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Androgens, insulin resistance and vascular disease in men.

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Abstract: Type 2 diabetes mellitus is increasing globally and is an established risk factor for the development of atherosclerotic vascular disease. Insulin resistance is the hallmark feature of type 2 diabetes and is also an important component of the metabolic syndrome. There is evidence to suggest that testosterone is an important regulator of insulin sensitivity in men. Observational studies have shown that testosterone levels are low in men with diabetes, visceral obesity (which is strongly associated with insulin resistance), coronary artery disease and metabolic syndrome. Short-term interventional studies have also demonstrated that testosterone replacement therapy produces an improvement in insulin sensitivity in men. Thus hypotestosteronaemia may have a role in the pathogenesis of insulin-resistant states and androgen replacement therapy could be a potential treatment that could be offered for improvements in glycaemic control and reduction in cardiovascular risk, particularly in diabetic men