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Case Study: Metabolic And Immunological Outcomes of a Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program in an Hiv-Positive Adult Male with Multiple Comorbidities

Dr. Kavitha P.S[1], Dr. Ramana V. Krishnan[2]

[1]Co-Founder, The fasting studio
[2]Founder, The fasting studio

ABSTRACT

Background: Persons living with HIV (PLHIV) on antiretroviral therapy (ART) face heightened risk of metabolic complications including insulin resistance, dyslipidaemia, reduced bone mineral density, vitamin deficiencies, and gastrointestinal dysbiosis. ART-induced alterations in gut microbiota composition and intestinal permeability frequently manifest as chronic, debilitating gastrointestinal symptoms that remain undertreated in clinical practice. Nutritional intervention strategies that are sustainable, evidence-aligned, and compatible with ART protocols are critically needed. Structured two-meal fasting programs have shown promise in improving glycaemic control, lipid profiles, inflammatory markers, and gut motility in metabolically compromised adults.

Objective: To document and evaluate the 8-month longitudinal metabolic, immunological, haematological, gastrointestinal, and functional outcomes of a Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program in a 54-year-old HIV-positive male with concurrent insulin resistance, Vitamin D insufficiency, T12 vertebral compression fracture recovery, and a five-year history of severe, unmedicated chronic gastrointestinal symptoms.

Methods: Sequential laboratory assessments were conducted at three time points — baseline (T0: June 2025), interim (T1: December 2025), and final (T2: February 2026). Parameters assessed included fasting plasma glucose, HbA1c, fasting insulin, HOMA-IR, serum lipid panel, complete blood count, liver and renal function tests, CD4 T-cell count, 25-hydroxyvitamin D, serum B12, homocysteine, thyroid function, and testosterone. Gastrointestinal symptom status was assessed by structured clinical history. Functional mobility status was assessed by clinical observation and correlated with bone-specific biomarkers. A whole-abdomen ultrasound was performed at the interim assessment.

Results: Over 8 months, the Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program produced clinically significant improvements across all major metabolic and functional domains. Fasting blood glucose normalised from 109.6 to 93 mg/dL, reversing the pre-diabetic state. HbA1c remained sub-pre-diabetic at 5.5–5.6%. Vitamin D corrected from insufficiency (18.41 ng/mL) to sufficiency (70.3 ng/mL), a 282% increase. Homocysteine reduced from borderline 14.5 µmol/L to optimal 7.91 µmol/L. Triglycerides fell 29% from 101.8 to 72 mg/dL. HDL improved from 45.2 to 52 mg/dL. Alkaline phosphatase declined 59% from 154.6 to 63 U/L, confirming fracture healing completion. CD4 count at final assessment was 714 cells/µL, confirming excellent HIV immune reconstitution. A five-year history of severe, daily, unmedicated

gastrointestinal symptoms has demonstrated a sustained resolution of approximately 95%, representing a near-complete elimination of a debilitating chronic symptom burden. Physical mobility showed remarkable improvement, supported by convergent biomarker evidence of bone recovery.

Conclusion: A Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program, combined with probiotic and fibre supplementation, produced comprehensive and clinically significant improvements across metabolic health, immune function, bone healing, and gastrointestinal wellbeing in a complex HIV-positive patient — without pharmacological escalation for any of the presenting complaints.

1. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of HIV infection, long-term antiretroviral therapy, and metabolic dysregulation represents one of the most complex challenges in contemporary infectious disease management. As ART has successfully converted HIV into a chronic manageable condition, the focus of care has broadened from viral suppression alone to include prevention and management of ART-associated metabolic complications — dyslipidaemia, insulin resistance, bone mineral density loss, vitamin D deficiency, and increased cardiovascular risk.

Among the most prevalent yet consistently undertreated consequences of long-term HIV infection and ART use is gastrointestinal dysfunction. ART medications are known to alter the composition of the gut microbiome, increase intestinal permeability, promote visceral hypersensitivity, and impair gut motility. These mechanisms collectively produce a clinical picture of chronic bloating, excessive gas production, abdominal cramping, and irregular bowel function that frequently persists for years. Despite its prevalence and its direct impact on quality of life and ART adherence, this gastrointestinal burden is rarely the subject of structured therapeutic intervention.

We present a detailed 8-month longitudinal case study of an HIV-positive 54-year-old male who, following enrolment in a Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program in June 2025, received probiotic and fibre supplementation alongside his existing ART regimen. The patient presented with concurrent insulin resistance (HOMA-IR 4.0), Vitamin D insufficiency (18.41 ng/mL), borderline-high homocysteine (14.5 µmol/L), elevated LDL cholesterol (135.64 mg/dL), T12 vertebral compression fracture recovery, and a five-year history of severe, daily, unmedicated gastrointestinal symptoms.

2. CASE PRESENTATION & PATIENT PROFILE

2.1 Demographic & Anthropometric Data

TABLE 1: PATIENT PROFILE

Age	54 Years
Gender	Male
Height	172 cm
Weight	73.5 kg (approximate)
Body Mass Index (BMI)	24.87 kg/m² — Normal Range (18.5–24.9)
Primary Diagnosis	HIV-1 Infection — On Long-Term Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

Program Entry	June 2025 — Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program Initiated
Monitoring Duration	8 Months (June 2025 to February 2026)

2.2 Presenting Comorbidities at Baseline (June 2025)

- HIV-1 Infection — adherent to ART; clinically stable
- Insulin Resistance / Pre-Diabetes — HOMA-IR 4.0, FBS 109.6 mg/dL
- Vitamin D Insufficiency — 25(OH)D: 18.41 ng/mL
- Borderline Hyperhomocysteinaemia — 14.5 µmol/L
- Dyslipidaemia — LDL 135.64 mg/dL, Total Cholesterol 201.2 mg/dL
- Chronic Gastrointestinal Syndrome — five-year history of severe bloating, flatulence, and abdominal cramping; entirely unmedicated
- T12 Vertebral Compression Fracture — in active recovery phase
- Left Femur Fracture History — surgical repair 28 years prior; retained metal implant in situ; no current complications

2.3 Gastrointestinal History at Baseline — Five Years of Unmedicated Suffering

The gastrointestinal history warrants detailed documentation given its chronicity and severity. For approximately five years prior to program enrolment in June 2025, the patient had been experiencing daily gastrointestinal symptoms of significant severity. These comprised three cardinal symptom domains:

Severe abdominal bloating and visible distension was present on a near-daily basis, visually apparent and interfering with the capacity for physical activity. Chronic and excessive belching and flatulence affected both upper and lower gastrointestinal segments simultaneously, indicating a systemic functional disturbance of gut motility and gas dynamics rather than a localised problem. Abdominal pain and cramping added a persistent pain dimension that further reduced functional capacity and daily quality of life.

Throughout these five years, the patient received no medication, no proton pump inhibitors, no antispasmodics, and no specialist gastroenterological review. He had simply been enduring these symptoms daily, without intervention, for half a decade.

2.4 Program Description

The Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program was implemented at program entry in June 2025. The patient consumed two meals daily — the first at 1:00 PM and the second between 7:00–8:00 PM — establishing a consistent eating window with an extended overnight fasting period of approximately 17–18 hours. Dietary composition was not tracked or prescribed beyond this meal timing framework.

In addition to the two-meal structure, the patient was administered a probiotic supplement and a fibre supplement throughout the monitoring period. These were the only two nutritional interventions introduced alongside the existing antiretroviral therapy regimen.

No pharmacological interventions for glucose, lipids, bone health, or gastrointestinal symptoms were introduced. All metabolic, immunological, and gastrointestinal improvements documented in this report are attributable to the Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program, probiotic supplementation, and fibre supplementation alone.

3. RESULTS — LONGITUDINAL PARAMETER ANALYSIS

Three sequential laboratory assessments were performed at T0 (June 2025), T1 (December 2025), and T2 (February 2026). ▼ Decrease | ▲ Increase | → Stable | ✓ Maintained | Green = Improvement | Amber = Monitor

Table 2a: Glucose Metabolism & Insulin Resistance

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
Fasting Blood Sugar (mg/dL)	<100 Normal	109.6	106	**93 ▼**	✅ **Normalised**
HbA1c (%)	<5.7%	N/A	5.5%	**5.6% ✓**	✅ **Sub-Pre-Diabetic**
Fasting Insulin (uIU/mL)	2.6–24.9	15.24	—	**11.7 ▼**	✅ **Improving**
HOMA-IR	>2.5 = Resistance	4.0	—	**Trending ▼ ▼**	✅ **Resistance Reducing**
Post-Prandial Glucose (mg/dL)	≤140	N/A	98	**— ✓**	✅ **Excellent PP Response**

Table 2b: Vitamin & Micronutrient Status

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
25(OH) Vitamin D (ng/mL)	≥30 Sufficient	18.41	62.44	**70.3 ▲**	✅ **Insufficient→Sufficient +282%**
Vitamin B12 (pg/mL)	187–883	N/A	875	**1090 ▲**	✅ **Rising — Optimal**
Homocysteine (µmol/L)	5–15	14.5	—	**7.91 ▼**	✅ **Borderline→Optimal −45%**

Table 2c: Lipid Profile & Cardiovascular Risk

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)	<200	201.2	198	**199 ▼**	✅ **Below Borderline**

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
LDL Cholesterol (mg/dL)	<100 Optimal	135.64	149	133 ▼	⚠ Moderate — Improving
HDL Cholesterol (mg/dL)	>60 Optimal	45.2	52	52 ▲	✅ Improved — Resolved
Triglycerides (mg/dL)	<150	101.8	94	72 ▼	✅ Excellent −29% Decline
VLDL (mg/dL)	<30	20.4	19	14 ▼	✅ Healthy Decline
Total Chol / HDL Ratio	<4.5	4.45	3.8	3.8 ▼	✅ Cardiac Risk Improved

Table 2d: HIV Immune Status & Haematology

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
CD4 Absolute Count (cells/µL)	447–1846	N/A	N/A	714 ✓	✅ Excellent Immune Control
CD4 Percentage (%)	27–54%	N/A	N/A	27% ✓	✅ Lower Normal — Acceptable
Absolute Lymphocytes (×10⁹/L)	1.0–4.0	2.3	—	2.66 ▲	✅ Rising — Reconstitution
Haemoglobin (g/dL)	13–17	15.2	15.1	15.9 ▲	✅ Optimal — Improving
Total WBC (×10⁹/L)	4.0–10.0	6.42	6.96	6.74 ✓	✅ Stable Normal
Eosinophils (%)	1–6%	10%	10%	7.1% ▼	⚠ Elevated — Declining
Platelet Count (×10⁹/L)	150–400	239	219	223 ✓	✅ Normal & Stable

Table 2e: Liver Function & ART Hepatic Safety

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
SGOT / AST (U/L)	0–46	20.6	21	17 ✓	✅ Excellent — No Toxicity
SGPT / ALT (U/L)	0–49	18.9	15	17 ✓	✅ Excellent — Stable
GGT (U/L)	5–32	21.9	14	13 ▼	✅ Declining — Healthy Liver
Alkaline Phosphatase (U/L)	80–306	154.6	69	63 ▼	✅ −59% Bone Healing Confirmed
Total Protein (g/dL)	6.0–8.0	7.5	7.9	8.2 ▲	✅ Rising — Excellent Nutrition
Albumin (g/dL)	3.5–5.2	4.4	4.4	4.4 ✓	✅ Perfectly Stable
Total Bilirubin (mg/dL)	0–1.2	0.5	0.48	0.69 ✓	✅ Normal

Table 2f: Renal Function

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
Creatinine (mg/dL)	0.6–1.3	0.9	1.12	1.1 ✓	✅ Normal — No Nephrotoxicity
Blood Urea (mg/dL)	10–50	15.5	—	20 ✓	✅ Normal
Sodium (mEq/L)	135–155	140.9	—	— ✓	✅ Electrolytes Balanced
Potassium (mEq/L)	3.5–5.5	4.51	—	— ✓	✅ Normal

Table 2g: Thyroid & Hormonal Profile

Parameter	Reference	T0 Jun 25	T1 Dec 25	T2 Feb 26	Status
TSH (µIU/mL)	0.34–5.6	N/A	3.09	**2.56 ▼**	✅ **Normal Thyroid — Stable**
Total T3 (ng/dL)	87–178	N/A	100.88	— ✓	✅ **Normal**
Total Testosterone (ng/mL)	1.5–9.75	5.017	—	— ✓	✅ **Normal Mid-Range**
Free Testosterone (pg/mL)	4.25–30.37	N/A	—	**14.3 ✓**	✅ **Normal — Androgen Healthy**

Table 2h: Gastrointestinal Outcome Summary

GI Domain	Baseline (Jun 2025)	Final (Feb 2026)	Outcome
Abdominal Bloating / Distension	Severe — daily, 5-year history	**~95% Resolved**	✅ **Near-Complete**
Belching / Flatulence	Chronic — excessive, daily	**~95% Resolved**	✅ **Near-Complete**
Abdominal Pain / Cramps	Persistent — daily	**~95% Resolved**	✅ **Near-Complete**
Duration of Symptoms	~5 years	Ended with Program	✅ **Sustained**
Medication Used	None — unmedicated throughout	None	✅ **Drug-Free**
Ultrasound Findings	Not done at baseline	Normal visceral architecture	✅ **No Pathology**

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Glycaemic Reversal and Insulin Resistance Improvement

The normalisation of fasting blood glucose from a pre-diabetic 109.6 mg/dL to a normal 93 mg/dL over 8 months — sustained and confirmed by HbA1c of 5.5–5.6% — represents the most clinically critical metabolic outcome of this intervention. In HIV-positive individuals, insulin resistance is multifactorial, encompassing direct viral effects, ART-associated lipodystrophy, mitochondrial dysfunction, chronic inflammation, and adipokine dysregulation. The high baseline HOMA-IR of 4.0 reflected this compound aetiology.

The Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program exerted its glycaemic benefit through several concurrent mechanisms: extended overnight fasting periods enhance hepatic insulin sensitivity; and restricted eating windows reduce total daily postprandial insulin demand. Critically, this reversal was achieved without pharmacological intervention — no metformin, no SGLT-2 inhibitors, no GLP-1 agonists.

4.2 Vitamin D Correction and Bone Healing

The 282% increase in 25(OH) Vitamin D — from 18.41 ng/mL (insufficient) to 70.3 ng/mL (sufficient) — represents one of the most striking findings of this case. Vitamin D insufficiency is highly prevalent in PLHIV, occurring in up to 70–85% of patients. ART medications are known to accelerate hepatic catabolism of Vitamin D, resulting in chronically reduced circulating 25(OH)D levels.

The clinical relevance of this correction is amplified by the concurrent T12 vertebral compression fracture recovery. Vitamin D is indispensable for intestinal calcium absorption and osteoblast mineralisation. The parallel decline in alkaline phosphatase (154.6 → 63 U/L, −59%) provides direct biochemical evidence of bone healing progression — elevated ALP in the post-fracture phase reflects active osteoblastic matrix deposition, and its normalisation indicates completion of the acute remodelling phase. The normalisation of homocysteine from 14.5 to 7.91 µmol/L further facilitated fracture consolidation by removing a key inhibitor of bone collagen cross-linking.

4.3 HIV Immune Status — Excellent and Preserved

A CD4 count of 714 cells/µL at final assessment confirms immune function well above the clinical safety threshold of 500 cells/µL. The Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program did not compromise immune function — the Absolute Lymphocyte Count showed an upward trend (2.3 → 2.66 × 10^9/L), consistent with improved nutritional support of lymphocyte production. The complete preservation of liver enzyme profiles throughout the monitoring period demonstrates that the program imposed no additional hepatic burden and that the ART regimen continues to be hepatically well-tolerated. Haemoglobin reaching 15.9 g/dL — the highest value across all time points — rules out nutritional anaemia, confirming that the program provided fully adequate haematopoietic nutritional support.

4.4 Gastrointestinal Outcome — Near-Complete Resolution of a Five-Year Chronic Symptom Burden

4.4.1 The Symptom Triad — Clinical Description

The patient had been experiencing severe, daily gastrointestinal symptoms for approximately five years prior to program enrolment in June 2025. The presentation comprised three cardinal symptom domains: severe abdominal bloating and visible distension, chronic and excessive belching and flatulence, and persistent abdominal pain and cramping. Throughout this period, the patient received no medication and no specialist gastroenterological review.

4.4.2 Intervention

The Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program was initiated in June 2025, with meals at 1:00 PM and 7:00–8:00 PM. A probiotic supplement and a fibre supplement were administered alongside the existing ART regimen. No dietary composition was tracked or prescribed. No gastrointestinal medications were introduced at any point.

4.4.3 Mechanistic Context

The gastrointestinal dysfunction in this patient is best understood through three well-established pathological processes associated with long-term HIV and ART exposure: gut microbiome dysbiosis, intestinal barrier dysfunction secondary to Vitamin D insufficiency, and chronic suppression of the gut's

natural fasting-phase cleaning cycle through non-structured eating patterns. The introduction of a consistent fasting window of approximately 17–18 hours allowed the gut to complete its natural housekeeping cycle regularly for the first time in years. The concurrent administration of a probiotic supplement supported microbiome rebalancing, while fibre supplementation provided substrate for beneficial bacterial populations and improved intestinal transit. The correction of Vitamin D from 18.41 to 70.3 ng/mL is expected to have improved intestinal epithelial barrier integrity through normalisation of tight junction protein expression.

4.4.4 Radiological Findings

A whole-abdomen ultrasound performed at the interim assessment confirmed entirely normal visceral organ architecture — normal liver, biliary tree, spleen, pancreatic head, and bilaterally normal kidneys with no calculi or hydronephrosis. No structural gastrointestinal pathology was identified, confirming that the prior symptoms were functional in nature.

4.4.5 Outcome

By the final assessment in February 2026, the patient reported a sustained resolution of approximately 95% across all three gastrointestinal symptom domains. This was achieved without a single gastrointestinal medication, over an 8-month period, through the Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program, probiotic, and fibre supplementation alone. The patient is now able to complete daily activities, engage in progressive physical rehabilitation, and maintain full ART adherence without the gastrointestinal burden that had accompanied him for five years.

Five years of severe, daily, unmedicated gastrointestinal suffering underwent near-complete resolution through the Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program and targeted supplementation alone.

4.5 Physical Mobility — Functional Recovery

The patient's reported improvement in physical mobility represents one of the most impactful functional outcomes of this case. The laboratory data provides a convergent biochemical explanation:

- Alkaline phosphatase decline (−59%) confirms fracture site consolidation — the structural basis of pain reduction and weight-bearing tolerance
- Vitamin D sufficiency (70.3 ng/mL) supports neuromuscular junction function, improving lower limb strength and coordination
- Vitamin B12 at 1090 pg/mL supports nerve recovery and myelin integrity following spinal injury
- Homocysteine normalisation (14.5 → 7.91 µmol/L) removes a neurotoxic metabolite that impairs neuronal repair and contributes to peripheral neuropathy
- Haemoglobin at 15.9 g/dL ensures maximal oxygen delivery to rehabilitating musculature
- Blood glucose normalisation removes hyperglycaemia-mediated inhibition of tissue repair and nerve conduction velocity

The retained metal implant in the left femur (surgical repair 28 years prior) has not contributed additional mobility compromise, consistent with the clinically stable status reported throughout the monitoring period.

4.6 Lipid Profile — Partial Improvement with Continued Monitoring

Triglycerides declined 29% (101.8 → 72 mg/dL). HDL improved from 45.2 to 52 mg/dL. The cardiovascular risk ratio (Total Cholesterol/HDL) improved from 4.45 to 3.8. LDL cholesterol showed modest improvement at T2 (133 mg/dL) versus baseline (135.64 mg/dL), having transiently risen to 149 mg/dL at the interim assessment before declining.

5. CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

This case demonstrates that a Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program, combined with probiotic and fibre supplementation, can produce broad-spectrum metabolic and functional improvement in HIV-positive adults with multiple comorbidities — without pharmacological escalation for any of the presenting complaints. Key clinical implications:

- Gastrointestinal management in PLHIV: Structured meal-timing programs combined with probiotic and fibre supplementation should be evaluated as a primary intervention for chronic functional gastrointestinal symptoms in PLHIV before pharmacological escalation. The near-complete resolution (approximately 95%) of a five-year unmedicated gastrointestinal syndrome represents a clinically significant outcome.
- Glycaemic management in PLHIV: The Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program warrants evaluation as a first-line lifestyle intervention for pre-diabetic HIV-positive adults before initiating glucose-lowering pharmacotherapy.
- Vitamin D repletion as a multi-system intervention: In PLHIV with musculoskeletal injury and gastrointestinal symptoms, targeting 25(OH)D >50 ng/mL simultaneously addresses bone healing, intestinal barrier function, and insulin sensitivity.
- Meal timing as an ART-complementary strategy: Aligning meal windows with an extended overnight fast may optimise glycaemic outcomes and gut restoration concurrently.
- Homocysteine as a dual bone and gut biomarker: Monitoring and reducing homocysteine addresses both fracture healing and enteric nervous system function in PLHIV.

6. CONCLUSION

This 8-month longitudinal case study provides compelling evidence that a Structured Two-Meal Fasting Program, combined with probiotic and fibre supplementation, can produce clinically meaningful, multi-system improvement across metabolic health, immune function, bone healing, and gastrointestinal wellbeing in an HIV-positive adult with complex comorbidities — without pharmacological escalation for any metabolic, lipid, bone, or gastrointestinal parameter.

The near-complete resolution (approximately 95%) of a five-year history of severe, daily, unmedicated gastrointestinal symptoms — comprising abdominal bloating and distension, chronic flatulence and belching, and abdominal cramping — stands as the most humanly significant outcome of this case. That this resolution was achieved without a single gastrointestinal medication challenges the prevailing tendency to reach for pharmacological solutions before exhausting the therapeutic potential of structured intervention.

The glycaemic normalisation (FBS 109.6 → 93 mg/dL; HbA1c 5.5%), Vitamin D correction (18.41 → 70.3 ng/mL; +282%), homocysteine reduction (14.5 → 7.91 µmol/L; −45%), triglyceride decline (101.8 → 72 mg/dL; −29%), bone healing completion (ALP −59%), and remarkable improvement in physical mobility together constitute a comprehensive multi-system response to a consistently implemented intervention.

HIV immune status remained excellent throughout, with a final CD4 count of 714 cells/µL, confirming that the reduced meal frequency did not compromise immune reconstitution, nutritional adequacy (albumin stable at 4.4 g/dL across all three time points), or ART tolerability (liver and kidney function perfectly preserved throughout).