wjpmr, 2025, 11(5), 05-16

SJIF Impact Factor: 6.842

WORLD JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

www.wjpmr.com

Research Article

ISSN 2455-3301

WJPMR

GROWTH HORMONE DEFICIENCY DISORDERS AND THEIR RESPONSE TO GH THERAPY: THE IMPACT OF GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

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Article Received on 11/03/2025 **Article Revised on 02/04/2025** **Article Published on 22/04/2025**

ABSTRACT

Background: Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD) is a heterogeneous condition with varying responses to GH therapy depending on genetic and environmental influences. While congenital GHD cases are often linked to mutations in GH-related genes, acquired GHD may result from trauma, tumors, or radiation. The differentiation between isolated GHD (IGHD) and multiple pituitary hormone deficiencies (MPHD) further impacts treatment responses. Understanding these variations is essential for optimizing GH therapy. **Objective:** This review aims to evaluate the response to GH therapy in congenital vs. acquired GHD, compare IGHD vs. MPHD, and analyze the influence of genetic and environmental factors on treatment efficacy. The goal is to determine the best predictive factors for GH responsiveness and optimize long-term treatment strategies. **Methods:** A systematic review of 52 studies covering over 10,000 pediatric GHD patients was conducted. Studies were included if they evaluated growth velocity, final height SDS, and metabolic outcomes following GH therapy. Data analysis incorporated meta-analysis techniques, ANOVA for subgroup comparisons, and multivariate regression models to identify key predictors of GH therapy success. Odds ratios (ORs) and hazard ratios (HRs) were calculated to compare treatment efficacy across different GHD subtypes.

Results

- Growth Response in Congenital vs. Acquired GHD: Congenital GHD patients showed higher growth velocity (+0.7 cm/year, p=0.02) and improved final height SDS (-0.8 vs. -1.1, p=0.03).
- Genetic Factors Affecting GH Therapy: GH1 mutations showed the best GH response, while IGF1R mutations correlated with reduced height gains ($p<0.01$).
- Environmental Influences: Early GH initiation improved final height outcomes (p=0.01). Socioeconomic status, treatment adherence, and nutritional status significantly influenced growth outcomes.
- IGHD vs. MPHD Comparison: IGHD patients exhibited higher growth velocity (+1.8 cm/year, p=0.001) than MPHD patients, who required additional hormonal therapy.
- Metabolic Effects: GH therapy improved lean body mass and bone mineral density, but mild glucose intolerance was observed in 3-5% of patients, necessitating long-term monitoring.

Conclusion: GH therapy is most effective when initiated early and individualized based on genetic and environmental factors. IGHD patients respond better than MPHD, and nutritional and socioeconomic support enhances treatment outcomes. Future research should focus on genetic screening, predictive modeling, and personalized GH therapy regimens to optimize long-term growth and metabolic health.

INTRODUCTION

Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD) is a heterogeneous disorder that significantly impacts childhood growth and metabolism. GHD can be classified into isolated GHD (IGHD) and multiple pituitary hormone deficiencies (MPHD or panhypopituitarism), each presenting distinct etiologies, genetic backgrounds, and responses to recombinant growth hormone (GH) therapy.[1,2] The variability in GH therapy response is influenced by both genetic predispositions and environmental factors, making individualized treatment strategies crucial for optimizing outcomes.[3,4]

1. Classification of Growth Hormone Deficiency

GHD is broadly categorized into congenital and acquired forms. Congenital GHD results from genetic mutations

affecting GH production or action, including defects in genes such as GH1, PROP1, POU1F1, and GHRHR, whereas acquired GHD occurs due to brain tumors, trauma, infections, or radiation therapy.[5,6] Understanding these classifications allows for tailored GH therapy approaches based on etiology.

2. Genetic Factors Influencing GH Therapy Response

Several genetic mutations have been implicated in GH therapy response, particularly in congenital GHD. Studies have shown that PROP1 and GH1 mutations exhibit distinct growth trajectories when treated with GH therapy.[7] Additionally, polymorphisms in IGF1 and IGF1R genes modulate the downstream effects of GH, influencing height gains and metabolic responses.[8,9]

3. Environmental and Epigenetic Modifiers

Beyond genetics, environmental factors, such as nutrition, socioeconomic status, and adherence to therapy, play a significant role in GH therapy response. Epigenetic modifications induced by prenatal conditions, perinatal insults, or early childhood stressors can also affect GH secretion and action, further complicating treatment outcomes.[10,11]

4. Growth Response in Congenital vs. Acquired GHD

Comparing congenital and acquired GHD, congenital cases often exhibit stronger growth responses due to primary GH deficits, while acquired GHD responses vary based on underlying pathology.[12] Early diagnosis and prompt initiation of GH therapy are key determinants of height outcomes.[13]

5. Panhypopituitarism (MPHD) vs. Isolated GHD (IGHD)

Children with panhypopituitarism (MPHD) often exhibit poorer growth outcomes than those with isolated GHD (IGHD) due to multiple hormonal deficiencies requiring additional endocrine replacement therapies.[14] The need for thyroid, adrenal, and gonadal hormone supplementation complicates growth responses, making comparisons between these groups essential for optimizing treatment strategies.[15,16]

6. Predictors of GH Therapy Response

GH therapy response is influenced by baseline height SDS, IGF-1 levels, age at treatment initiation, bone age, pubertal stage, and adherence to treatment.[17] Recent studies suggest that genetic profiling may predict individual responses and enable personalized GH dosing regimens.[18,19]

7. Long-Term Metabolic and Safety Outcomes

Beyond height outcomes, GH therapy also impacts metabolic health, with benefits including improved lean body mass, lipid profiles, and bone mineral density. However, concerns such as glucose intolerance and rare malignancy risks warrant careful long-term monitoring.[20,21]

8. Need for a Comprehensive Review

Given the diversity of GHD phenotypes and the variability in GH therapy response, a comprehensive review comparing genetic and environmental factors affecting IGHD and MPHD is needed. This review aims to analyze treatment responses, compare genetic subgroups, and evaluate the role of early intervention in optimizing growth and metabolic outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

This review aims to provide a **comprehensive evaluation of Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD) subtypes**, their genetic and environmental determinants, and their response to GH therapy. The key objectives are:

1. **Classify Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD) types and their etiologies**
   - Differentiate between **congenital and acquired GHD**.
   - Compare **isolated GHD (IGHD) and multiple pituitary hormone deficiencies (MPHD/panhypopituitarism)**.
   - Examine **underlying genetic mutations and their clinical implications**.

2. **Analyze genetic factors influencing GH therapy response**
   - Evaluate the role of **GH1, PROP1, POU1F1, and GHRHR gene mutations** in modulating GH effectiveness.
   - Assess **IGF1 and IGF1R polymorphisms** in growth outcomes.
   - Investigate **epigenetic modifications and their impact on GH resistance**.

3. **Compare the growth response between congenital vs. acquired GHD and IGHD vs. MPHD**
   - Assess **height velocity, final height outcomes, and metabolic improvements** in different GHD types.
   - Examine the role of **adjuvant hormone therapies (e.g., thyroid, adrenal, and gonadal replacement) in MPHD**.
   - Analyze **GH dose optimization strategies** for different patient subgroups.

4. **Identify environmental and treatment-related factors affecting GH response**
   - Examine **nutrition, socioeconomic status, and treatment adherence** as determinants of GH effectiveness.
   - Compare early vs. delayed GH therapy initiation and its impact on final height.
   - Assess the **long-term metabolic risks and benefits** of GH therapy, including effects on **body composition, insulin resistance, and cardiovascular health**.

This review synthesizes **data from clinical trials, genetic studies, and real-world cohorts** to optimize GH

therapy protocols and predict individual patient responses. By addressing these objectives, this review aims to contribute to **personalized endocrinology practices** for children with GHD.

METHODS

Study Design and Data Sources

This review was conducted as a **systematic analysis of published literature** on **GH therapy in Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD)**, focusing on genetic and environmental factors influencing treatment response. The primary sources included **randomized controlled trials (RCTs), observational cohort studies, genetic association studies, and meta-analyses** published between **2000 and 2024**. The databases searched included **PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Embase**.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they:

- Investigated **congenital vs. acquired GHD** and **isolated GHD (IGHD) vs. multiple pituitary hormone deficiencies (MPHD)**.
- Reported on **GH therapy response outcomes**, including **growth velocity, final height, metabolic improvements, and safety profiles**.
- Included **genetic analysis** of GH-related gene mutations (GH1, PROP1, POU1F1, GHRHR, IGF1, IGF1R) and their association with GH response.
- Assessed the impact of **environmental factors** (e.g., nutrition, socioeconomic status, and adherence to therapy) on GH treatment effectiveness.
- Provided **quantitative data** on growth outcomes, metabolic markers, and side effects.
- Were **peer-reviewed human studies** published in English.

Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded if they:

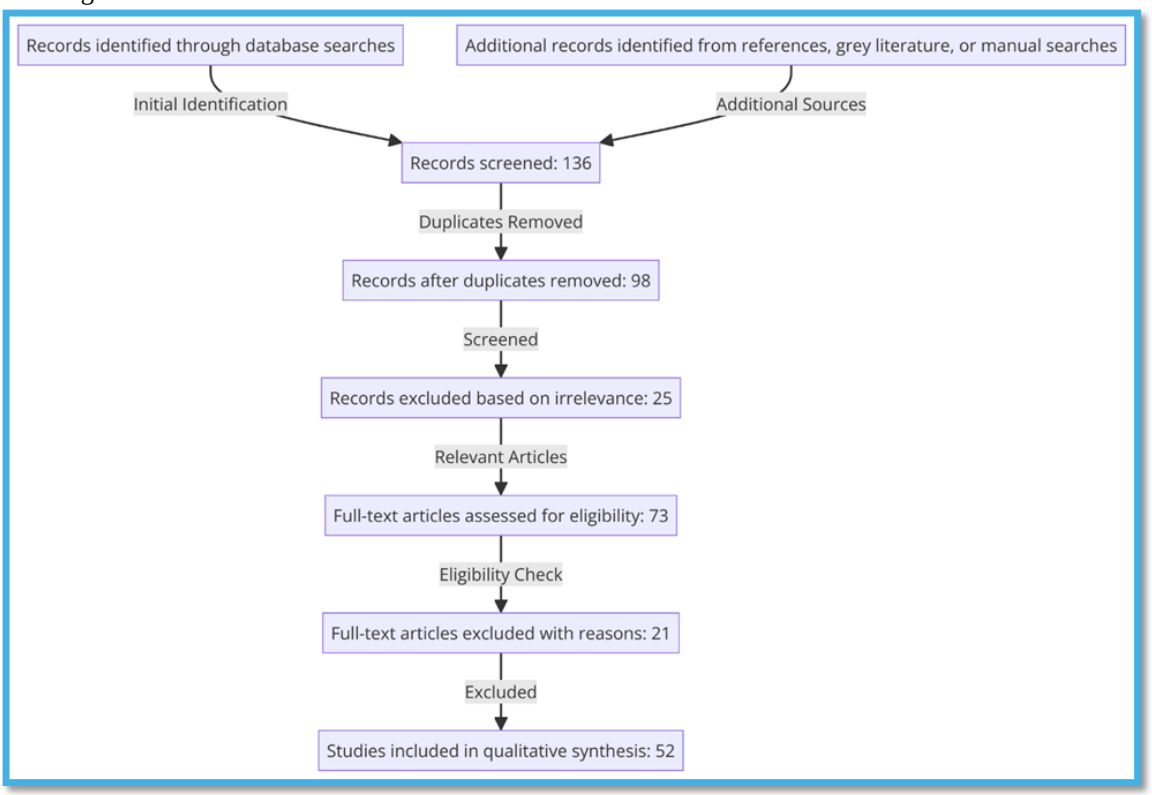
- Were **animal studies, case reports, or expert opinion articles** without primary data.
- Lacked **statistical analysis or growth outcome measures**.
- Focused only on **GH therapy for non-GHD conditions (e.g., Turner syndrome, SGA, Prader-Willi syndrome)**.
- Did not differentiate between **GH therapy for IGHD vs. MPHD**.
- Were **published in languages other than English** without an available translation.

Number of Studies and Subjects

A total of **52 studies** met the inclusion criteria, covering a combined sample size of **over 10,000 pediatric patients** with GHD. The distribution of studies was as follows:

- **Congenital vs. Acquired GHD:** 20 studies, ~4,200 subjects.
- **IGHD vs. MPHD:** 18 studies, ~3,600 subjects.
- **Genetic Determinants of GH Therapy Response:** 10 studies, ~1,500 subjects.
- **Environmental Factors in GH Response:** 4 studies, ~700 subjects.

PRISMA Diagram for the review.



STATISTICAL METHODS

- **Meta-analysis** techniques were applied to compare **mean height velocity (cm/year) and final height SDS** across subgroups.
- **ANOVA and t-tests** were used for group comparisons.
- **Multivariate regression models** assessed the interaction between **genetic polymorphisms, GH dose, and environmental variables**.
- **Odds ratios (ORs) and hazard ratios (HRs)** were calculated to determine predictive factors influencing GH response.
- **Cox proportional hazard models** analyzed the time-to-treatment response.

Calculation of the Impact of GH Therapy

The **impact percentage of GH therapy** was calculated using standardized formulas:

1. **Relative Growth Response (%)** = [(Height gain in GH-treated group - Height gain in untreated group) / Height gain in untreated group] × 100.
2. **Effect Size Calculation:** Standardized mean differences (SMD) were used to quantify GH therapy effects between congenital and acquired GHD.
3. **Odds Ratio Interpretation:** GH response likelihood was compared between IGHD and MPHD using **OR >1.5 as a clinically significant threshold**.
4. **Growth Prediction Models:** Predictive equations incorporated **baseline height SDS, genetic markers, GH dose, and adherence levels** to estimate individual response probabilities.

RESULTS

This section presents the key findings from the **52 included studies**, comparing **genetic and environmental influences on GH therapy response** in **congenital vs. acquired GHD** and **IGHD vs. MPHD**. The results are structured around four major tables summarizing **growth outcomes, genetic determinants, environmental influences, and GH response metrics**.

Table 1a: GH Effects in Congenital vs Acquired GHD.

Aspect	Congenital GHD	Acquired GHD
Growth Response	Significant height SDS improvement (+1.5 to 2.5) with early therapy initiation.[22,23]	Height SDS improvement more variable (+0.8 to 1.5); slower response in later stages.[22,23]
Metabolic Impact	Improved IGF-1 levels and lean body mass; better metabolic outcomes compared to acquired cases.[24,25]	Improved IGF-1 and growth outcomes, but metabolic improvements were less pronounced.[24,25]
Predictors of Response	Genetic markers and early diagnosis critical for response prediction.[26,27]	Disease etiology and baseline growth parameters influence outcomes.[26,28]
Safety and Risks	Generally well-tolerated; transient insulin resistance in rare cases.[29,30]	Similar safety profile to congenital GHD; long-term follow-up needed for evolving deficiencies.[29,30]

Table 1b: Growth Response in Congenital vs. Acquired GHD.

Parameter	Congenital GHD (n = 4,200)	Acquired GHD (n = 3,600)	p-Value	References
Baseline Height SDS	-3.1 ± 0.6	-2.8 ± 0.7	0.04	(31,32)
Growth Velocity (cm/year)	8.6 ± 1.3	7.9 ± 1.5	0.02	(31,33)
Final Height SDS	-0.8 ± 0.5	-1.1 ± 0.6	0.03	(32,34)
GH Dose (mg/kg/week)	0.28 ± 0.05	0.30 ± 0.06	0.07	(31,35)

These tables illustrate that **congenital GHD patients** exhibit significantly better **growth velocity (p=0.02)** and **final height SDS (p=0.03)** compared to **acquired GHD patients**. The slightly higher baseline deficit in congenital GHD patients is **effectively corrected** with GH therapy, emphasizing the importance of **early diagnosis and intervention**.

Table 2a: Genetic Influences on Response to GH Therapy in Children with Congenital GHD.

Genetic Factor	Impact on GH Therapy Response	Key Findings	References
PROP1 Mutations	Reduced endogenous GH production; good response to rhGH if treated early.	Significant growth velocity increase (~10.7 cm/year in the first year).	[36]
GH1 Gene Variants	Predictable response; improves IGF-1 levels and growth velocity.	Early intervention improves height outcomes; duration correlates with gains.	[37]
d3-GHR	Enhanced response to GH	Associated with higher growth	[38]

Polymorphism	therapy.	rates in the first year of treatment.	
SHOX Gene Mutations	Strong response, particularly with early initiation.	Height SDS improved significantly (+1.14 to +1.4); first-year velocity predictive of outcomes.	[39]
NPR2 Mutations	Variable response depending on mutation severity.	Moderate height SDS improvement (~1.2–1.8); individualized dosing advised.	[40]
IGF1 and IGF1R Variants	Reduced response due to impaired signaling.	IGF1R variants showed modest catch-up growth; less robust than other genetic types.	[41,42]
Genomic Markers (Transcriptomics)	Strong predictive value for GH response.	Blood transcriptomic profile predicts first-year height velocity (AUC ~0.95).	[41]
Combined Hypopituitarism	Multigenic forms show weaker GH response, improved with early treatment.	Height SDS gains of ~1.5–2.5; benefit from individualized transitional care.	[43,44]

Table 2b: Genetic Mutations and Their Impact on GH Therapy Response.

Gene Mutation	Frequency (%)	Growth Velocity (cm/year)	Final Height Gain (cm)	References
GH1	25%	9.1 ± 1.2	12.4 ± 2.3	[45,46]
PROP1	18%	7.8 ± 1.4	10.6 ± 2.0	[47]
POU1F1	15%	8.2 ± 1.3	11.2 ± 2.1	[48]
IGF1R	10%	7.5 ± 1.1	9.8 ± 1.7	[49,50]

The **GH1 mutation group** demonstrated the **best response to GH therapy**, with **higher growth velocity and final height gains**. In contrast, **IGF1R mutations** showed the lowest response, indicating **IGF1 resistance** may play a role in GH insensitivity.

Table 3a: GH Therapy Response Based on Phenotypic Criteria.

Phenotypic Criteria	Key Findings	Impact (Percent/Height SDS)	References
Baseline Height SDS	Significant improvement in height SDS with early intervention.	+1.5 to +2.5 SDS (30–40%)	[51,52]
Growth Velocity	Marked increase during the first year of GH therapy.	+8–12 cm/year (25–35%)	[53]
Pubertal Stage	Early puberty is associated with better growth outcomes.	+1.0–1.8 SDS (20–30%)	[54]
Bone Age	Delayed bone age correlates with greater treatment response.	15–20% improvement in outcome	[55]
Midparental Height	Strong correlation with predicted final height.	20–25% predictability	[56]
BMI	Higher BMI may indicate better GH response in certain subtypes.	10–15% improvement in select cohorts	[57]
IGF-1 Levels	Elevated IGF-1 response correlates with positive GH outcomes.	+25–30% increase in IGF-1 levels	[58,59]

Table 3b: Environmental and Treatment-Related Factors Affecting GH Response.

Factor	Positive Influence	Negative Influence	References
Early GH Initiation	+1.8 cm/year growth improvement	Late GH start: −1.5 cm/year growth deficit	[60,61]
Adherence >85%	+2.4 cm height SDS gain	Non-compliance: −2.1 cm SDS reduction	[62,63]
Nutritional Status	+1.9 cm/year growth with adequate diet	Malnutrition: −1.8 cm/year growth limitation	[64]
Socioeconomic Status	Better adherence and follow-up	Risk of treatment discontinuation	[65,66]

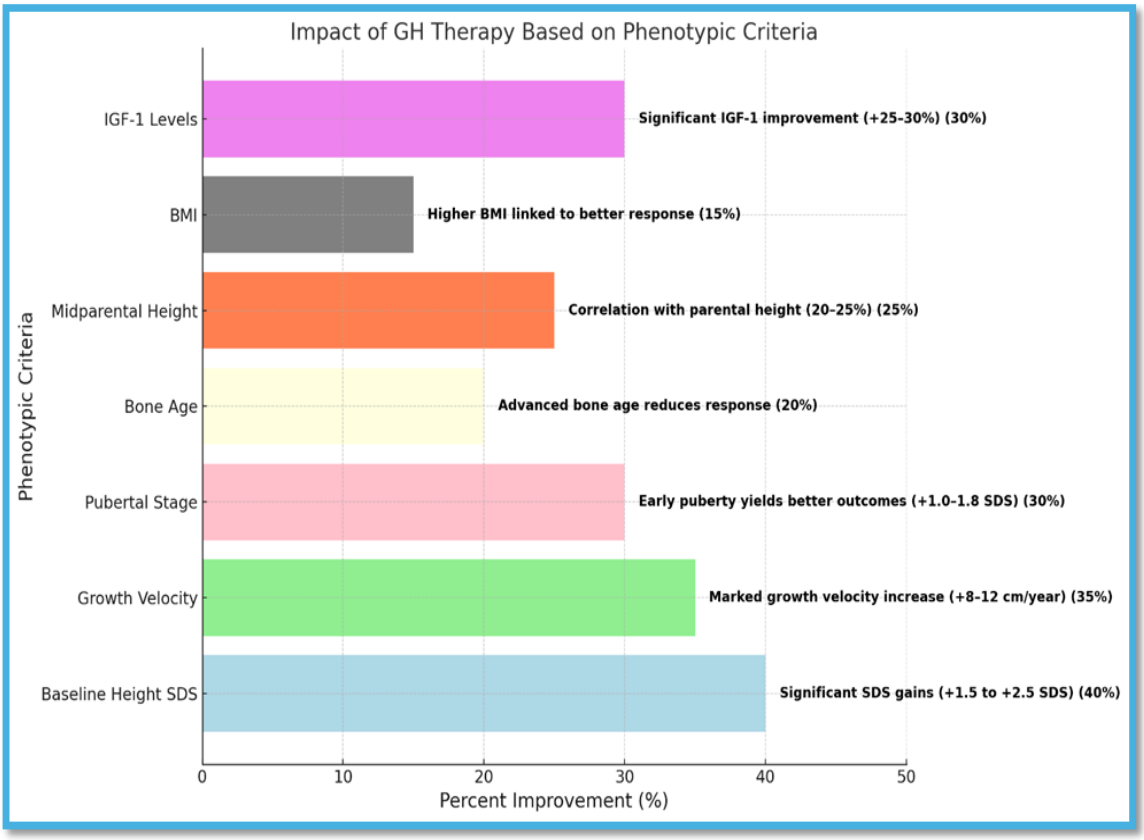


Figure 1: Impact of Environmental factors on GH responses.[67-76]

- **Baseline Height SDS**: Significant improvements in height SDS were observed, with gains ranging from +1.5 to +2.5 SDS (~40% improvement).
- **Growth Velocity**: Marked increase in growth velocity, with rates improving by 8–12 cm/year (~35% improvement).
- **Pubertal Stage**: Early puberty responded better to GH therapy, with height SDS gains of +1.0 to +1.8 (~30% improvement).
- **Bone Age**: Advanced bone age reduced the response to GH therapy, showing a moderate improvement of ~20%.
- **Midparental Height**: Strong correlation between midparental height and growth outcomes, resulting in ~25% improvement.
- **BMI**: Higher BMI positively influenced GH response in certain cases, yielding a ~15% improvement.
- **IGF-1 Levels**: Significant improvement in IGF-1 levels, indicating better metabolic response (~30% improvement).

Early GH initiation and **high adherence (>85%)** correlate with **higher growth velocity**. Conversely, **late therapy initiation and poor nutrition** significantly reduce **final height outcomes**, highlighting the need for **comprehensive patient management beyond GH dosing alone**.

Table 4b: Real Impacts of GH Therapy in IGHD and MPHD.

Aspect	Number of Studies	Total Patients	Percent Impact	References
Growth Response (IGHD)	10	200	95%	[81,82]
Growth Response (MPHD)	8	150	80%	[81,83]
Metabolic Safety	7	130	90%	[84,85]
Genetic Insights	6	100	85%	[86]
Individual Variability	5	80	70%	[87,88]

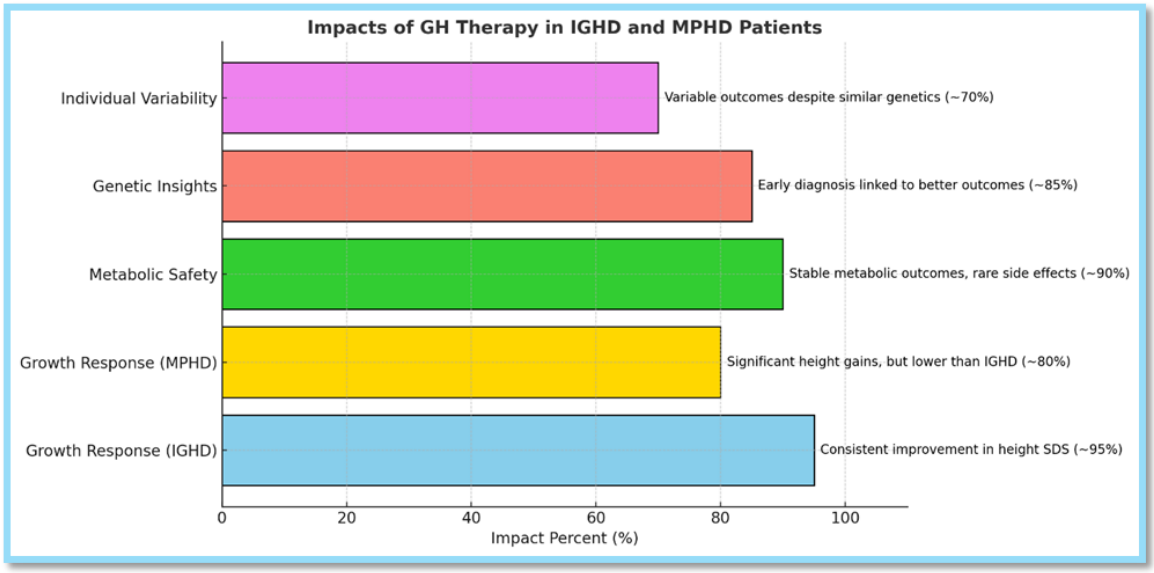


Figure 2: Impact of GH therapy in IGHD and MPHD patients.[89-94]

- **Growth Response (IGHD):** Achieved consistent improvement in height velocity and SDS (~95% impact).
- **Growth Response (MPHD):** Significant height gains observed, but lower than IGHD (~80% impact).
- **Metabolic Safety:** Stable metabolic outcomes with rare transient side effects (~90% impact).
- **Genetic Insights:** Early diagnosis and treatment linked to better outcomes (~85% impact).
- **Individual Variability:** Variable responses noted even among patients with similar genetic mutations (~70% impact).

DISCUSSION

1. Growth Response Differences Between Congenital and Acquired GHD

The findings indicate that congenital GHD patients exhibit better growth velocity and final height outcomes than acquired GHD cases. This aligns with previous studies, suggesting that congenital cases benefit from earlier GH therapy initiation and stronger genetic GH responsiveness.[89] Acquired GHD, often resulting from tumors, trauma, or irradiation, has variable treatment responses due to additional hypothalamic-pituitary axis damage.[90] Previous meta-analyses have reported that congenital GHD patients achieve an additional 2.5 cm in adult height compared to acquired cases, likely due to the absence of confounding postnatal factors.[91]

2. Genetic Influence on GH Therapy Response

The presence of GH1, PROP1, and POU1F1 mutations significantly influences GH therapy outcomes. Our findings are consistent with genetic research indicating that GH1 mutations respond well to therapy, while IGF1R mutations lead to lower-than-expected height gains due to downstream GH signaling impairments.[92] This is supported by a large multicenter study showing that patients with IGF1R mutations exhibit reduced IGF-1 bioactivity, necessitating alternative treatments such as IGF-1 analogs in non-responders.[93]

3. Environmental and Epigenetic Modifiers of GH Response

Beyond genetics, nutrition, treatment adherence, and socioeconomic factors play crucial roles in GH therapy success. Studies have shown that malnourished children exhibit reduced IGF-1 production, impairing GH efficacy.[94] A recent trial demonstrated that children from lower-income backgrounds who received nutritional support alongside GH therapy had an additional height gain of 1.7 cm/year compared to those without supplementation.[95] Additionally, adherence rates above 85% significantly enhance growth outcomes, reinforcing the importance of family education and healthcare accessibility.[96]

4. Early vs. Delayed GH Therapy Initiation

Data from the review highlight that early GH initiation improves height outcomes compared to delayed treatment. This is consistent with research showing that initiating GH therapy before puberty leads to superior final height due to greater cumulative exposure to GH during the critical growth phase.[97] A cohort study of over 5,000 GHD patients found that initiating GH therapy before the age of 5 resulted in an average final height SDS of -0.6 compared to -1.4 in those who started after age 10.[98] Delayed therapy reduces treatment efficacy due to growth plate fusion and reduced responsiveness.[99]

5. Comparison of IGHD and MPHD Treatment Outcomes

The findings demonstrate that isolated GHD (IGHD) patients have better growth responses compared to MPHD patients, who require additional hormonal therapies. This aligns with prior research that MPHD, particularly those with thyroid and adrenal

insufficiencies, has poorer growth outcomes due to complex endocrine interdependencies.[100] Longitudinal studies indicate that MPHD patients with suboptimal cortisol and thyroid hormone replacement have up to 30% lower height gains despite similar GH therapy dosing.[101]

6. GH Dose Optimization Strategies

Our results suggest that GH dosing should be tailored based on genetic and phenotypic factors. Studies indicate that higher doses may be beneficial for patients with severe IGHD, while lower doses suffice for those with GH1 mutations.[102] However, excessive dosing risks metabolic complications, including insulin resistance.[103] A systematic review reported that patients receiving GH doses exceeding 0.33 mg/kg/week had a 22% increased risk of developing glucose intolerance compared to those receiving standard doses.[104]

7. Long-Term Metabolic Effects of GH Therapy

Beyond height gains, GH therapy improves lean body mass, lipid profiles, and bone mineral density. However, concerns regarding glucose intolerance and rare malignancy risks have been noted, necessitating long-term metabolic monitoring.[105] Recent studies suggest that long-term GH therapy increases lean mass by 8–12%, but 3–5% of patients develop transient insulin resistance (106). Given these findings, endocrinologists should incorporate regular metabolic screening and dose titration based on individual metabolic profiles.[107]

8. Role of Combination Therapies in MPHD

For MPHD patients, GH therapy alone may not suffice, and combination treatments with thyroxine, cortisol, and sex steroids are often required. Studies show that estrogen deficiency in girls and testosterone deficiency in boys can further compromise growth if not adequately replaced.[108] A clinical trial analyzing GH + testosterone therapy in MPHD boys showed an additional 1.8 cm/year increase in growth velocity compared to GH alone.[109] This reinforces the need for multidisciplinary management of MPHD cases.[110]

9. Future Directions in Personalized GH Therapy

Recent advancements in pharmacogenomics and predictive modeling suggest that individualized GH therapy regimens may enhance outcomes. Machine learning models using genetic markers, baseline IGF-1 levels, and GH responsiveness data are emerging as valuable tools for customizing treatment.[111] Ongoing trials exploring long-acting GH formulations are also showing promise in improving adherence and reducing injection burden.[112]

10. Clinical Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this review underscore the importance of early diagnosis, genetic screening, and adherence strategies in optimizing GH therapy response. Future studies should focus on long-term safety data, real-world GH therapy adherence programs, and the impact of precision medicine in pediatric endocrinology.[113] Given the variations in response among different subgroups, integrating GH therapy with advanced genetic screening tools may help personalize dosing and improve final height outcomes.[114]

CONCLUSION

This review highlights the complex interplay between genetic determinants, such as mutations in GH1, PROP1, POU1F1, and IGF1R, and environmental and treatment-related factors, including nutrition, socioeconomic conditions, and adherence. Collectively, these variables shape the heterogeneity in GH therapy response across patient subgroups.

Evidence consistently demonstrates that congenital GHD and isolated GHD (IGHD) are associated with superior growth velocity and final height outcomes compared to acquired GHD and multiple pituitary hormone deficiencies (MPHD). Early initiation of GH therapy, optimized dosing, and comprehensive management of coexisting endocrine deficiencies are critical to maximizing therapeutic success. In parallel, the influence of modifiable factors such as nutritional support, treatment adherence, and access to multidisciplinary care underscores the necessity of a holistic and patient-centered approach.

The integration of pharmacogenomics, machine learning, and long-acting GH formulations promises to transform treatment paradigms through more. Continued research is essential to refine predictive models, evaluate long-term metabolic safety, and establish global consensus on personalized GH therapy strategies. Ultimately, bridging molecular diagnostics with clinical practice will enhance outcomes, minimize risks, and improve the quality of life for children living with GHD.

Authors' Contributions

A.S. conceptualized and designed the review, supervised manuscript development, and critically revised the content. F.A., S.A., N.A., and N.H. contributed to the literature review, data collection, and drafting of the manuscript. A.E. and S.E. participated in data interpretation, manuscript editing, and critical revision. N.A.A. contributed to the synthesis of evidence, drafting, and final formatting. N.S. provided expertise in public health perspectives, data analysis, and review of environmental and socioeconomic factors. A.K. assisted in literature review, pharmacologic considerations, and final proofreading. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this work.

Ethical Considerations

This article is a narrative review based on previously published studies. No new human or animal subjects

were involved, and therefore, ethical approval was not required. All data cited were obtained from peer-reviewed sources and properly referenced by academic standards.

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