.

MARKET POSITIONING

For successful market positioning of Sitagliptin + Glimepiride combination therapy, it is essential to differentiate it from other existing oral anti-diabetic treatments. The combination's positioning strategy should highlight its efficacy, safety, and the added advantage of lowering the incidence of hypoglycemia, which is often a deterrent with traditional sulfonylureas.

Highlight Safety and Efficacy: The messaging should emphasize that this combination therapy provides strong glycemic control with a significantly lower risk of adverse effects compared to other oral medications like high-dose sulfonylureas or insulin. This can be leveraged to target healthcare providers who prioritize treatments that maintain both efficacy and safety.

Target Patient Segments: The therapy can be positioned particularly well for patients with uncontrolled T2DM, especially those who are non-compliant with lifestyle modifications or are resistant to initiating insulin therapy. Additionally, targeting elderly patients who require safer and milder therapeutic options can set this combination apart.

Focus on Combination Benefits: Given that Sitagliptin and Glimepiride work through different mechanisms (Sitagliptin via DPP-4 inhibition and Glimepiride via insulin secretion), their combination can be marketed as a comprehensive approach to diabetes management, offering dual benefits in controlling blood sugar levels.

Educational Campaigns: Partnering with diabetes specialists and launching educational campaigns through seminars, webinars, and conferences can help establish the drug's clinical benefits. A focus on India-specific case studies that highlight the success of this combination in managing blood sugar levels and preventing long-term complications could resonate well with healthcare professionals.

Pharmaceutical Branding: A strong branding strategy that promotes the combination as a convenient, once-daily solution for diabetes management would appeal to patients looking for ease of use. Pharmaceutical companies can explore direct-to-consumer (DTC) campaigns, especially via digital media and telemedicine platforms, to increase awareness and adherence among patients.

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