

Clinical Update

Reason for low level of HDL in hospitalized patients is often misdiagnosed

(New England Journal of Medicine, May 2007)

In a letter to the editor of the May 2007 issue of New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. Jürg Schifferli, M.D. comments on a case study of a 64 year old patient with anemia and low HDL cholesterol levels. According to Jurg A. Schifferli, MD, the most frequent cause of a low level of HDL in hospitalized patients is simply an acute or chronic severe inflammatory disease with a marked acute phase reaction.

Schifferli states, "Negative tests for acute phase proteins are often overlooked as excellent markers of ongoing inflammation, and too often, a low albumin level is immediately regarded as evidence of malnutrition and a low HDL cholesterol level as evidence of a cardiovascular risk factor necessitating intervention. One should remember the complex changes that occur during the acute-phase reaction in a patient with inflammation or infection."

