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## Cardiorenal disease management in type 2 diabetes: An expert consensus



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### ABSTRACT

**Background and aim:** The interplay between cardiovascular disease (CVD), chronic kidney disease (CKD) and type 2 diabetes (T2D) is well established. We aim at providing an evidence-based expert opinion regarding the prevention and treatment of both heart failure (HF) and renal complications in people with T2D.

**Method:** ology: The consensus recommendations were developed by subject experts in endocrinology, cardiology, and nephrology. The criteria for consensus were set to statements with  $\geq 80\%$  of agreement among clinicians specialized in endocrinology, cardiology, and nephrology. Key expert opinions were formulated based on scientific evidence and clinical judgment.

**Results:** Assessing the risk factors of CVD or CKD in people with diabetes and taking measures to prevent HF or kidney disease are essential. Known CVD or CKD among people with diabetes confers a very high risk for recurrent CVD. Metformin plus lifestyle modification should be the first-line therapy (unless contraindicated) for the management of T2D. Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists can be preferred in people with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) or with high-risk indicators, along with sodium–glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i), whereas SGLT2i are the first choice in HF and CKD. The GLP-1 agonists can be used in people with CKD if SGLT2i are not tolerated.

**Conclusion:** Current evidence suggests SGLT2i as preferred agents among people with T2D and HF, and for those with T2D and ASCVD. SGLT2i and GLP-1RA also lower CV outcomes in those with diabetes and ASCVD, and the treatment choice should depend on the patient profile.

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## 1. Introduction

The burden of type 2 diabetes (T2D) is very high in India. In

2019, India reported the second-highest prevalence of diabetes in the world, with 77 million individuals living with diabetes. This figure is estimated to increase to >130 million by 2045 [1]. Earlier studies have reported that most adults with diabetes in India have at least one comorbid condition, including a high prevalence of major cardiovascular (CV) risk factors such as hypertension, dyslipidemia, and body mass index  $\geq 25$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> [2].

### 1.1. Pathophysiology of cardiorenal disease in T2D

Several studies have established an independent association of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and chronic kidney disease (CKD) with T2D. Consequently, individuals with these risk factors tend to develop cardiorenal syndrome (CRS) with acute or chronic organ dysfunction of one organ influencing the function of the other. The pathophysiology of CRS constitutes an interplay of multifaceted dysfunctional cardiac and renal factors, including insulin resistance, hypertension, and dyslipidemia. The overlapping of these two distinct processes results in subsequent heart failure (HF) associated with diastolic dysfunction, HF with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF), HF with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF), left ventricular hypertrophy, and kidney failure associated with acute injury and CKD [3,4].

Hyperfiltration, characterized by a gradual loss of kidney function and an increase in albuminuria, is a critical process in the pathogenesis of kidney disease in people with diabetes [5]. Further, both hyperglycemia and hypertension have an additive effect on the progression of diabetic nephropathy, driven by oxidative stress, inflammation, and fibrosis.

Acute and chronic CV events increase the risk of acute kidney injury and end-stage renal disease (ESRD), and conversely, acute and chronic renal events increase the risk of new CV events, at least in people with T2D. As these two processes share a common pathophysiologic mechanism, they can be considered under a “single CRS” umbrella. Diabetes management is hence considered complex for both the patient and healthcare providers [6].

### 1.2. Indian phenotype with T2D

Indians usually develop diabetes at a much younger age compared to Western population. Indians have a “thin–fat” phenotype characterized by low lean body mass and high abdominal and hepatic fat. This phenotype together with glucose and lipid dysregulation accentuates the susceptibility to insulin resistance among Indians. Indians also tend to have early pancreatic beta-cell dysfunction that precipitates diabetes faster in them [7,8]. Additionally, while the risk of microvascular complications is lower, the risk of coronary artery disease is higher among Indians compared to the Western population [7]. Further, in the INSPIRED study involving 19,084 Indian individuals with T2D, four clusters with distinct phenotypes and varied disease outcomes have been identified: cluster 1 (severe insulin-deficient diabetes [SIDD]); cluster 2 (insulin-resistant obese diabetes [IROD]); cluster 3 (combined insulin-resistant and deficient diabetes [CIRDD]); and cluster 4 (mild age-related diabetes [MARD]). Two of these clusters, IROD and CIRDD, were unique to the Asian Indian population [9].

Considering the aforementioned literature views, this manuscript aims at reviewing strategies for the prevention and treatment of both HF/renal complications in T2D by stratifying the risk of patients. The experts' statements are presented in this article.

## 2. Methodology

The consensus recommendations were formed by experts from three different specialties (five each from endocrinology,

cardiology, and nephrology). These experts then formulated key opinions based on scientific evidence and clinical judgment. Based on the agreed statements, supporting data were extracted from multiple databases including PubMed/MEDLINE, Embase, Cochrane, and Google Scholar. The criteria for consensus were set to statements with  $\geq 80\%$  of agreement among experts.

## 3. Risk stratification

Currently, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association guidelines recommend the stratification of people with diabetes with risk calculators. Stratification is essential as it enables individual treatment for cardiac or renal disease prevention. Further, risk stratification is useful for decision-making in assigning specific treatment for diabetes control and prevention and or management of risk factors [10]. As much of the evidence appraised in the guidelines is from the West, the recommendations may not always be suitable for the Indian population. Moreover, considering the peculiarities of diabetes among Indians as shown by the clustering studies of Anjana et al. [9], risk stratification followed in the West may not correlate with Indian settings [11].

Therefore, patients in the low-risk category in the West may be considered to be at intermediate risk in India, whereas those at intermediate risk may be categorized to be at high risk. In a real-world analysis of CVD risk in asymptomatic people with T2D in India, more than half of the patients had a 10-year CVD risk of >20%. Individuals with T2D aged 25–44 years had a fivefold higher CVD risk compared to the healthy cohort. Females aged 55–64 years had a mean high-CVD risk of >20% contrary to males who had a similar risk a decade earlier [12]. Given the vulnerability of the Indian phenotype, people with T2D qualify for the high-risk approach of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD). According to European Society of Cardiology and European Association for the Study of Diabetes (ESC/EASD) guidelines [13], men <35 years and women <45 years, with a duration of diabetes of <10 years, without other risk factors or established CVD, are considered at medium risk. Target organ damage or the presence of two additional major CV risk factors is considered very high risk. Also, patients above the age of 50 years are considered to be at high risk of HF (Table 1). Similar stratification of people with diabetes in India is needed. Verma et al. appraised the predictors of HF in people with T2D. Diabetes-specific risk factors include chronic hyperglycemia, insulin resistance, mitochondrial dysfunction, abnormal calcium management, autonomic dysfunction, abnormal extracellular matrix remodeling, and enhanced renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) dysfunction that is attributed to the increased risk of HF development [14]. The presence of albuminuria in T2D is considered high risk as it predicts HF and other CVD events, independent of other risk factors. Traditional CV risk factors such as hypertension, obesity, and history of CVD also contribute to the development of HF. Additionally, age and presence of obstructive sleep apnea among people with T2D render them at a high risk of developing HF [14]. Also, people with T2D without CVD but with increased N-terminal pro-brain natriuretic peptides are at high risk of incident HF [15]. A meta-analysis of 21 studies (N = 1,111,569, including 507,637 people with T2D) has shown that CAD (hazards ratio [HR], 1.77), HbA<sub>1c</sub>  $\geq 10\%$  (HR, 1.66), insulin use (HR, 1.43), HbA<sub>1c</sub> 9.0%–10.0% (HR, 1.31), fasting glucose (HR, 1.27), and 5-year increase in age (HR, 1.26) were associated with a significant increase in HF development [16]. Albuminuria and high serum creatinine levels are early indicators of CKD. People with T2D and clinical predictors of CKD are at a high risk of diabetic neuropathy [13].

The expert recommendations regarding the CVD and CKD risk in people with T2D are presented in Box 1.

**Table 1**  
Cardiovascular risk categories in people with diabetes [16].

Very high risk	People with diabetes with established CVD or target organ damage or two or more major risk factors such as age, hypertension, dyslipidemia, smoking, and obesity or patients aged 50 years and more with more than one risk factor.
High risk	People with a duration of diabetes for more than 10 years without target organ damage and more than one risk factor.
Moderate risk	Men aged <35 and women aged <45, with a duration of diabetes for <10 years and without any other risk factor or absence of CVD.

CVD: Cardiovascular disease.

#### 4. Management of T2D

As T2D is a lifestyle-related disease, the initial therapeutic approach should target lifestyle management and weight management. The Look AHEAD trial has shown that intense lifestyle interventions, including dietary restrictions and weight loss, were associated with clinically significant improvements in glycemic control over a longer period. However, no benefits on CV mortality were observed [17].

Several clinical trials have shown the safety, efficacy, and tolerability of metformin (850–2000 mg daily) monotherapy or combination therapy in controlling glycemic levels and providing CV protection in people with T2D [18,19]. Based on these findings, guidelines published by national and international diabetes associations, such as the American Diabetes Association (ADA), EASD, and Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), have clearly defined the use of metformin as the first-line therapy along with lifestyle changes for the management of T2D [20–22].

Sodium–glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) are the new class of antidiabetics with a different mode of action from other classes of antidiabetics—largely due to their insulin-independent function—thus maintaining the effectiveness of these drugs at all stages of T2D. These drugs promote reduced renal glucose reabsorption by directly blocking SGLT2, increasing the urinary excretion of glucose, and efficiently lowering hyperglycemia. Further, SGLT2i seem to have added benefits, including lowering of BP, body weight, and serum urate levels, with protective effects on cardiac as well as renal systems [23]. The recent ADA and EASD consensus report recommend the use of SGLT2i in people with T2D with CKD or HFrEF and ASCVD. They can also be primarily used to minimize weight gain or promote weight loss along with hypoglycemia in people with T2D irrespective of baseline CVD or CKD [21]. The RSSDI also suggested the use of SGLT2i for people with established ASCVD, HF, and DKD or those in need of weight reduction [22].

Based on available evidence from literature and the consensus agreement, the expert panel put forward the following

##### Box 1

Risk stratification of people with T2D

- People with T2D and established CVD or CKD should be considered to be at “very high CV risk.”
- People aged above 50 years with T2D and the presence of one or more risk factors for CVD should be considered to be at “very high CV risk.”
- People with T2D for >10 years without target organ damage and more than one risk factor should be considered to be at “high CV risk.”
- Albuminuria and high serum creatinine levels indicate a high risk of CKD due to the distinct CIRDD phenotype among Indians with diabetes. The presence of albuminuria in T2D is considered a high risk factor for CVD.

recommendations for the management of T2D (Box 2).

##### 4.1. Management of T2D in people with risk/history of CVD and/or CKD

###### 4.1.1. Cardiovascular outcome trial (CVOT) with SGLT2i

SGLT2i have multiple glycemic advantages beyond regulation of body weight, BP, and lipid levels, viz. lowering the risk of CV events and renal protection. The first SGLT2i CVOT trial, the EMPA-REG OUTCOME [24], focused on empagliflozin, which established better glycemic control and improved CV mortality and renal outcomes in the T2D population at CVD risk and mild-to-moderate kidney dysfunction at baseline. The primary composite CV endpoint of MACE was observed in 10.5% of people with empagliflozin vs. 12.1% of people with placebo (rate per 1000 patient-years: 37.4 vs. 43.9; HR = 0.86; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.74–0.99;  $p = 0.04$ ). Hospitalization for HF (hHF) or CV death occurred in 5.7% vs. 8.5% (empagliflozin vs. placebo; rate per 1000 patient-years: 19.7 vs. 30.1; HR = 0.66; 95% CI, 0.55–0.79;  $p < 0.001$ ). In a subgroup analysis among Asian patients, empagliflozin was associated with a reduced risk of the composite endpoint of doubling of serum creatinine, initiation of renal replacement therapy or renal death (HR, 0.48; 95% CI, 0.25–0.92), incidence or worsening of nephropathy (HR, 0.64; 95% CI, 0.49–0.83), and progression to macroalbuminuria (HR, 0.64; 95% CI, 0.49–0.85) [25].

The CANVAS program [26] included participants with T2D at high CV risk and mild-to-moderate kidney dysfunction at baseline. The composite CV endpoint (CV death, nonfatal MI, or nonfatal stroke) rate per 1000 patient-years was 26.9 with canagliflozin vs. 31.5 with placebo (HR = 0.86; 95% CI, 0.75–0.97;  $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority;  $p = 0.02$  for superiority). The hHF rate per 1000 patient-years was 5.5 vs. 8.7 with canagliflozin vs. placebo (HR = 0.67; 95% CI, 0.52–0.87;  $p = 0.02$ ). The hHF or CV death rate per 1000 patient-years was 16.3 vs. 20.8 (HR = 0.78; 95% CI, 0.67–0.91;  $p = 0.0015$ ). The composite renal outcome of a 40% decrease in estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), death

##### Box 2

Consensus recommendations for the management of T2D

- Physical inactivity should be avoided, and physical fitness is advisable for people with T2D with concomitant CVD.
- Moderation of dietary intake, especially reducing carbohydrates, increasing plant protein intake, and accommodating medical nutritional therapy depending on the risks or history of CVD, is recommended.
- In line with several international and national guidelines, we recommend metformin plus lifestyle modification as the first-line therapy, unless contraindicated, for the management of T2D.
- SGLT2i can be alternatively used due to their insulin-independent action and additional benefits, including promoting weight loss and reducing BP.

resulting from kidney disease, or kidney replacement therapy requirement was reduced with canagliflozin vs. placebo (HR = 0.60; 95% CI, 0.47–0.77). Further, the progression of albuminuria was low with canagliflozin vs. placebo (HR = 0.73; 95% CI, 0.67–0.79) [27]. These benefits were seen across all eGFR subgroups as well. In a prespecified analysis, canagliflozin was associated with a reduction in doubling of serum creatinine, end stage kidney disease (ESKD), and kidney disease-related death (HR = 0.53; 95% CI, 0.33–0.84) [28].

The DECLARE-TIMI 58 trial [29] evaluated the safety of dapagliflozin in people with T2D and either established CVD (40% with ASCVD) or multiple risk factors (60%), unlike the EMPA-REG trial that included only people with ASCVD. After a median follow-up of 4.2 years, CV death or hHF was significantly reduced with dapagliflozin compared to placebo (4.9% vs. 5.8%; HR = 0.83; 95% CI, 0.73–0.95;  $p = 0.005$ ). This finding was mainly driven by a reduction in hHF (HR = 0.73; 95% CI, 0.61–0.88). Dapagliflozin was found to be noninferior to placebo for major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) ( $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority) [30]. Further, dapagliflozin greatly reduced CV death or hHF in people with HFrEF (HR = 0.62; 95% CI, 0.45–0.86), but not in people without HFrEF (HR = 0.88; 95% CI, 0.66–1.17 and HR = 0.88; 95% CI, 0.76–1.02, respectively). It also significantly reduced cardiac and all-cause mortality in people with HFrEF, but not in those without HF. Further, dapagliflozin significantly reduced MACE in people with a history of myocardial infarction (MI) (HR = 0.84; 95% CI, 0.72–0.99) vs. those without a history of MI (HR = 1.00; 95% CI, 0.88–1.13) [31]. The composite cardiorenal outcomes of a 40% decrease in eGFR, ESKD, or death caused by kidney or CV disease were in favor of dapagliflozin vs. placebo (HR = 0.76; 95% CI, 0.67–0.87;  $p < 0.0001$ ) in people with T2D, with and without established ASCVD and preserved renal function [30].

The VERTIS-CV trial [32] evaluated the effects of ertugliflozin in 8246 patients aged  $\geq 40$  years with T2D and established ASCVD. The mean follow-up time was 3.5 years. Noninferiority of ertugliflozin over placebo for MACE (HR = 0.97; 95% CI, 0.85–1.11;  $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority) was noted. Further, there was no significant difference between the groups for composite endpoint of CV death or hHF (HR = 0.88; 95% CI, 0.75–1.03;  $p = 0.11$  for superiority) or CV death (HR = 0.92; 95% CI, 0.77–1.11;  $p = 0.39$ ). However, ertugliflozin lowered the risk of hHF by 30% (HR = 0.70; 95% CI, 0.54–0.90;  $p = 0.006$ ). No significant difference was found for kidney composite outcome (renal death, ESKD, and doubling of serum creatinine) [32] but in people with eGFR  $< 60$  mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> and those with micro- and macroalbuminuria, HF-related events were reduced greatly [33].

The SCORED trial determined the effect of sotagliflozin in 10,584 people with T2D with CKD, with or without albuminuria (eGFR, 25–60 mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup>). The modified primary endpoint of the total number of deaths from CV causes, hHF, and urgent visits for HF was significantly reduced with sotagliflozin vs. placebo (HR, 0.74; 95% CI, 0.63–0.88;  $p < 0.001$ ), driven primarily by HF events. There was no significant reduction in CV death alone. The original primary endpoint of time to first MACE was also reduced with sotagliflozin (HR, 0.84; 95% CI, 0.72–0.99) as well as time to first CV death or hHF (HR, 0.77; 95% CI, 0.66–0.91;  $p < 0.001$ ) [34].

The SOLOIST-WHF trial [35] determined the effect of sotagliflozin (SGLT2i and SGLT1i) in either people with hHF or recently discharged people with T2D (N = 1222). The new primary composite endpoint of the total number of deaths from CV causes, hHF, and urgent visits for HF was significantly reduced with sotagliflozin vs. placebo (HR = 0.67; 95% CI, 0.52–0.85;  $p < 0.001$ ). Treatment benefits were similar in people with both reduced LVEF, that is,  $< 50\%$  (HR = 0.72; 95% CI, 0.56–0.94), and preserved LVEF, that is,  $> 50\%$  (HR = 0.48; 95% CI, 0.27–0.86).

According to the meta-analysis by McGuire et al., which evaluated six trials (involving 46,969 people with T2D), the largest benefit noted with SGLT2i was reduced risk of hHF and kidney disease progression among people with diabetes. Notably, the findings were consistent across the trials [36].

#### 4.1.2. Real-world studies with SGLT2i

The CVD-REAL study [37] compared the range of CV outcomes in people with T2D at high CV risk (n = 154,528) initiated on SGLT2i vs. other glucose-lowering drugs (OGLDs). The SGLT2i were associated with a significant reduction in hHF (pooled HR = 0.61; 95% CI, 0.51–0.73;  $p < 0.001$ ) and all-cause death (pooled HR = 0.49; 95% CI, 0.41–0.57;  $p < 0.001$ ) compared to OGLDs. Further, the CVD-REAL2 study [38] reported significant reduction in the risk of mortality (HR = 0.51; 95% CI, 0.37–0.70;  $p < 0.001$ ), hHF (HR = 0.64; 95% CI, 0.50–0.82;  $p < 0.001$ ), CV death or hHF (HR = 0.60; 95% CI, 0.47–0.76;  $p < 0.001$ ), MI (HR = 0.81; 95% CI, 0.74–0.88;  $p < 0.001$ ), and stroke (HR = 0.68; 95% CI, 0.55–0.84;  $p < 0.001$ ) with SGLT2i compared to OGLDs. According to the CVD-REAL 3 study [39] the between-group difference in the rate of eGFR decline was 1.53 mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> per year favoring SGLT2i over OGLDs ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Further, SGLT2i were associated with a lower risk of ESKD alone compared to OGLDs (HR = 0.33; 95% CI, 0.16–0.68;  $p = 0.0024$ ).

The EMPRISE study compared the efficacy and safety of empagliflozin with dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitors (DPP4i) in people with T2D based on the data collected from US healthcare databases. Empagliflozin decreased the risk of hHF-specific by 50% (HR = 0.50; 95% CI, 0.28–0.91) and the risk of hHF-broad by 49% (HR = 0.51; 95% CI, 0.39–0.68) compared to sitagliptin [40]. According to the OBSERVE 4-D study new users of canagliflozin were associated with a lower risk of hHF in the on-treatment (HR = 0.39; 95% CI, 0.26–0.60) and intent-to-treat analyses (HR = 0.58; 95% CI, 0.42–0.80) compared to new DPP4i or GLP-1 receptor agonists [41].

#### 4.1.3. CVOT trials with GLP-1 receptor agonists

GLP-1 receptor agonists are the other class of diabetes medication with beneficial CV outcomes. ELIXA was the first CVOT involving a GLP-1 agonist, lixisenatide. The composite primary outcome of CV death, nonfatal MI, nonfatal stroke, or hospitalization for unstable angina was found to be noninferior to placebo (HR = 1.02; 95% CI, 0.89–1.17). After adjusting for baseline HbA<sub>1c</sub>, a change in the urinary albumin-to-creatinine ratio was comparable to the placebo group [42]. In the high-risk CV patients of the LEADER trial [43], the primary composite outcome of CV death, nonfatal MI, or nonfatal stroke was significantly low with liraglutide compared to placebo (HR = 0.87; 95% CI, 0.78–0.97;  $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority;  $p = 0.01$  for superiority). The lower CV risk was due to a significant reduction in CV death (HR = 0.78; 95% CI, 0.66–0.93;  $p = 0.007$ ). Additionally, liraglutide was associated with a low incidence of new-onset macroalbuminuria compared to placebo. Semaglutide in the SUSTAIN-6 trial [44] demonstrated noninferiority to placebo with a 26% reduction in the primary composite outcome of CV death, nonfatal MI, or nonfatal stroke (HR = 0.74; 95% CI, 0.58–0.95;  $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority;  $p = 0.02$  for superiority). In contrast, nonfatal stroke (HR = 0.61; 95% CI, 0.38–0.99;  $p = 0.04$ ) was significantly reduced with semaglutide compared to placebo. In the EXSCAL study [45], once-weekly exenatide significantly reduced composite primary outcomes (HR = 0.91; 95% CI, 0.83–1.00;  $p < 0.001$  for noninferiority). In the REWIND trial [46] once-weekly dulaglutide demonstrated a significant reduction in the primary endpoint (HR = 0.88; 95% CI, 0.79–0.99;  $p = 0.026$ ).

According to a meta-analysis by Sattar et al., which evaluated eight trials involving 60,080 people with T2D, GLP-1 receptor



agonists were associated with a reduction in MACE by 14%, all-cause mortality by 12%, hHF by 11%, and composite kidney outcome by 21% [47]. The important outcomes noted in these trials have been enumerated in Table 3 [47].

#### 4.1.4. Trials with a focus on HFpEF, irrespective of diabetes status

The DAPA-HF trial [48] evaluated the safety and efficacy of dapagliflozin in people with HF with reduced LVEF (defined as LVEF  $\leq 40\%$ ) regardless of T2D status ( $N = 4744$ ). About 45% of patients had T2D at baseline. The primary endpoint (a composite of death from CV causes or worsening HF, which was defined as an unplanned hospitalization or an urgent visit requiring intravenous therapy for HF) was significantly reduced in the dapagliflozin group vs. the placebo group (16.3% vs. 21.2%; HR = 0.74; 95% CI, 0.65–0.85;  $p < 0.001$ ). The CV improvements were also seen in people with diabetes ( $n = 215$  in the dapagliflozin group and  $n = 271$  in the placebo group) or people without diabetes ( $n = 163$  and 213) with no difference between the groups (HR = 0.75; 95% CI, 0.63–0.90 vs HR = 0.73; 95% CI, 0.60–0.88;  $p$  for interaction = 0.80). The CV mortality was low in the dapagliflozin group vs. placebo group (9.6% vs. 11.6%; HR = 0.82; 95% CI, 0.69–0.98). The hHF or CV mortality was also lower in the dapagliflozin group compared to the placebo group (16.1% vs. 20.9%; HR = 0.75; 95% CI, 0.65–0.85;  $p < 0.001$ ).

The EMPEROR-Reduced trial [49] evaluated the safety and efficacy of empagliflozin in people with chronic HF and a reduced ejection fraction (with or without diabetes). About 50% of the study population had diabetes at baseline. After a median of 16 months, the primary outcome event occurred in 19.4% in the empagliflozin group compared to 24.7% in the placebo group (HR for CV death or hHF, 0.75; 95% CI, 0.65–0.86;  $p < 0.001$ ). The CV improvements were also seen in people with diabetes ( $n = 200$  events in the empagliflozin group and  $n = 265$  events in the placebo group) and without diabetes ( $n = 161$  and 197 events, respectively) with no difference between the groups (HR = 0.72; 95% CI, 0.60–0.87) vs HR = 0.78; 95% CI, 0.64–0.97). According to the similarly designed EMPEROR-Preserved trial [50], empagliflozin was associated with a reduction in the combined risk of CV mortality or hHF in patients with HFpEF, irrespective of diabetes status.

The DELIVER trial [50] evaluated the effect of dapagliflozin 10 mg on CV death reduction or heart failure worsening among patients with HFpEF ( $n = 6263$ ). According to the recently published results, dapagliflozin administration was associated with lower total events and symptom burden compared to placebo (composite of worsening heart failure: 16.4% vs 19.5%; worsening heart failure: 11.8% vs 14.5%; CV death: 7.4% vs 8.3%; in dapagliflozin vs placebo groups, respectively). The results were similar among patients with mildly reduced or preserved ejection fraction and with or without diabetes.

Table 2 summarizes the CV outcomes of various CVOTs by SGLT2i.

The expert recommendations for the prevention and management of T2D with the risk of CVD and/or CKD are presented in Box 3.

#### 4.1.5. Trials with a focus on CKD, irrespective of diabetes status

The CREDENCE trial [51] showed renal benefits of canagliflozin among people with T2D with moderate-to-advanced renal impairment (eGFR, 30 to  $< 90$  mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup>). The primary composite renal endpoint of doubling of serum creatinine from baseline (up to 30 days), ESRD, or occurrence of renal/CV death was seen in 11.1% with canagliflozin compared to 15.4% with placebo (rate per 1000 patient-years, 43.2 vs. 61.2 for canagliflozin vs. placebo; HR = 0.70; 95% CI, 0.59–0.82;  $p < 0.001$ ). The incidence of CV death, nonfatal MI, or nonfatal stroke was 9.9% with canagliflozin vs. 12.2% with placebo (rate per 1000 patient-years, 38.7 vs. 48.7; HR = 0.80;

95% CI, 0.67–0.95;  $p = 0.01$ ); hHF was observed in 4.0% with canagliflozin compared to 6.4% with placebo (rate per 1000 patient-years, 15.7 vs. 25.3; HR = 0.61; 95% CI, 0.47–0.80;  $p < 0.001$ ); about 8.1% of patients in the canagliflozin group had hHF or CV death compared to 11.5% in the placebo group (rate per 1000 patient-years, 31.5 vs. 45.4; HR = 0.69; 95% CI, 0.57–0.83;  $p < 0.001$ ).

The DAPA-CKD trial [52] evaluated the effects of the SGLT2i dapagliflozin on CV and renal events in CKD with or without concomitant T2D. The study included people with mild, mild-to-moderate, moderate-to-severe, and severe reduction in eGFR and severe increase in urine albumin-creatinine ratio (uACR). The primary composite endpoint events of worsening of renal function, defined as a composite of an eGFR decline of at least 50%, onset of end-stage kidney disease, and death from a CV or renal cause, were less with dapagliflozin compared with placebo (HR = 0.61; 95% CI, 0.51–0.72;  $p < 0.001$ ). The all-cause mortality with dapagliflozin was consistent across prespecified subgroups with a relative risk reduction of 31% (HR = 0.69; 95% CI, 0.53–0.88;  $p = 0.003$ ). This effect was driven primarily by a 46% relative risk reduction of non-CV death (HR = 0.54; 95% CI, 0.36–0.82). Further, dapagliflozin also reduced worsening renal function or death from kidney failure when compared to placebo (HR = 0.56; 95% CI, 0.45–0.68;  $p < 0.001$ ) [37]. In a prespecified analysis, dapagliflozin reduced the risk of kidney failure, CV-related death or hHF, and prolonged survival in people with CKD with or without T2D, irrespective of concomitant CVD.

In the DAPA-HF trial, the composite renal outcome (sustained  $\geq 50\%$  reduction in eGFR, ESRD, or death from renal causes) was not reduced by dapagliflozin (HR = 0.71; 95% CI, 0.44–1.16;  $p = 0.17$ ). However, the rate of decline in eGFR between day 14 and 720 was less with dapagliflozin (HR =  $-1.09$ ; 95% CI,  $-1.41$  to  $-0.78$ ) when compared to placebo (HR =  $-2.87$ ; 95% CI,  $-3.19$  to  $-2.55$ ) mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> per year;  $p < 0.001$ ). This benefit was observed in those with and without T2D ( $p$  for interaction = 0.92) [53].

Similarly, in the EMPEROR-Reduced trial [49], the annual rate of decline in the eGFR rate was slower in the empagliflozin group than in the placebo group ( $-0.55$  vs.  $-2.28$  mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> of body surface area per year;  $p < 0.001$ ) and was associated with a lower risk of serious renal outcomes. Table 4 summarizes the renal outcomes of various randomized controlled trials related to SGLT2i.

The exploratory analysis of the REWIND trial determined the long-term effect of dulaglutide on renal outcomes in people with T2D with previous CV events or CV risk factors. The incidence of renal outcomes (development of macroalbuminuria [uACR  $> 33.9$  mg/mmol in people with a lower baseline concentration] and a sustained 30% or greater decline in eGFR) was significantly low in the dulaglutide group vs. the placebo group (HR = 0.85; 95% CI, 0.77–0.93;  $p = 0.0004$ ). Compared to placebo, the reduced incidence of new macroalbuminuria (HR = 0.77; 95% CI, 0.68–0.87;  $p < 0.0001$ ), sustained decline in eGFR of  $\geq 30\%$  (HR = 0.89; 95% CI, 0.78–1.01;  $p = 0.066$ ), and chronic renal replacement therapy (HR = 0.75, 0.39–1.44;  $p = 0.39$ ) are in favor of dulaglutide treatment [54]. The expert recommendations for the prevention and management of T2D with the risk of CKD are presented in Box 4.

## 5. Conclusion

This article is a conglomeration of the existing evidence and the clinical experience of experts from three different specialties of medicine. The consensus statements have been formed accordingly based on the available scientific evidence and clinical judgment of the experts.

It is evident that for people with T2D, SGLT2i can be used in the presence of ASCVD or high-risk indicators and HF. Besides, SGLT2i also reduce the risk of ESRD events, including the occurrence of

**Table 2**  
Composite cardiovascular outcomes with SGLT2i.

MACE outcomes						
Study	Drug	Patients enrolled	Events (%)		HR 95% CI	p-Value
EMPA-REG OUTCOME [24]	Empagliflozin (10 and 25 mg)	7020 T2D: ALL CVD: 99%	SGLT2i 10.5	Placebo 12.1	0.86 (0.74–0.99)	0.04
DECLARE–TIMI 58 [29]	Dapagliflozin	17,160 T2D: ALL CVD: 40%	8.8	9.4	0.93 (0.84–1.03)	0.17
CANVAS [26]	Canagliflozin (100 and 300 mg)	10,142 T2D: ALL CVD: 65%	10.1	9.9	0.86 (0.75–1.30)	0.02
CANVAS with multiple risk factors [26] CANVAS with eCVD [26] Cardiovascular death outcomes			15.7 36.9		2.36 (2.03–2.74)	<0.001
Study	Drug	Patients enrolled	Events (%)		HR 95% CI	p-Value
EMPA-REG OUTCOME [24]	Empagliflozin (10 and 25 mg)	7020 T2D: ALL CVD: 99%	SGLT2i 3.7	Placebo 5.9	0.62 (0.49–0.77)	<0.001
DECLARE–TIMI 58 [29]	Dapagliflozin	17,160 T2D: ALL CVD: 40%	2.9	2.9	0.98 (0.82–1.17)	–
CANVAS [26]	Canagliflozin (100 and 300 mg)	10,142 T2D: ALL CVD: 65%	4.6	4.3	0.87 (0.72–1.06)	–
DELIVER [50]	Dapagliflozin 10 mg	6263 HF and LVEF> 40%	7.4	8.3	0.88 (0.74–1.05)	–
Study	Drug	Patients enrolled	Events (%)		HR 95% CI	p-Value
EMPA-REG OUTCOME [24]	Empagliflozin	7020 T2D: ALL CVD: 99%	SGLT2i 2.7	Placebo 4.1	0.65 (0.50–0.85)	0.002
DECLARE–TIMI 58 [29]	Dapagliflozin	17,160 T2D: ALL CVD: 40%	2.5	3.3	0.73 (0.61–0.88)	–
DECLARE–TIMI with multiple risk factors [29] DECLARE–TIMI 58 with eCVD [29] CANVAS [26]	Canagliflozin	10,142 T2D: ALL CVD: 65%	1.2 4.3 5.5	1.9 5.5 8.7	0.64 (0.46–0.88) 0.78 (0.63–0.97) 0.67 (0.52–0.87)	0.30 – 0.002
CANVAS with multiple risk factors [26] CANVAS with eCVD [26]			3.2 8.9		2.64 (1.90–3.65)	<0.001

CANVAS: Canagliflozin Cardiovascular Assessment Study; CI: Confidence interval; CVD: Cardiovascular disease; DECLARE-TIMI: Dapagliflozin effect on cardiovascular events; DELIVER: Dapagliflozin Evaluation to Improve the LIVES of Patients With Preserved Ejection Fraction Heart Failure; eCVD: established CVD; EMPA-REG OUTCOME: Empagliflozin Cardiovascular Outcome Event Trial in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients Removing Excess Glucose; HR: Hazards ratio; MACE: Major adverse cardiac events; SGLT2i: Sodium–glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors; T2D: Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

**Table 3**  
Risk of MACE, all cause mortality, hHF, composite kidney outcome and worsening of kidney outcome with GLP-1RA in different trials [47].

	ELIXA (n = 6068)	LEADER (n = 9340)	SUSTAIN-6 (n = 3297)	EXSCEL (n = 14752)	Harmony Outcomes (n = 9463)	REWIND (n = 9901)	PIONEER 6 (n = 3183)	AMPLITUDE-O (n = 4076)
Three point MACE	400/3034 (13%)	608/4668 (13%)	108/1648 (7%)	839/7356 (11%)	338/4731 (7%)	594/4949 (12%)	61/1591 (4%)	189/2717 (7%)
All cause mortality	211/3034 (7%)	381/4668 (8%)	62/1648 (4%)	507/7356 (7%)	196/4731 (4%)	536/4949 (11%)	23/1591 (1%)	111/2717 (4%)
hHF	122/3034 (4%)	218/4668 (5%)	59/1648 (4%)	219/7356 (3%)	79/4731 (2%)	213/4949 (4%)	21/1591 (1%)	40/2717 (1%)
Composite kidney outcome	172/2647 (6%)	268/4668 (6%)	62/1648 (4%)	366/6256 (6%)	NA	848/4949 (17%)	NA	353/2717 (13%)
Worsening of kidney outcome	41/3031 (1%)	87/4668 (2%)	18/1648 (1%)	246/6456 (4%)	NA	169/4949 (3%)	NA	7/2717 (<1%)

AMPLITUDE-O: Effect of Efglenatide on Cardiovascular Outcomes; ELIXA: Evaluation of Lixisenatide in Acute Coronary Syndrome; EXSCEL: Exenatide Study of Cardiovascular Event Lowering; Harmony Outcomes: Albiglutide and cardiovascular outcomes in patients with type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease; hHF: Hospitalization for heart failure; LEADER: Liraglutide Effect and Action in Diabetes: Evaluation of Cardiovascular Outcome Results; MACE: Major adverse cardiac events; PIONEER 6: Trial Investigating the Cardiovascular Safety of Oral Semaglutide in Subjects With Type 2 Diabetes; REWIND: Dulaglutide and cardiovascular outcomes in type 2 diabetes; SUSTAIN-6: Trial to Evaluate Cardiovascular and Other Long-term Outcomes With Semaglutide in Subjects With Type 2 Diabetes.

renal death and the need for renal replacement therapy. Both SGLT2i and GLP-1RA reduce CV risk among patients with T2D and

ASCVD; the treatment choice should be individualized based on the patient profile. The experts opined that endocrinologists should

**Box 3**

Consensus recommendations for the prevention and management of people with T2D with the risk of CVD.

- SGLT2i should be used for the first-line treatment of people with T2D with known CVD.
- For people with high-risk ASCVD (prior MI, ischemic stroke, unstable angina with electrocardiography changes, myocardial ischemia on imaging or stress test, or revascularization of coronary, carotid, or peripheral arteries), GLP-1 agonists are preferred.
- SGLT2i are also recommended for T2D people with HFrEF/HfpEF to reduce hHF, MACE, and CV mortality.
- In patients who are already on metformin, SGLT2i or GLP-1 agonists should be added.

consider evaluating the risk of HF and CKD among people with T2D based on the suggested risk stratification while planning the treatment. They also suggested the need for multidisciplinary academic meetings involving endocrinologists, cardiologists, and nephrologists for better management of people with T2D.

**Summary**

The association between cardiovascular disease (CVD) and chronic kidney disease (CKD) in type 2 diabetes (T2D) is well known. Hence, the management of T2D among individuals with these comorbidities needs careful evaluation. Key expert opinions were accordingly formulated based on scientific evidence and clinical judgment. The use of glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists is suggested in individuals with atherosclerotic CVD or high-

**Box 4**

Consensus recommendations for the prevention and management of people with T2D with the risk of CKD.

- SGLT2i are preferred in people with CKD progression.
- In people with established CVD and CKD, SGLT2i may be preferred.
- Similarly, in people without established CVD but with CKD or at risk of HF, SGLT2i can be used.

risk indicators, along with sodium–glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i), whereas SGLT2i are the first choice in HF and CKD. SGLT2i are becoming the drugs of choice in individuals with T2D and CKD.

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All co-authors were involved in the review of the literature and actively participated in forming the consensus recommendations as well as in the writing of the manuscript.

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**Table 4**  
Composite renal outcomes with SGLT2i.

Study	Drug	Patients enrolled	Outcomes (vs. placebo)	
			Kidney	CVD
CREDESCENCE [51] Criteria: 30 ≤ eGFR < 90 plus uACR > 300  Mean eGFR, 56.2	Canagliflozin	4401	Composite of ESKD, doubling of creatinine, kidney or CV-related death HR = 0.70 (95% CI, 0.59–0.82); p < 0.001	Reduction in CV death, MI, stroke HR = 0.80 (95% CI, 0.67–0.95)
DAPA-HF [48] Criteria: eGFR ≥ 30  Mean eGFR, 66	Dapagliflozin	4744	Composite of >50 reductions in eGFR, ESKD, or kidney-related death HR = 0.71 (95% CI, 0.44–1.16)	Reduction in HF hospitalizations HR = 0.61 (95% CI, 0.47–0.80) Composite of CV death or HF hospitalization HR = 0.75 (95% CI, 0.65–1.85)
DAPA-CKD [52] Criteria: eGFR ≥ 25 but ≤ 75 mL/min/1.73 m <sup>2</sup> and uACR ≥ 200 mg/g but ≤ 5000 mg/g (≥ 22.6 to ≤ 565 mg/mmol)	Dapagliflozin	4304	Composite of >50 reductions in eGFR, ESKD, kidney or CV-related death HR = 0.61 (95% CI, 0.51–0.72); p < 0.001	CV death/HF hospitalization: 4.6% vs. 6.4% (p < 0.001)
EMPA-REG OUTCOME [24] Criteria: eGFR ≥ 30 Mean eGFR, 74.1	Empagliflozin	7020	Composite of ≤ 45 reductions in eGFR, doubling of creatinine, need for a transplant, kidney-related death HR = 0.54 (95% CI, 0.40–0.75)	Discussed in Table 1
DECLARE-TIMI 58 [29] Criteria: eGFR ≥ 30 Mean eGFR, 74.1	Dapagliflozin	7020	Composite of ≤ 40 reductions in eGFR, to < 60, ESKD, kidney-related death HR = 0.76; (95% CI, 0.67–0.87); p < 0.0001	Discussed in Table 1
CANVAS [26] Criteria: eGFR ≥ 30 Mean eGFR, 76.5	Canagliflozin	10142	Progression of albuminuria HR = 0.73 (95% CI, 0.67–0.79) Composite of ≤ 40 reductions in eGFR, doubling of creatinine, need for KRT, kidney-related death HR = 0.60 (95% CI, 0.47–0.77)	Discussed in Table 1

CANVAS: Canagliflozin Cardiovascular Assessment Study; CREDESCENCE: Canagliflozin and Renal Events in Diabetes with Established Nephropathy Clinical Evaluation; CVD: Cardiovascular disease; DAPA-CKD: Dapagliflozin and Prevention of Adverse Outcomes in Chronic Kidney Disease; DECLARE-TIMI: Dapagliflozin effect on cardiovascular events; DAPA-HF: Dapagliflozin and Prevention of Adverse Outcomes in Heart Failure; eGFR: Estimated glomerular filtration rate; EMPA-REG OUTCOME: Empagliflozin Cardiovascular Outcome Event Trial in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients Removing Excess Glucose; ESKD: End-stage kidney disease; HF: Heart failure; HR: Hazards ratio; KRT: Kidney replacement therapy; MI: Myocardial infarction; SGLT2i: Sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors; T2D: Type 2 diabetes mellitus; uACR: Urine abumin-to-creatinine ratio.

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