

**TITLE**

Increased liver fat and glycogen stores following high compared with low glycaemic index food: a randomized cross over study

**AUTHORS**

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## **SHORT RUNNING TITLE**

GI Diet Study

## **WORD COUNT OF ABSTRACT**

242

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4,183

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

NAFLD – Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

NASH – Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis

GI – Glycaemic Index

LGI – Low Glycaemic Index

HGI – High Glycaemic Index

MRS – Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy

SPMIC – Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging Centre

IPAQ – International Physical Activity Questionnaire

COMA – Committee on Medical Aspect of Food Policy

QMC – Queen’s Medical Centre

VAS – Visual Analogue Scale (subjective appetite rating)

PRESS – Point Resolved Spectroscopy

GCV – Gastric Content Volume

AUC – Area Under Curve

iAUC – Incremental Area Under Curve

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

CV – Coefficient of Variance

NIHR – National Institute of Health Research

**CLINICAL TRIALS REGISTRY NUMBER AND WEBSITE**

This study was registered at [clinicaltrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov), ID: NCT02482558.

## 1 **ABSTRACT**

### 2 **Aims**

3 To investigate the acute and longer term effects of low (LGI) v high (HGI) glycaemic index  
4 diets on hepatic fat and glycogen accumulation and related blood measures in healthy  
5 volunteers.

### 6 **Methods**

7 Eight healthy males (age=20.1±0.4y, BMI=23.0±0.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) attended a test day before and  
8 after a 7-day macronutrient and energy matched HGI or LGI diet, followed by a minimum 4  
9 week wash-out period, and then returning to repeat the intervention with the alternative diet.  
10 During test days, participants consumed either a HGI or LGI test meal corresponding to their  
11 diet week, and liver fat (<sup>1</sup>H MRS), glycogen (<sup>13</sup>C MRS) and gastric content volume (MRI)  
12 were measured. Blood samples were obtained regularly throughout the test day for plasma  
13 glucose and insulin.

### 14 **Results**

15 Plasma glucose and insulin peak values and AUC were significantly greater following the  
16 HGI test meal compared with LGI test meal as expected. Hepatic glycogen concentrations  
17 increased more following the HGI test meal ( $P < 0.05$ ) and peak levels were significantly  
18 greater after 7 days of HGI dietary intervention compared to that at the beginning of the  
19 intervention ( $P < 0.05$ ). Liver Fat fractions increased significantly following the HGI dietary  
20 intervention compared with the LGI dietary intervention (two way repeat measures ANOVA,  
21  $P \leq 0.05$ ).

### 22 **Conclusions**

23 Compared to an LGI diet, a one week HGI diet increased hepatic fat and glycogen stores.  
24 This may have important clinical relevance for dietary interventions in the prevention and  
25 management of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

26

## 27 INTRODUCTION

28 Shifts in eating patterns and dietary compositions are believed to be a major contributing  
29 factor to the recent rise in obesity and obesity related problems [1, 2]. Type II diabetes, for  
30 example, has been thought to be a disease of ectopic fat and the development of non-  
31 alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) as well as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) have  
32 been considered as key steps in its pathogenesis [3]. Changes in the amount of food  
33 consumed and total energy intake influences long-term energy stores such as adipose tissue  
34 and intrahepatic triglycerides, but the specific influence of individual macronutrients on  
35 ectopic fat in general and accumulation of liver fat in particular are not established.

36 Recently, glycaemic index has been considered as a potentially important factor influencing  
37 these conditions, and low glycaemic index (LGI) dietary interventions have been shown to be  
38 effective in lowering total fat mass and increasing lipid utilisation in patient studies [4, 5].  
39 LGI foods have also been linked to more rapid recovery from previous training sessions [6]  
40 and improved satiety with less hunger between meals [7]. Whilst these findings are promising  
41 with potential clinical relevance, work is needed to investigate a wide range of factors  
42 effecting metabolic disorders. This includes both forms of energy storage in the liver, in the  
43 longer term as fats, and in the shorter term as glycogen. Gastric emptying also impacts the  
44 delivery of foods to the small intestines for absorption of nutrients into the blood stream and  
45 previous studies have shown meal timing, volume and fibre content can affect the  
46 postprandial response [8, 9].

47 Magnetic resonance techniques offer a unique method of investigating some of these  
48 parameters.  $^1\text{H}$  MRS measurements of liver fat have been validated and used in many  
49 previous studies [10-12] and  $^{13}\text{C}$  MRS measurements of glycogen have also been well  
50 validated [13, 14] and provides the only non-invasive measure of hepatic glycogen stores *in*

51 *vivo*. Fast imaging techniques can also be used to monitor gastric emptying [15, 16]. These  
52 magnetic resonance measures can be obtained alongside blood samples to provide a broader  
53 picture of metabolic response.

54 Previous studies have focussed on the acute postprandial changes alone, and as such less is  
55 known about the longer term effect of well controlled diets with varying glycaemic index.

56 The aim of this study was to investigate both the immediate and cumulative effects of varying  
57 glycaemic index on liver metabolic control in healthy volunteers by monitoring hepatic  
58 glycogen and lipid levels *in vivo* with MRS [14, 17]. Secondary outcomes were related  
59 changes in gastric content volume, blood glucose and insulin and subjective appetite scores.

## 60 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

61 *Study Design.* Eight male participants underwent two 7-day diet periods separated by a  
62 minimum four-week washout in a randomized cross-over study. The day before (visit 1) and  
63 the day after (visit 2) each diet period, participants attended the Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging  
64 Centre (SPMIC) in Nottingham for a test day. Ethical permission was obtained from the  
65 University of Nottingham Medical School Research Ethics Committee and all participants  
66 provided informed written consent before participation.

67 *Eligibility.* Participants were screened for eligibility (male, aged between 18 and 35 years old,  
68 with a BMI between 20 and 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and no contraindications for MRI). Participants were  
69 excluded if they were on any special diets, weight loss programs or strict physical training  
70 routine (defined as > 5 hours of intense training per week); if they were heavy drinkers (more  
71 than 3 units a day) or smokers; or if they had any metabolic disorders or liver disease.

72 Participants were block randomized to determine the initial intervention (HGI or LGI).

73 *Demographics.* Mean age of participants was  $20.1 \pm 0.4$  years with a mean BMI of  $23.0 \pm 0.9$   
74  $\text{kg/m}^2$ . The mean weight of participants at the start of visit 1 was  $73 \pm 3$  kg and at the start of  
75 visit 2 was  $73 \pm 3$  kg.

76 *Test Day.* Prior to the test days the participants were asked to refrain from alcohol and to  
77 consume the same evening meal by 9:00 pm the night before visit 1 of both diets. At the end  
78 of each dietary period the final meal was consumed before 9:00pm on the evening before  
79 visit 2. On the morning of each test day participants arrived fasted at the MR centre between  
80 7:30am and 8:00am, and were weighed. After fasted measurements, participants were given  
81 either a high glycaemic index (HGI) or LGI test meal for breakfast (supplementary table 1)  
82 depending on their diet week, which was to be consumed within 10 minutes followed by  
83 regular measurements for 360 mins.

84 At the start of the day, participants were cannulated in the forearm and samples were taken at  
85 regular intervals throughout the day. Samples were centrifuged, frozen and stored at  $-80^{\circ}\text{C}$   
86 for analysis of plasma glucose and insulin (detailed methods in supplementary material).

87 All MR measurements were acquired using a Philips Achieva 3T system (Philips, Best, The  
88 Netherlands).

89  $^{13}\text{C}$  MRS measurements of glycogen were detected with an adiabatic half passage pulse-  
90 acquire sequence (MRS bandwidth = 7 kHz, TR = 959 ms). Spectra were acquired using a  
91 single loop carbon coil with proton decoupling (Pulseteq, Surrey, UK) as described  
92 previously [15, 18, 19] (more details in supplementary material). Measurements were taken at  
93 start of day (fasted) and hourly following the test meal.

94  $^1\text{H}$  MRS measurements of liver fat were detected with a respiratory triggered point resolved  
95 spectroscopy (PRESS) sequence (Bandwidth = 2 kHz; TR = 5 s) with varying TE (40, 50, 60



96 and 80 ms). Spectra were acquired using a 32 channel Philips XL SENSE torso coil from a  
97  $30 \times 30 \times 30 \text{ mm}^3$  voxel in the lower right hepatic lobe, with and without water suppression. T2  
98 was determined and used to correct fat-to-water ratios to determine liver fat fractions [10, 20]  
99 at start of day (fasted) and 360 mins after test meal (more detail in supplementary material).

100 MR Images were also acquired throughout the test day and regions of interest were drawn  
101 around the content of the stomach using Analyze9 (Mayo Foundation, Rochester, MN, USA)  
102 and summed across slices to determine Gastric Content Volume (GCV) as described  
103 previously [15, 16]. GCV was therefore a combined measure of both ingested food and  
104 stomach secretion.

105 Visual analogue scales (VAS) were completed at the same time as blood sampling to assess  
106 subjective appetite ratings using five mixed appetite questions [21-23]. On day 1 (start of  
107 diet), day 4 (middle of diet) and day 7 (end of diet) participants also filled out subjective  
108 appetite ratings. The VAS methods and results are reported in the supplementary material.

109 *Diet Week.* Following the test day, participants undertook a 7 day HGI or LGI diet before  
110 visit 2, and returned again after a >4 week washout for the alternate diet. During the diet  
111 week participants were provided with all the food required as adapted from Morgan et al [24]  
112 shown in supplementary table 2. All food was purchased from a single supplier and given  
113 directly to participants. They were also given a booklet describing the quantities of each meal  
114 to be consumed, along with scales and a measuring jug to measure out the required  
115 ingredients for each meal. Participants recorded whether they consumed the full meal, and if  
116 not how much was remained.

117 Prior to the study, participants completed the international physical activity questionnaire  
118 (IPAQ) and their basal metabolic rate was calculated using the Henry modified Schofield  
119 formula [25, 26]. This was used to scale the amount of food consumed during diet weeks to

120 match expected energy expenditure and provide over all energy balance (no weight loss or  
121 weight gain). The energy intake and macronutrient content was matched for the HGI and  
122 LGI diets (71% carbohydrate, 14% protein, 14% fat per day). Whilst this level of  
123 carbohydrate is greater and level of fat is lower than national standards, these proportions  
124 were based on previous well defined HGI v LGI intervention in healthy volunteers that show  
125 clear glycaemic differences [24], and the diet was deemed suitable for this preliminary proof  
126 of concept study exploring carbohydrate glycaemic index. As would be expected and is  
127 usually the case, the fibre content was greater during LGI compared with HGI (Fibre: ~22  
128 g/day for HGI and ~42 g/day for LGI) [24] and therefore the term LGI denotes a high-fibre  
129 low glycaemic index diet and HGI denotes a lower-fibre high glycaemic index diet.

130 *Sample size.* The exploratory nature of this study with few related publications made sample  
131 size calculations difficult. However, estimates of effect size were made based on previous  
132 studies and used to determine an appropriate sample size using G\*power 3.1.5 [27]. An *a*  
133 *priori* two way repeated measures F-test (ANOVA) will find a significance interaction with a  
134 power of 0.8 given an effect variance (HGI – LGI) of 2.1% and a within group variance of  
135 2.9% in a sample size of 6 subjects (effect size = 0.84). These variances were based on liver  
136 fat changes observed in a previous study [28] assuming changes only observed on HGI diet.  
137 There are a number of important differences in the present study, such as increased  
138 carbohydrate proportion and iso-energetic intervention, and as such the sample size was  
139 increased to 8 subjects. This sample size would also calculate a significant change of 15%  
140 hepatic glycogen using a matched pair student's t-test given variability observed in previous  
141 studies [13]

142 *Blinding.* On completion of all data acquisition, results were blinded by an uninvolved  
143 colleague and analysed by the first author. Although the first author was present during scan  
144 sessions, spectroscopy data were not viewed in real time and only assessed after blinding.

145 Blood samples were analysed by uninvolved colleagues and so were not blinded. Following  
146 initial analysis a blind review meeting was held before data were unblinded. Deviations from  
147 protocol were discussed and data assessed for statistical relevance on a *per* protocol basis.

148 *Data Analysis.* Methods of analysis are described in more detail in the supplementary  
149 material. Values were calculated for individual time points and hepatic glycogen values were  
150 also calculated as percentage baseline. The total area under curve (AUC) across the test visit  
151 was also calculated for glucose, insulin and glycogen. In addition, the glycaemic index was  
152 calculated using the area above baseline (incremental AUC, iAUC) from t=0 to t=120minutes  
153 from plasma glucose results. Homeostasis model assessment of insulin resistance (HOMA-  
154 IR) was also calculated from fasted glucose and insulin values using  $(GLUCOSE \times$   
155  $INSULIN)/ 22.5$  .

156 *Statistical Analysis.* Results are reported as mean with standard error, and mean difference  
157 with standard deviation. Parametric testing was performed assuming normal distributions of  
158 lipid and glycogen in tissue, as well as postprandial hepatic glycogen and glucose response,  
159 which is reasonable given the restrictive selection criteria (healthy, male, sedentary, non-  
160 smokers etc.).

161 To assess differences in the acute response between test meals, Postprandial peaks, AUCs  
162 and iAUCs following test meals (HGI v LGI) on visit 1 (prior to diet) were compared using a  
163 matched pair Student's t test. Measurements taken across the time course on this visit were  
164 also assessed using a two way repeated measures ANOVA and used to evaluate any  
165 significant main effect of diet (LGI v HGI) or time of day (across the test day) and/or any  
166 significant interaction between diet and time of day.

167 To assess longer term effects of the dietary intervention, differences in fasted values at each  
168 visit were compared using a two way repeated measures ANOVA. Changes across the time

169 course between visit 2 and visit 1 in LGI and HGI diet arms independently were also assessed  
170 using a two way repeated measures ANOVA to evaluate any significant main effect of visit  
171 (visit 1 v visit 2) or time of day (across the test day) and/or any significant interaction  
172 between visit and time of day.

173 All significant main effects were followed up by pairwise comparisons using a matched pair  
174 two-tail Student's t test and significant interactions were followed up by pairwise  
175 comparisons of change from baseline values.

176 A Bonferroni adjustment was applied for multiple comparisons. In all cases significance was  
177 attributed to  $P < 0.05$ . The statistical package used for analysis was SPSS version 21 for  
178 Windows (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL).

## 179 **RESULTS**

180 *Participant recruitment and Flow.* The first test day was 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and the final test day  
181 was on 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013. One participant dropped out early, and as such his data were  
182 removed from analysis and one subject failed to complete the LGI diet week and so his visit 2  
183 data was excluded. For primary outcomes, this gave a sample size of  $n = 8$  for visit 1 HGI v  
184 LGI comparisons and  $n = 7$  for visit 1 v visit 2 comparisons. Other difficulties arose for  
185 secondary outcomes, such as failure to cannulate, and as such the sample size for each  
186 analysis varies as follows - glucose:  $n=5$ ; insulin:  $n=6$ .

187 *Compliance.* Participants reported good compliance across the diet week (beside the one  
188 exception mentioned above). According to the returned volunteer's booklets,  $98 \pm 2$  % of  
189 meals were consumed during the HGI diet and  $97 \pm 3$  % during the LGI diet (reported energy  
190 intake was  $100 \pm 0$  % as provided for HGI and  $99 \pm 1$  % for LGI).

191 *Fasted Values on visit 1 (prior to diet).* HOMA-IR values were similar prior to both diets  
192 ( $\text{HOMA-IR}_{\text{HGI}} = 1.91 \pm 0.12$ ,  $\text{HOMA-IR}_{\text{LGI}} = 1.78 \pm 0.05$ ). Fasted liver fat fractions (FF%)

193 and fasted hepatic glycogen (GLYC) levels were also similar prior to both diets ( $FF_{HGI}\% = 1.5$   
194  $\pm 0.6\%$  and  $FF_{LGI}\% = 1.5 \pm 0.5\%$ ,  $P = 0.98$ ;  $GLYC_{HGI} = 306 \pm 37$  mmol/l and  $GLYC_{LGI} =$   
195  $290 \pm 32$  mmol/l,  $P = 0.67$ ) indicating a successful washout period.

196 *Glycaemic and insulinaemic response of diets.* Acute changes in plasma glucose and insulin  
197 in response to HGI and LGI test meals on visit 1 (prior to diet) are shown in **figure 1a-b**.  
198 Plasma glucose rose significantly more following HGI compared with LGI test meal ( $P <$   
199  $0.01$ ). Postprandial insulin AUC was significantly more following the HGI compared with the  
200 LGI test meal ( $INSULIN_{HGI} - INSULIN_{LGI} = 19 \pm 3$  IU/l h,  $P < 0.05$ ). There was no  
201 significant change in HOMA-IR on visit 2 v visit 1 for either diet ( $\Delta HOMA-IR_{HGI} = 0.42 \pm$   
202  $0.93$ ;  $\Delta HOMA-IR_{LGI} = 0.13 \pm 0.43$ ) and there were no significant differences in the glucose  
203 and insulin response to the test meal between visit 1 and visit 2.

#### 204 *Study Outcomes*

205 **Effect of dietary intervention on liver fat fraction.** There was a significant interaction  
206 between diet and visit for fasted liver fat fractions ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) with mean values increasing  
207 following the HGI dietary intervention and decreasing following the LGI dietary intervention  
208 ( $\Delta FF_{HGI}\% = 1.3 \pm 2.0\%$  and  $\Delta FF_{LGI}\% = -0.4 \pm 0.7\%$ ). In the LGI arm, the main effect of  
209 diet on liver fat fraction was significant, and a subsequent pairwise comparison showed a  
210 significant reduction in liver lipids at  $t = 360$  minutes on visit 2 compared with visit 1  
211 ( $FF_{LGI}\% \text{ Visit 2} - \text{Visit 1} = 0.4 \pm 0.1$ ,  $P \leq 0.001$ ) as shown in **figure 2**.

212 **Acute effect of test meal on hepatic glycogen.** The main effect of test meal on postprandial  
213 glycogen concentration was significant on visit 1 (prior to diet), with values increasing from  
214 fasted concentrations for the first 180 minutes and then beginning to decline until the end of  
215 the test day, as shown in **figure 3a** ( $P \leq 0.01$ ). In contrast, following the HGI test meal,  
216 hepatic glycogen concentrations increased from fasted levels throughout all of the visit, but

217 the main effect of test meal on glycogen concentration did not reach significance due to  
218 increased inter-subject variability. The coefficient of variation (CV) post consumption was  
219 significantly greater during the HGI visit compared with LGI ( $CV_{HGI} = 48\%$ ;  $CV_{LGI} = 20\%$ ;  $p$   
220  $\leq 0.001$ ). There was no significant interaction between test meal and time of day

221 **Longer term effect of dietary intervention on hepatic glycogen.** **Figure 3b** shows the  
222 postprandial changes in hepatic glycogen on visit 2. There was no significant increase  
223 following either test meal, and no significant change from visit 1 to visit 2. **Figure 3 d, e and**  
224 **f** shows changes in hepatic glycogen at fasted, postprandial peak and AUC between visit 2  
225 and visit 1 for HGI and LGI diets. There was no significant change in fasted glycogen stores  
226 between visit 1 and visit 2 (**figure 3c**), but the main effect of diet on peak glycogen  
227 concentration was significant ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) with mean HGI values greater than LGI (**figure 3d**).  
228 A subsequent pairwise comparison showed HGI peak glycogen concentration on visit 2 was  
229 significantly greater than visit 1 ( $P = 0.04$ ). The effect sizes of LGI diet on fasted glycogen  
230 and peak glycogen values were small (0.06 and 0.38 respectively), whereas the effect sizes of  
231 HGI diet on fasted glycogen and peak glycogen values were moderate to large (0.67 and 1.15  
232 respectively). The main effect of diet on hepatic glycogen AUC was also significant, with  
233 mean HGI AUC greater than mean LGI AUC ( $P < 0.02$ ) as shown in **figure 3e**.

234 **Acute effect of test meal on GCV.** The main effect of test meal on GCV on visit 1 (prior to  
235 diet) was significant (**figure 4**) and a subsequent pairwise comparison showed  $GCV_{LGI}$  was  
236 significantly greater than  $GCV_{HGI}$  at  $t = 20$  minutes (difference =  $116 \pm 23$  ml,  $P \leq 0.001$ ).

237 **Longer term effects of dietary intervention on GCV.** Visit 1 and visit 2 GCVs are shown  
238 on **figure 4**. In the HGI arm, the main effect of diet on GCV was significant ( $P < 0.03$ ) and a  
239 subsequent pairwise comparison showed gastric content values were significantly greater on  
240 HGI visit 2 compared with HGI visit 1 at  $t = 20$  minutes ( $P \leq 0.05$ ), 140 minutes ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

241 and 200 minutes ( $P < 0.05$ ). In the LGI arm the main effect of diet on GCV was not  
242 significant. There was also no significant interaction between diet and visit.

## 243 **DISCUSSION**

244 *Glycaemic Response.* The immediate glycaemic responses were as expected and blood  
245 glucose levels were in strong agreement with Morgan *et al* [24] confirming a variation in  
246 glycaemic index as intended. Plasma insulin responses were also as expected [29], with  
247 greater plasma glucose levels prompting increased insulin secretion. There was no change in  
248 fasting insulin resistance following the diet week (HOMA-IR) which is not surprising given  
249 the short intervention period. Changes in liver fat are expected to precede insulin resistance,  
250 and future studies should explore the longer term impact of HGI and LGI diets on insulin  
251 sensitivity.

252 *Liver Fat Fraction.* Results from  $^1\text{H}$  MRS were striking and of high clinical relevance.  
253 Hepatic fat fractions increased after 1 week of HGI diet and decreased after LGI, suggesting  
254 that reducing dietary glycaemic index has the potential of providing long term health benefits  
255 in the prevention and management of NAFLD, obesity and type II diabetes.

256 Previous HGI v LGI dietary intervention studies have not controlled for macronutrient  
257 content or total energy intake and energy balance; as such the present study provides new  
258 evidence that glycaemic index and/or fibre content plays an important role in ectopic fat  
259 deposition independent of nutritional composition. In a recent cross sectional analysis,  
260 Valtuena *et al* reported a strong correlation between steatosis grading and dietary glycaemic  
261 index specifically [30]. Whilst the smaller sample size of the present study limits its direct  
262 applicability to the general population, it does provide preliminary data that supports the  
263 findings of this previous study [30] and suggests that glycaemic index is indeed associated  
264 with liver lipid storage even under iso-energetic conditions.

265 A recent 4 way trial comparing glycaemic index (High v Low) and carbohydrate content  
266 (65% v 50%) during a period of weight gain found significant increases in liver fat following  
267 a high carbohydrate diet but no association with glycaemic index [31]. However, in this study  
268 the refeeding phase included excess energy, whereas the present study used a dietary  
269 intervention that provided no energy surplus or deficit in participants and also had a greater  
270 proportion of carbohydrates. Further studies should explore if the significant effects of  
271 glycaemic index found in the present study are driven by the increased carbohydrate  
272 consumption and how this relates to excess energy intake. These results indicate the potential  
273 importance of type of carbohydrate consumed in the prevention of metabolic disorders, for  
274 example in the pre-diabetic population. Whilst excess energy intake will provide the most  
275 significant contribution to fat deposition and metabolic dysfunction [32], glycaemic index  
276 should also be seen as relevant.

277 *Glycogen.* As far as the authors are aware, this study showed for the first time increased  
278 hepatic glycogen storage following a HGI breakfast compared with an iso-energetic LGI  
279 breakfast. During the visit prior to the diet, the increase in mean absolute glycogen levels  
280 following the HGI test meal accounted for 25% of the ingested intake of carbohydrates, in  
281 strong agreement with the literature [33, 34]. In contrast to this, the peak LGI hepatic  
282 glycogen response was lower and declined from 180 minutes. Similar findings have been  
283 reported in muscle in a number of studies [35, 36] in which HGI test meals prompted a  
284 greater storage of muscle glycogen. This relationship may be due to increased insulin levels  
285 driving an increased rate of glycogenesis and these effects may differ in patient populations,  
286 such as people with insulin resistance or obesity. <sup>13</sup>C MRS provides a powerful non-invasive  
287 method for monitoring these effects in future studies and provides useful insight into  
288 metabolic diseases. Related to this finding was the observation of increased peak glycogen  
289 levels on the visit following the 7-day diet, which was only significant after the HGI



290 intervention, although this may be due to the larger proportion of carbohydrates in the dietary  
291 intervention consumed compared with the standard UK diet. Whilst previous studies have  
292 shown longitudinal glycogen MRS measurements have considerable variability [20], there  
293 was a large effect size in fasted and peak measures following the HGI diet. This may be  
294 accounted for by the increased postprandial glycogen levels from the evening HGI meal  
295 before visit 2. Greater glycogen stores at the start of the day would seem beneficial to  
296 individuals who need a sustained postprandial energy release, for example athletes or other  
297 physically active individuals, but have the potential to be broken down through  
298 glycogenolysis and enter lipogenesis for longer term energy stores in more sedentary  
299 individuals. The significantly greater CV following the HGI compared with LGI test meal  
300 also indicates a more variable glycogen response to high glycaemic index food in healthy  
301 individuals and may be relevant to the prevention or treatment of patients with glycogen  
302 storage disease.

303 *Gastric Contents Volume.* The present study also showed evidence of changes in postprandial  
304 GCV following the diet week, though could be due to either changes in gastric emptying or  
305 gastric secretion which were not distinguished here. During the visit prior to the diet week,  
306 gastric content was greater for LGI compared with HGI despite meal volumes being matched,  
307 which may be a result of slowed gastric emptying during LGI due to increased fibre content  
308 [9]. However, during visit 2 this was reversed and gastric content was significantly smaller for  
309 LGI visit 2 compared with LGI visit 1. Further work is needed to establish whether these  
310 changes are an adaptive effect of the dietary interventions.

311 There were a number of limitations with this study. First, the study group was small; given the  
312 multifactorial nature of the study, it would have been preferable to have allowed more for non-  
313 compliance and cannulation difficulties while calculating sample size. Whilst eight participants  
314 could be analysed for the proposed primary outcomes, problems with blood samples and

315 incomplete response to survey limited our ability to assess some of the secondary outcomes.  
316 Secondly, it was difficult to account for the effect of the variation in fibre content between diets  
317 and this cannot be ruled out as a factor independent of glycaemic index that influenced some  
318 of the outcomes. In addition, obtaining information about eating habits of participants prior to  
319 entry into the study would allow the investigators to more directly compare changes seen in  
320 both diets rather than our assumption that intake reflected average UK dietary intakes. This  
321 could also be used to exclude those with unusual eating habits or to normalize intake in a pre-  
322 diet period. Thirdly, we recruited young healthy Caucasian males with the intention to limit  
323 metabolic and hormonal variability and to improve statistical power given a small sample size.  
324 However, this limits the generalisability of our findings and further work should explore if the  
325 results can be extrapolated to a wider population.

326 In conclusion, this study provides preliminary data that suggest that iso-energetic HGI diets  
327 compared with LGI diets lead to significant accumulations of liver fat without changes in  
328 body weight. Therefore, low glycaemic index high fibre foods offer significant health  
329 benefits in reducing liver fat fractions compared with high glycaemic index foods, and should  
330 be considered in dietary interventions in NAFLD, obesity and related metabolic disorders.  
331 Future studies should explore the impact of glycaemic index over a longer period, and also in  
332 patients with obesity or metabolic syndromes to assess whether the findings of this study can  
333 be used in the prevention and management of these conditions.

334

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## FIGURE LEGENDS

**Figure 1.** (a) Plasma glucose (n=5) and (b) plasma insulin (n = 6) results on visit 1 for high (▲) and low (●) glycaemic index test days; Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. \*P < 0.05 between diets, † P < 0.005 between diets using matched pair Student's t-test.

**Figure 2.** Liver fat fractions at fasted state and end of day (t = 360 minutes) on visit 1 and visit 2 for HGI (■) and LGI (□) dietary interventions (n=7). Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. \* P < 0.05 between diets using a two way repeat measures ANOVA; ‡ P < 0.05 FF% at t = 360 min on visit 2 compared with visit 1 using matched pair Student's t-test.

**Figure 3.** Hepatic glycogen concentration (% baseline) across the time course on (a) visit 1 (n=8) and (b) visit 2 (n=7) for HGI (visit 1 =▲, visit 2 =△) and LGI (visit 1 = ■, visit 2 = □) test days; (c), (d) and (e) are fasted, postprandial peak and AUC respectively (n=7). Values are means, with SEMs represented by vertical bars. \* P ≤ 0.05 between visits using matched pair Student's t-test, † P ≤ 0.05 significant mains effect of diet using two way repeat measures ANOVA.

**Figure 4.** Gastric contents volume across the time course on visit 1 and visit 2 for HGI (visit 1 =▲, visit 2 = △) and LGI (visit 1 = ●, visit 2 = ○) test days; x and y-axis are scaled equally for both visits and grid lines are included to compare absolute values. † P ≤ 0.001 between diets using matched pair Student's t-test \$ P < 0.05 between visit 1 and visit 2 HGI using matched pair Student's t-test.

## FIGURES

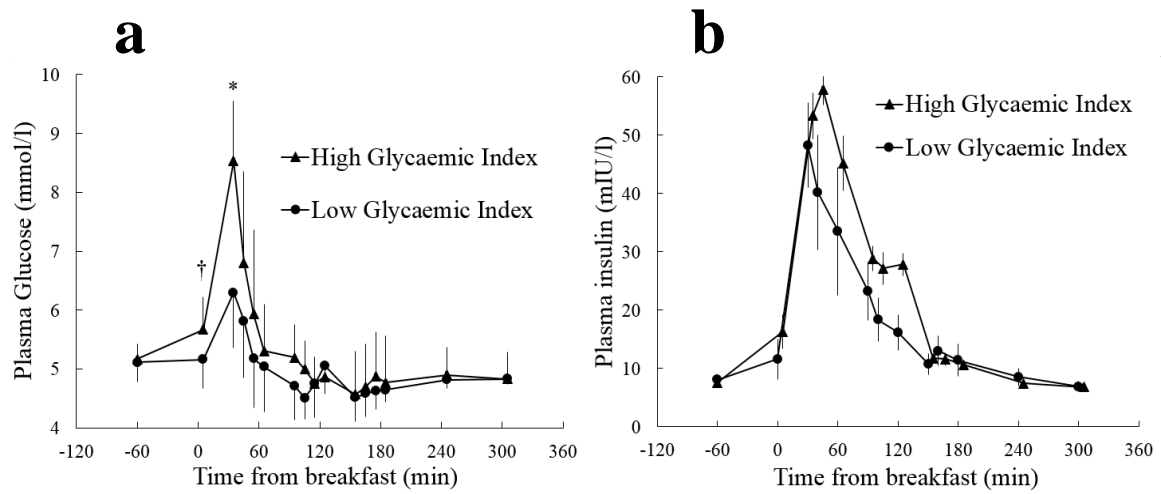


Figure 1

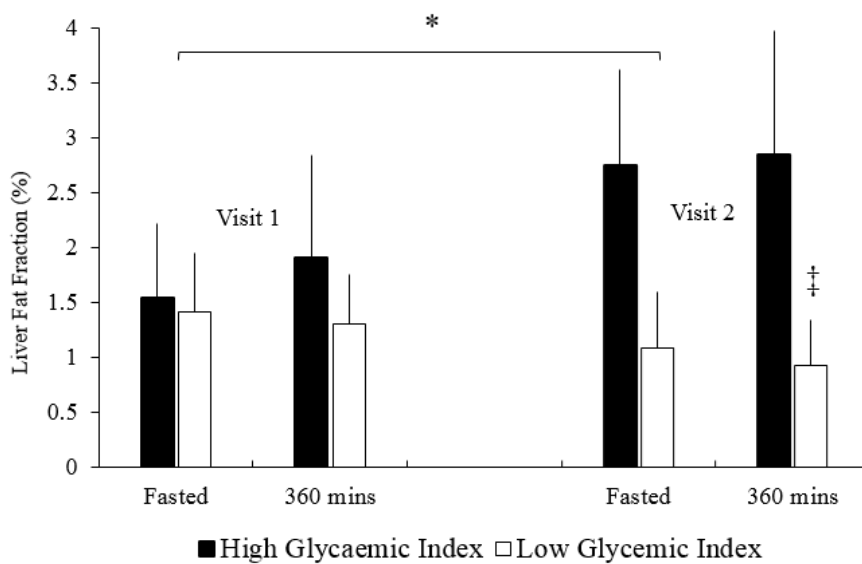


Figure 2

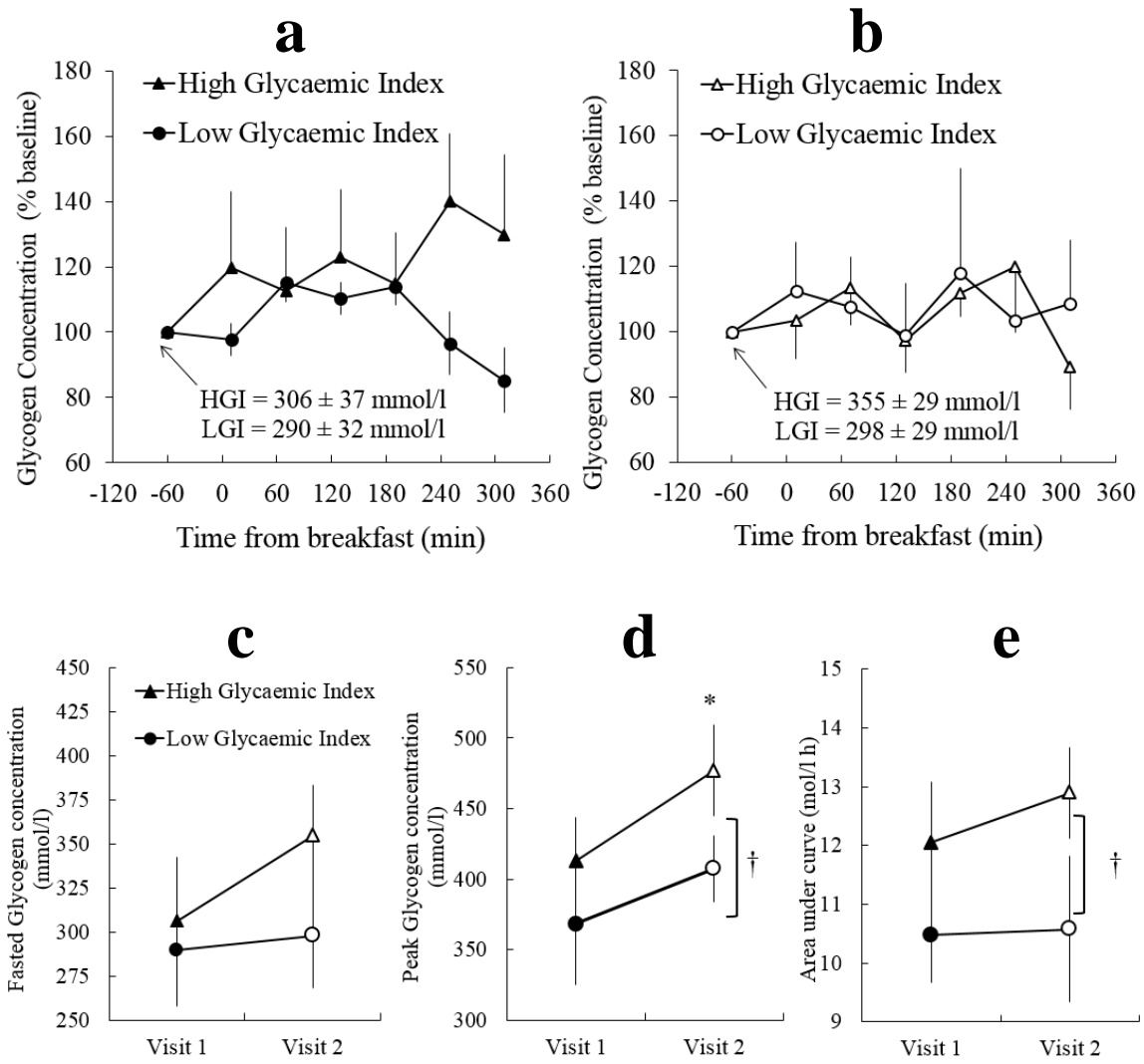
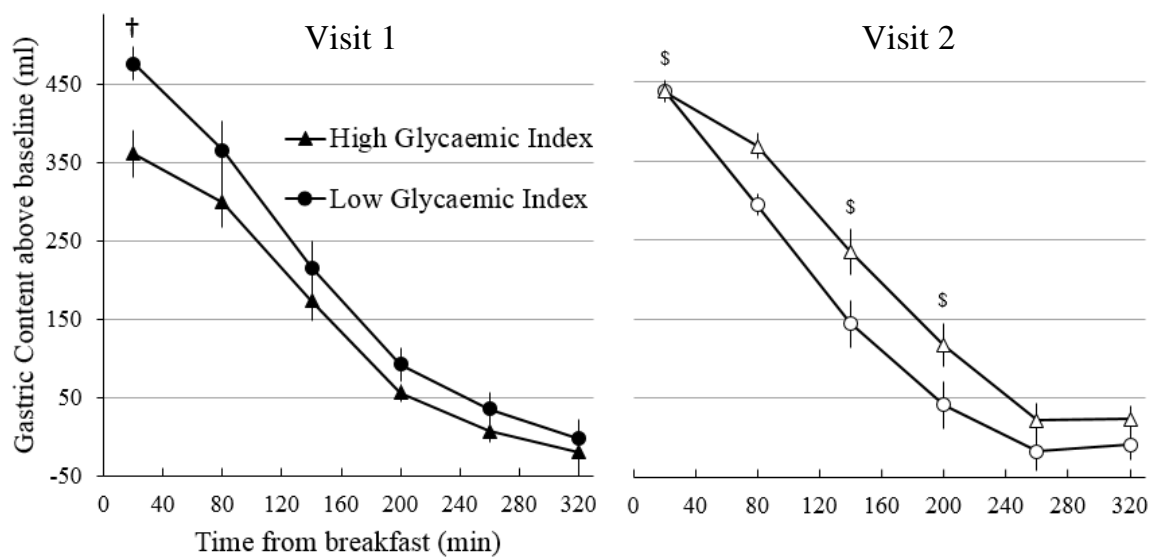


Figure 3





**Figure 4**

