The Artificial Pancreas in 2016: A Digital Treatment Ecosystem for Diabetes

Diabetes Care 2016;39:1123–1126 | DOI: 10.2337/dc16-0824

With the increasing availability of continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) and continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion (CSII), the artificial pancreas (AP) (the commonly accepted term for closed-loop control [CLC] of blood glucose [BG] levels in diabetes) has become a hot area in translational research and industrial development. After a prolonged period of inpatient, clinical research center trials using cumbersome systems, the field has progressed rapidly over the past 2 years to long-term, free-living studies running AP algorithms on smartphones. Although it is still not a cure, the AP is the most promising advance in the treatment of diabetes at this time.

This issue of Diabetes Care presents today’s AP state of the art, including reports on multinational home-use AP trials, studies in young children, the use of multihormonal approaches to mitigate meal-related hyperglycemia, and discussions of AP study designs and outcome measures. This collection of articles establishes the AP as a new diabetes treatment paradigm—not a single-function CGM or CSII device but an adaptable wearable network encompassing the patient in a digital treatment ecosystem.

In its May 2014 issue, Diabetes Care featured the progress in the AP field in a series of articles labeled “Advances in Artificial Pancreas Development.” In addition to an editorial discussing the state of the art of AP development in 2014 (1), the issue included original articles that covered a broad range of topics including analyses of the possible physiological inputs to CLC (2), real-time estimation of insulin sensitivity from CGM and insulin pump data (3), engineering of the AP algorithms (4), reports of predictive low-glucose suspend (LGS) systems (5), studies of overnight CLC at home (6), feasibility of the AP in type 2 diabetes (7), and the first around-the-clock outpatient CLC running a model predictive control (MPC) algorithm on a portable AP system (8).

Since then, Nature, Science, JAMA, the New England Journal of Medicine, and Lancet have published overviews or research articles on the AP as well (9–15). These articles supported the conviction that a mechanical solution to the problem of maintaining strict control of diabetes without increasing the risk of hypoglycemia was rapidly progressing to a reality.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the AP concept can be traced back to studies in the 1970s that showed the possibility for external BG regulation using intravenous infusions of insulin and glucose and frequent BG measurements (16,17), today’s AP was made possible by advances in insulin pump technology and the introduction of real-time, minimally invasive CGM sensors (18–21). The pioneering AP study by Steil et al. (22) in 2006 was followed by a series of promising, short-term, closely supervised, inpatient investigations that demonstrated the effectiveness of hybrid CLC using manual premeal bolus dosing (23), tested different control algorithms (24,25) and the feasibility of a bihormonal “bionic” pancreas that used glucagon to prevent post-meal hypoglycemia resulting from aggressive premeal insulin (26), and demonstrated other benefits of CLC (27–30). Most of these reports showed the superiority of CLC over CSII therapy in terms of 1) increased time within target BG range (typically 70–180 mg/dL), 2) reduced incidence of hypoglycemia, and 3) better overnight control (31). These studies were supported by the JDRF Artificial Pancreas Project Consortium and the National Institutes of Health AP initiatives, which set the stage for the European AP@home Consortium launched in 2010.
SYSTEM INTEGRATION

LGS, which is now commercially available and is already a part of clinical practice, was the first half-step to CLC because it is an integrated pump and CGM system that can automatically shut off insulin delivery when sensor glucose levels fall below a preset low threshold level. The Automation to Simulate Pancreatic Insulin Response (ASPIRE) trial showed a 38% reduction in nocturnal hypoglycemia compared with CGM alone, without increasing HbA1c (32). Predictive LGS algorithms, which have the ability to shut off insulin delivery based on the projected fall of sensor glucose levels during a predefined time interval, brought this type of system to a higher level of computational sophistication when introduced in 2014. However, both of these LGS approaches are based on a simple switch to turn off insulin in response to falling glucose values and lack the defining characteristics of CLC—feedback/feedback-forward modulation of insulin delivery based on the analysis of glucose fluctuations and insulin on board.

OUTPATIENT CLC

The first step toward CLC in the outpatient setting was using a laptop-based system installed at the bedside of children at a diabetes camp (12). Other AP trials, which confirmed the feasibility of CLC outside of the hospital in adults and adolescents, used small personal computers installed in the patients’ homes (6,14,33). The University of Virginia group introduced the first wearable AP platform—the Diabetes Assistant (DiAs)—in 2011. DiAs used an Android smartphone as a computational hub, and its defining characteristic was the ability to switch smoothly between different modes of operation depending on patient preference and signal availability (34,35). Several international multisite trials confirmed the feasibility and the safety of this system in the outpatient setting (36–40).

AP TODAY

This issue of Diabetes Care presents the AP state of the art today and includes four reports on outpatient clinical trials in free-living patients: two testing the AP in adults (41,42), one in adolescents (43), and one in young children (44). One study examined whether adjunctive treatment with pramlintide and liraglutide improves CLC by mitigating postmeal glucose excursions (45) and one focused on the head-to-head comparison of two strategies: MPC and proportional integral derivative (PID) under comparable clinical conditions (46). The issue concludes with two articles related to study design issues: a consensus document aimed at identifying a minimal set of outcome measures that should be included in future studies (47) and an article that discusses design considerations for AP pivotal trials (48). Here we provide a brief guided tour on these contributions by pointing out some relevant information for each article, which should help the reader put them into context.

Anderson et al. (41) report the results of a multicenter multinational trial testing the free-living use of a wearable AP system in 30 adults, aged 18–66 years, recruited in six centers in the U.S., Italy, France, and Israel. This nonrandomized study included three 2-week periods. In the first period, the patients used a sensor-augmented pump (SAP). In the second period, they used the AP system only overnight (from 2300 to 0700 h). In the third period, they used the AP 24/7. This study used the University of Virginia’s DiAs AP platform.

Renard et al. (42) report a nonrandomized extension phase, continuing a previous AP trial (15) that tested, in free-living conditions, SAP against AP used from dinner to wake-up (evening-and-night AP). In the current study, the same AP system is used 24/7 for 1 month (day-and-night AP) in adults from the previous study (15). Day-and-night AP was compared against evening-and-night AP and SAP. The algorithm was an MPC algorithm developed at the University of Pavia, University of Padova, and University of Virginia. The algorithm was running on DiAs.

Tauschmann et al. (43) report the first outpatient trial testing in free-living, at-home day-and-night closed-loop insulin delivery in 12 adolescents, aged 15.4 ± 2.6 years, recruited in Cambridge, U.K. This randomized crossover study included two 1-week periods during which patients used either SAP or the AP. The control algorithm used was the MPC algorithm developed at the University of Cambridge. The algorithm was running on the Florence D2A wearable platform that was developed at the same university.

Del Favero et al. (44) report the results of the first study focused on outpatient day-and-night use of a single-hormone AP in 30 children, aged 5–9 years, recruited in five Italian centers and studied in a pediatric camp. This randomized crossover study included two 3-day periods during which the patient used either SAP, managed by their parent/caretakers, or SAP. The algorithm was an MPC algorithm developed at the University of Padova, University of Padova, and University of Virginia. The algorithm was running on DiAs.

Sherr et al. (45) investigated clinical strategies that used adjunctive treatment with pramlintide and liraglutide, titrated to full therapeutic doses over 3–4 weeks, to blunt exaggerated postprandial glucose excursions. In the pramlintide study, two 24-h closed-loop inpatient studies were conducted in 10 subjects, aged 16–23 years. It compared AP alone with AP plus 60-μg doses of pramlintide given with each meal. A similar study was carried out with liraglutide in 11 subjects, aged 18–27 years, who were studied before and after treatment with daily injections of 1.8 mg of liraglutide. Meals were not announced in either study.

Pinser et al. (46) compare two widely used AP control algorithms, personalized MPC and PID, under nonideal but comparable clinical conditions. The comparison was performed in 20 adults studied in a randomized crossover trial held in supervised inpatient 27.5-h AP sessions. Challenges included both announced (dinner and breakfast) and unannounced meals (lunch).

The current issue of Diabetes Care is enriched by a consensus document by Maahas et al. (47) in which a broad panel of scientists working in the field of the AP identified a minimal set of outcome measures that should be included among those presented when reporting on AP studies. This consensus on outcome measures will facilitate the interpretation of study results by investigators, regulatory bodies, health care providers, payers, and patients themselves, thereby accelerating the widespread adoption of AP technology.

Finally, Russell and Beck (48) discuss design considerations for AP pivotal studies intended to provide the necessary data to gain clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, coverage by payers, and adoption by patients and clinicians. In particular, a key aspect of study design is emphasized: the intervention to be used by the control group.
Suggested options are the currently available best technology, SAP, or the usual care. Patients often ask how many years will it be before AP systems become commercially available for the treatment of their diabetes. Although there is still much work to be done in improving these systems, our readers should be reassured by the remarkable progress that has been made during the two years since Diabetes Care’s last AP issue. However, the evidence provided in the articles published in this special issue of Diabetes Care should not be interpreted as an indication that we are nearing the end of AP development. Rather, this body of work indicates that the translation of advances in AP technology into better care for patients with diabetes is just around the corner.

Acknowledgments. W.T.C. is supported in part by National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant 1U54-GM-104940, which funds the Louisiana Clinical and Translational Science Center, and NIH grant P50-AT-002776.

Duality of Interest. B.K. reports grants from Becton, Dickson, and Co. and Sanofi; personal fees from Sanofi; and nonfinancial support from Animas Corp., Roche Diagnostics, and Tandem Diabetes Care, outside the submitted work. In addition, B.K. has patented #5862587 that was published on 22 October 2013, with royalties paid to Animas Corp.; patent PCT/US2012/043883 that was filed on 22 June 2012 and is licensed to TypeZero Technologies; and patent PCT/US2012/043910 that was filed on 23 June 2012 and is licensed to TypeZero Technologies. B.K. is a shareholder in TypeZero Technologies. W.V.T. is a consultant for Medtronic, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi, and AstraZeneca. W.T.C. has served as principal investigator on clinical research grants received by his institutions from AstraZeneca, Janssen, MannKind Corp., and Sanofi and has served as a consultant for Intarcia Therapeutics and Sanofi. C.C. holds patent applications related to diabetes technology and received research support from Dexcom, Sanofi, and Adocia and nonfinancial research support from Dexcom and Roche Diagnostics.

References
1. Cefalu WT, Tamborlane WV. The artificial pancreas: are we there yet? Diabetes Care 2014;37:1182–1183
2. Kudva YC, Carter RE, Kobell C, Basu R, Basu A. Closed-loop artificial pancreas systems: physiological input to enhance next-generation devices. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1184–1190
3. Schiavon M, Dalla Man C, Kudva YC, Basu A, Kobell C. Quantitative estimation of insulin sensitivity in type 1 diabetic subjects wearing a sensor-augmented insulin pump. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1216–1223
4. Doyle FJ 3rd, Huyett LM, Lee JB, Zisser HC, Dassau E. Closed-loop artificial pancreas systems: engineering the algorithms. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1191–1197
5. Beck RW, Raghinaru D, Wadwa RP, Chase HP, Maahs DM, Buckingham BA; In Home Closed Loop Study Group. Frequency of morning ketosis after overnight insulin suspension using an automated nocturnal predictive low glucose suspend system. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1224–1229
6. Hovorka R, Elleri D, Thabt H, et al. Overnight closed-loop insulin delivery in young people with type 1 diabetes: a free-living, randomized clinical trial. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1204–1211
7. Kumareswaran K, Thabt H, Leelarathna L, et al. Feasibility of closed-loop insulin delivery in type 2 diabetes: a randomized controlled study. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1198–1203
8. Del Favero S, Bruttomesso D, Di Palma F, et al.; AP@home Consortium. First use of model predictive control in outpatient wearable artificial pancreas. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1212–1215
9. Dolgin E. Medical devices: managed by machine. Nature 2012;485:S6–S8
10. Clery D. Medicine. A pancreas in a box. Science 2014;343:133–135
11. Hampton T. Fully automated artificial pancreas finally within reach. JAMA 2014;311:2260–2261
12. Philip M, Battelino T, Atlas E, et al. Nocturnal glucose control with an artificial pancreas at a diabetes camp. N Engl J Med 2013;368:824–833
13. Russel SJ, El-Khatib FH, Sinha M, et al. Outpatient glycemic control with a bionic pancreas in type 1 diabetes. N Engl J Med 2014;371:313–325
14. Thabit H, Tauchmann M, Allen JM, et al.; APCam Consortium; AP@home Consortium. Home use of an artificial beta cell in type 1 diabetes. N Engl J Med 2015;373:2129–2140
15. Kropff J, Del Favero S, Place J, et al.; AP@home Consortium. 2 month evening and night closed-loop glucose control in patients with type 1 diabetes under free-living conditions: a randomised crossover trial. Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol 2015;3:939–947
16. Albisser AM, Leibel BS, Ewart TG, Davidovac Z, Botz CK, Zingg W. An artificial endocrine pancreas. Diabetes 1978;19:23–396
17. Mirouze J, Selam J, Pham TC, Cavadore D. Evaluation of exogenous insulin homeostasis by the artificial pancreas in insulin-dependent diabetes. Diabetologia 1977;13:273–278
18. Pickup JC, Keen H, Parsons JA, Alberti KG. Continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion: an approach to achieving normoglycemia. BMJ 1978;1:204–207
19. Tamborlane WV, Sherwin RS, Genel M, Felig P. Reduction to normal of plasma glucose in juvenile diabetes by subcutaneous administration of insulin with a portable infusion pump. N Engl J Med 1979;300:573–578
20. Hirsch IJ, Armstrong D, Bergensdal RM, et al. Clinical application of emerging sensor technologies in diabetes management: consensus guidelines for continuous glucose monitoring (CGM). Diabetes Technol Ther 2008;10:232–244; quiz 245–246
21. Tamborlane WV, Beck RW, Bode BW, et al.; Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Continuous Glucose Monitoring Study Group. Continuous glucose monitoring and intensive treatment of type 1 diabetes. N Engl J Med 2008;359:1464–1476
22. Steil GM, Rebrin K, Darwin C, Hariri F, Saad MF. Feasibility of automating insulin delivery for the treatment of type 1 diabetes. Diabetes 2006;55:3344–3350
23. Weinzimer SA, Steil GM, Swan KL, Dziura J, Kurtz N, Tamborlane WV. Fully automated closed-loop insulin delivery versus semiautomated hybrid control in pediatric patients with type 1 diabetes using an artificial pancreas. Diabetes Care 2008;31:934–939
24. Kovatchev B, Cobelli C, Renard E, et al. Multisinusional study of subcutaneous model-predictive closed-loop control in type 1 diabetes mellitus: summary of the results. J Diabetes Sci Technol 2010;4:1374–1381
25. Atlas E, Nimri R, Miller S, Grunberg EA, Phillip M. MD-logic artificial pancreas system: a pilot study in adults with type 1 diabetes. Diabetes Care 2010;33:1072–1076
26. El-Khatib FH, Russell SJ, Nathan DM, Sutherland RG, Damiano ER. A bim Hormonal closed-loop artificial pancreas for type 1 diabetes. Sci Transl Med 2010;2:27ra27
27. Hovorka R, Kumareswaran K, Harris J, et al. Overnight closed loop insulin delivery (artificial pancreas) in adults with type 1 diabetes: cross-over randomised controlled studies. BMJ 2011;342:d1855
28. Breton M, Farret A, Bruttomesso D, et al.; International Artificial Pancreas Study Group. Fully integrated artificial pancreas in type 1 diabetes: modular closed-loop glucose control maintains normoglycemia. Diabetes 2012;61:2230–2237
29. Luifj YM, DeVries JH, Zwijnderman K, et al.; AP@home Consortium. Day and night closed-loop control in adults with type 1 diabetes: a comparison of two closed-loop algorithms driving continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion versus patient self-management. Diabetes Care 2013;36:3882–3887
30. Zisser H, Renard E, Kovatchev B, et al.; Control to Range Study Group. Multicenter closed-loop insulin delivery study points to challenges for keeping blood glucose in a safe range by a control algorithm in adults and adolescents with type 1 diabetes from various sites [published correction appears in Diabetes Technol Ther 2015;17:68]. Diabctes Technol Ther 2014;16:613–622
31. Cobelli C, Renard E, Kovatchev B. Artificial pancreas: past, present, future. Diabetes 2011;60:2672–2682
32. Bergenstal RM, Klonoff DC, Garg SK, et al.; ASPIRE In-Home Study Group. Threshold-based insulin-pump interruption for reduction of hypoglycemia. N Engl J Med 2013;369:224–232
33. Thabit H, Lubina-Solomon A, Stadler M, et al. Home use of closed-loop insulin delivery for overnight glucose control in adults with type 1 diabetes: a 4-week, multicentre, randomised crossover study. Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol 2014;2:701–709
34. Keith-Hynes P, Mize B, Robert A, Place J. The Diabetes Assistant: a smartphone-based system for real-time control of blood glucose. Electronics 2014;3:609–623
35. Cobelli C, Renard E, Kovatchev BP, et al. Pilot studies of wearable outpatient artificial pancreas in type 1 diabetes. Diabetes Care 2012;35:665–677
36. Kovatchev BP, Renard E, Cobelli C, et al. Feasibility of outpatient fully integrated closed-loop control: first studies of wearable artificial pancreas. Diabetes Care 2013;36:1851–1858
37. Kovatchev BP, Renard E, Cobelli C, et al. Safety of outpatient closed-loop control: first randomized crossover trials of a wearable artificial pancreas. Diabetes Care 2014;37:1789–1796
38. Ly TT, Breton MD, Keith-Hynes P, et al. Overnight glucose control with an automated, unified safety system in children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes at diabetes camp. Diabetes Care 2014;37:2310–2316
39. Brown SA, Kovatchev BP, Breton MD, et al. Multinight “bedside” closed-loop control for patients with type 1 diabetes. Diabetes Technol Ther 2015;17:203–209
40. Del Favero S, Place J, Kropff J, et al.; AP@home Consortium. Multicenter outpatient dinner/overnight reduction of hypoglycemia and increased time of glucose in target with a wearable artificial pancreas using modular model predictive control in adults with type 1 diabetes. Diabetes Obes Metab 2015;17:468–476
41. Anderson SM, Raghinaru D, Pinsker JE, et al.; Control to Range Study Group. Multinational home use of closed-loop control is safe and effective. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1143–1150
42. Renard E, Farret A, Kropff J, et al.; AP@home Consortium. Day-and-night closed-loop glucose control in patients with type 1 diabetes under free-living conditions: results of a single-arm, 1-month experience compared with a previously reported feasibility study of evening and night at home. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1151–1160
43. Tauschmann M., Allen JM, Wilinska ME, et al. Day-and-night hybrid closed-loop insulin delivery in adolescents with type 1 diabetes: a free-living, randomized clinical trial. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1168–1174
44. Del Favero S, Boscarf F, Messori M, et al. Randomized summer camp crossover trial in 5- to 9-year-old children: outpatient wearable artificial pancreas is feasible and safe. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1180–1185
45. Sherr JL, Patel NS, Michaud CI, et al. Mitigating meal-related glycemic excursions in an insulin-sparing manner during closed-loop insulin delivery: the beneficial effects of adjunctive pramlintide and liraglutide. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1127–1134
46. Pinsker JE, Lee JB, Dassau E, et al. Randomized crossover comparison of personalized MPC and PID control algorithms for the artificial pancreas. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1135–1142
47. Maahs DM, Buckingham BA, Castle JR, et al. Outcome measures for artificial pancreas clinical trials: a consensus report. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1175–1179
48. Russell SJ, Beck RW. Design considerations for artificial pancreas pivotal studies. Diabetes Care 2016;39:1161–1167