

1        **Expression of inflammation-related genes in gluteal and abdominal subcutaneous adipose**  
2        **tissue during weight-reducing dietary intervention in obese women**

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4        **Running title:** Gene expression in gluteal and abdominal fat during diet

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22 **Summary**

23

24 Accumulation of adipose tissue in lower body lowers risk of cardiovascular and metabolic disorders.

25 The molecular basis of this protective effect of gluteofemoral depot is not clear. The aim of this study

26 was to compare the profile of expression of inflammation-related genes in subcutaneous gluteal

27 (sGAT) and abdominal (sAAT) adipose tissue at baseline and in response to multiphase weight-

28 reducing dietary intervention (DI). 14 premenopausal healthy obese women underwent a 6 months'

29 DI consisting of 1 month very-low-calorie-diet (VLCD), subsequent 2 months' low-calorie-diet and 3

30 months' weight maintenance diet (WM). Paired samples of sGAT and sAAT were obtained before

31 and at the end of VLCD and WM periods. mRNA expression of 17 genes (macrophage markers,

32 cytokines) was measured using RT-qPCR on chip-platform.

33 At baseline, there were no differences in gene expression of macrophage markers and cytokines

34 between sGAT and sAAT. The dynamic changes induced by DI were similar in both depots for all

35 genes except for three cytokines (IL6, IL10, CCL2) that differed in their response during weight

36 maintenance phase. The results show that, in obese women, there are no major differences between

37 sGAT and sAAT in expression of inflammation-related genes at baseline conditions and in response

38 to the weight-reducing DI.

39

40 **Keywords:** body fat distribution, hypocaloric diet, macrophages, cytokines

41

## 42 **Introduction**

43 Obesity is associated with higher risk of metabolic and cardiovascular diseases. In addition to body  
44 mass index (BMI), body fat distribution plays a major role in the development of the above  
45 mentioned diseases. While upper body fat accumulation is associated with increased obesity-related  
46 health risk, the lower body fat accumulation was shown to be linked with the reduction of metabolic  
47 (Snijder, *et al.* 2004), cardiovascular risk (Canoy, *et al.* 2007, Faloia, *et al.* 2009, Seidell, *et al.* 2001)  
48 and with lower morbidity and mortality (Folsom Ar and Et Al. 1993, Pischon, *et al.* 2008). The  
49 increased amount of lower body fat - expressed as hip circumference - was associated with lower  
50 triacylglycerol and higher HDL cholesterol levels (Ruige and Van Gaal 2009).

51 Possible mechanisms that may contribute to the subcutaneous gluteal adipose tissue (sGAT)  
52 protective role have not been fully elucidated. Different uptake and release of fatty acids in the  
53 subcutaneous abdominal (sAAT) when compared to sGAT have been suggested as a candidate  
54 underlying cause (Berman, *et al.* 1998, Berman, *et al.* 2004). In several studies, the activity of  
55 lipoprotein lipase (LPL) was found to be higher (Arner, *et al.* 1991, Ferrara, *et al.* 2002) in sGAT in  
56 obese women. This might suggest a higher capacity of sGAT for lipid accumulation.

57 In addition to alteration of adipose tissue (AT) fatty acid handling, the obesity-related metabolic  
58 disturbances are linked with pro-inflammatory state of AT characterized by enhanced recruitment of  
59 macrophages in AT and modified AT secretion of cytokines (Klimcakova, *et al.* 2011, O'hara, *et al.*  
60 2009, Suganami and Ogawa 2010, Trayhurn and Wood 2004). Thus, it may be hypothesized that  
61 differences in the inflammation-related characteristics underlie the differences in metabolic role of  
62 sGAT when compared with sAAT. Few studies paid attention to this topic. Recently, Evans *et al.*

63 showed that sGAT had, contrary to the expectation, greater mRNA expression of a set of pro-  
64 inflammatory genes than sAAT (Evans, *et al.* 2011).

65 Thus the first aim of our study was to compare, in obese women, expression of wider range of  
66 cytokines and macrophage markers in sGAT vs. sAAT (selected according to our previous studies of  
67 Capel, *et al.* 2009, Klimcakova, *et al.* 2011, Siklova-Vitkova *et al.* 2012) and their association with  
68 indices of metabolic syndrome. Our second aim was to explore the regulation of expression of the  
69 above mentioned genes in a dynamic condition that was realized by a dietary intervention (DI) using  
70 hypocaloric diet. It was shown previously that hypocaloric diet-induced changes in adipocyte  
71 lipolysis (Mauriege, *et al.* 1999) or in adipocyte size (Bjorntorp, *et al.* 1975) were less pronounced in  
72 sGAT when compared with sAAT. We hypothesized that this impaired responsiveness, or  
73 “inflexibility”, of sGAT might also appear in respect to the diet-induced modulation of gene  
74 expression of immunity-related genes. Thus, we measured mRNA expression of the respective genes  
75 in the paired samples of sGAT and sAAT obtained in obese women before and during multiple  
76 phases of a 6 months’ hypocaloric DI.

77

78 **Materials and Methods**

79 STUDY DESIGN

80 *Subjects*

81 14 premenopausal obese women (BMI  $34.2 \pm 2.6$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>, range 27 – 49 yr) without medication and  
82 diseases except for obesity participated in this study. Their body weight had been stable for 3 months  
83 prior to the examination. The informed consent was obtained from each patient before the study. The  
84 study was performed according to the Declaration of Helsinki protocols and was approved by Ethical  
85 Committee of the Third Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague.

86 *Dietary intervention and clinical investigation*

87 The entire DI lasted 6 months. During the first dietary period, obese subjects received a very low  
88 calorie diet (VLCD) of 800 kcal/day (liquid formula diet, Redita, Promil, Czech Republic) for 1  
89 month. The subsequent period consisted of a 2 months' low-calorie diet (LCD) followed by 3  
90 months' weight maintenance (WM) diet. LCD was designed to provide 600 kcal/day less than the  
91 individually estimated energy requirement based on an initial resting metabolic rate multiplied by 1.3,  
92 the coefficient of correction for physical activity level. Patients consulted a dietician once a week  
93 during the first 3 months of the program and once a month during subsequent phase. They provided a  
94 written 3 days' dietary record at each dietary consultation.

95 Complete clinical investigation including anthropometric measurements, blood sampling and AT  
96 biopsies was performed in the morning in the fasting state before the beginning of the diet and at the  
97 end of VLCD and WM periods.

98 The whole body composition was evaluated by multi-frequency bioimpedance (Bodystat, Quad scan  
99 4000, Isle of Man, UK). The blood was collected and centrifuged at 1300 RPM, 4°C, separated  
100 plasma was stored at -80°C until analysis. The paired samples of subcutaneous AT were obtained  
101 from the subcutaneous abdominal (10 cm lateral to the umbilicus) and gluteal (right upper quadrant)  
102 region using needle biopsy under local anesthesia (1% Xylocaine). AT samples were obtained from  
103 superficial sAAT, as we verified on several occasions using ultrasonography. AT was washed in  
104 physiological saline, aliquoted, snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C until processing.

#### 105 *Laboratory measurements*

106 Plasma glucose was determined using the glucose-oxidase technique (Beckman Instruments,  
107 Fullerton, CA). Plasma insulin was measured using an Immunotech Insulin Irma kit (Immunotech,  
108 Prague, Czech Republic). Homeostasis model assessment of the insulin resistance index (HOMA-IR)  
109 was calculated as follows: ((fasting insulin in mU/l) x (fasting glucose in mmol/l) / 22.5). Plasma  
110 levels of other relevant substances were determined using standard clinical biochemistry methods.  
111 Plasma levels of cytokines were determined using multiplex human cytokines Milliplex panels  
112 (Millipore-Merck, Bedford, MA, USA).

#### 113 *Gene expression analysis*

114 Total RNA was isolated from 100-300 mg aliquots of AT using RNeasy Lipid Tissue RNA Mini kit  
115 (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). RNA concentration was measured by Nanodrop1000 (Thermo Fisher  
116 Scientific, Wilmington, Delaware, USA). Genomic DNA was removed by DNase I treatment  
117 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad CA, USA). cDNA was obtained by reverse transcription (High Capacity cDNA  
118 Reverse Transcription Kit, Applied Biosystem, Carlsbad, CA, USA) using 200 ng of total RNA. 1 ng

119 of cDNA was then preamplified to improve detection of target genes during subsequent Real Time  
120 qPCR (16 cycles, TaqMan Pre Amp Master Mix Kit, Applied Biosystem). For the preamplification,  
121 20 x TaqMan gene expression assays of all target genes were pooled together and diluted with 1x TE  
122 buffer to the final concentration 0.2x (each probe). The RT-qPCR was performed on Biomark Real  
123 Time qPCR system and 96x96 chip (Fluidigm, USA) in triplicates. This part of analysis was carried  
124 out as a paid service by Biotechnology Institute, AS CR.

125 Expression of 17 genes grouped according to their origin or function was measured: cytokines (IL6,  
126 TNF, CCL2, CXCL1, IL10, TGF $\beta$ 1, IL10RA) and cytokine receptor (CCR2), macrophage markers  
127 (SPP1, CD68, MSR1, PLA2G7, ACP5, FCGBP, CD14, TLR4, TLR2). Macrophage markers were  
128 selected according to the work of Capel (Capel, *et al.* 2009) and Klimcakova (Klimcakova, *et al.*  
129 2011) and cytokines produced predominantly by cells of stromavascular fraction were chosen  
130 according to study of Siklova (Siklova-Vitkova, *et al.* 2012) so that comparisons of outcomes  
131 between this and our previous studies were enabled. Expression data were normalized to expression  
132 of reference gene, PPIA, and delta Ct was log-transformed for statistical analysis.

### 133 *Statistical analysis*

134 The data from RT-qPCR were analyzed with Genex software (MultiD Analysis AB, Sweden) and  
135 SPSS version 13.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). For all the analyses the data were log-  
136 transformed. One way ANOVA was used for comparison of gene expression separately in each  
137 depot, the effect of sAAT *vs.* sGAT on the diet-induced changes was estimated by two way ANOVA  
138 with repetitive measures and Tukey's posthoc analysis. The level of significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .  
139 Clinical and anthropometrical data were analyzed with GraphPad Prism 5.0. (La Jolla, CA, USA).  
140 Correlations were performed using Pearson's parametric test.

141 **Results**

142 *Effect of dietary intervention on anthropometrical and plasma variables*

143 The clinical data of the entire group of subjects at baseline and during the DI are presented in Table 1.  
144 When compared to baseline, the subjects' body weight decreased by 8.0 % after the VLCD and  
145 decreased further during subsequent period so that the weight loss at the end of WM represented  
146 11.1% of the original weight. BMI, fat mass, waist and hip circumference showed a similar pattern.  
147 The relative decrease of waist circumference was greater than that of hip circumference at the end of  
148 VLCD as well as at the end of the entire DI (VLCD: waist:  $-6.8 \pm 0.3\%$ , hip:  $-4.2 \pm 0.3\%$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ,  
149 the end of DI: waist:  $-8.6 \pm 0.2\%$ , hip:  $-5.9 \pm 0.3\%$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). Plasma levels of insulin were lower at  
150 the end of VLCD when compared to baseline condition and remained lower at the end of WM.  
151 Glycaemia and total cholesterol decreased after VLCD and returned to the baseline levels at WM.  
152 Free fatty acid levels were increased after VLCD and decreased below the baseline values at the end  
153 of the WM. Insulin resistance assessed by HOMA-IR decreased during VLCD and remained reduced  
154 at the end of WM phase. The changes of plasma levels of cytokines IL10, IL6, TNF, CCL2 were in  
155 line with our previous study (Siklova-Vitkova, *et al.* 2012).

156

157 *Comparison of gene expression in gluteal and abdominal subcutaneous AT in obese women at pre-*  
158 *diet condition (Figure1)*

159 To compare gene expression profile in sAAT and sGAT, we measured mRNA expression of 17 genes  
160 divided into 2 functional groups: macrophage markers (9 genes), cytokines (8 genes), and reference  
161 gene PPIA. The expression of macrophage markers was similar in both depots except for two genes,  
162 ACP5 and MSR1 that had higher expression in sGAT compared to sAAT (Figure 1A). There were no

163 depot-related differences in the expression of all measured cytokines (TNF, IL6, CCR2, CXCL1,  
164 IL10, TGFβ1) with exception of IL10RA (higher in sGAT) and CCL2 (lower in sGAT) (Figure 1B).

165

166 *Effect of dietary intervention on gene expression in gluteal and abdominal subcutaneous AT*  
167 *(Figure 2, Table 2)*

168 The evolution of the mRNA expression for individual genes during DI is shown in Figure 2.  
169 Schematic representation of the direction and significance of the diet-induced changes of gene  
170 expression during VLCD and during the entire DI in each depot is presented in Table 2.

171 *Macrophage markers (Figure 2A-2B)*

172 The expression of 6 macrophage markers (CD68, ACP5, FCGBP, MSR1, PLA2G7, SPP1) increased  
173 during VLCD in both depots while expression of 3 remaining markers (CD14, TLR4, TLR2) was not  
174 changed in both depots. At the end of WM, the mRNA levels of all macrophage markers were not  
175 different from the baseline values in both depots (*Figure 2A-2B*).

176 *Cytokines (Figure 2C-2D)*

177 During VLCD, the mRNA levels of 5 cytokines (TNF, IL6, IL10RA, TGFβ1, CXCL1) did not  
178 change in either depot, CCL2 increased and CCR2 decreased in both depots and IL10 showed a  
179 significant increase selectively in sAAT.

180 At the end of DI, IL10 and CCL2 mRNA levels were higher than baseline values in sGAT while, in  
181 sAAT, the mRNA levels of these two cytokines as well as those of IL6, IL10RA and TNF were lower  
182 when compared with the baseline.

183 The diet-induced changes of mRNA levels were similar in the two depots for all of the cytokine genes  
184 with 3 exceptions: during the entire DI, expression of IL10, IL6, and CCL2 decreased in sAAT while  
185 it increased or was unaltered in sGAT.

186 *Summary of the comparison of the diet-induced responses of the gene expression in sGAT and sAAT*

187 For majority of measured genes no differences in the diet-induced changes between sGAT and sAAT  
188 were found. Different responses were found only for the 3 cytokines (IL10, IL6, CCL2): their  
189 decrease during the entire DI was pronounced in sAAT but not in sGAT.

190 *Correlations*

191 No correlations between the diet-induced changes of mRNA expression of examined genes in sGAT  
192 vs. sAAT were found. No correlations were found between the diet-induced changes of plasma levels  
193 of IL10, IL6, TNF, CCL2 and the changes in the expression of these genes in either sGAT or sAAT.  
194 In addition, no correlations between the diet-induced changes of mRNA expression of examined  
195 genes and those of BMI or HOMA-IR were found.

196 **Discussion**

197 It was hypothesized that the protective role of AT accumulation in the lower body, in respect to  
198 cardiovascular risk and metabolic disturbances, might be based on the lower pro-inflammatory profile  
199 of sGAT. However, recent work of Evans et al. (Evans, *et al.* 2011) reported that the expression of  
200 several pro-inflammatory markers was higher in sGAT compared to sAAT in a mixed group of lean  
201 and obese black and white South African women. Our work extended the range of explored genes and  
202 showed that, in a wide group of cytokines and macrophage markers, there were, with exception of 4  
203 genes, no differences between sAAT and sGAT at baseline. Taken together, our and Evans' results do  
204 not support the hypothesis of the lower pro-inflammatory profile of sGAT. This is in line with the  
205 finding reported by Tchoukalova et al. (Tchoukalova, *et al.* 2010) that subcutaneous abdominal and  
206 femoral fat depot did not differ in number of macrophages in lean men and women.

207 The main interest of this study lies in the comparison of gene regulation in sAAT vs. sGAT in  
208 dynamic condition represented by two phases of a 6 months' dietary intervention. The pattern of the  
209 expression of macrophage markers observed in this study, including the increase during initial VLCD  
210 phase is in agreement with our previous work carried out in sAAT in another cohort of subjects  
211 (Capel, *et al.* 2009). The pattern is bi-phasic, characterized by an increased expression during VLCD  
212 and a decrease towards baseline values during subsequent weight maintenance phase of the diet.  
213 Increased expression of macrophage markers during VLCD might be associated with enhanced fatty  
214 acids release from adipocytes as a possible trigger of macrophage activation and infiltration mediated  
215 by TLR4 signaling as shown before (Kosteli, *et al.* 2010, Suganami, *et al.* 2005). Importantly, this bi-  
216 phasic response of macrophage markers expression was similar in sGAT when compared with sAAT  
217 (*Figure 2, Table 2*) and the magnitudes of the diet-induced changes were not different in the two fat  
218 depots (*Table 2*). This finding suggests the same regulation of macrophage infiltration in sGAT and  
219 sAAT during weight-reducing dietary intervention.

220 The bi-phasic pattern of the diet-induced regulation was found also in the expression of cytokines  
221 derived predominantly from the cells of stromavascular fraction. This pattern was in accordance with  
222 previous results obtained in sAAT in a different cohort of subjects (Siklova-Vitkova, *et al.* 2012). The  
223 magnitudes of the diet-induced changes were not different between sGAT and sAAT - except for  
224 three cytokines - IL6, IL10 and CCL2. The observed variability in respect to the individual cytokine  
225 genes is, again, in agreement with the above mentioned study of Siklova et al.: in that study the same  
226 three cytokine genes were the only ones that showed a significant decrease in sAAT at the end of  
227 dietary intervention. This partial differential depot-related response - limited to the expression of the  
228 three cytokines - might be linked to differential response of endocannabinoid system as observed in  
229 the study of Bennetzen (Bennetzen, *et al.* 2011). In fact, during the weight-reducing diet the authors

230 found different change of expression of cannabinoid receptor type 1 in sGAT when compared with  
231 sAAT. And endocannabinoids were shown to inhibit production of several proinflammatory  
232 cytokines in primary human Muller cells (Krishnan and Chatterjee 2012). This mechanism could be  
233 taken into account, although no such regulation has been reported in adipose tissue. Moreover, in  
234 resting condition, Rantalainen et al. found differential expression of 12% of measured microRNA  
235 (e.g. miR146-5b, miR-21, miR155) in sGAT when compared with sAAT which could imply a  
236 differential expression of targets of these microRNA such as IL10 (Quinn and O'Neill 2011) in the  
237 two fat depots (Rantalainen, *et al.* 2011).

238 The lack of correlations in gene expression changes between sAAT and sGAT suggests that, in spite  
239 of the similar pattern of the diet-induced response of the gene expression in the two fat depots, there  
240 is no direct quantitative association of the magnitude of the change between these two depots. In light  
241 of our and others results demonstrating the absence of major differences between sGAT and sAAT it  
242 has been suggested that the deleterious effect of upper body obesity could be mediated by the excess  
243 of visceral adipose tissue (VAT) and not excess of sAAT. Nevertheless, several studies showed that  
244 both, VAT and sAAT, are associated with the increased risk of metabolic profile and pro-  
245 inflammatory status (although the association was stronger with VAT) (Fox *et al.* 2007, Oka *et al.*  
246 2010, Pou *et al.* 2007).

247 Furthermore, it should be noted that the present study compared sGAT and sAAT on transcriptional  
248 level. Due to the lack of sufficient amount of adipose tissue we did not explore the protein levels of  
249 cytokines in adipose tissues or their levels of secretion. It is not excluded that the underlying causes  
250 of different physiological impact of sGAT vs. sAAT may be at the level of translation or post-  
251 translational regulations of cytokine production or release.

252 It is to be noted that the results of this study are limited to women. Female adipose tissue shows  
253 different metabolic and endocrine characteristics (Kern, *et al.* 2003, Montague, *et al.* 1997) when  
254 compared with men. Moreover, the initial fat distribution in our set of women (mean WHR=  
255  $0.861\pm 0.0$ ) might play a role in the diet-induced response of the two fat depots although the reports  
256 on the effect of initial fat distribution on the body fat reduction are not unequivocal (Svendsen, *et al.*  
257 1995, Jones and Edwards, 1999).

258 In conclusion, we did not find major differences in mRNA levels of macrophage markers and  
259 cytokines between sAAT and sGAT at baseline condition or in the pattern of their regulation in  
260 response to two phases of hypocaloric weight-reducing dietary intervention (with exception of 3  
261 cytokines that were differentially regulated during weight maintenance phase). Therefore, our results  
262 do not bring evidence of an altered pro-inflammatory status or an altered “responsiveness” of immune  
263 cells in sGAT when compared with sAAT. Further research elucidating the molecular base of the  
264 protective role of sGAT fat depot is therefore warranted.

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## 270 **Conflicts of interests**

271 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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**Table 1.** Clinical characteristics of subjects and plasma levels of cytokines before dietary intervention (basal) and at the end of VLCD and weight maintenance (WM) phase of the dietary intervention.

	<b>Basal</b>	<b>VLCD</b>	<b>WM</b>
<b>Age (year)</b>	27-49		
<b>BMI (kg/m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	34.2±0.2	31.5±0.2***	30.4±0.2 †††
<b>Weight (kg)</b>	93.5 ± 0.6	86.0 ±0.6***	83.1±0.7 †††
<b>Waist circumference (cm)</b>	102.3±0.4	95.4±0.6***	93.6±0.6 †††
<b>Hip circumference (cm)</b>	119.1±0.5	114.1±0.5***	112.1±0.5 †††
<b>Waist to hip ratio (cm)</b>	0.861±0.0	0.838±0.0*	0.836±0.0††
<b>Fat mass (%)</b>	41.9±0.3	39.4±0.4***	37.2±0.4†††
<b>FFM (%)</b>	58.1±0.3	60.1±0.4*	63.0±0.5†††
<b>Glucose (mmol/l)</b>	4.9 ±0.4	4.6 ±0.0*	4.7±0.0
<b>Insulin (mIU/l)</b>	11.7±0.8	8.0±0.3*	9.0±0.4†
<b>FFA (µmol/l)</b>	842±60.1	1190±28.2*	676±13.5†
<b>Triglycerides (mmol/l)</b>	1.6±0.0	1.2±0.0	1.5±0.0
<b>HDLcholesterol (mmol/l)</b>	2.0±0.0	1.2±0.0	1.6±0.0

<b>Total cholesterol (mmol/l)</b>	5.2±0.0	4.3±0.0***	5.2±0.0
<b>HOMA-IR</b>	2.6±0.1	1.7±0.1*	1.9±0.1††
<b>hs-CRP (mg/l)</b>	5.8±0.4	4.2±0.3	4.0±0.3†
<b>IL10 (pg/ml)</b>	1.4±0.4	1.5±0.6	1.5±0.6
<b>IL6 (pg/ml)</b>	3.7±0.1	3.1±0.1	2.6±0.1
<b>TNF (pg/ml)</b>	2.0±0.1	2.3±0.1**	2.0±0.1
<b>CCL2 (pg/ml)</b>	104.3±4.7	103.1±3.2	86.4±2.7†

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Values are means ± SEM, n = 14. Significance was set as follows: VLCD vs. basal: \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001, WM phase vs. basal: † p<0.05, †† p<0.01, ††† p<0.001

BMI, body mass index; CCL2, chemokine (C-C motif) ligand 2; FFM, fat-free mass; HOMA-IR, homeostasis model assessment of the insulin resistance index; hs-CRP, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein; IL6, interleukin 6; IL10, interleukin 10; FFA, free fatty acids; TNF, tumor necrosis factor

**Table 2.** Changes of gene expression in subcutaneous abdominal (sAAT) and subcutaneous gluteal (sGAT) adipose tissue during VLCD and weight maintenance (WM) phases of dietary intervention in relation to the pre-diet (basal) level.

Name of gene	sAAT		sGAT	
	VLCD	WM	VLCD	WM
<b>1. Macrophage markers</b>				
<b>CD68</b>	**↑	↔	*↑	↔
<b>ACP5</b>	***↑	↔	**↑	↔
<b>CD14</b>	↔	↔	↔	↔
<b>FCGBP</b>	***↑	↔	**↑	↔
<b>MSR1</b>	***↑	↔	**↑	↔
<b>PLA2G7</b>	**↑	↔	*↑	↔
<b>SPP1</b>	*↑	↔	*↑	↔
<b>TLR4</b>	↔	↔	↔	↔
<b>TLR2</b>	↔	↔	↔	↔
<b>2. Cytokines</b>				
<b>TNF</b>	↔	*↓	↔	↔
<b>IL10</b>	*↑	*↓	↔	*↑ (##)
<b>IL6</b>	↔	*↓	↔	↔ (##)
<b>IL10RA</b>	↔	**↓	↔	↔
<b>CCL2</b>	*↑	*↓	*↑	*↑ (##)
<b>CCR2</b>	**↓	↔	**↓	↔
<b>TGFβ</b>	↔	↔	↔	↔
<b>CXCL1</b>	↔	↔	↔	↔

↑ denotes a higher level of gene expression at the end of respective dietary phase (VLCD or WM) in relation to the pre-diet (basal) level

↓ denotes a lower level of gene expression in relation to the pre-diet (basal) level

↔ denotes no change in gene expression in relation to the pre-diet (basal) level

\*, \*\*, \*\*\* denotes the level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively) of the difference between the value at the end of respective dietary phase vs. pre-diet (basal) level

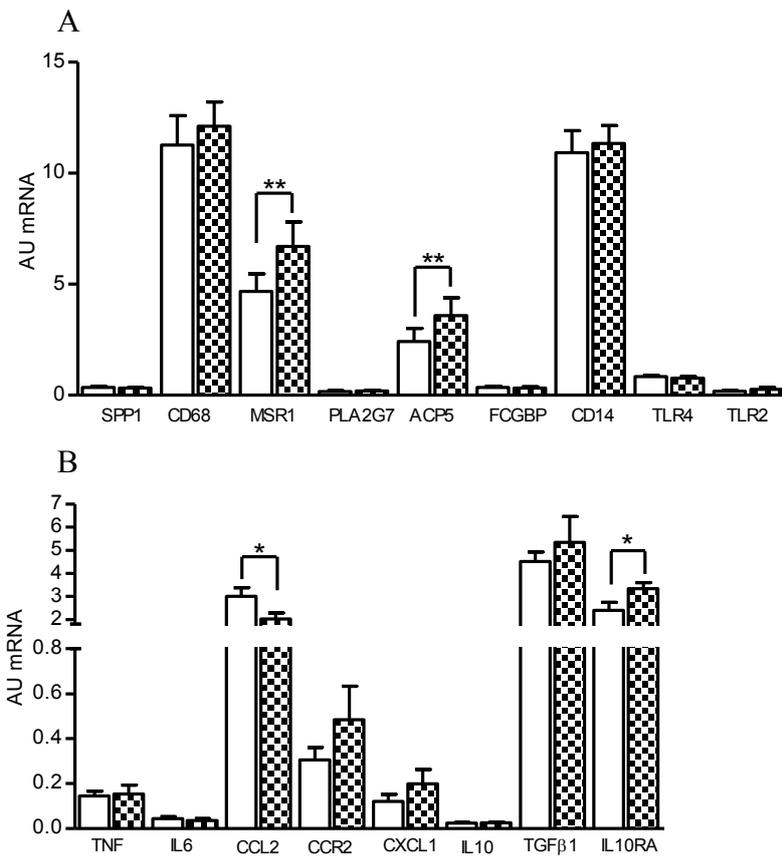
# # denotes the level of significance ( $p < 0.01$ ) of the difference between sGAT and sAAT in respect to the change of gene expression during respective dietary phase (as assessed by two-way ANOVA)

### Legend of figures

**Figures 1 :** Adipose tissue gene expression in basal state, before the diet. A: macrophage markers, B: cytokines. Subcutaneous abdominal adipose tissue , subcutaneous gluteal adipose tissue . Each column represents mean of gene expression levels calculated as delta Ct (normalized to PPIA). \*p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001.

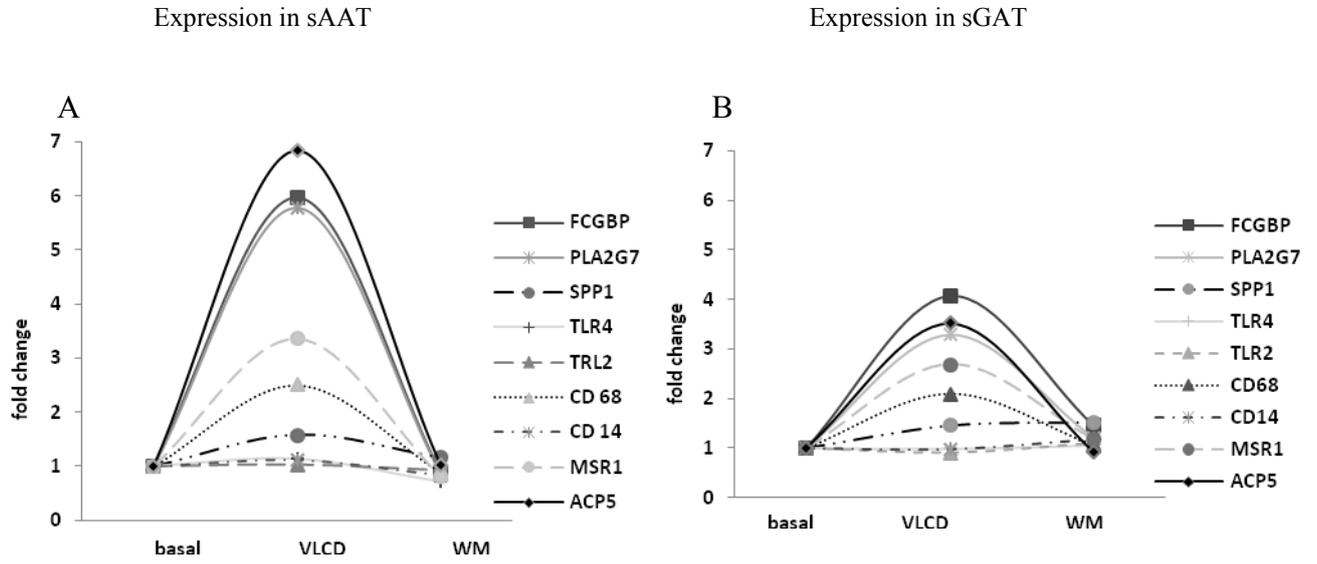
**Figures 2 :** Profile of gene expression in subcutaneous abdominal (sAAT) and gluteal (sGAT) adipose tissue during the two phases (VLCD and WM) of dietary intervention. A and B: Expression of macrophage markers in sAAT (A) and sGAT (B). C and D: Expression of cytokines in sAAT (C) and sGAT (D). The data are presented as fold change in respect to the pre-diet (basal) levels. Data are presented as means  $\pm$  SEM.

**Figure 1.**



**Figure 2**

**Macrophage markers**



**Cytokines**

