

Exploring the Role of Coenzyme Q10 and Cytochrome C Oxidase in Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI): Implications for Treatment and Understanding Pathogenesis

Premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) is a condition in which the ovaries stop functioning prematurely, before the age of 40¹. Premature ovarian dysfunction or premature ovarian defect, affects approximately 1-2% of women under 40 years of age². POI can have varied clinical presentations. It mostly presents with primary or secondary amenorrhea, infertility, hypogonadotropic hypogonadism, or clinical hypo-estrogenism³. Although it seems like an isolated organ failure, it may show systemic findings due to a sex steroid synthesis defect¹. POI negatively affects many functions, including the individual's psychological state and quality of life. can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetic mutations, autoimmune diseases, and chemotherapy or radiation treatment⁴. POI (premature ovarian failure) has many different causes, including spontaneous genetic defects, autoimmune diseases, infections, and medical treatments. However, in many cases, the cause is unknown, and genetics is likely to play a role⁵.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a vitamin-like substance found in every cell in the body. It plays a vital role in energy production and protects cells from damage⁶. Being a cofactor that regulates the expression of genes, CoQ10 is required for signalling, transport, and metabolism in human cells. Deficiency in CoQ10 levels can cause many mitochondrial and oxidative stress pathologies, especially ageing, recessive autosomal mutations, and carcinogenesis⁷. Apart from the above medical conditions, CoQ10 are also lower in people with certain medical conditions, including premature ovarian failure (POF)⁸.

There is some evidence that CoQ10 may play a role in POF by improving mitochondrial function, reducing oxidative stress, and improving blood flow to the ovaries⁹. However,

there is not much data on whether mitochondrial pathways are damaged actually in POI patients. Apart from improving mitochondrial function which is affected by POI, CoQ10 may help in reducing oxidative stress¹⁰. CoQ10 is a powerful antioxidant that can help to protect cells from oxidative damage. CoQ10 may help to improve blood flow to the ovaries. This is important because it ensures that the ovaries receive the nutrients and oxygen they need to function properly.

Cytochrome c oxidase (CCO) is a large transmembrane protein complex found in bacteria, archaea, and mitochondria of eukaryotes. It is the last enzyme in the respiratory electron transport chain of cells located in the membrane¹¹. The active site of CCO contains a heme iron atom and a copper atom, which are essential for the transfer of electrons from cytochrome c to oxygen. It receives an electron from each of four cytochrome C molecules and transfers them to one oxygen molecule and four protons, producing two molecules of water¹². CCO is a critical enzyme for cellular respiration, and mutations in the CCO gene can lead to a variety of diseases, including Leigh syndrome, Leber hereditary optic neuropathy, mitochondrial encephalomyopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes¹³.

CCO deficiency is a rare condition, but it has been linked to several diseases, including premature ovarian failure (POF). The exact role of CCO deficiency in POF is not fully understood, but researchers believe that it may play a role in several ways such as improving mitochondrial dysfunction, reducing oxidative stress and decreasing apoptosis¹. While apoptosis is a normal process that helps to remove damaged cells from the body, excessive apoptosis can lead to the death of healthy ovarian follicles, which can contribute to

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POF.

Some studies have shown that CCO deficiency is more common in women with POF than in women without POF. For example, one study found that 20% of women with POF had CCO deficiency, compared to only 5% of women without POF². Another study found that women with POF and CCO deficiency had lower levels of anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH), which is a marker of ovarian reserve¹³. This suggests that CCO deficiency may impair ovarian function and contribute to the development of POF. Overall, the research suggests that CCO deficiency may play a role in the development of POF.

In this issue of the journal, there is a case-control study where the study authors investigated the levels of serum coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) and cytochrome C oxidase (CCO) in women with premature ovarian insufficiency (POI). The study included 104 participants, 56 with POI (group 1) and 48 healthy controls (group 2), all aged between 21 and 40 years. The control group was selected from fertile patients with normal hormone profiles and regular menstruation. Serum CoQ10 and CCO levels were measured using ELISA. The results showed that both CoQ10 and CCO levels were significantly lower in the POI group than in the control group. Additionally, serum FSH and LH levels were significantly higher in the POI group, while serum AMH and estradiol levels were significantly lower.

The authors concluded that serum CoQ10 and CCO levels are lower in women with POI than in healthy individuals. They suggested that a defect in the electron transport chain may play a role in the development of POI. The electron transport chain is a series of chemical reactions that generate energy in cells. CoQ10 is a key component of the electron transport chain, and CCO is the last enzyme in the chain. This study is significant because it provides further evidence that CoQ10 and CCO may play a role in the development of POI. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to determine whether CoQ10 supplementation could be a beneficial treatment for women with POI.

However, the study did not assess the underlying cause of POI in the participants. It is possible that the lower levels of CoQ10 and CCO in the POI group are due to the underlying cause of POI, rather than playing a role in its development. The study also did not assess the long-term effects of CoQ10

supplementation on women with POI. More research is needed to determine whether CoQ10 supplementation can improve ovarian function or fertility in women with POI. Therefore, more research is needed to determine whether CoQ10 supplementation is safe for long-term use in this population. Overall, this study provides interesting insights into the possible role of CoQ10 and CCO in the development of POI. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to determine the potential benefits and risks of CoQ10 supplementation in women with POI.

CoQ10 is anecdotally used to treat or manage a variety of disease conditions, including heart disease, Diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Migraine headaches, Fibromyalgia, Statin-induced muscle cramps, and Mitochondrial diseases. CoQ10 is also used to improve exercise performance, boost energy levels, and reduce the risk of certain types of cancer. Several studies have shown that CoQ10 supplementation may improve ovarian function and fertility in women with POF. For example, one study found that CoQ10 supplementation increased the number of eggs retrieved and fertilized during in vitro fertilization (IVF) in women with POF. Another study found that CoQ10 supplementation improved ovarian function and pregnancy rates in women with POF who were undergoing fertility treatment¹⁵.

While research studies suggest that CoQ10 supplementation may be a helpful treatment for women with POF, more research is needed to confirm that CoQ10 is safe and effective for this condition over the long term. It will be interesting to see if CoQ10 can help women with POF who have no other treatment options.

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Dr Shariq Rashid Masoodi

MD, FACP, FRCP, DM

Professor, Department of Endocrinology, SKIMS