Chinese Expert Consensus on Medication Safety in Polypharmacy in Type 2 Diabetics with Chronic Kidney Disease

Diabetes is a serious public health problem worldwide. The prevalence of chronic kidney disease (CKD) secondary to type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is growing with the increase of T2DM prevalence. There is no comprehensive guideline on medication safety in polypharmacy in patients with T2DM-related CKD. This consensus provides guidance on safety issues in polypharmacy for clinical pharmacists and Chinese patients with T2DM-related CKD, and a summary of the information on usage and dosage, and related pharmaceutical characteristics of drugs as well as medication for special populations for supporting clinical medical workers in delivering standardized medication services.

Contents

1. Methods ................................................................. 2
   1.1 Consensus making steps and criteria ..................................... 2
   1.2 Clinical questions, evidence search rationale and recommendations formation ........ 2
      1.2.1 Clinical questions ........................................... 2
      1.2.2 Guideline search and clinical evidence search system ......................... 3
      1.2.3 Evaluation of levels of evidence........................................ 3
      1.2.4 Formation of consensus recommendations ................................... 3
      1.2.5 Consensus registration ............................................. 3

2. Profiles of T2DM combined with CKD .................................. 5
   2.1 Epidemiology ................................................................ 5
   2.2 Current status of domestic and foreign guidelines or consensus of polypharmacy in T2DM combined with CKD ............................................................. 5
   2.3 Targets and strategies of treatment for diabetes and CKD ...................... 5
      2.3.1 Hypoglycemia therapy .............................................. 7
      2.3.2 Antihypertensive treatment ........................................... 7
      2.3.3 Lipid regulation therapy .............................................. 7
      2.3.4 Urate lowering therapy .............................................. 7

3. Risks and recommendations for monitoring of co-medications in patients with diabetes and CKD ........................................ 8
   3.1 Risks and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic agents in patients with diabetes and CKD .............................................................. 8
   3.2 Risks and monitoring of combination hypoglycemic agents in patients with diabetes and CKD .............................................................. 11
   3.3 Risks and monitoring recommendations of combinations of hypoglycemia drugs and antihypertensive and lipid regulating drugs in patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD ....... 13
   3.4 Risk and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic and other drug combinations in patients with diabetes and CKD ................................ 14

4. Characteristics of drug treatment and multi-factorial risk control in elderly patients .... 16
   4.1 Characteristics of drug treatment in elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD .... 16
   4.2 Elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD drug treatment multi-factorial risk
4.3 Common drug risk management for elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD...

5. Clinical frequently asked questions and recommendations for special concomitant medications in patients with diabetes and CKD...

5.1 In patients with diabetes and CKD, what is the effect of aspirin use on the risk of bleeding?

5.2 In T2DM patients with CKD, metformin combined with SGLT2i, does it affect renal function?

5.3 In patients with T2DM and CKD, are SGLT2i combinations associated with an increased risk of urinary and genital infections compared with metformin monotherapy when using metformin based regimens?

5.4 ACEIs combined with ARBs in the DKD population, is there an increased risk of hyperkalemia and AKI?

5.5 Increased incidence of edema after TZD class drug treatment in T2DM patients with CKD?

5.6 In patients with diabetes and renal impairment, does the addition of a mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist (MRA) to an ACEI / ARB basic medication increase the risk of developing hyperkalemia?

5.7 In patients with diabetes and CKD, how should they be managed with potassium lowering agents when hyperkalemia is present?

References...

1. Methods

1.1 Consensus making steps and criteria

The development of this consensus was mainly based on the following criteria: the definition of clinical practice guidelines published by the American Institute of Medicine in 2011, the evidence generated through a systematic review, and the optimal guidance proposed after the evaluation of the pros and cons of various alternative intervention modalities; the World Health Organization Handbook for Guideline Development issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2013 [1]; the Basic Methods and Procedures for Making / Revising the Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Guidelines issued by the Chinese Medical Association in 2016 [2]. And guideline plans and formal guideline documents would be produced in accordance with the reporting entries for health care practice guidelines [3].

1.2 Clinical questions, evidence search rationale and recommendations formation

1.2.1 Clinical questions The clinical questions were collected from clinical practice and relevant literature pre-test, and first-line clinicians and clinical pharmacists experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) combined with chronic kidney disease (CKD) were recruited and interviewed over 2 rounds of questionnaires. Clinical questions for inclusion in
this consensus and an inductive summary of the current approach to diagnosis and treatment were finalized by online survey and discussion meetings among experts involved in the writing of this consensus.

### 1.2.2 Guideline search and clinical evidence search system

A search of PubMed, EMBase, Cochrane Library, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Wanfang Data Knowledge Service Platform and Chinese Biomedical Literature Database (CBM), and guideline publishing websites [including the UK National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN), WHO official site (https://www.who.int/) and the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China official site (https://www.nhc.gov.cn/)]. The clinical evidence was retrieved from the time when the library was built to 2022-05-08, the restricted language was English or Chinese, and “type 2 diabetes mellitus, renal disease, nephropathy, nephrosis, nephroma, the kidney disease, renal dysfunction, combination, combination medication, polydrug, polypharmacy” was used as the search term. The search included patients with T2DM and CKD, of whom age > 65 years was defined as elderly patients. Search results of 2,262 Chinese and English literatures were obtained after de-duplicating, and 76 safety related literatures were obtained after spermatozoa screening. After clarifying the search strategy and inclusion and exclusion criteria of literatures, two groups of consensus panel members independently conducted literature screening according to the title, aim and full texts in the step-by-step order, and then the information of included literatures was extracted according to a predesigned information extraction form. Disagreements were resolved by discussion through consultation with the opinions of a third party of evidence-based methodology experts.

### 1.2.3 Evaluation of levels of evidence

The consensus panel evaluated the evidence and the evaluation tool was the Clinical Evidence Level Grading and Recommendation Grade from Oxford Centre for Evidence Based Medicine (OCEBM) [3]. The grade of recommendation for this consensus was graded according to the strength of recommendation from the OCEBM and GRADE, and the strength of recommendation was formed based on a comprehensive consideration including quality of evidence, trade-off of benefits, patient willingness, values, cost of intervention, and accessible resources and graded as A, B, C, and D. A total of 76 references were included, including 70 references (92.11%) with recommendation grade I and 6 references (7.89%) with recommendation grade II, as detailed in Table 1 [4-79].

### 1.2.4 Formation of consensus recommendations

An evidence review group was responsible for the review of evidence and drafting the evidence summary. The quality of evidence was based on the OCEBM evidence grade evaluation. After members of the expert panel reached consensus on recommendations through the Delphi process, guideline consensus was ultimately adjudicated and approved by the guideline Steering Committee. Peer review mainly consisted of review of the questions, review of evidence tables and a complete recommendation scheme (conducted in the manner of a guideline group meeting), with the secretary group responsible for recording feedback on the comments and all changes.

### 1.2.5 Consensus registration

This expert consensus was registered with the Global Practice Guidelines Registry Platform, http://www.guidelines-registry.cn/domestic version) (Registration Number: IPGRP-2021CN261).

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Table 1. The level of evidence graded by the OCEBM recommended in the Chinese Expert Consensus on Medication Safety in Polypharmacy in Type 2 Diabetics with Chronic Kidney Disease
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of recommendation</th>
<th>Level of evidence</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Quantity of literature (articles)</th>
<th>Proportion of literature (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Systematic review of the homogeneity randomized controlled trials</td>
<td>[4-44]</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>A single randomized controlled trial</td>
<td>[45-73]</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>&quot;All or nothing&quot; evidence</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Systematic review of homogeneous cohort studies</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>A single cohort study (including low-quality RCTs, e.g., follow-up rate &lt;80%)</td>
<td>[74-79]</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Outcome based study</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Systematic review of homogenous case-control studies</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>A single case-control study</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Case series (with low-quality cohort studies and case-control studies)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Profiles of T2DM combined with CKD

2.1 Epidemiology

Diabetes mellitus has become a serious global public health problem, with a global prevalence of diabetes mellitus of approximately 9.3% (463 million people) in 2019, which is expected to increase to 10.9% (700 million people) in 2045 \(^{[80]}\). Sustained high blood glucose levels cause systemic vascular damage affecting the heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves and leading to various complications. Among them, CKD is a serious comorbidity of diabetes, and diabetic kidney disease (DKD) is the most common one \(^{[81]}\). CKD is a clinical syndrome characterized by persistent abnormalities in renal structure and / or renal function, with a worldwide incidence of CKD ranging from 8% to 16% \(^{[82-83]}\). More than 40% of patients with diabetes may develop CKD, and the majority of patients have early CKD (CKD stages 1 to 2); some patients will progress to end-stage renal disease requiring dialysis and / or transplantation \(^{[80]}\). According to age stratified analysis, the prevalence of CKD is found to be as high as 58.7% in T2DM patients \(\geq 65\) years old, with a more advanced CKD stage \(^{[84]}\).

2.2 Current status of domestic and foreign guidelines or consensus of polypharmacy in T2DM combined with CKD

There has not been a more comprehensive clinical polypharmacy safety guideline for T2DM patients with CKD at home and abroad, and some of the guidelines that have been issued only consider one comorbidity, with limited specific recommendations on how to manage patients with coexistent multiple diseases. There are 15 judgment criteria published nationally and internationally regarding potentially inappropriate medication (PIM) for older people, but only the Beers provides a potentially inappropriate medication for older people \(^{[84]}\) (AGSBeers Criteria \(^{®}\)), in which a small number of adverse drug-drug interactions (ADI) content are involved. Therefore, a consensus on the safety of clinical polypharmacy in patients with T2DM and CKD needs to be made and promulgated, to avoid or reduce the damage caused by ADI when polypharmacy is used and improve the level of safe medication.

2.3 Targets and strategies of treatment for diabetes and CKD

Patients with diabetes and CKD should be treated with a comprehensive treatment strategy and aimed at reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and the progression of renal disease as the
main treatment goals, with strict control of cardiovascular risk factors including hypertension, hyperglycemia, abnormal serum lipids, smoking, obesity, etc., effective remission of proteinuria, avoidance of nephrotoxic drugs, and adjustment of drug doses to delay CKD progression. Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is one of the important indexes for evaluating renal function, and the staging of renal function in CKD is performed based on estimating the glomerular filtration rate (eGFR). It was found that declines in urinary albumin/creatinine ratio (UACR) and EGFR were both independent risk factors for end-stage renal disease and cardiovascular mortality, and the two were synergistic. Staging of renal function was referred to the Staging Criteria for Clinical Practice Guidelines 2012 edition, produced by the Kidney Disease Improving Global Organization (KDIGO), as detailed in Table 2.

### Table 2. Characteristics of stages of CKD in type 2 diabetes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CKD classification based on cause (C), eGFR (G) and albuminuria (A)</th>
<th>UACR Categories (Description and Range)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normal to mildly increased</td>
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<tr>
<td>G1 Normal or high ≥90 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>1, if CKD is diagnosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2 Mildly decreased 60-89 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>1, if CKD is diagnosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3a Mildly to moderately decreased 45-59 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>treatment, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3b Moderately to severely decreased 30-44 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>treatment, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4 Severely decreased 15-29 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>referral, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5 Kidney failure &lt;15 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹</td>
<td>referral, 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** CKD= chronic kidney disease, eGFR= estimated glomerular filtration rate, UACR= urinary albumin/creatinine ratio; The numbers in the table are the guide of follow-up frequency (number of times per year); The background color represents the progression risk of CKD: green is low risk, yellow is medium risk, orange is high risk, and red is extremely high risk. Green can reflect CKD with normal eGFR an UACR level only in the presence of other kidney damage markers, such as polycystic kidney disease or kidney biopsy abnormalities in imageology, with follow-up measurements once annually; It requires caution, and measurements at least once per year in yellow; It requires measurements twice per year in orange; It requires measurements three times per year in red; It requires measurements four times per year in dark red.
2.3.1 Hypoglycemia therapy  Glycemic control retards progression of CKD, and for patients with prevention of complications as the primary goal, recommended target values for glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) control can be appropriately relaxed to: HbA1c < 6.5% or HbA1c < 7.0%; for patients with multiple comorbidities or at high risk of hypoglycemia, HbA1c can be at the higher recommended target values, such as: HbA1c < 7.5% or HbA1c < 8.0% [80]. Glucose lowering on target alleviates the aggravation or progression of proteinuria and reduces the proportion of patients who develop CKD stage 3, and massive proteinuria can be reversed to microalbuminuria or normoproteinuria in patients [88-89]. Hypoglycemic agents mainly include insulin, biguanides, sulfonylureas, glinides, aglycosidase inhibitors, thiazolidinediones (TZD) class, dipeptidyl peptidase 4 (DPP-4) inhibitors, sodium glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2I) and glucagon like peptide 1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RA). Patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) require insulin therapy, whereas for those with T2DM, there are many treatment options. Because clearance of insulin and other drugs is reduced in patients with CKD, such populations are more prone to hypoglycemia, and hypoglycemic drug classes and doses may need to be adjusted with the level of renal function.

2.3.2 Antihypertensive treatment  Controlling hypertension in patients with CKD may not only slow the progression of kidney injury but also reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Antihypertensive treatment in diabetes patients with CKD, the blood pressure lowering targets are systolic blood pressure (SBP) ≤ 140 mm Hg (1 mm Hg = 0.133 kPa) and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) ≤ 90 mm Hg at urinary albumin excretion rate (AER) < 30 mg / 24 h; at AER > 30 mg / 24 h, the blood pressure lowering targets are SBP ≤ 130 mm Hg and DBP ≤ 80 mm Hg [90]. Hypertensive patients with CKD without proteinuria may be treated with 1 or 2 of the following drugs: angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEI) or angiotensin II receptor antagonists (ARB), calcium channel blockers (CCB), thiazide diuretics, and if unable to reach the control glycemic level, continue the joint use of α- Receptor blockers, β- Receptor blockers, or mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists (MRA), etc; Combination of ACEI or ARB with or without CCB is preferred in hypertensive patients with CKD with proteinuria, and for those whose glycemic level cannot be controlled to the desired level, α- Receptor blockers, β- Receptor blockers, thiazide diuretics, MRA, etc may be used jointly; Patients with severe hypertension may choose a combination of 2 or more antihypertensive drugs [91].

2.3.3 Lipid regulation therapy  There is an association between dyslipidemia and the risk of CKD patients with diabetes, and lipid regulation by statins can reduce cardiovascular disease events and mortality [92]. Studies have shown that statins are safe and effective in regulating lipids and preventing cardiovascular disease (CVD) events at the end of CKD and after transplantation [93].

2.3.4 Urate lowering therapy  Hyperuricemia is a risk factor for the development of CKD and is associated with all-cause mortality in CKD, and lowering serum uric acid levels ameliorates kidney injury [94]. Allopurinol readily accumulates in the body in renal insufficiency, increases the risk of toxicity, and is contraindicated in patients with CKD stage 5; No dose adjustment is necessary for febuxostat in patients with mild to moderate renal dysfunction or even end-stage CKD, and febuxostat can slow the eGFR decline in asymptomatic hyperuricemia patients with CKD stage 3 and CKD stage 4 [95]. Benz bromarone is not recommended in patients with CKD stage 4 and above and is contraindicated in patients with nephrolithiasis. To avoid toxic drug accumulation caused by impaired renal function mediated improper drug metabolism and
excretion, urate lowering drugs should be rationally selected according to the stage of renal function.

3. Risks and recommendations for monitoring of co-medications in patients with diabetes and CKD

3.1 Risks and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic agents in patients with diabetes and CKD

Clinical findings show that glucose lowering up to goal reduces the incidence of the primary renal endpoint by 20% in patients with early-stage of diabetes or CKD, and can reverse pre-existing macroalbuminuria to microalbuminuria or normoproteinuria in patients. Patients with T2DM and CKD are suitable for individualized selection of oral hypoglycemic agents according to renal function status and dose adjustment according to the degree of renal impairment, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. The risks and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic agents in patients with diabetes and CKD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug classification</th>
<th>Recommendations related to kidney benefits</th>
<th>Representative drugs</th>
<th>Glomerular filtration rate eGFR [ml·min⁻¹·(1.73m²)⁻¹]</th>
<th>Risks and adverse reactions</th>
<th>Precautions and monitoring suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>≥60</td>
<td>45–59</td>
<td>30–44</td>
<td>15–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biguanides</td>
<td>For T2DKD patients, metformin is recommended as the first choice for blood glucose control when there is no contraindication (2020)</td>
<td>Metformin √</td>
<td>dose reduction</td>
<td>Use with caution on /×²</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Metformin may accumulate and cause lactic acidosis in case of renal insufficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Monitoring eGFR, and timely adjust the dosage of metformin according to eGFR. 2. Metformin should be stopped in severe infection, acute heart failure, respiratory failure, AKI and other stress states.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGLT2i</td>
<td>SGLT2i has an effect on urine glucose excretion, urine glucose should be rationally selected according to the stage of renal function.</td>
<td>Dapagliflozin √</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Use with</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dapagliflozin may cause lactic acidosis in case of renal insufficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Patients with high risk of ketoacidosis should avoid using such drugs as much as</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>indipendent hypoglycemic renal protective effect, significantly reducing renal risk[100]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empagliflozin</td>
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<td>Invokana</td>
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</table>

|GLP-1 receptor agonists can significantly reduce urinary albumin[101]|
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Exenatide        |                  |                  |                  |
|Risennatide       |                  |                  |                  |
|Liraglutide       |                  |                  |                  |
|Dulaglutide       |                  |                  |                  |
|Smeaglutide       |                  |                  |                  |

|DPP-4 inhibitors can significantly reduce urinary albumin[102]|
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Linagliptin      |                  |                  |                  |
| Sitagliptin      | dose reduction   | dose reduction   | dose reduction   |
| Saxagliptin      | dose reduction   | dose reduction   | dose reduction   |
| Alogliptin       | dose reduction   | dose reduction   | dose reduction   |
| Vildagliptin     | dose reduction   | dose reduction   | dose reduction   |

|insulin |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| There is no renal benefit, but insulin can be the first choice |

| to genitourinary system infection and blood volume reduction. Invokana increases the risk of amputation and fracture of lower limbs[103] |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                     |                  |                  |                  |

1. It should start from a small dosage and gradually increase the dosage to reduce gastrointestinal reaction
2. Not recommended for ESRD patients
3. Patients with medullary thyroid carcinoma, multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2 and history of acute pancreatitis should not use GLP receptor agonist.

Gastrointestinal adverse reactions, infections (mainly include nasopharyngitis, urinary tract infection, upper respiratory tract infection, allergies and elevated liver enzymes) 1. Monitor the liver enzymes of patients, and do not adjust the dose for mild liver damage
2. Timely adjust the dose according to the renal function level. The dose of saxagliptin should be halved when 30<eGFR<45, and reduced to 1/4 of the conventional dose when eGFR<30
3. The dose of saxagliptin and vildagliptin should be halved when eGFR<45
4. The dose of alogliptin should be halved when 30<eGFR<60, and reduced to 1/4 of the conventional dose when eGFR<30[103]

1. In the early stage of DKD, the insulin demand may increase due to the increase of insulin resistance [33]. It is recommended that the dosage of insulin be increased as appropriate when it is used in the early stage of DKD (Rave et al., 2001)
2. In patients with middle and late stage
of hypoglycemic drugs for DKD patients during pregnancy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insulin Secretagogues</th>
<th>Glimepiride</th>
<th>Gliptins</th>
<th>Nateglinide</th>
<th>Repaglinide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No kidney benefit</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommendation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>ESRD, it may lead to</td>
<td>dose reduction</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>accumulation in the</td>
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<td>body, with the risk of</td>
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<td>hypoglycemia and fluid</td>
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<td>retention</td>
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<td>DKD, especially those</td>
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<td>with CKD G3b and below,</td>
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<td>the insulin demand will</td>
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<td>decrease due to the</td>
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<td>reduction of insulin</td>
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<td>insulin and insulin</td>
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<td>acting or quick acting</td>
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<td>dosage forms are</td>
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<td>preferred, blood</td>
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<td>glucose is closely</td>
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<td>monitored, and insulin</td>
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<td>dosage is adjusted in</td>
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<td>patients should give</td>
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<td>priority to basic</td>
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<tr>
<td>insulin to avoid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hypoglycemia. 5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients with DM - CKD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need to be reassessed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to the eGFR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level, and individualized dose adjustment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sulfonylureas:** Attention should be paid to strengthening blood glucose monitoring, and try to use preparations with short half-life[^11].

[^11]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nateglinides:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attention should be paid to strengthening blood glucose monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The peak drug concentration of nateglinide in hemodialysis patients decreases, and the dosage may need to be adjusted[^11]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.2 Risks and monitoring of combination hypoglycemic agents in patients with diabetes and CKD

It is recommended that when combining multiple hypoglycemic agents simultaneously, the risk of hypoglycemia may be increased, and the main agents include insulin, sulfonylurea, and nonsulfonylurea insulin secretagogues, etc. The risks and monitoring recommendations for commonly used combinations of glucose lowering drugs in the clinic are detailed in Table 4 [110-120].

Table 4  Risks and monitoring suggestions of some commonly used hypoglycemic drugs in diabetic CKD patients
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of hypoglycemic drugs</th>
<th>Risk of Combination</th>
<th>Medication precautions and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Metformin + SGLT2i                | Increased risk of reproductive system infections and fractures, with reports of AKI | 1. First-line combination of drugs in T2DM with CKD  
2. Renal function status needs to be taken into account when choosing the type and dose of SGLT2i  
3. Invokana may increase the risk of lower limb amputation |
| Metformin + GLP-1 receptor agonist | Increased gastrointestinal adverse effects such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea | 1. To reduce the occurrence of gastrointestinal adverse reactions, GLP-1 receptor agonists should be started at small doses and gradually increased  
2. The adverse effects are gradually reduced with longer duration of use |
| Metformin + sulfonylureas/ glinides | Increased hypoglycemia, body mass, and possible cardiovascular risk | 1. Require regular monitoring of body mass, blood glucose and renal function  
2. Patients with mild renal insufficiency should choose gliquidone if using sulfonylureas |
| Metformin + α glucosidase inhibitors | Increased gastrointestinal adverse effects such as nausea and abdominal discomfort | 1. α-glucosidase inhibitors can be started with a small dose, and gradually increased to avoid adverse effects  
2. If hypoglycemia occurs, glucose or honey can be given |
| Metformin + TZD                   | Increased risk of congestive heart failure and fracture | Should be used with caution in elderly T2DM patients with ASCVD, cardiac insufficiency and osteoporosis |
| Insulin + sulfonylureas/ glinides  | Increased risk of hypoglycemia | Regular blood glucose monitoring is needed to avoid the risk of hypoglycemia. |
| Insulin + TZD                     | Increased body mass, which can lead to water and sodium retention and increased risk of heart failure and fractures | 1. Monitor body mass and control diet  
2. The combination in the elderly or in those with cardiac insufficiency should be closely monitored, to avoid water and sodium retention leading to congestive heart failure; The combination in patients with osteoporosis should with caution |
| Insulin+ SGLT2i                   | Increased risk of urogenital infections  
Risk for diabetic ketoacidosis may be increased due to excessive reduction of insulin dosages | When who have already taken basal insulin, the amount of insulin may be appropriately reduced to the risk of hypoglycemia, but the dose should not be reduced too quickly. |

Notes: AKI = acute kidney injury, ASCVD = atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
3.3 Risks and monitoring recommendations of combinations of hypoglycemia drugs and antihypertensive and lipid regulating drugs in patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD

It is inevitable and very common to combine glucose lowering drugs and other drugs in patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD, and polypharmacy may increase the risk of ADI, which in part will lead to serious consequences. In view of this, the risk of polypharmacy in such patients is of concern, and management measures are proposed to avoid or reduce the damage from drug-drug interactions when polypharmacy is combined.

There is an association among blood pressure, dyslipidemia, and cardiovascular disease events and mortality in diabetic patients with CKD [94]. For hypertensive patients with CKD with proteinuria, ACEI / ARB may be used as the first choice of antihypertensive agent, although the risk of co-administration with glucose lowering drugs should be kept in mind; For example, gemfibrozil can be used for lipid regulating therapy in patients with diabetes and CKD, and has irreversible inhibitory effects on CYP2C8 and is prone to drug interactions with other drugs, as detailed in Table 5 [121-124].

Table 5  Risks and monitoring suggestions of the use of hypoglycemic drugs with antihypertensive and lipid-lowering drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypoglycemic drugs</th>
<th>Combined drugs</th>
<th>Risk of interaction and adverse reaction</th>
<th>Medication recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulfonylureas:</td>
<td>Antihypertensive drugs:</td>
<td>Increased insulin sensitivity, leading to severe hypoglycemia</td>
<td>Patients should be informed about the risk of hypoglycemia in order to be prepared for the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glibenclamide, etc</td>
<td>ACEI [121] (captopril, enalapril, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glinides:</td>
<td>Antihypertensive drugs:</td>
<td>Increased risk of hypoglycemia when combined</td>
<td>The dose of repaglinides should be reduced and the frequency of blood glucose monitoring should be increased when combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repaglinides</td>
<td>ACEI [121] (captopril, enalapril, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZD:</td>
<td>Lipid-lowering drugs:</td>
<td>Gemfibrozil has a strong CYP2C8 inhibition effect, rosiglitazone and pioglitazone are mainly metabolized by CYP2C8; When used with gemfibrozil, the AUC of rosiglitazone and pioglitazone increases by 2.3 times and 3.4 times respectively</td>
<td>When starting or stopping the combination, changes in diabetes treatment may be needed based on clinical response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rosiglitazone,</td>
<td>Beite (gemfibrozil) [122]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pioglitazone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glinides:</td>
<td>Lipid-lowering drugs:</td>
<td>Regglinide is mainly metabolized by CYP2C8 and CYP3A4; AUC of regglinide increases by 8 times when combined with gemfibrozil, and its hypoglycemic effect is significantly enhanced and prolonged [123]</td>
<td>The combination use was prohibited [124]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repaglinide</td>
<td>Beite (gemfibrozil) [122]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: ACEI= angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor, AUC= the area under the subject operating characteristic curve

3.4 Risk and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic and other drug combinations in patients with diabetes and CKD

In addition to strict control of cardiovascular and renal disease risk factors such as blood glucose, blood pressure, and lipids, patients with diabetes and CKD might complicate other chronic diseases, including heart failure, thromboembolism, infection, etc., and need to be alert to the risk of using other drugs and polypharmacy in patients with CKD, as detailed in Tables 6-9.[125-130]

Table 6. The risks and monitoring recommendations of hypoglycemic drugs combined with other related drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug(s)</th>
<th>Combined drug(s)</th>
<th>Drug interaction mechanism</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metformin</td>
<td>iodinated contrast agent</td>
<td>Patients with contrast agents often have a transient GFR reduction. Metformin is mainly excreted by glomerular filtration, and the use of contrast agent can easily lead to the accumulation of metformin in the body.</td>
<td>For patients with eGFR&gt;60, Metformin can be temporarily stopped on the day of receiving iodinated contrast agent examination. For patients with 60&gt;eGFR&gt;45, stop using metformin 48 hours before receiving iodinated containing contrast agent examination [125].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α-Glycosidase inhibitors:</td>
<td>Acarbose</td>
<td>Diarrhea after taking acarbose can reduce the absorption, AUC and blood drug peak concentration of digoxin [52].</td>
<td>The dose of digoxin needs to be adjusted in combination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colestyramine</td>
<td>Colestyramine can adsorb acarbose and reduce its effect.</td>
<td>The combination should be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulfonylureas</td>
<td>fluconazole</td>
<td>Fluconazole can inhibit CYP2C9 activity, slow down the metabolism of sulfonylureas, and increase the risk of hypoglycemia. [127]</td>
<td>Monitor blood glucose and adjust the dosage of sulfonylureas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rifampicin</td>
<td>Rifampicin induces CYP2C9 activity, accelerates the metabolism of sulfonylureas, and leads to the increase of blood glucose.</td>
<td>Monitor blood glucose and adjust the dosage of sulfonylureas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glinides: Repaglinide</td>
<td>Clopidogrel</td>
<td>The metabolite of Clopidogrel can significantly inhibit CYP2C8, the metabolism enzyme of repaglinide, and increase its blood concentration. [122]</td>
<td>Avoid using together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYP3A4 inhibitors:</td>
<td>The blood concentration of Repaglinide can be increased in combination</td>
<td>Reduce the dose of Repaglinide or increase the frequency of blood glucose monitoring when combined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYP3A4/5 weak</td>
<td>The major metabolic enzyme CYP3A4/5</td>
<td>Reduce the dosage of sargliptin to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(DPP-4) inhibitor: Shaglptin

inhibitors: Ketoconazole, azanavir, etc.

CYP3A4/5 strong inducer: Rifampicin etc.

of saxagliptin will be inhibited, and the plasma concentration of Shaglptin will be increased.\[128]\.

The major metabolic enzyme CYP3A4/5 is saxagliptin will be induced.

2.5mg per day.\[129]\.

CYP3A4/5 strong inducer: Rifampicin etc.

The major metabolic enzyme CYP3A4/5 is saxagliptin will be induced.

The two agents should be used at an interval of 24 hours. It is not recommended to adjust the dosage of Shaglptin.\[130]\.

TZDs: Rosiglitazone Pioglitazone

CYP2C8 inducer: Rifampicin

Rosiglitazone and pioglitazone are mainly metabolized by CYP2C8, and their AUC may be reduced when combined with CYP2C8 inducers such as rifampicin.\[130]\.

When starting or stopping the combination, it may be necessary to change the diabetes treatment according to the clinical response.

Table 7. Recommended dose of statins in T2DM patients with CKD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug(s)</th>
<th>Recommended dosage (mg/d)</th>
<th>Eliminate</th>
<th>Dose adjustment for mild to moderate renal insufficiency</th>
<th>Dose adjustment for severe renal insufficiency (mg/d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simvastatin</td>
<td>5-40</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Use with caution, initial dose: 5 mg/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pravastatin</td>
<td>10-40</td>
<td>Liver/Kidney</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Initial dose: 10, maximum dose: 10-20 mg/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin</td>
<td>20-60</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Maximum dose: 20 mg/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluvastatin</td>
<td>20-80</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitavastatin</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Liver/Kidney</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Initial dose: 1 mg/d, maximum dose: 2 mg/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atorvastatin</td>
<td>10-80</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosuvastatin</td>
<td>5-40</td>
<td>Liver/Kidney</td>
<td>No dose adjustment required</td>
<td>Initial dose: 5 mg/d, maximum dose: 10 mg/d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Anticoagulant use in elderly T2DM patients with impaired renal function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug(s)</th>
<th>CrCl ≥ 60ml/min</th>
<th>CrCl 45~59ml/min</th>
<th>CrCl 30~44ml/min</th>
<th>CrCl 15~29ml/min</th>
<th>CrCl &lt;15ml/min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low molecular heparin</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>50% initial dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dabigatran</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apixaban</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edoxaban</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>&lt;50%, dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivaroxaban</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>&lt;50%, dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heparin</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
<td>Usual dose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Dose adjustment of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs in elderly T2DM patients with impaired renal function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug(s)</th>
<th>CrCL ≥ 60 ml/min</th>
<th>CrCL 10–50 ml/min</th>
<th>CrCL &lt; 10 ml/min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paracetamol</td>
<td>Adjust the interval of medication, q4h</td>
<td>q6h</td>
<td>q8h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibuprofen</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diclofenac</td>
<td>50%–100%</td>
<td>25%–50%</td>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meloxicam</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celecoxib</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parecoxib</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flurbiprofen axetil</td>
<td>Dose adjustment</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Characteristics of drug treatment and multi-factorial risk control in elderly patients

4.1 Characteristics of drug treatment in elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD

Based on the characteristics of elderly physiological conditions and multiple drug use in patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD, elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD also have the following drug use risks.

- In diabetic elderly patients with CKD, the significant reduction of serum albumin will change the volume of distribution of drugs and affect their clearance, and polypharmacy is more likely to cause adverse effects \[131\].
- Unlike other populations, glycemic control goals in older adults with diabetes mellitus needs more care to avoid hypoglycemia. According to the Expert Consensus on Glycated Hemoglobin (HbA1c) Control Goals and Attainment Strategies for Chinese Adults with Type 2 Diabetes \[5\] and the Chinese Guideline for the Management and Treatment of Diabetes in the Elderly (2021 Edition) \[132\], benefits may be achieved when HbA1c targets are more liberal for older patients, such as the appropriate HbA1c target values of < 7.5% in elderly diabetic patients with CKD stages 1 to 3a, < 8.0% in those with stage 3b and above, and < 8.5% in elderly diabetic dialysis patients without other end-stage chronic diseases \[133\]. Special vigilance for hypoglycemia is warranted in patients using drugs with a higher risk of hypoglycemia (e.g., insulin, sulfonylureas, glinides, etc.).
- Elderly patients with diabetes and CKD are also usually combined with cardiovascular disease as well as cognitive dysfunction and so on, so the prognosis of elderly patients with
diabetes and CKD is worse than that of patients with T2DM or CKD alone.

- Elderly patients with diabetes and CKD should be aware of the risk of acute kidney injury (AKI). Many drugs have the risk of renal injury, such as certain antimicrobials, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, certain Chinese herbs, etc. Acute kidney injury can also be induced by comorbid cardiovascular disease, sepsis, and acute hyperglycemia and ketoacidosis. When these drugs are used, the dosage and course of medication should be strictly mastered, while renal function monitoring should be enhanced.

4.2 Elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD drug treatment

multi-factorial risk control

Elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD who have a multi-factorial risk during the use of concomitant medication with hypoglycemic drugs should carefully review, collate, evaluate, and list the control planning.

- Conduct disease progression risk assessment and management, and develop multiple medication risk control plans.
- Evaluate the medication regimen plausibility and safety risks according to the physiological characteristics, drug metabolism characteristics, and medication adherence of elderly patients [134-135].
- Develop individualized treatment goals to stratify patient medication use. Instruct patients to take their medication correctly, and effectively establish communication and feedback system.

4.3 Common drug risk management for elderly patients with diabetes mellitus and CKD

- Elderly patients having a reduced sensitivity in response to β-receptor blockers and an adverse effect on glucose metabolism by the intrinsic sympathomimetic activity of the drug class itself suggest the use of selective β1-blockers or β-receptor blockers with the function of α1-receptor blockade. At the same time, regular assessment and management of blood pressure and heart rate were performed. To avoid masking hypoglycemic symptoms, β-receptor blockers should be used in caution in patients with a history of recurrent hypoglycemic episodes [136].
- In patients with concomitant ischemic heart disease, anticoagulant and antiplatelet aggregation therapy is recommended and novel glucose lowering drugs may be selected as appropriate.
- When patients with combined CKD stage 3 have heart failure, ACEI, ARB and β-receptor blockers might be used appropriately; if symptoms do not resolve, add an MRA. When patients have depressed ejection fraction, sacubitril may be used instead of ACEI / ARB, or use a novel MRA such as finerenone et al [137].
- Diabetic patients with CKD, when using ACEI / ARB class rennin-angiotensin system blockers, can continue to use when there is a small increase in serum creatinine but the increase is < 30% from baseline and in the context of euvoletic condition [138].
- In elderly diabetic patients with comorbid hypertension, complicated with kidney disease or
impaired renal function, lowering BP should avoid the combination of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, diuretics in antihypertensive drugs, ACEIs, and ARBs to reduce the occurrence of adverse events such as hyperkalemia and AKI. Routine supplementation of vitamin D or ω-3 fatty acids in T2DM patients with normal renal function or with mild renal impairment do not reduce CKD incidence or delay eGFR decline, and therefore is not recommended.

In patients with CKD presenting with anemia and hemoglobin (Hb) < 100 g / L, treatment with erythropoietin or combination of iron is recommended. Prophylactic hydration may be administered when CKD grade G3b patients require contrast media for imaging diagnosis, from 3 to 4 h before contrast media to 4-6 h after: 0.9% sodium chloride solution 1 ml / kg intravenously every hour. Keep under close observation during application and avoid heart failure.

5. Clinical frequently asked questions and recommendations for special concomitant medications in patients with diabetes and CKD

5.1 In patients with diabetes and CKD, what is the effect of aspirin use on the risk of bleeding?

**Recommendations**

- Caution is recommended for the use of aspirin in patients with diabetes mellitus complicated by CKD [6-8, 46-47, 74]. (1a, A)
- Whether the benefits outweigh the risks of bleeding with aspirin for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease in diabetic patients with CKD remains inconclusive [10-12]. (1a, A)
- Routine use of aspirin in non-elderly diabetic patients for primary prevention of cardiovascular events is not recommended [12-13]. (1a, A)
- For the prevention of cardiovascular disease in elderly patients with diabetes, it is recommended to start with low-dose aspirin and make an individualized assessment [14-16, 48, 132]. (1a, A)

**Evidence:** A Meta-analysis suggested that prophylactic use of low-dose aspirin in CKD patients may prevent the occurrence of cardiovascular events in CKD to some extent, but increase the risk of bleeding more than 1-fold in CKD patients, and similar results have been demonstrated in multiple RCT studies [6-8, 46-47, 74]. Therefore, low-dose aspirin should be used with caution in CKD patients at higher bleeding risk. A 2011 meta-review showed that aspirin reduces the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) in diabetic patients without cardiovascular disease, while there was also a trend towards higher rates of bleeding and gastrointestinal complications [10]. Whereas two Meta reviews in 2019 [11] and 2022 [9] seemed to draw opposite conclusions in the evaluation of aspirin use in CKD patients. After evaluating the risks and benefits of aspirin use for primary prevention of CVD in patients with CKD, it was found that patients had an approximately 50% increased risk of CVD major bleeding events and more than a 1-fold increase in small bleeding events, without clear evidence of benefit. Recommendations for primary prevention with aspirin are age ≥ 50 years combined with at least 1 major risk factor and no high risk of bleeding,
and aspirin is not recommended for patients at low cardiovascular risk [12-13]. The results of a Meta-analysis [14] in 2019 showed a 9% reduction in the risk of MACE but an increase in the risk of major bleeding by 24% in the subgroup aged over 60 years, thus suggesting the use of low-dose aspirin as the primary prevention strategy for CVD in patients with diabetes. Multiple RCT studies have also suggested that the use of aspirin as primary prevention for older adults (with or without diabetes mellitus) aged > 70 years carries a greater risk than benefit, and whether aspirin should be used as primary prevention in older patients needs to be evaluated clinically specifically [15-16, 48,132].

5.2 In T2DM patients with CKD, metformin combined with SGLT2i, does it affect renal function?

**Recommendations**
- There is a renal benefit of SGLT2i combination with metformin [45,49,50,75]. (1b, B)
- In T2DM patients with mild to moderate CKD (eGFR 30–60ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹), dual therapy with metformin and SGLT2i is recommended to reduce the incidence of adverse renal outcomes [49,50]. (1b, B)
- In T2DM patients with eGFR 30-90 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73m²)⁻¹ and concomitant albuminuria, dual treatment with metformin and SGLT2i is recommended to attenuate the loss of renal function, prevent end-stage renal disease, and reduce the mortality of renal disease [45]. (1b, B)

**Note:** As indicated in the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) instructions, SGLT2i is not recommended for adult T2DM patients with eGFR < 30 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹ [where dapagliflozin eGFR < 45 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹] to improve glycemic control, but may continue to be prescribed to lower eGFR and reduce the risk of end-stage renal disease, with the exception of dialysis patients. The State Food and Drug Administration of the People's Republic of China (SFDA) stipulates that metformin is contraindicated in patients with eGFR < 45 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹, whereas the FDA specifies that it is contraindicated in patients with EGFR < 30 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹.

**Evidence:** Multiple Meta-analyses have indicated that additional treatment with SGLT2i plus metformin, compared with metformin monotherapy, significantly and consistently reduced HbA1c in T2DM patients [17-24], without increasing the risk of serious adverse events [25]. Mentioned in a 2021 Meta-analysis that SGLT2i significantly reduced the risk of renal events [26], similar conclusions were also presented in several large cohort and RCT studies [4, 51-52, 76]. In a 2021 retrospective study, it was mentioned that the decline in eGFR levels after SGLT2i use could be abolished by the combination of metformin, so there was a renal benefit with the two drug combination [75]. A 2018 post hoc analysis of a phase 2 / 3 study in patients with T2DM with renal impairment suggested that dapagliflozin could be used to treat patients with CKD stage 3a [eGFR ≥ 45 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹ and < 60 ml·min⁻¹·(1.73 m²)⁻¹] [53]. In addition, more than 50% of patients in the EMPA-REG study [45], the DECLARE-TIMI study [49], the CREDENCE study [50], and the SCORED study [54] were treated with metformin in combination with SGLT2i, and each study demonstrated significant benefit in attenuating loss of renal function, preventing end-stage renal disease, and reducing renal mortality, as well as reducing the SGLT2i applicable range to
In patients with T2DM and CKD, are SGLT2i combinations associated with an increased risk of urinary and genital infections compared with metformin monotherapy when using metformin-based regimens?

**Recommendations**
- When using SGLT2i alone or in combination with metformin in patients with T2DM, both of them should be paid more attention to the risk of germline infection and should be selected carefully [27-28, 77] (1a). The significantly increased risk of germline infections when empagliflozin is administered to female patients suggests careful selection and use [77] and a switch to other agents may be considered if necessary. (1a, A)
- Patients with T2DM and CKD who choose DGLT2i need to be concerned about the high risk of germline infection. (B)
- The risk of urethral infection with SGLT2i is a matter of debate [21, 25] and there are trade-offs when they are chosen. (B)

**Evidence:** There is currently debate as to whether the combination of SGLT2i with metformin increases the risk of urinary and genital infections. Multiple Meta-analysis studies have suggested that SGLT2i increase the risk of urinary tract infections and genital infections compared with metformin alone [17-18, 21]. Similar conclusions were also presented in a retrospective cohort study in 2022, where SGLT2i used as adjunct to metformin were associated with a higher risk of reproductive and urinary tract infections compared to TZD used in combination with DPP-4 inhibitors, SU class glucose lowering agents and metformin [77]. However, several Meta-analyses have also suggested that the incidence of urinary tract infections associated with SGLT2i combinations with metformin was similar to that associated with metformin alone, although the incidence of genital infections was slightly higher in the combination group [19-20, 22]. A national Meta-analysis including 9 RCT studies with 3422 patients showed that compared with metformin alone, the combination of SGLT2i increased the risk of developing genital infection during treatment in patients with T2DM, but there was no significant difference in the risk of urinary infection [24]. A 2017 Meta-analysis including 3 RCT studies showed that SGLT2i therapy combined with metformin had no statistically significant difference in the relative risk of urinary tract infection and genital system infection compared with metformin alone [20]. However, results from a Meta-analysis including four RCT studies, 3749 patients, in 2019 showed that SGLT2i combination with metformin compared with metformin or SGLT2i monotherapy, the RR (95% CI) of urinary tract infection for combination therapy was 1.12 (0.77, 1.61) and 0.97 (0.69, 1.37), respectively; Compared with metformin and SGLT2i monotherapy, and the RR (95% CI) of genital system infection for combination therapy was 2.22 (1.33, 3.72) and 0.69 (0.50, 0.96), respectively. This result suggested that the increased risk of infection in the urinary tract and reproductive system mainly stems from SGLT2i [18]. A Meta-analysis of the dose and safety of empagliflozin suggested that female patients taking empagliflozin had a significantly higher incidence of genital and urinary tract infections than male patients [27]. Conversely, a 2020...
Meta-analysis including 51 RCT studies with 24,371 patients showed that SGLT2i significantly increased the risk of genital infection in T2DM patients, but the risk was independent of the dosage [28]. Subsequently in 2021 the team further explored the overall efficacy of different doses for T2DM patients and showed that high-dose of SGLT2i were more likely to achieve glycemic control targets compared to low-dose of SGLT2i, along with better control in blood pressure and body quality [29]. The risk of urinary and genital infections associated with SGLT2i use in combination with metformin in T2DM patients with renal dysfunction has not been reported.

5.4 ACEIs combined with ARBs in the DKD population, is there an increased risk of hyperkalemia and AKI?

【Recommendations】
- It is recommended that monotherapy with ACEI or ARB is clinically preferred, after gradually adding up to the maximum dose and then adding / switching other drugs to achieve the desired therapeutic goal, and the combination is not recommended [32], (1a, A).
- Two drug combinations can reduce proteinuria in DKD by dual blockade of the rennin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS), but the clinical benefit is limited to reduction of proteinuria, and the benefit on GFR is uncertain. There is a certain risk of hyperkalemia and AKI simultaneously [31-35], (1a, A).

Evidence: ACEI and ARB belong to the RAAS inhibitors and single agent use is effective in controlling blood pressure and reducing urinary protein levels. Multiple Meta-analyses [31-33] showed that the combination of the two drugs significantly reduced the level of proteinuria in diabetic patients, but did not improve the progression of end-stage renal disease, nor did it improve all-cause and cardiovascular mortality [31-33]. Studies have found that in patients with DKD, losartan combined with lisinopril increased the risk of hyperkalemia and AKI, suggesting that the combination of both drugs increased the risk of adverse events [34]. For blood potassium, five Meta-analyses [31-33] all reported that the combination of ARB and ACEI caused a significant increase in blood potassium, but one Meta-analysis in Chinese indicated that the combination of ARB and ACEI did not increase the risk of hyperkalemia. Jennings et al [32] mentioned in their Meta-analysis results of 10 RCT studies that RAAS dual blockade would cause a mean increase in serum potassium of 0.2 mmol / L. In addition, 1 meta-analysis including 42 RCT studies found that DKD patients with macroalbuminuria (> 300 mg / day) had a higher risk of hyperkalemia than those with microalbuminuria (30-300 mg / day) [31]. A Meta-analysis including 32 RCT studies similarly showed that patients with severe DKD (GFR < 60 ml / min or UACR > 1,000 mg / g) had a higher incidence of hyperkalemia and AKI after combination therapy, whereas patients with mild (GFR > 60 ml / min or UACR ≤ 1,000 g / g) had a similar prevalence of hyperkalemia and AKI as monotherapy [33].

5.5 Increased incidence of edema after TZD class drug treatment in T2DM patients with CKD?

【Recommendations】
- Treatment with metformin combined with TZDs increases the risk of edema development
compared with metformin alone [36-39]. (1a, A)

- Suggest that patients at high risk of edema treated with a TZD plus metformin use a small dosage (e.g., pioglitazone 7.5 mg / day) as the starting therapeutic dosage to reduce the risk of edema development [57, 78]. (2a, C)

**Evidence:** Metformin and TZD class drugs are commonly used for oral therapeutics for T2DM. Often in the clinic, when metformin alone does not achieve the ideal glucose lowering effect, consider combination medication to achieve better glucose lowering effect. At present, 2 domestic Meta-analyses [36-37] and 1 foreign systematic review [38] consistently showed that combination therapy of the two drugs could reduce blood glucose and HbA1c more effectively, while improving lipid metabolism and insulin resistance, but the incidence of simultaneous edema was significantly higher than that of metformin monotherapy. Edema is a known adverse effect associated with TZD class drugs, and its higher incidence of edema up to 11.7% has been reported in both monotherapy and combination with metformin therapy. In addition, a 2018 Meta-analysis investigating the association between oral hypoglycemic agents and the risk of macular edema [39], which included 13 studies, suggested that oral hypoglycemic agents may not be associated with the incidence of macular edema [OR (95% CI) = 1.77 (0.93, 3.37)]. But TZD class [OR (95% CI) = 2.19 (1.49, 3.21)] was a risk factor for macular edema, and the use of rosiglitazone [OR (95% CI) = 3.12 (1.30, 7.49)] increased the risk for macular edema. In response to the reported influence of TZD class on the risk of edema, a 2018 clinical study with stratified assessment based on routine clinical data and individual trial data (n = 22 379) suggested that female gender and obesity might be among the influencing factors on the risk of edema [78]. The dosage of TZDs as another contributing factor to the risk of edema was mentioned in an RCT on dose-effect [57]: compared with standard and high-dose therapy, low-dose pioglitazone was found to have a significantly lower incidence of peripheral edema in the low-dose (7.5 mg / D) pioglitazone group than in the standard dose group (15 mg / D) (3.7% vs.26.8%, P = 0.001 4), on the basis of lowering blood glucose, regulating lipid metabolism, and improving insulin resistance.

**5.6 In patients with diabetes and renal impairment, does the addition of a mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist (MRA) to an ACEI / ARB basic medication increase the risk of developing hyperkalemia?**

**Recommendations**

- Low to moderate dose of novel MRA combined with ACEI / ARB is suggested to reduce proteinuria and less cause hyperkalemia in patients with diabetes mellitus associated with renal dysfunction [58]. (1a, C)
- The risk of hyperkalemia can be reduced by thiazides or loop diuretics when used in combination with ACEI / ARB by MRA in patients with diabetes and renal dysfunction [59]. (1a, C)
- In patients with diabetes and renal dysfunction who are at high risk for hyperkalemia, blood potassium management is recommended with ACEI / ARB in combination with Finerenone, while routine blood potassium monitoring is necessary [60-61]. (1a, C)

**Evidence:**

(1) Several RCT studies have demonstrated that MRA combined with ACEI / ARB could
obviously reduce proteinuria levels in patients with DKD and effectively slow the progression of DKD [40-41, 58, 62]. In patients with persistent microalbuminuria on long-term ACE1 / ARB therapy, there was a significant renal benefit from the addition of MRA [63]. Combination use increases a patient's risk of hyperkalemia, leading to discontinuation or dose reduction [62, 64, and 79]. But for most patients, the increase in serum potassium is in a predictable and manageable range. Most hyperkalaemias are asymptomatic, not accompanied by ECG changes, and can be managed by dietary counseling and the short-term use of sodium potassium exchange resin [59]. In patients who withdraw from the study due to hyperkalemia, serum potassium can gradually return to baseline levels after discontinuation of MRA [41, 63].

(2) Multiple studies suggested that low to moderate dose of MRA as an add-on therapy to RAAS inhibitors did not observe hyperkalemia or consequent withdrawal of participants from the trial while showed benefits of lowering blood pressure, reducing urinary protein, and conferring cardiovascular [58, 65-67], most likely because patients were carefully selected, such as excluding patients with a history of hyperkalemia, close follow-up, liberal use of loop or thiazide diuretics as needed, and the relatively short duration of the study. A similar low incidence may not be seen by general clinicians in the routine use of this treatment [68].

(3) Finerenone has not yet been approved in our country. Serum potassium levels and eGFR should be measured before starting treatment. Finerenone therapy may be initiated if serum potassium is ≤ 4.8 mmol / L according to the EU and FDA instructions. If serum potassium is > 4.8 to 5.0 mmol / L, starting Finerenone therapy may be considered, with additional serum potassium monitoring within the first 4 weeks based on patient characteristics and serum potassium levels. Treatment should not be initiated if serum potassium is > 5.0 mmol / L. Finerenone starting dosage varied according to patient renal function, with eGFR ≥ 60 ml · min⁻¹ · (1.73 m²)⁻¹ patient, starting dose at 20 mg / time, 1 time / D, with eGFR ≥ 25 ml · min⁻¹ · (1.73 m²)⁻¹ and < 60 ml · min⁻¹ · (1.73 m²)⁻¹ patient, starting dose at 10 mg / time, 1 time / D, and those with an eGFR < 25 ml · min⁻¹ · (1.73 m²)⁻¹, Finerenone is not recommended.

(4) International large-scale studies such as FIGARO-DKD have shown that in patients with DKD and eGFR > 25 ml · min⁻¹ · (1.73 m²)⁻¹, who already have RAAS inhibitors, the addition of Finerenone further improves composite renal and cardiovascular outcomes, decreased proteinuria, and also a small decrease in systolic blood pressure. Routine potassium monitoring in patients with CKD and T2DM is considered appropriate to manage the risk of hyperkalemia, being able to minimize the impact of hyperkalemia. Diuretics or SGLT2i use can reduce risk. Emerging data suggest newer potassium binders may reduce this risk [60, 69].

5.7 In patients with diabetes and CKD, how should they be managed with potassium lowering agents when hyperkalemia is present?

【Recommendations】
- Diabetic patients with CKD who have hyperkalemia can be treated with potassium conjugates for potassium lowering therapy [42]. (1a, A)
- Calcium polystyrene sulfonate (CPS) is recommended for the treatment of hyperkalemia in diabetic patients with CKD when using potassium - like conjugates, especially combined with thiazide diuretics [42]. (1a, A)
- In patients with acute hyperkalemia (when serum potassium is < 6 mmol / L), zirconium
cyclosilicate sodium (SZC) is an optional drug \[^{43}\]. (1a, A)

- Patiromer reduces serum potassium in T2DM patients with CKD hyperkalemia independent of insulin use \[^{70}\]. (1b, C)
- When combined with ACEI / ARB, patiromer's medium- and low-dose potassium lowering therapy may be recommended when available \[^{71}\]. (1b, C)

**Evidence:** a Cochrane systematic review of potassium binders for hyperkalemia in CKD suggested that there were no statistical differences in the changes of serum potassium, SBP or DBP levels between CPS and sodium polydisulfide propane sulfonate (SPS) groups \[^{42}\]. In combination with thiazide diuretics, SPS increased the risk of nausea compared to CPS \[^{72}\]. SZC is the drug of choice in patients with acute hyperkalemia due to its ability to lower serum potassium levels more rapidly, with a recommended starting dose of 10 g three times / D, administered orally, and administered for a maximum of 48 h \[^{43}\]. And in patients with chronic hyperkalemia, patiromer seems to be the drug of choice \[^{44}\]. In a retrospective study, patiromer reduced serum potassium in hyperkalemia patients with T2DM and CKD, independent of insulin use \[^{70}\]. In the AMETHYST-DN (NCT01371747) study \[^{71}\], patiromer was used with ACEI / ARB alone or in combination with or without spironolactone in patients with DKD, and the results showed that (1) Patiromer (18.6g / D) at moderate doses may cause serum potassium changes in mild hyperkalemia (> 5.0 ~ 5.5 mmol / L); (2) Low dose (8.4 g / D) and moderate dose of patiromer caused changes in serum potassium in moderate hyperkalemia (> 5.5 ~ < 6.0 mmol / L); (3) When applied to diabetic patients with CKD and hyperkalemia, low and moderate dose patiromer did not affect blood glucose. The long-term efficacy and safety follow-up in the AMETHYST-DN study also found that: in heart failure patients with DKD with ACEI / ARB induced hyperkalemia, the use of patiromer was well tolerated with significant efficacy \[^{73}\].

This article has no conflict of interest.
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《Chinese Expert Consensus on Medication Safety in Polypharmacy in Type 2 Diabetics with Chronic Kidney Disease》Writing Group

Group leader: XU Ajing, ZHANG Jian

Review expert list:
Bian Xiaolan--Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine Affiliated Ruijin Hospital
Chen Wansheng--Second Affiliated Hospital of Navy Military Medical University (Changzheng Hospital, Shanghai)
Chen Xiao--First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yatsen University
Chen Zhi--First Affiliated Hospital of Zhengzhou University
Dai Haibin--Second Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University School of Medicine
Dong Yan--Xinhua Hospital affiliated with Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Duan Junli--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Fan Guorong--First People's Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Fei Aihua--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Gao Chengjin--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Gao Shen--First Affiliated Hospital of Naval Military Medical University (Changhai Hospital, Shanghai)
Ge Weihong--Gulou Hospital Affiliated to Nanjing University School of Medicine
Gu Zhichun--Ruijin Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Guo Cheng--Sixth People's Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Guo Daihong--Chinese PLA General Hospital
Jiang Ling--The First Affiliated Hospital of China University of Science and Technology (Anhui Provincial Hospital)
Jiang Ganru--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Jin Pengfei--Beijing hospital
Li Pengmei--China Japan Friendship Hospital
Li Xiaoyu--Zhongshan Hospital, Fudan University
Liao Yun--Tongren Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Liu Gaolin--First people's Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Liu Yali--Beijing Children's Hospital, Capital Medical University
Liu Zhengu--Xinhua Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Miu Liyan--First Affiliated Hospital, Suzhou University
Qiu Feng--First Affiliated Hospital, Chongqing Medical University
Su Qing--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Sun Xin--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Sun Zhouliang--Tongan campus, the First Affiliated Hospital of Xiamen University (Third Hospital of Xiamen City)
Tong Rongsheng--Affiliated Hospital of University of Electronic Science and Technology · People's Hospital of Sichuan Province
Wang Haifeng--First Hospital of Jilin University
Wang Jingwen--Xijing Hospital of Air Military Medical University
Wang Zhuo--First Affiliated Hospital of Navy Military Medical University (Changhai Hospital
Shanghai)
Wen Aidong--Xijing Hospital of Air Military Medical University
Xia Yue--Peking University People's Hospital
Xu Adong--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Yang Yong--Affiliated Hospital of University of Electronic Science and Technology · Sichuan Provincial People's Hospital
Yu Zicheng--Yangpu Hospital Affiliated to Tongji University (Central Hospital of Yangpu District, Shanghai, China)
Yuan Yongfang--Ninth People's Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Zhang Jin--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Zhang Lingli--Huaxi Second Hospital of Sichuan University
Zhang Xiaojian--First Affiliated Hospital of Zhengzhou University
Zhang Yu--Union Hospital Affiliated to Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of science and Technology
Zhao Qingwei--First Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University School of Medicine
Zhao Rongsheng--Third Hospital of Peking University
Zheng Yingli--Fuwai Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences
Zhu Deqiu--Tongji Hospital, Shanghai
Zuo Xiaocong--The Third Xiangya Hospital, Central South University

Author list:
Po Shuhong--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Chen Jihui--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Chen Yuxia--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Li Lixia--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Li Min--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Liu Yan--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Ma Jing--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Qi Xia--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Wang Fang--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Weixin--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Xu Ajing--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Yao Huijuan--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Yang Rui--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Zhang Jian--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Zhang Chun--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
Zhang Hongmei--Xinhua Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
He Xia--Affiliated Hospital of University of Electronic Science and Technology · Sichuan Provincial People's Hospital
Zhu Changyu--Affiliated Hospital of University of Electronic Science and Technology · Sichuan Provincial People's Hospital
Mei Tonglin--Beijing Nuodao Cognitive Medicine Science and Technology Co