

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of patients with biopsy-proven NAFLD, stratified by plasma NT-proBNP tertiles.

	1 st Tertile (n = 117)	2 nd Tertile (n = 116)	3 rd Tertile (n = 118)	<i>p</i> -value	* <i>p</i> -value
Demographics					
Age (years)	35.5 ± 10.2	42.2 ± 10.1	46.9 ± 13.4	<0.001	<0.001
Male (%)	106 (90.6)	88 (75.9)	64 (54.2)	<0.001	<0.001
Metabolic comorbidities					
Body mass index (kg/m ²)	27.24 ± 3.23	26.63 ± 3.42	26.04 ± 3.99	0.039	0.270
Waist circumference (cm)	92.51 ± 7.57	91.68 ± 8.84	89.51 ± 11.23	0.047	0.002
Diabetes (%)	28 (23.9)	37 (31.9)	49 (41.5)	0.016	0.004
Dyslipidemia (%)	92 (78.6)	89 (76.7)	95 (80.5)	0.779	0.663
Hypertension (%)	11 (9.4)	23 (19.8)	42 (35.6)	<0.001	<0.001
Laboratory parameters					
hs-C reactive protein (mg/l)**	2.04 ± 3.53	2.58 ± 3.92	3.38 ± 9.18	0.495	0.384
Leptin (ng/ml)**	3.17 ± 2.16	3.11 ± 3.06	3.08 ± 2.72	0.982	0.587
ALT (U/L)	96.0 ± 70.6	63.0 ± 51.3	77.9 ± 114.9	0.011	0.001
AST (U/L)	55.3 ± 39.5	41.5 ± 29.3	54.9 ± 77.8	0.080	0.780
Alkaline phosphatase (U/L)	92.0 ± 42.9	82.4 ± 26.2	88.9 ± 41.7	0.142	0.098
GGT (U/L)	82.2 ± 64.4	64.9 ± 53.9	77.2 ± 134.8	0.336	0.951
Albumin (g/L)	47.25 ± 4.33	46.13 ± 3.72	44.57 ± 4.11	<0.001	0.027
Platelet (×10 ⁹ /L)	250 ± 48	235 ± 59	246 ± 70	0.148	0.650
Prothrombin time (sec)	12.80 ± 0.70	12.82 ± 0.62	12.92 ± 0.68	0.351	0.970
Fasting glucose (mmol/L)	5.47 ± 1.38	5.54 ± 1.34	5.68 ± 1.38	0.488	0.052
Fasting insulin (mIU/L)	24.37 ± 30.90	15.13 ± 8.49	16.94 ± 15.93	0.002	0.411
HOMA-IR score	6.26 ± 9.87	3.77 ± 2.61	4.62 ± 6.34	0.022	0.280
Hemoglobin A1c (%)	5.84 ± 1.13	6.10 ± 1.45	6.43 ± 1.48	0.005	0.010
Total cholesterol (mmol/L)	5.21 ± 1.08	4.98 ± 1.17	4.88 ± 1.23	0.091	0.156

Total triglyceride (mmol/L)	2.37 ± 1.13	2.35 ± 1.77	2.03 ± 1.12	0.104	0.201
HDL-cholesterol (mmol/L)	0.98 ± 0.21	1.00 ± 0.21	1.00 ± 0.26	0.623	0.520
LDL-cholesterol (mmol/L)	3.23 ± 0.84	3.01 ± 1.03	2.93 ± 0.95	0.044	0.103
Liver histology					
NASH (%)	81 (69.2)	55 (47.4)	51 (43.2)	<0.001	0.007
Steatosis score	1.9 ± 0.9	1.5 ± 0.8	1.5 ± 1.0	<0.001	<0.001
Ballooning score	1.2 ± 0.6	1.0 ± 0.6	1.1 ± 0.7	0.014	0.013
Lobular inflammation score	1.3 ± 0.6	1.1 ± 0.7	1.1 ± 0.6	0.119	0.081
Fibrosis score	1.0 ± 0.8	0.9 ± 0.8	0.9 ± 1.0	0.667	0.390
NAS score	4 (3-5)	3 (3-4)	3 (2-5)	<0.001	0.001

Sample size, $n=351$. Data are presented as means ± SD, medians (IQRs) or frequencies.

P-values tested by the one-way ANOVA for normally distributed variables, the Kruskal Wallis Rank test for not normally distributed continuous variables or the Fisher's exact test for categorical variables.

*: P-values for trend calculated by regression tests.

1st tertile: plasma NT-proBNP ≤ 16 pg/ml; 2nd tertile 2: plasma NT-proBNP 17-33 pg/ml; 3rd tertile 3: plasma NT-proBNP ≥ 34 pg/ml.

** : plasma hs-C reactive protein and leptin levels were measured only in 177 patients with NAFLD.

Abbreviations: NT-proBNP, N-terminal pro-brain natriuretic peptide; NASH, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis; ALT, alanine aminotransferase; AST, aspartate aminotransferase; GGT, gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase; HOMA-IR, homeostasis model assessment of insulin resistance; HDL, high-density lipoprotein; LDL, low-density lipoprotein.