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Conundrum of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy: role of vascular endothelial dysfunction, reactive oxygen species, and mitochondria

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Abstract Diabetic cardiomyopathy and heart failure have been recognized as the leading causes of mortality among diabetics. Diabetic cardiomyopathy has been characterized primarily by the manifestation of left ventricular dysfunction that is independent of coronary artery disease and hypertension among the patients affected by diabetes mellitus. A complex array of contributing factors including the hypertrophy of left ventricle, alterations of metabolism, microvascular pathology, insulin resistance, fibrosis, apoptotic cell death, and oxidative stress have been implicated in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Nevertheless, the exact mechanisms underlying the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy are yet to be established. The critical involvement of multifarious factors including the vascular endothelial dysfunction, microangiopathy, reactive oxygen species (ROS), oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunction has been identified in the

mechanism of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Although it is difficult to establish how each factor contributes to disease, the involvement of ROS and mitochondrial dysfunction are emerging as front-runners in the mechanism of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. This review highlights the role of vascular endothelial dysfunction, ROS, oxidative stress, and mitochondriopathy in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Furthermore, the review emphasizes that the puzzle has to be solved to firmly establish the mitochondrial and/or ROS mechanism(s) by identifying their most critical molecular players involved at both spatial and temporal levels in diabetic cardiomyopathy as targets for specific and effective pharmacological/therapeutic interventions.

Keywords Diabetic cardiomyopathy · Hyperglycemia · Vascular endothelial dysfunction · Reactive oxygen species · Cardiac mitochondriopathy

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Introduction

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of death and disability throughout the world. It is associated with blindness, strokes, kidney failure, and vascular, heart and nerve diseases.

Diabetes in epidemic proportions worldwide

According to the report released by the International Diabetes Federation in 2011, 366 million people worldwide are affected by diabetes, and that number is estimated to rise to 552 million by 2030. Between 2010 and 2030, there will be a 69 % increase in the number of adults with diabetes in

developing countries and a 20 % increase in the developed countries [1]. The global health expenditure on diabetes was estimated to account for a total of at least US \$376 billion in 2010 and is expected to reach US \$490 billion in 2030. Worldwide, approximately 12 % of the healthcare expenditure (US \$1330/person) was allocated to diabetes care in 2010 [2].

Salient features of diabetic cardiomyopathy

The relationship between diabetes and heart disease is well established from several animal and human studies [3–5]. The term “Diabetic Cardiomyopathy” was first coined by Rubler 30 years ago [6]. Diabetic cardiomyopathy refers to structural changes in the heart, such as chamber enlargement, increased fibrosis and left ventricular (LV) mass [7]. In the Framingham study conducted on an unselected cohort of 5,209 patients, men between 45 and 74 years of age exhibited more than twice the frequency of congestive heart failure as opposed to their non-diabetic cohorts, and diabetic women showed a fivefold increased risk of congestive heart failure (CHF). Furthermore, the correlation between heart failure (HF) and diabetes still persisted even after taking age, blood pressure, weight, cholesterol levels, and coronary heart disease into account [8]. In a study conducted on 2,737 patients (mean age of 81 years) without HF and with and without diabetes, 39 % of the diabetic subjects developed CHF as compared to 23 % of subjects in the non-diabetic group with a relative risk of 1.3 [9]. Another retrospective cohort study conducted on 17,076 subjects (8,231 patients with type 2 diabetes and 8,845 non-diabetic patients) revealed 30.9 % incidence of CHF in the diabetic group as compared to 12 % of incidence of CHF in the non-diabetic group, with a relative risk of greater than 2.5 [10]. These studies are supported by United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS), which has revealed that the prevalence of HF decreases with the decrease in blood sugar, as measured by serum hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) [11]. Understanding the relationship between hyperglycemia and CHF is vital in combatting diabetes since cardiogenic and related complications are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in these individuals [12]. The STENO 2 study has demonstrated that the cardiovascular mortality in diabetic patients remains high in spite of intensive treatment of all the associated cardiovascular risk factors, treatments that decreased the incidence of cardiovascular events by 50 % [13].

The incidence of diabetic cardiomyopathy in type 1 versus type 2 is variable between different clinical and human studies. However, in humans in the long run, the incidence looks quite similar in both the types. Regarding the pathogenesis, it almost is similar in humans with type 1

diabetes compared to type 2, because despite being type 1, well-controlled individuals receive exogenous insulin, thus are not hypoinsulinemic. Systolic dysfunction in type 1 diabetes in humans, is less evident than in STZ-induced models because of the exogenous insulin, making them metabolically akin to a type 2 diabetic [14].

Early changes in the heart during diabetes are characterized by abnormal diastolic function, ultimate loss of systolic function, and overt clinical symptoms [15, 16]. The pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy broadly involves hyperglycemia, lipotoxicity, and insulin resistance contributing to reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation, mitochondrial dysfunction, impaired calcium metabolism, Renin–Angiotensin System (RAS) activation, altered substrate metabolism, and endothelial dysfunction, which ultimately lead to diastolic dysfunction and HF (Fig. 1).

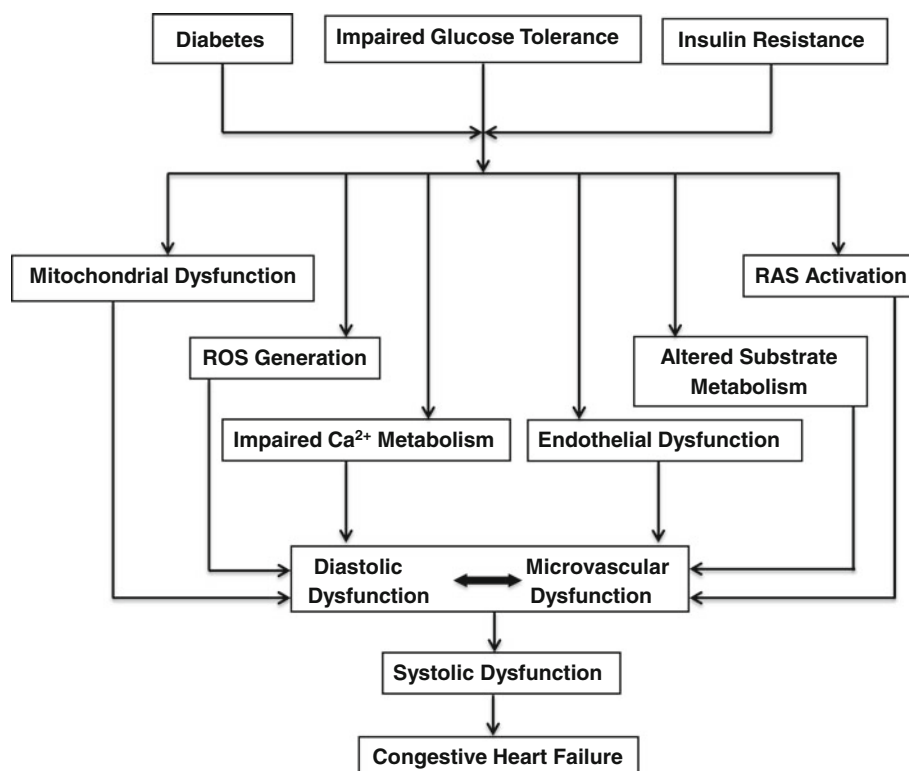
In this review we present the putative mechanisms operated by endothelial dysfunction, involvement of ROS, and mitochondrial dysfunction and current therapeutic strategies/options of diabetic cardiomyopathy.

Functional changes of myocardium during diabetic cardiomyopathy

Echocardiography is an extremely useful, inexpensive tool for the researcher and to clinician to assess the cardiac function in patients and in animal models. Transmitral Doppler imaging is commonly used for measuring the diastolic function in the heart [17]. The four useful variables from mitral flow measurement are the (i) early peak diastolic transmitral flow velocity (*E*), (ii) late peak diastolic transmitral flow velocity (*A*), (iii) A-wave duration (*Adur*), and (iv) early filing deceleration time (*DT*). These values vary with the severity of the disease [18]. Tissue Doppler Imaging (TDI) echocardiography has emerged as a very sensitive and effective technique in recent years for the assessment of diastolic function [19]. Several studies have shown that TDI is superior to conventional flow echocardiography, but the combination of both techniques enhances the ability to diagnose diastolic dysfunction at early stages in diabetics [20, 21].

The association of diabetes with diastolic dysfunction has been well established [15, 20, 22–25]. The Hoorn study has shown that Diabetes Mellitus type 2 (DM2) is independently associated with a 2.0-fold greater risk for systolic dysfunction and a 2.4-fold greater risk for diastolic dysfunction [26]. Diastolic dysfunction usually precedes the systolic dysfunction [7, 15, 23]. A population-based cohort study of more than 2,000 patients has shown an increased prevalence of diastolic dysfunction and a tendency of the diastolic dysfunction to progressively worsen with advancing age [27]. Studies have shown that the diastolic dysfunction is more common in type 2 diabetics

Fig. 1 Mechanisms of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. The pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy broadly involves hyperglycemia, lipotoxicity, and insulin resistance contributing to reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation, mitochondrial dysfunction, impaired calcium metabolism, RAS activation, altered substrate metabolism, and endothelial dysfunction which ultimately lead to diastolic dysfunction and heart failure



than in type 1 diabetes in the earlier stages of the disease without overt cardiovascular symptoms [28, 29]. However, not all studies have shown association of diabetes with diastolic dysfunction. A study conducted on children (4–20 years of age) consisting of 61 diabetic and 23 non-diabetic subjects failed to show any association between the disease and the studied variables pertinent to LV function [30].

Metabolic syndrome and alterations in myocardial functions

The metabolic syndrome that coexists with diabetes augments LV diastolic dysfunction (LVDD), both in prevalence and severity [31]. Studies have reported the presence of LVDD in patients before diagnosis of overt diabetes mellitus suggesting that LVDD develops temporally with impaired glucose tolerance and insulin resistance. The study involved 208 patients, and the patients with insulin resistance showed significantly higher association with LVDD as compared to the non-insulin resistant group [32]. In similar studies, the patients with impaired glucose tolerance test exhibited diastolic dysfunction as high as 50–74 % [33, 34]. Screening these populations with diastolic dysfunction at earlier stages may lower the risk of HF, thereby alleviating financial burden to the patient and to society. Systolic function also serves as a reliable marker

for diabetic cardiomyopathy as evidenced by lower peak strain, strain rates, and cyclic variation indexes of the septum and posterior [35], lower systolic and diastolic function reserve indices [36], impaired radial and longitudinal LV systolic function, [37], and left atrial electromechanical delay [38].

Myocardial alterations in animal models of diabetes

In various animal models of diabetes, the functional and pathophysiological changes seen in human studies also have been documented [39]. Several models of diabetes (Types 1 and 2) have been developed and studied both in vivo, ex vivo (e.g., isolated perfused heart), and in vitro (e.g., cardiomyocytes). Most of these studies have shown decreased systolic and diastolic functions during diabetes in both in vivo and ex vivo models. Increased LV mass and LV stiffness were established in several studies with animal models [40–44]. A study performed on 24-week-old db/db mouse (type 2 diabetes model) found decreased LV contractility but normal ejection fraction, cardiac output, and dP/dt [45]. Another study that compared both type 1 diabetes (streptozotocin-induced, STZ) and type 2 diabetes (Zucker diabetic fatty rat, ZDF) showed that the type 1 diabetics exhibited a greater magnitude of systolic dysfunction than diastolic dysfunction while the type 2 diabetics predominantly exhibited diastolic dysfunction with

preserved systolic function [46]. Even though animal models may represent the human disease pattern, their utility is limited due to the inability to induce coronary atherosclerosis in rodents and to tightly control the blood sugar level in animals [47].

Structural changes of myocardium during diabetic cardiomyopathy

Several studies on human subjects and animal models have been carried out to associate myocardial structural changes with the progression of diabetes [48, 49]. A study performed on 145 patients undergoing coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), some of whom had a history of diabetes revealed increased myocardial hypertrophy, interstitial fibrosis, and capillary endothelial swelling and degeneration in the biopsy specimens of the diabetic heart. Ultrastructural examinations of the tissue samples elucidated capillary basal laminar thickening [49]. Similar examinations on young type I diabetics without cardiovascular disease (CVD) revealed no significant changes in the basal lamina [50], suggesting that the absence of those changes may be related to the duration of the disease and the presence (abundance) of the insulin receptors. If diabetes coexists with hypertension, the pathological changes observed in myocardium including thickening of the capillary basement membrane, interstitial fibrosis, and cell atrophy are amplified [51].

In type I diabetes, loss of myofibrils, transverse tubules, and sarcoplasmic reticulum was observed 12 weeks after the induction of the disease. Separation of the fasciae adherens at the intercalated disk also was observed and most of these alterations were reversed by insulin administration for 6–12 weeks [52]. Advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which are the metabolic end products of the non-enzymatic glycation, have been linked with the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. In diabetics, AGEs covalently crosslink and alter the structure and function of many proteins, including collagen thereby leading to the development of myocardial fibrosis and stiffness [53–55]. From a study on the type I diabetic rat model, it has been suggested that AGEs play a pivotal role in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy and the cleavage of AGEs with crosslink breaker ALT-711 slows down the process of diabetes associated with the cardiac abnormalities [54]. A study conducted on both diabetic HF patients and a diabetic animal model has shown statistically significant intramyocardial lipid overload and its association with contractile dysfunction [56]. Similarly the alterations in gene expression in ZDF rat hearts have been observed to be similar to those in the failing human heart with lipotoxicity.

Mechanisms of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy

Altered calcium metabolism in diabetes and relevance to diabetic cardiomyopathy

Under normal physiologic conditions, action potentials depolarize the cardiomyocyte and open the L-type calcium channel located in the sarcolemma [57]. Entry of calcium ions triggers the release of calcium stored in the sarcoplasmic reticulum through ryanodine receptors (calcium-induced calcium release, CICR) [58]. Free calcium then binds to troponin C, which causes conformational changes of the regulatory complexes leading ultimately to muscle contraction. A small amount of calcium also is pumped out of cytosol by the sodium-calcium exchanger pump, Sarco (Endo) plasmic Reticulum Calcium-ATPase (SERCA) and the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. Phospholamban is an endogenous inhibitor of SERCA, which upon phosphorylation by protein kinases (PKA) gets inactivated and loses its inhibitory effect on SERCA. This leads to decreased levels of calcium in the cytosol and increased calcium levels in the sarcoplasmic reticulum, which allows for faster twitch relaxation [59].

In diabetes, a defect in calcium handling has been proposed as one of the major mechanisms of contractile dysfunction as revealed by several animal model and human studies [60–62]. Proposed causes of pathology include (i) altered SERCA activity and (ii) altered SR calcium storage and defects in ryanodine receptors [63]. Studies conducted on the animal models have shown that the diabetic heart exhibits decreased SERCA activity [64, 65]. Decreased SERCA activity has been linked with decreased expression and function of SERCA and increased inhibition of SERCA activity by overexpression of phospholamban in diabetes. All these changes have been shown reversible by insulin replacement [66, 67]. The decreased activity of SERCA in diabetes is thought to arise from the interaction of AGEs with SERCA [68]. Overexpression of SERCA in the transgenic models has been shown to protect the diabetic heart against severe contractile dysfunction [69]. Expression and function of the ryanodine receptors involved in calcium release from the SR also appear decreased during diabetes [66, 68]. However, there are studies, which failed to show any such changes [70]. Decreased level of FK506-binding protein (FKBP 12.6), an accessory protein and stabilizer of the ryanodine receptor, is also presumed to be involved in the HF during diabetes [71]. Furthermore, activity and expression of the sodium-calcium exchanger that contributes to 28 % of calcium removal has been shown to be lower during diabetes [59, 60]. Thus, it can be concluded that defects in intracellular calcium cycling/signaling caused by alterations in function

and expression of the proteins that handle calcium homeostasis lead to cardiomyopathy in diabetics and can be normalized by specific therapeutic interventions.

Endothelial dysfunction in diabetes and association with diabetic cardiomyopathy

Vascular endothelial cells (ECs) play a pivotal role in the maintenance of cardiovascular homeostasis [72]. ECs form the inner lining of blood vessels that separates the circulating blood from the underlying vascular smooth muscle cells. Normal and healthy ECs produce various vasodilators such as nitric oxide, prostacyclin, bradykinin, and endothelium-derived hyperpolarizing factor, all of which inhibit platelet aggregation and fibrinolysis, and maintain vascular tone and permeability. ECs are also involved in the production of vasoconstrictors such as endothelin and angiotensin II [73]. The opposing effects of these dilators and constrictors together play an important role in maintaining the coronary vascular structure. The endothelium functions as a semipermeable tissue-barrier that regulates the flow of nutrients and macromolecules. Exposure to high levels of glucose under diabetic conditions can damage the physiological properties of endothelium and alter its physiological processes, which causes enhanced permeability, leukocyte adhesion, and reduced fibrinolysis [74–76].

Dysfunction of endothelium is considered to be one of the early markers in the development of diabetic atherosclerosis. Physiologically, nitric oxide plays a pivotal role in endothelium-dependent vasodilation and blood pressure regulation [77]. Endogenous nitric oxide is produced by the conversion of the amino acid, L-arginine to L-citrulline by the enzyme, nitric oxide synthase (NOS). Of the various isoforms of NOS, NOS III is considered to be important for maintaining vascular tone [78, 79]. Nitric oxide produced in the endothelium by NOS III diffuses into the vascular smooth muscle cells and activates cyclic GMP, thereby relaxing vascular smooth muscles and leading to vasodilation. However, under diabetic conditions, vascular production of free radicals such as superoxide anions can inactivate nitric oxide or reduce its tissue bioavailability thus promoting atherosclerosis [80]. Increased levels of plasminogen activator inhibitor-1 have been observed during insulin-resistant conditions and have been demonstrated to play a key role in the generation and progression of atherosclerosis [81].

Experimental evidence shows that hyperglycemia-induced activation of protein kinase C (PKC) signaling pathway promotes EC layer permeability. Activation of PKC has been shown to reduce the expression of endothelial NOS and NO production in aortic cells [82]. In addition, inflammatory cytokines are also known to play an

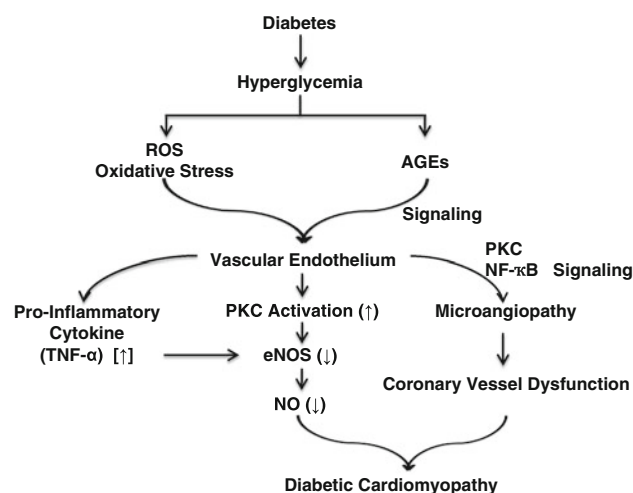


Fig. 2 Vascular endothelial dysfunction in pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Vascular endothelium, the inner monolayer lining of cells surrounding the lumen of the blood vessel acts as a semipermeable barrier and maintains homeostasis of the circulation. Endothelial cells are crucial for both vasodilation and vasoconstriction. Endothelial nitric oxide synthase (eNOS) generates nitric oxide (NO) that is critical for the vascular smooth muscle cell function in vasodilation. Hyperglycemic conditions during diabetes alters the vascular endothelial cell signaling (e.g., decreasing the activity of eNOS through the activation of protein kinase C, PKC) and functions leading to the endothelial dysfunction that is responsible for diabetic microangiopathy and cardiomyopathy

important role in endothelial dysfunction. Conditions of insulin resistance caused by type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, and endothelial dysfunctions are all known to induce the expression of the pro-inflammatory cytokine, TNF- α , which can increase the expression of vascular and intercellular cell adhesion molecules and promote adherence of monocytes [83]. Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) also reduces eNOS expression and interferes with NO production (Fig. 2). Moreover, under hyperglycemic conditions, the coronary circulation gets exposed to increasing amounts of acetylcholine, which paradoxically constricts the coronary arteries, thereby leading to coronary vasospasm [84].

Endothelial dysfunction and related microangiopathy have been linked to the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy and HF via cellular signaling cascades involving PKC and nuclear factor- κ B (NF- κ B) [85]. In this scenario, microvessels undergo diabetes-induced injury causing subsequent destruction of the coronary vasculature. ROS and oxidative stress appear to play a major role in diabetic microangiopathy and the dysfunction of coronary vessels in a hyperglycemia-dependent manner. Hyperglycemia-induced vascular endothelial damage/dysfunction operated through oxidative stress and cell signaling pathways has been identified in the onset and progression of diabetic cardiomyopathy [86]. In the rat model of streptozotocin-diabetes, it has been shown that diabetes induces alterations

in Ca^{2+} homeostasis, SERCA, and sodium–calcium exchanger in cardiac ECs along with diabetes-induced myocardial fibrosis, suggesting that cardiac endothelial alterations play a role in diabetic cardiomyopathy [87]. Transplantation of bone marrow-derived endothelial progenitor cells (EPCs) through intravenous delivery into the streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats has been shown to protect against diabetes-induced myocardial dysfunction, apoptosis of cardiomyocytes, and fibrosis of the heart [88]. This study not only underscores the importance of ECs but also demonstrates the therapeutic use of EPCs in protecting against diabetic cardiomyopathy.

Several therapeutic measures have been shown to yield promising results in improving endothelial dysfunction. Supplementations with the antioxidants such as vitamins C and E, L-arginine, and magnesium have been shown to suppress ROS and induce NO production [89–91]. Drugs that increase insulin sensitivity have also been shown to improve the function of ECs [92, 93]. Non-pharmacological measures such as weight reduction, exercise, and reduced salt intake are also suggested for the recovery of EC functions [94]. One of the intriguing and promising approaches is the use of EPCs in the treatment/protection of diabetic cardiomyopathy [88].

ROS and oxidative stress in diabetic cardiomyopathy

Molecular oxygen, one of the main fuels for energy generation in aerobic organisms, is both a friend and foe. Oxygen undergoes one electron reduction through either enzymatic or non-enzymatic mechanisms to form the superoxide radical, which in turn is converted into hydrogen peroxide by dismutation mediated by the enzyme, superoxide dismutase (SOD) [95]. Enzymes including xanthine oxidase, NAD(P)H oxidase (NOX), and the constituents of the mitochondrial electron transport system are known to activate oxygen to form highly reactive oxygen radicals through the generation of superoxide radical [95]. Hydrogen peroxide reacts with redox-active transition metals including iron (Fe^{2+}) to form the highly reactive radicals [96]. Iron in the biological systems can also be converted into highly reactive ferryl species. Reactive oxygen metabolites such as superoxide radical, hydrogen peroxide, hydroxyl radical, and perferryl/oxoferryl species are collectively called “reactive oxygen species” (ROS) [96]. ROS are known to cause oxidative stress through oxidation of critical biomolecules including proteins, nucleic acids (RNA and DNA), and lipids leading to the damage and dysregulation of the cellular structural, physiological, and metabolic machinery that ultimately causes pathophysiological alterations in the cells, tissues, organs, and the entire organism [97]. Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) of membrane phospholipids in the living cells are

vulnerable to attack of ROS resulting in lipid peroxidation [98, 99]. Lipid peroxidation causes the formation of highly reactive lipid hydroperoxides and reactive carbonyls, which leads to the dysfunction of cellular structure and functions. However, living cells also possess antioxidant defense mechanisms, including enzymatic and non-enzymatic processes aided by (i) the antioxidant enzymes such as SOD (which dismutase superoxide anion), catalase (which removes hydrogen peroxide), and glutathione peroxidase (which converts reactive PUFA hydroperoxides into PUFA hydroxyl species) and (ii) non-enzymatic antioxidant molecules such as glutathione (GSH), vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (tocopherol), and myriad dietary antioxidants of plant origin [100–102].

A delicate balance between the extent of production of detrimental ROS and the status of protective antioxidant defense mechanisms in the living cell is essential and critical for the homeostasis of physiological and metabolic functions under normal physiological conditions. Either an overwhelming production of ROS and/or depletion or dysfunction of the antioxidant defense system in the cells is known to cause pathophysiological states including CVDs, cerebrovascular diseases (stroke), neurological diseases, metabolic disorders (e.g., diabetes), lung diseases, and respiratory disorders [103–105]. Strategies of suppression of deleterious actions of ROS, alleviation of ROS-induced oxidative stress, and enhancement of antioxidant status in cells, tissues, and organs by pharmacological treatments or dietary supplementation with antioxidants have been emerging as promising options to combat the ROS and oxidative stress-mediated pathophysiological states and diseases in animal models and humans.

HF and cardiomyopathy have been identified as the foremost causes of mortality among diabetics [106]. Although diabetic cardiomyopathy has been characterized primarily by the manifestation of LV dysfunction among patients affected by diabetes mellitus, a complex array of contributing factors including LV hypertrophy, alterations of metabolism, microvascular pathology, insulin resistance, fibrosis, apoptotic cell death, and oxidative stress have been implicated in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy [106–108]. Nevertheless, the exact mechanisms underlying the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy are yet to be established [106]. The critical involvement of ROS and oxidative stress in HF and different types of cardiomyopathy has been delineated, and the importance of the inhibition of xanthine oxidase may attenuate superoxide radical formation and protect against myocardial injury [109]. ROS have been unequivocally established to cause oxidative stress leading to altered cell signaling, apoptosis, and modified gene expression that could lead to diabetic cardiomyopathy. Also, the involvement of ROS and oxidative stress in diabetic CVDs has been emphasized

[110, 111]. Of all the possible mechanisms put forth to describe the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy, experimental evidences are mounting for the role of ROS-mediated oxidative stress in the onset and/or progression of diabetic cardiomyopathy [108, 112]. The association of oxidative stress with cardiac damage during diabetes has been recognized [113]. Myocardial disease states including diabetic cardiomyopathy have been shown to be associated with ROS actions and oxidative stress [114]. The involvement of ROS in insulin resistant cardiomyopathy also has been reported [115].

The connection between a lipid-rich diet (high fat) and diabetic cardiomyopathy has been emphasized as the fatty acids take precedence over glucose in uptake and metabolic utilization by the myocardium, which furthers insulin resistance in the cardiac tissue [116]. Fatty acids derived from the fatty diets have been observed to cause elevated state of β -oxidation in cardiomyocyte mitochondria through involvement of the peroxisome proliferator-activated receptors (PPARs), thus causing a metabolic switch in the heart for metabolic utilization of the fatty acids over glucose. This substrate switch has been implicated as a critical factor in the altered cardiomyocyte metabolism leading to the pathogenesis of cardiomyopathy [116]. In addition, the high-fat diet causing fatty heart (accumulation of fat in the myocardium), the condition has also been known to cause overwhelming generation of ROS, which is expected to cause altered insulin signaling cascade and associated alterations in the physiological functions of the heart such as contraction [116]. Therefore, it is highly conceivable that the fat-mediated metabolic switch, typical of the type 2 diabetic state is associated with diabetic cardiomyopathy, wherein the ROS play an important role (Fig. 3). Hyperglycemia leads to the elevated generation of ROS that causes the oxidative stress-induced myocardial damage leading subsequently to the altered gene expression and cellular signal transduction, cardiac cell death, and eventually diabetic cardiomyopathy [117]. Although diabetic cardiomyopathy has been observed to manifest without the involvement of vascular diseases/disorders, ROS-mediated oxidative myocardial injury is gaining precedence over several other plausible mechanisms [117]. Altogether, the hyperglycemic state during diabetes has been marked as the culprit in causing ROS generation and oxidant-induced myocardial damage, which are critical players in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy (Fig. 3).

A case study conducted on a 60-year-old female patient with diabetes, CHF, and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy has revealed a mitochondrial transition mutation (A3243G) [118]. In this study, the electron microscopy of an endocardial biopsy demonstrated proliferation and swelling of mitochondria and induction of heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1)

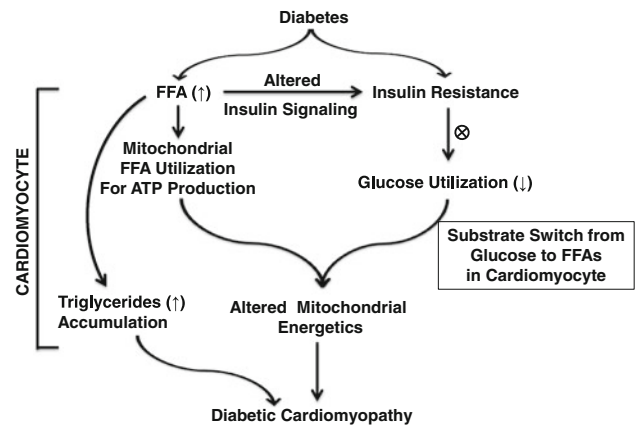


Fig. 3 Substrate switch in pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Elevated levels of free fatty acids (FFAs) are encountered during diabetes in plasma and tissues. Myocardial accumulation of triglycerides (fatty heart) is also known during hyperglycemic conditions. FFAs are preferentially taken up by cardiomyocytes as glucose is not transported into the cell due to either lack of insulin or dysfunction of insulin receptors. FFAs are also known to cause the dysregulation of insulin receptor signaling and insulin resistance through lipotoxicity. Cardiomyocyte mitochondria utilize abundant FFAs as energy substrate by switching the substrate from glucose, which leads to altered mitochondrial energetics and ultimately diabetic cardiomyopathy

and elevated ROS generation. From this study, the authors have concluded that the induction of HO-1, an antioxidant enzyme is an adaptation to combat oxidative stress in the myocardium of the diabetic patient, suggesting the dual role of ROS and antioxidant enzyme (HO-1) in the pathogenesis of mitochondrial cardiomyopathy in diabetes [118]. However, the mechanisms of ROS generation (sources and enzymes) and antioxidant responses are not thoroughly known in diabetic mitochondrial cardiomyopathy. The imbalance between the overwhelming production of ROS leading to oxidative stress and the antioxidant defense systems is critical in the pathogenesis of CVDs and diabetic cardiomyopathy, wherein the stress-mediated signal transduction cascades turn on the ROS generation contributing to the disease state [119]. Antioxidants appear to play a protective role against the ROS-mediated and oxidative stress-induced diabetic cardiomyopathy.

Overexpression of the mitochondrial manganese superoxide dismutase (MnSOD) in the heart of MnSOD transgenic mice with type 1 diabetes has been shown to offer protection against diabetes-induced myocardial damage such as attenuation of mitochondrial ROS, maintenance of the normal heart morphology, preservation of myocardial contractile function, and improvement of mitochondrial abundance (mass) and respiration [120]. Overall, this study clearly underscores (i) the critical role of ROS causing damage to the diabetic heart through mitochondrial dysfunction and (ii) the mitochondrial ROS (superoxide)

scavenging enzyme (MnSOD) is cardioprotective during diabetes. A study with the alloxan-induced diabetic rat model has demonstrated the enzymatic antioxidant defenses against ROS including glucose 6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PDH) and catalase activities and the thiol-antioxidant defense peptide, GSH in the diabetic heart mitochondria have been suppressed [121]. Furthermore, this study revealed that (i) activity of the oxygen radical-forming enzyme xanthine oxidase is enhanced in myocardium of diabetic female rats; (ii) ROS scavenging defenses in the heart mitochondria of female diabetic rats are drastically lower than in male counterparts; (iii) female diabetic rats are more severely affected than male diabetic rats; and (iv) the myocardial mitochondria appear to contribute to diabetic cardiomyopathy (more distinct in females) through suppressed ROS-scavenging defense systems. Altogether, this study demonstrated that gender plays a critical role in ROS production and altered status of the antioxidant defenses in the myocardium of the diabetic rat model in dictating the state of diabetic cardiomyopathy [121]. Nevertheless, the exact mechanisms responsible for differences in ROS production and altered antioxidant defenses in the female diabetic rat heart as compared to the same in the male diabetic rat heart warrant further investigation to flesh out gender differences in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy.

There have been several studies, which have clearly shown the gender differences in incidence and type of diabetes induced cardiovascular complications. The study by Juutilainen et al., with over 2,000 study subjects concluded that the diabetes-related relative risk for major cardiovascular complications is significantly increased in diabetic female compared to men. Diabetes seems to completely abolish the female protection against major CHD and the related deaths. Several other studies have demonstrated the same findings. However, the basis for the sex difference remains inconclusive [122–124]. The incidence of LV hypertrophy was also found to be at least threefold increased in diabetic female compared to men, thus contributing to cardiovascular morbidity and mortality [125].

Catalase, an important cellular antioxidant enzyme that scavenges hydrogen peroxide, has been shown to offer protection against diabetes-induced functional abnormalities, elevated levels of ROS, and apoptosis of cardiomyocytes in the myocardium of streptozotocin-induced diabetic transgenic mice overexpressing cardiac-specific catalase [126]. In addition, catalase overexpression also lowered the diabetes-mediated alterations of phospho-Akt, Foxo3a, and Sirt2 in cardiomyocytes, further suggesting that diabetes causes enhanced production of ROS. The ROS, in turn, cause alterations in critical cell signaling and epigenome-regulating enzymes that can be attenuated by the

antioxidant enzyme, catalase. From this study, the authors suggest the possible use of catalase for the therapy of diabetic cardiomyopathy [126].

As studies have revealed convincing evidence for the role of ROS and ROS-mediated oxidative stress in the pathogenesis of cardiomyopathy, the exact nature, precise site/source, and regulation of ROS generation in diabetic myocardium should be elucidated to develop proper therapeutic interventions for diabetic cardiomyopathy. In this regard, several oxygen-activating and ROS-generating enzymes including NAD(P)H oxidase (NOX), xanthine oxidase, and constituents of mitochondrial electron transport in the myocardium appear to be important. NOX4, an isoform of the seven member NOX family of oxidases [127] has been shown to be upregulated in the ventricle of the streptozotocin-induced type 1 diabetic rat model with concomitant activation of NOX activity, enhancement of ROS generation, and augmented appearance of molecular markers for hypertrophy and myofibrosis [128]. Administration of the phosphorothiolated antisense for NOX4 has caused attenuation of diabetes-induced alterations in the ventricle of rats thus offering evidence for the role of NOX4 in diabetes-induced ventricular abnormalities [128]. Overall, this study strongly demonstrates that NOX4 is a critical enzyme in the generation of ROS in the ventricle, which apparently participate in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. The role of NOX in HF, whether due to myocardial infarction, inflammation, drug cardiotoxicity, or diabetes needs to be thoroughly investigated [129]. Insights into the NOX enzymology in diabetic myocardium hopefully will offer new options for the prevention and therapy of HF including diabetic cardiomyopathy where in ROS is a critical player. Strategies of targeting the mitochondrial electron transport sites of ROS production with mitochondria-specific antioxidants appear as promising therapeutic option to protect against the diabetic cardiomyopathy induced by the mitochondria-generated ROS. A chief controller of intracellular redox status and detoxification process is the nuclear factor, erythroid-2-related factor 2 (Nrf2), a transcription factor belonging to the Cap'n'co'l'r/basic region leucine zipper (CNC-bZIP) family of transcription factors [130, 131]. Following activation by different oxidants and drugs, Nrf2 undergoes phosphorylation, translocates to the nucleus, binds with the antioxidant response element, and induces the expression of important cytoprotective genes including cellular antioxidant and detoxification proteins/enzymes. Nrf2 also induces activation of critical signaling cascades involved in protection against oxidant-mediated damage, immune dysregulation, inflammation, cancer, and apoptotic death [130]. Nrf2 has been identified as a chief controller or master regulator of cytoprotective mechanisms against oxidant injury, redox dysregulation, and toxicant stress, the

potential therapeutic actions in the treatment of several diseases including diabetic cardiomyopathy have been suggested [130, 131]. Coenzyme Q₁₀, a lipophilic cofactor of the mammalian mitochondrial electron transport chain, is not only crucial for mitochondrial energy production (5'-adenosine triphosphate, ATP) but also has emerged as an effective antioxidant [132]. As coenzyme Q₁₀ has been recognized as a crucial player in the ATP generation in the heart, its protective actions against CVDs have been emphasized and investigated [133]. In the db/db diabetic mouse model, coenzyme Q₁₀ has been observed to offer cardioprotection against the diabetes-induced hypertrophy of cardiomyocytes, ROS formation, lipoperoxidative oxidative stress, cardiac hypertrophy and remodeling and diastolic dysfunction, suggesting that coenzyme Q₁₀ may be useful in the treatment of diabetic cardiomyopathy [134]. In the streptozotocin-induced type 1 diabetic mouse model, coenzyme Q₁₀ administration has been shown to offer protection against diabetic cardiomyopathy mainly through attenuation of the NOX-generated ROS production in the left ventricle [134]. However, the temporal events of activation, regulation of activity, and extent of participation of different ROS-generating devices (NOX, xanthine oxidase, and mitochondrial electron transport chain) in cardiac tissue of the animal models or human subjects with diabetic cardiomyopathy need to be firmly established for effective therapeutic targeting of the source of ROS generation with pharmacological agents. Although redox signaling in the cardiovascular system has been highlighted as a critical platform for thorough investigation to unravel the intricate cascades involving redox sensor proteins and oxidative stress-mediated post-translational modifications responsible for the diabetic CVDs [135], the shortage of cardiac tissue samples (biopsies) from patients with diabetic cardiomyopathy to conduct translational studies has been a serious limitation.

Mitochondrial dysfunction in diabetic cardiomyopathy

The mitochondrion is the powerhouse of the eukaryotic cell through its use of oxidative phosphorylation to generate the cellular energy currency, ATP. This energy is essential for constant contraction of the myocardium. In addition to ATP generation, mitochondria of many tissues including the heart play crucial roles in several important physiological and pathophysiological functions such as maintenance of intracellular calcium (Ca²⁺) levels, regulation of apoptosis, mitoptosis, formation of ROS, modulation of cellular oxidative stress, thermoregulation, autophagy, modulation of cellular signaling events, operation of the mitochondrial potassium (K⁺)-ATP channels, and engagement in the mitochondrial permeability transition pore to name a few [136–143]. Mitochondriopathy is characterized by the alterations or

dysfunctions of mitochondria, which include alterations in the efficiency of respiration, energy production (ATP generation), production of ROS, antioxidant defense mechanisms, morphology and size, and mitochondrial DNA (with mutations). Hence, cardiac mitochondria have emerged as potential targets for therapeutic intervention(s) of myocardial diseases with hopes of conveying cardioprotection [144]. Diabetic cardiomyopathy appears to be no exception to the involvement of mitochondria in pathogenesis of disease.

With the use of animal models of diabetes, earlier studies have demonstrated the mitochondrial alterations in the myocardium under experimental diabetic conditions. In the isolated mitochondria from the left ventricle of streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats, state 3 respiration, oxidative phosphorylation, calcium uptake, and activity of Mg²⁺-ATPase have been shown to be lower as compared to the same in control animals [145]. Similarly, a study performed on a diabetic male subject has revealed a tRNA(Leu) [UUR] mutation in the mitochondria with alterations in the electrocardiogram and hypertrophy of the left ventricle [146]. This case study has shown elevated number of mitochondria in the myocardial biopsies that has been correlated with the cardiac hypertrophy, cardiomyopathy, and LV systolic dysfunction. The authors have accentuated that the development of diabetic cardiomyopathy is a definite outcome of mitochondrial diabetes [146]. This study underscores that mitochondrial diabetes is a genetic predisposition to diabetic cardiomyopathy.

The critical role of cardiac mitochondrial dysfunction in the pathogenesis of cardiac diseases, including ischemia-reperfusion damage and diabetic myocardial defects has been highlighted [147]. Although several crucial factors, such as alterations in lipid metabolism, insulin resistance, and altered adipokine secretion have been recognized to play significant roles in diabetic cardiomyopathy (LV dysfunction), evidence is mounting for the role of cardiac mitochondrial abnormalities/dysfunction in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy [148]. Alterations or imbalances in the cardiac mitochondrial bioenergetics (energy metabolism) have been shown to be critical factors in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy [149, 150]. Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) during diabetes has been recognized as a key factor in the diabetes-induced myocardial defects including diabetic cardiomyopathy through structural abnormalities in the myocardium (cardiac hypertrophy, fibrosis, myofibril defects, and cardiomyocyte aberrations) and also the myocardial mitochondrial defects such as the mitochondrial swelling and fewer number of mitochondria [151]. Oxidative stress has been noticed to be associated with the diabetes-induced myocardial structural alterations.

Mitochondrial metabolic alterations and dysfunctions of bioenergetics are being recognized as important factors in

the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Elevated free fatty acid (FFA) levels (lipotoxicity) that arise under uncontrolled diabetic conditions causes substrate switch in the cardiomyocytes at the cost of glucose since the FFAs are solely taken up by the cardiomyocytes and utilized for ATP (energy) generation. The direct association between substrate switch from glucose utilization to predominant FFA utilization for energy production in the cardiomyocytes under the uncontrolled hyperglycemia and the pathogenesis of cardiomyopathy in animal (rodent) models of experimental diabetes has been recognized [152]. Additionally, the substrate switch from glucose to FFAs has been established in the myocardial mitochondria of human diabetic subjects [153]. Mitochondria isolated from the atrium of type 2 diabetic patients have shown preference for FFA utilization as the substrate for respiration, elevated levels of ROS production (H_2O_2), loss of GSH, altered redox status, and enhanced oxidative stress. This study has clearly established the substrate switch from glucose to FFAs in mitochondrial respiration and its association with oxidative stress and mitochondrial dysfunction in the myocardium of human type 2 diabetics, which may contribute to the pathogenesis of diabetic HF among humans. Furthermore, these findings suggest that the myocardial mitochondria are critical players in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy (hypertrophy and dysfunction of the ventricle) through the dysregulation of cardiac bioenergetics operated by the mitochondrial fuel substrate switch. Although this substrate switch appears as an adaptive strategy for the diabetic myocardial mitochondria towards ATP production during hyperglycemic stress, the mechanisms of elevation of FFAs (hydrolysis of triglycerides) and preferential uptake of FFAs by the myocardial cells (cardiomyocytes) should be thoroughly established to target the lipotoxicity-mediated diabetic cardiomyopathy at the level of mitochondrial energetics.

Altered cell signaling cascades are becoming increasingly important as critical players in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Aconitase is an important enzyme in the Krebs cycle of mitochondrial respiration and ATP synthesis. Activated protein kinase C (PKC) has been recognized as the key cell-signaling enzyme that regulates the activity of aconitase through phosphorylation in the diabetic rat myocardium. In the diabetic myocardial mitochondria, PKC β 2-mediated phosphorylation of aconitase and subsequent alterations in aconitase activity, mitochondrial functions, and bioenergetics have been observed [154]. Furthermore, this study underpins the importance of PKC-mediated myocardial mitochondrial signaling in the altered activities of aconitase in type 1 diabetic rat that could be critical in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. By utilizing the insulin receptor knock-out mouse model (with cardiomyocyte deletion of insulin

receptors, CIRKO), it has been shown that the loss of insulin signaling leads to uncoupling of mitochondria, which leads to elevated formation of ROS, elevated oxidative stress, decreased mitochondrial oxygen consumption with deranged respiration, alterations in pyruvate dehydrogenase, lowered ATP production, and the decline in mitochondrial bioenergetics in cardiomyocytes [155]. Thus, this study underscores the importance of cardiomyocyte insulin signaling and associated mitochondrial dysfunction towards understanding the insulin receptor/signaling-mediated diabetic cardiomyopathy. In the obese db/db mouse model with type 2 diabetes, the role of nuclear factor- κ B (NF- κ B) in diabetes-induced myocardial dysfunction through mitochondrial alterations has been shown [156]. Pyrrolidine dithiocarbamate (PDTTC), an inhibitor of NF- κ B, has been shown to protect against the diabetes-mediated oxidative stress and mitochondrial alterations and to maintain normal ATP generation and heart function. Altogether, this study reveals the connection between NF- κ B-mediated cell signaling and mitochondrial dysfunction in the diabetic myocardium that could be important in understanding the transcription factor-mediated pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. In the streptozotocin-induced and type 2 db/db diabetic mouse models, it has been shown that the expression of p53 and synthesis of cytochrome c oxidase 2 (SCO2) have been enhanced, leading to an increase in cytochrome c oxidase (complex IV) activity, elevated oxygen consumption, and enhanced formation of ROS in cardiac mitochondria, all of which are associated with myocardial lipid buildup and dysfunction [157]. Therefore, p53 signaling in regulation of mitochondrial respiration in the diabetic heart appears to be important in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Overall, these studies have demonstrated that certain vital myocardial cellular signaling pathways intricately associated with cardiac mitochondrial function are important players in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. The agonist-mediated G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) and the orchestrated activation of protein kinases and other signaling enzymes packaged in caveolin-containing endosomes (signalosomes) exert their actions in mitochondria and lead to cardioprotection [158]. However, the possibility of such GPCR-activated and signalosome-mediated mitochondrial protection of diabetic cardiomyopathy warrants thorough investigation. These critical signaling cascades must be better understood before therapies can be developed. More intriguing the nuclear microRNA (miRNA) (specifically miR-181c) has been shown to undergo translocation into the mitochondria of the cardiomyocytes leading to the regulation of mitochondrial expression of cytochrome c oxidase subunit 1 (mt-COX1) at the translational level [159]. Thus, miRNAs appear effective molecular regulators of mitochondrial

genes that could offer therapy and/or protection for diabetic cardiomyopathy.

The heart has two specific types of mitochondria, the subsarcolemmal mitochondria (SSM) and interfibrillar mitochondria (IFM), each one with markedly distinct structure, function, and tissue location [160]. The SSM reside below the plasma membrane, whereas the IFM are localized amongst the myofibrils. Taking advantage of the distinct characteristics of the two types of myocardial mitochondria, studies have been conducted to establish the role of mitochondria in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy in the streptozotocin-induced diabetic mouse model [143, 160, 161]. The IFM have shown more drastic responses to the diabetic state as compared to the SSM in exhibiting decreased mitochondrial size, enhanced generation of superoxide, greater extent of oxidative stress (protein oxidation, lipid peroxidation, and nitrotyrosine formation), and reduced complex II-mediated respiration, suggesting that IFM possibly play role in diabetic cardiomyopathy [160]. The IFM have been shown to exhibit greater susceptibility to apoptosis in the heart of streptozotocin-induced diabetic mouse model as compared to the SSM in the tissue [143]. Also, expression and activity of the mitochondrial ATP-dependent potassium channel (mito- K_{ATP}^+) has been shown to be lowered in IFM of heart of the streptozotocin-induced diabetic mice. Overall, these studies reveal that two distinct types of myocardial mitochondria exhibit unique responses to the diabetic condition in experimental animal models, suggesting a mitochondria-driven mechanism of the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. However, the differential mitochondrial responses need to be established in the heart biopsy samples of human diabetic patients.

Since mitochondria play a crucial role in cell death (necrosis and apoptosis) and survival and the mitochondrial proteome exhibits changes during those stages, the utilization of mitochondrial proteome analysis in determining cardioprotection has been emphasized [162, 163]. With the use of proteomic analysis such as the two-dimensional polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and mass spectrometry, alterations in the mitochondrial proteins of the myocardium of diabetic animal models have been studied to establish the role of mitochondria in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy [164, 165]. In the obesity type 2 diabetes mouse model (db/db mouse), changes in the mitochondrial proteome of the myocardium have been investigated [165]. This study revealed alterations of the mitochondrial proteins including the ATP synthase D chain, ubiquinol cytochrome *c* reductase core protein 1, and the electron transfer flavoprotein subunit α peptide along with the decrease in contractile proteins such as α -smooth muscle actin, α -cardiac actin, myosin heavy chain α , and myosin-binding protein C in the hearts of

diabetic obese mice. Overall, this study suggests that alterations of mitochondrial proteins and downregulation of contractile proteins as observed in the myocardium of the obese type 2 diabetic mice appear to be involved in the diabetes-mediated aberrations of myocardial contractility [165]. Among the two different populations of myocardial mitochondria, the IFMs obtained from the type 1 diabetic heart have shown more distinct changes in the mitochondrial proteome than the SSMs, including the decline of levels of proteins of electron transport chain and fatty acid oxidation, phosphate carrier, adenine nucleotide translocator, and translocases of the mitochondrial inner membrane. Also, the study has revealed that the structural protein that is responsible for maintaining the architecture of mitochondria, mitofilin, is lowered in the IFMs of diabetic heart suggesting that diabetes causes the structural alterations of the cardiac mitochondria, which could be important in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Both the heat shock protein 70 (HSP70) and protein import in the diabetic heart, IFMs were significantly reduced. Overall, these studies have demonstrated that the changes in the cardiac mitochondrial proteome and altered protein import induced by diabetes appear to be critical in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy (Fig. 4). However, extensive investigations are warranted to establish the mechanisms of diabetes-associated alterations of mitochondrial proteome to target the mitochondria-driven diabetic cardiomyopathy.

While myocardial mitochondria are vital for aerobic respiration, they also are capable of generating ROS by uncoupling of electrons from the mitochondrial electron transport chain [166, 167]. Thus, mitochondria-generated ROS leads to oxidative stress, if uncontrolled by antioxidant mechanisms, leading to detrimental effects to the cardiac mitochondria and ultimately to the myocardium [167]. Therefore, ROS and oxidative stress have emerged as critical players in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy, wherein mitochondria have been identified as the major site of generation of ROS and targets of oxidative stress (Fig. 4). Although mitochondria are the generators of ROS, they are more susceptible to attack by ROS and exhibit dysfunction through oxidative stress [106]. Mitochondrial inner membrane contains cardiolipin, a distinctive phospholipid rich in PUFA that is susceptible to oxidative attack leading to membrane lipid peroxidation [168, 169]. Peroxidation of cardiolipin causes structural alteration and dysfunction of the cardiac mitochondria including alterations in membrane fluidity, activities of electron transport chain, and transport of ions, which ultimately lead to loss of oxidative phosphorylation ability of mitochondria and apoptotic cell death [168]. The involvement of cardiolipin peroxidation and associated elevated Ca^{2+} levels have been recognized as

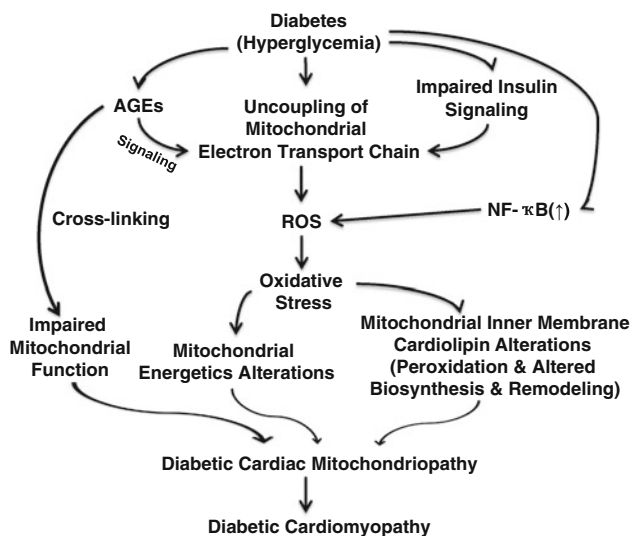


Fig. 4 Reactive oxygen species (ROS) and mitochondrial dysfunction in pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy. Hyperglycemic conditions during diabetes are known to cause uncoupling of the cardiomyocyte mitochondrial chain leading to the generation of ROS and actions of associated oxidative stress. Glucose oxidation is also known to lead to the formation of advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which form crosslinks with proteins, enzymes, and other critical macromolecules leading to the dysregulation of signaling cascades. ROS, oxidative stress, and AGEs are also known to cause alterations of the structure and function of the cardiac mitochondria leading to the overall dysfunction of the mitochondrial energetics. Cardiolipin, a unique phospholipid of the inner membrane of the mitochondria of the cardiomyocyte is vulnerable to the oxidative attack of ROS leading to the oxidative degradation of cardiolipin and dysfunction of the mitochondrial electron transport chain and oxidative phosphorylation. Thus, cardiac mitochondrial dysfunction (mitochondriopathy) appears to play a crucial role in the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy

causative factors in the mitochondrial permeability transition and subsequent mitochondrial dysfunction, which are critical in several diseases including diabetes and CVDs [168, 170, 171]. In the heart of streptozotocin-induced diabetic animal model, drastic changes in the fatty acid molecular species and hydrolysis of cardiolipin have been observed, suggesting that the remodeling of cardiolipin could aggravate functional aberrations of mitochondria during diabetic cardiomyopathy [172]. By utilizing shotgun lipidomics in diabetic mouse heart, significant decreases in the mitochondrial (i) cardiolipin content, (ii) phosphatidylglycerol (precursor of cardiolipin) levels, and (iii) glycerol 3-phosphate (penultimate metabolite of phosphatidylglycerol biosynthesis) levels have been revealed, suggesting that cardiolipin synthesis decreases in the diabetic myocardium leading to mitochondrial dysfunction and cardiomyopathy [173]. Alterations in cardiolipin-synthesizing/remodeling enzymes in heart during the pathogenesis of HF have been shown [174]. Cardiolipin synthase has been identified as a new

molecular target to mitigate diabetic cardiac mitochondrial dysfunction [175]. Hence, the regulation of cardiolipin metabolism (synthesis, turnover, and remodeling) during the pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy at temporal and spatial (SSM and IFM) levels should be thoroughly studied to pinpoint the alterations/dysfunctions of the diabetic heart. This is likely to offer insights into specific cardiac mitochondrial targets focusing on cardiolipin towards effective therapeutic treatments of diabetic cardiomyopathy in humans.

Although evidence is mounting for the role/contribution of mitochondrial dysfunction in the pathogenesis of several debilitating diseases including the myocardial pathologies, no appropriate or effective treatments are currently available to correct or treat those mitochondriopathies. Most of the existing or available therapeutic options hinge upon empirical data and experience of the clinician so there is a pressing need for controlled clinical trials that lead to evidence-based treatments such as the mitochondria-targeted antioxidants and co-enzyme Q10, for mitochondrial pathologies, including diabetic cardiomyopathy [176].

Conclusions

The mechanisms of pathogenesis of diabetic cardiomyopathy clearly appear to be complex and involve dysfunction and damage of LV tissue, cardiac hypertrophy, myocardial fibrosis, alterations of cardiomyocytes, microangiopathy, changes in coronary vessels, and vascular EC derangements. It is becoming clear that the mechanism(s) of diabetic neuropathy are orchestrated by the involvement of ROS, oxidative stress, and mitochondrial dysfunction. More detail is needed to firmly establish the mitochondrial and/or ROS mechanism(s) behind diabetic cardiomyopathy by identifying the most critical molecular players involved at both spatial and temporal levels of pathophysiology as targets for specific and effective pharmacological/therapeutic interventions.

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