

## Metabolic Syndrome: The drums are beating

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A well described medical condition, the prevalence of Metabolic Syndrome is matched by an equally large number of definitions, monikers, and acronyms. Known by various names such as the Deadly Quartet, Dysmetabolic Syndrome, hypertriglyceridaemic waist, insulin resistance syndrome, Syndrome W, Syndrome X, and Reaven's Syndrome, the concept describes a constellation of clinical features which increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.<sup>1</sup> In some parts of the world, apronyms have been coined to facilitate understanding of these features. CHAOS, for example used in Australia, lists five characteristics of cardiovascular dysmetabolism: Coronary artery disease, Hypertension, Atherosclerosis, Obesity, and Stroke.<sup>2</sup>

Such apronyms go one step further than common-place acronyms (e.g; NASH [non-alcoholic steatohepatitis), which are routinely used in medicine. They help by providing shorter names which convey the essence of the object of description, e.g. the chaotic nature of metabolic syndrome. These apronyms illustrate the biomedical issues related to the condition, in a manner which can easily be understood by non-medical personnel.

We suggest such a term for Metabolic Syndrome in South Asia, using the basic term 'DHOL'. The words 'dhol', 'dholl', 'dholak' and 'dholki' are used all across South Asia, to describe various types and sizes of drums. These nouns are common to most South Asian languages: Urdu, Nepali, Bengali, Sinhala, and Hindi.

The letters of this word can be used to describe the components of the metabolic syndrome (Table). Just as the metabolic syndrome can be defined by various parameters, different variants of the 'dhol' nomenclature can be used to match these definitions. It is co-incidental that south Asians have a high prevalence of metabolic syndrome as well.<sup>3</sup> Recent studies from Pakistan have reported high prevalence of all five 'dholl' features in individuals with pre-diabetes<sup>4</sup> and with diabetes.<sup>5</sup> In view of these findings, it becomes important to spread public

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**Table:** DHOL-based apronyms for Metabolic Syndrome.

D	dysglycaemia/ diabetes
H	hypertension/ high blood pressure
O	overweight/ obesity
L	LDL cholesterol/lipid
L	[for triglycerides]
aK	[microalbuminuria] kidney
Ki	[microalbuminuria] kidney

awareness and stimulate action to prevent and limit the spread of metabolic syndrome in the region.

The Journal of Pakistan Medical Association has always been proactive in public health. Using the mnemonic 'dhol', the medical profession can drum up awareness and concern about metabolic syndrome. "The drums are beating" may be used as a wake-up call for all stakeholders, including patients, the community, physician from all specialties, and policy-makers, to encourage early detection and prevention of the syndrome. As ethno-specific cut offs for definition of metabolic syndrome gain universal acceptance,<sup>6</sup> we hope that this linguo-specific apronym will achieve popularity, across South Asia, and in the South Asia diaspora. It should be able to enhance public understanding of the metabolic syndrome, and contribute to successful preventive measures for the same.

### References

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