

# Design and Clinical Pilot Testing of the Model-Based Dynamic Insulin Sensitivity and Secretion Test (DISST)

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4 Figures, 3 Tables

## **Abstract**

### ***Background***

Insulin resistance (IR) is a significant risk factor in the pathogenesis of type 2 diabetes. This research presents pilot study results of the Dynamic Insulin Sensitivity and Secretion Test (DISST), a high-resolution, low-intensity test to diagnose insulin sensitivity (IS) and characterise pancreatic insulin secretion in response to a (small) glucose challenge. This pilot study examines the effect of glucose and insulin dose on the DISST, and tests its repeatability.

### ***Methods***

DISST tests were performed on 16 subjects randomly allocated to low (5g glucose, 0.5U insulin), medium (10g glucose, 1U insulin) and high dose (20g glucose, 2U insulin) protocols. Two or three tests were performed on each subject a few days apart.

### ***Results***

Average variability in IS between low and medium dose was 10.3% (P=0.5) and between medium and high dose 6.0% (P=0.87). Geometric mean variability between tests was 6.0% (multiplicative standard deviation MSD 4.9%). Geometric mean variability in first phase endogenous insulin response was 6.8% (MSD 2.2%). Results were most consistent in subjects with low IS.

### ***Conclusions***

These findings suggest that DISST may be an easily performed dynamic test to quantify IS with high resolution, especially amongst those with reduced IS.

## Introduction

Insulin resistance (IR) is a key underlying abnormality in type 2 diabetes and a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (1, 2). A long-term follow-up study by Martin et al. (3) reported that 10 years ahead of a formal diagnosis of type 2 diabetes, those who developed the disease had 60% higher mean IR than those that did not. McLaughlin et al. (4) found that amongst obese individuals IR is the strongest predictor of subsequent type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease risk.

Insulin Sensitivity ( $IS=1/IR$ ) is not a discrete metric, but represents an attempt to quantify insulin mediated glucose utilization. The relative contributions of the three major determinants of overall IS (peripheral sensitivity, hepatic sensitivity,  $\beta$ -cell function) vary according to whether an individual is in the fasting or postprandial state and may change over time as the disease state progresses (5). Methods of assessment vary in their ability to determine one, two or three of the contributors, thus generating potentially discrepant results requiring careful interpretation (6).

The Euglycaemic Hyperinsulinaemic Clamp (EIC) (7) is the gold-standard for assessing insulin sensitivity. It measures peripheral sensitivity by suppressing endogenous glucose production (EGP) and endogenous insulin secretion using high dose infusions of insulin and glucose. Due to its complexity and duration (6, 8), simpler methods have arisen, including the Insulin Tolerance Test (ITT) (9) and the Intravenous Glucose Tolerance Test (IVGTT) with minimal model assessment (10). These tests have not achieved wide acceptance in a clinical environment given that they too are time consuming and complex

and do not correlate particularly well with the EIC (8, 9). Other attempts at sample reduced (12 sample (11)), or shorter (40 minute (12)) IVGTT protocols had the same model identification problems as the standard IVGTT (13), as they too are based on minimal model assessment. Simple, fasting assessments HOMA (14) and QUICKI (15), are appealing for large studies, however they assess combined hepatic and peripheral sensitivities in the fasting state, have poor reproducibility, and do not correlate well with the EIC. A sensitive, simple, repeatable measure of insulin sensitivity would have considerable value in clinical and research contexts, and in evaluating the impact of interventions (16).

The Dynamic Insulin Sensitivity and Secretion Test (DISST) is a dynamic test with mathematical model assessment, similar to the insulin modified IVGTT. The integrated design of the clinical protocol, mathematical model and data fitting methods enable a shorter test duration, more physiological dosing, less frequent sampling, and higher robustness, compared with the EIC or IVGTT. In addition to a combined metric for hepatic and peripheral insulin sensitivity, detailed information about  $\beta$ -cell function can also be obtained (17). During DISST development, a strong emphasis has been put on practical aspects of the protocol and clinical applicability, which differentiates it from the IVGTT. A more detailed explanation of the test design considerations and differences to the IVGTT are given in Appendix A.

The DISST has been designed and tested in Monte Carlo simulation studies (18) and shown good accuracy in repeatability with an intra-individual coefficient of variation of

4.5% (90%CI: 3.8% - 5.7%). As no simulation study can fully reproduce all metabolic effects in such a dynamic test, limited in vivo testing was required prior to the design of a full validation study. This pilot study was undertaken to qualitatively verify these simulation results in vivo, to assess the effect of glucose and insulin dosing on the outcome metrics and to get an indication of the repeatability of the test in an outpatient setting. This pilot study does not intend to deliver a fully powered result on the DISST's performance, but rather deliver an indication of feasibility of the test prior to a larger validation study against the EIC. A power calculation for a full validation study comparing the DISST to the EIC is proposed based on this study's results.

## Methods

### Subjects

A total of 16 adult volunteers were recruited by advertisements in the hospital and word of mouth. Subject 12 did not complete the full study protocol and was excluded from all further analysis. Insulin samples in two tests (two on subject 6 and two on subject 9) were exceptionally high, suggesting sampling errors and were therefore excluded. Subject 9 had to be excluded completely, as only a single remaining test was available. One subject was previously diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and on Metformin treatment. Medication was stopped a day prior to the testing. Written informed consent was obtained from all subjects, and height, weight and family history of diabetes recorded. Subject characteristics are summarised in Table 1.

### Study Design

All tests were performed at the Christchurch School of Medicine or the Department of Human Nutrition, University of Otago using exactly the same protocol. The clinical pilot study of the DISST aimed to investigate two aspects:

- Part 1: Effect of glucose and insulin dose on test outcome
- Part 2: Repeatability of the test at the same dose

In Part 1, the subjects had two tests on different days (3-8 days apart) using different glucose and insulin doses. Three dosing regimens were used: 5g glucose and 0.5U insulin (low), 10g glucose and 1U insulin (medium), or 20g glucose and 2U insulin (high). Each subject had a combination of either low/medium or medium/high dose tests.

In Part 2, the subjects had two tests (3-14 days apart) using the same glucose/insulin

dose. Some subjects had three tests and were included in both parts of the study by repeating one of the dosing options. The order of the tests on each individual was picked randomly, and Table 1 shows the doses given to each subject.

## **Experimental Protocol**

The tests were performed in the morning after an overnight fast. A cannula was inserted in the antecubital fossa for venous blood sampling and administration of glucose and insulin. The catheter was flushed with saline after every sampling or injection step to reduce sample contamination. Two baseline blood samples were taken at  $t=-10$  min and  $t=0$  minutes. Glucose (50% dextrose) was administered at  $t=0$  min, and insulin (Actrapid, NovoNordisk) at  $t=10$  min. Blood samples were taken at  $t=5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35,$  and 45 minutes to assess the physiological response to the administered glucose and insulin. Blood samples were assayed for plasma glucose, insulin and C-peptide concentrations. Glucose was analysed by an enzymatic glucose hexokinase assay (C8000 Analyzer, Abbott Laboratories, Inc). Insulin and C-peptide were analysed with an ECLIA immunoassay (Roche Diagnostics Elecsys).

## **Modelling and Data Analysis**

Sampled concentration profiles were analysed by fitting metabolic models of glucose, insulin and C-peptide to the data, as described in detail in (18-20) and in Appendix B. The estimated model parameter value for IS,  $S_I$ , was used to describe the body's insulin sensitivity. In addition to IS, information about  $\beta$ -cell function (basal secretion, first phase response) and hepatic insulin clearance were obtained.

For added robustness, glucose samples taken within ten minutes of glucose injection, and insulin samples taken within ten minutes of insulin administration, were disregarded in the model fit to minimise errors introduced by effects of intravascular mixing (21). This approach avoids over-fitting of measurement errors, which can cause considerable parameter estimation problems (13, 20).

### Statistical analysis

The inter-dose repeatability of Part 1 of this study is calculated as the relative percentile difference in the insulin sensitivity parameter  $S_I$  of the higher dose test compared to the lower dose test, as shown in Equation 1. The mean result is taken if more than one test was done at a given dose.

$$\Delta S_I = \frac{\overline{S_{I \text{ higher}}} - \overline{S_{I \text{ lower}}}}{\overline{S_{I \text{ lower}}}} \quad (1)$$

The variability in  $S_I$  at a given dose for Part 2 is defined as the maximum deviation from the mean  $S_I$ , divided by the mean  $S_I$ , as shown in Equation 2.

$$\Delta S_I = \max \left[ \frac{\text{abs}(S_{I_{1...n}} - \overline{S_I})}{\overline{S_I}} \right] \quad (2)$$

Where data distribution is normal, the mean and standard deviation (SD) are used to describe spread. Where the distribution is log-normal, the geometric mean and multiplicative standard deviation (MSD) are used. Statistical significance of the

differences is assessed with the two sample t-test.

Accuracy of the DISST is compared to the intra-individual coefficient of variation CV in  $S_I$ , defined as the ratio of SD over the mean  $S_I$  ( $CV=SD/\text{mean-}S_I$ ), simulated by Monte Carlo analysis on a virtual cohort generated from 146 euglycaemic clamp tests (18). The CV derived from the Monte Carlo analysis gives an indication of expected accuracy in a clinical testing environment. By comparing the simulated CV with the experimentally derived accuracy, an estimate is obtained of the variability attributable to other physiological factors not completely accounted for by the simulation method. In this pilot study a meaningful intra-individual CV in  $S_I$  cannot be calculated due to only two or three tests being performed on each subject. Instead, the absolute deviations of the test results  $\Delta S_I$  are compared to the range defined by  $\pm 2$  SD (95% of subjects) obtained from the Monte Carlo results (18). Despite this limitation, this comparison aims to deliver an indication of the achievable accuracy in an in-vivo environment, and the validity of the prior simulation study.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Upper South A Regional Ethics Committee.

## Results

### Part 1 – Effect of dosing

The estimated IS parameter,  $S_I$ , is shown in Table 2 for Part 1 (by dose combination), along with basal insulin secretion rate  $u_B$ , first phase insulin secretion  $AUC_{10}$  and peak secretion rate  $S_{max}$ . Differences in  $S_I$ ,  $AUC_{10}$  and  $S_{max}$  shown (denoted by  $\Delta$ ) are percentile difference of the higher dose result compared to the lower dose result.

Estimated  $S_I$  is lower in 8/12 subjects at the higher dose test, but the differences are not statistically significant (low/medium  $P=0.50$ , medium/high  $P=0.87$ ). A noticeable reduction in the impact of dosing can be seen on subjects with lower insulin sensitivity, as shown in the correlation plot in Figure 1. Basal insulin secretion  $u_B$  was consistently higher in subjects with lower  $S_I$ . Total first phase insulin secretion above basal,  $AUC_{10}$ , is increased at the higher dose in all but one subject, with a wide range in changes of -7.1% to 213.8%. The same is the case for the difference in peak secretion rate,  $S_{max}$ , which is in the range of -20.7% to 180.9%, and positive for all but two subjects.

### Part 2 – Repeatability

The study population for Part 2 consisted of 8 subjects, 4 of which completed two low dose, and 4 completed two or three medium dose tests. The estimated IS parameter,  $S_I$ , error in  $S_I$  and insulin secretion metrics are given in Table 3.

Variations in  $S_I$  are in the range 0.2% to 24.7% with a geometric mean of 6% (MSD 4.9%). The repeat tests at each dose were insignificantly different to the first tests (low

dose  $P=0.75$ , medium dose  $P=0.56$ ). Insulin secretion metrics are very consistent, with repeatability in basal secretion rate  $u_B$  in the range of 2.6% to 11.7%. Total first phase insulin  $AUC_{10}$  was estimated with high accuracy in repeatability, with a geometric mean value of 6.8% (MSD 2.2%) and a range of 2.9% - 33.1%, and repeatability in  $S_{max}$  resulted in a geometric mean of 7.4% (MSD 2.8%), with a range of 1.0% - 25.3%. The dependency of dosing on insulin sensitivity in Part 1 is evident in repeatability accuracy as well, but is less marked across the  $S_I$  range, as shown in Figure 2.

### **Diagnostic relevance**

Results from the full test protocol analysis on three subjects, including Normal Glucose Tolerant (NGT), Impaired Fasting Glucose (IFG) and Type 2 Diabetes (Type2) is shown in Appendix C with a full discussion of the potential diagnostic relevance.

## Discussion

The goal of this pilot study was to assess the feasibility and performance of the DISST in a clinical setting. The modelling and data fitting methods have been customised to a clinical protocol to allow robust parameter identification and avoid the problems encountered with the IVGTT (13, 22, 23). The study demonstrated a high level of acceptability of the test to participants, the only complaint being mild discomfort during the injection of 20g glucose, probably due to the large volume injected within a short time frame. This did not occur at lower doses.

The protocol and fitting algorithm proved to be reliable and robust. In Part 1 of the study, estimated  $S_I$  was lower in 8/12 subjects in the higher dose test as compared with the lower dose test, but the difference was not statistically significant ( $P=0.50$ ,  $P=0.87$ ). This effect has also been found by Prigeon et al. (24) who reported lower IS values when an IVGTT was performed at different doses. In that study, injecting 4U of insulin resulted in a 32% reduced IS value compared with injecting 2U of insulin. A possible explanation could be saturation effects, which have been identified in other studies (8, 24, 25). Saturation effects are less likely at lower doses, and this aspect could be improved by adding saturation dynamics to the model (25, 26).

This pilot study does not permit definitive conclusions with regard to optimum dose. A higher dose provides a stronger signal in the sampled concentration profiles but encounters stronger saturation effects and triggers stronger suppression of endogenous glucose production (EGP), thus adding unknown variability. Suppression of EGP cannot

be measured easily and thus is not accounted for in the model. On the other hand a lower dose is less likely to be affected by saturation and counter-regulatory responses but might be too small to provide an optimum signal. Lower doses are likely to be more physiological and involve less discomfort to the subject. In the clinical context, consistency is useful and a low to medium dose is probably the best choice.

The reason for the choice of a single dose across all subjects is practical, as it would allow a test kit to be compiled prior to knowing the subject's characteristics. This consistency is particularly useful in routine clinical testing environments. It is debatable whether a patient specific dose calculation should be used in such a test. However, in this study, differences in estimated  $S_I$  at different dosing in the same subject had a stronger effect on lighter subjects with a body weight of less than 70kg, in which estimated  $S_I$  was much lower at the higher dose. On all other subjects the effect was not systematic. It is unclear whether this effect is caused by the difference in weight or the fact that these lighter subjects were very insulin sensitive and thus more sensitive to assay error or measurement noise. A larger study is required to further analyse this aspect.

A further factor that could influence insulin sensitivity in a person is pain induced by the protocol, such as cannulation or administration of large volume 50% glucose solution. Pain has been shown to affect insulin sensitivity (27, 28) and would add an unknown inaccuracy to the assessment. In this study, one person experienced discomfort during administration of 20g of glucose, but not in the lower dose. By using a lower, more

physiological dose, and more diluted glucose solutions, this effect could potentially be mitigated.

Part 2 assessed repeatability by performing the same low or medium dose test on each subject two or three times. Errors around the mean in each subject were in the range of 0% – 25%, and log-normally distributed, with a geometric mean of 6.0% (MSD 4.9). The expected intra-individual accuracy assessed by the Monte Carlo simulation (18) resulted in a mean  $CV_{SI-MC} = 4.5\%$  (90% CI: 3.8-5.7%) at the medium dose,  $CV_{SI-MC} = 6.9\%$  (90% CI: 4.9-9.9%) at the low dose, and  $CV_{SI-MC} = 3.6\%$  (90% CI: 3.0-4.5%) at the high dose. In other words, considering  $\pm 2$  SD, an absolute deviation between 6.0-19.8% from the mean can be attributable to assay and protocol errors in ~95% of subjects. This outcome is also reflected in the hypothesis testing ( $P=0.75$ ,  $P=0.56$ ), indicating that repeatability of the DISST is good, even with the limited small sample size of this study.

Natural variability in IS, which was not included in the Monte Carlo simulation, can be a source of additional variability in this pilot study (29). Results of this study are thus in good accordance with the Monte Carlo simulation results, though possibly slightly more variable due to additional sources of variability, such as time of day (29), state of health (30, 31), menstrual cycle (32) or exercise (33, 34). Glucose samples were analysed in the lab with an assay  $CV=1-2\%$  similar to that simulated in the Monte Carlo study. If point of care glucose sensors were used with higher inaccuracies of  $CV=2-8\%$ , one could think that estimated IS could be slightly less repeatable. Due to the integrals involved in the

model fitting method (35), this impact is minimized if the variability is assumed to be normally distributed around the mean.

The data in Figure 2 suggest more consistency in  $S_I$  at lower IS ranges. This effect is partly attributed to insulin and glucose assay variability, which carry over into the model. A dominant effect influencing the estimation of  $S_I$  in the modelling methodology is the decay rate of insulin concentrations immediately following the insulin injection. A smaller rate, as generally observed in insulin resistant subjects, is less affected by assay variability and results in a more consistent IS assessment. This increased accuracy in less sensitive subjects is a positive characteristic of the test, as these subjects represent the group amongst whom repeatability and accuracy are clinically the most relevant. In contrast to the DISST, the IVGTT can be much less sensitive in markedly insulin resistant individuals and those with diabetes (13, 22, 23).

In addition to IS,  $\beta$ -cell secretion metrics are estimated with the DISST from C-peptide concentrations (see Appendix B). Secretion metrics were estimated with good consistency, given assay errors. While basal secretion  $u_B$  and total first phase insulin above basal  $AUC_{10}$  are likely to be very accurate, peak secretion rate  $S_{max}$  may be underestimated due to lack of samples in the first five minutes after glucose injection. Additional modelling could improve this artefact. Since this error is systematic, comparison between tests remains valid. Considered alongside IS data, help to provide a clear indication of the pathophysiology at any given state of the disease process. For example, an increased basal insulin secretion and blunted first phase response typically

represents a fairly early stage in the progression of insulin resistance, as can be seen in Subject 16 (Figure 3 in Appendix C). In addition to the quantitative metrics, these concentration profiles resulting from the DISST provide further valuable diagnostic data on an individual's metabolic status.

While the administration of insulin 10 minutes after glucose has clear benefits in identifiability of  $S_I$ , its limitations are in suppressing endogenous second phase insulin secretion (36). A reliable estimation of second phase insulin secretion is thus not possible with the DISST in the current short protocol. A larger time gap between glucose and insulin administration would be required for second phase estimation.

Overall, this pilot study showed that the DISST is feasible to perform in vivo and the model and protocol assumptions discussed in detail in Appendix A are valid. The integrated approach combining a customized protocol, model and identification method has shown good performance in matching the results previously obtained in a Monte Carlo study (18).

The full DISST protocol presented here can be completed in 50-60 minutes, which is appreciably shorter than the EIC (min 2-4 hours) and the IVGTT (3 hours). A single fasting blood test or OGTT is cheaper and simpler, but provide no dynamic information regarding the disease process. Instead, the benefit of the test is its accuracy and richness of information not obtainable with other simple tests. In addition to providing an indication of insulin secretion and sensitivity, the DISST has considerable potential for

use as an accurate monitoring tool in metabolic studies and monitoring drug or lifestyle intervention programs. The ability to reduce the DISST's duration to ~30 minutes without any loss of performance will make it a more viable alternative to the EIC and IVGTT.

Optimal sample size power calculations for a clinical validation study of the DISST compared to the EIC were performed using the cross-over study method described by Hauschke et al. (37) based on the expected accuracies in repeatability obtained from this pilot study. The method calculates the minimal sample size required to show clinical equivalence of two different tests. An optimal number of subjects required to show equivalence between both metrics within  $\pm 10\%$  was determined to be between 24-49. A safe choice would thus be at least 50 subjects encompassing a wide range of individuals to ensure a broad spectrum of insulin sensitivities. The design of such a validation study should also ensure that both tests are performed only a few days apart to minimise errors introduced by natural variability. This validation study is currently ongoing, based on these pilot trial results.

## **Conclusions**

The clinical pilot study of a new Dynamic Insulin Sensitivity and Secretion Test (DISST) has been presented. The DISST was previously designed and verified in Monte Carlo simulation and shown to be potentially repeatable and practicable in a clinical setting. This clinical pilot trial confirmed these simulated results and provided further insight on expected variability due to different dosing and unaccounted physiological variability.

Different insulin and glucose dosing can affect estimated outcomes, but these effects did not achieve statistical significance in this pilot study. Repeatability was within expected ranges of 6.0-19.8% (2SD) identified in the previous Monte Carlo study (18) and shows good potential to correlate well to the EIC in clinical validation. Given the performance and practical aspects, a dose of 5-10g glucose and 0.5-1U insulin is recommended for further application of the protocol. This low level of dosing ensures a more physiological state and less affect on counter-regulatory responses. In practical application, the protocol proved to be robust, and can be performed by a single person. Further reduction in the number of blood samples and test duration is possible.

Finally, this pilot study provided the results necessary to conservatively power a validation trial versus the EIC at N=50+ subjects, which is now underway.

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## Appendix A

### Specific differences between DISST and IVGTT

At a first glance, the DISST looks very similar to an insulin modified IVGTT. The general sequence of the test protocol is similar, followed by a physiological glucose model assessment. The IVGTT has been used in many studies and discussed widely, both benefits and problems, since the original landmark publication of the minimal model of glucose kinetics by Bergman and Cobelli (38). In spite of its merits, many problems still exist with the IVGTT protocol, which constrain its use to a research only environment. We have analysed these problems and have attempted to design an insulin sensitivity test that is based on the IVGTT concept, but can be used in a clinical setting under physiological conditions and dosing. Such a test can enable more accurate insulin sensitivity testing in a wider group of people. The key differences in protocol, modelling and identification are:

#### 1. Clinical Protocol

A clinical protocol that is relatively simple to perform was a key objective for the development of the DISST. The three main aspect of improvement that were identified are *the duration*, *the sampling frequency* and *the analytes*.

- To achieve a *shorter duration* than the IVGTT, ie less than 60 minutes, only the initial response after insulin administration is to be analyzed. This section of the glucose decay curve is mainly attributable to an insulin dependent uptake, due to the relatively high concentration of plasma insulin. Furthermore, the counterregulatory

glucagon response leading to an increase in EGP is not yet marked and does not strongly affect the sampled glucose concentrations. This time reduced data set also better matches model assumptions, avoiding misidentification of certain parameters, such as insulin-independent glucose uptake  $p_G$ . In fact, the aspect mentioned here has been recognized to also clearly improve Minimal Model fitting of IVGTT data (39).

- The highly transient dynamics in the first 10 minutes after glucose or insulin administration are strongly affected by intravascular mixing, as can be seen in Figure 4 in which blood samples were taken from both arms during a DISST test. These effects have been observed to affect model fitting before, but were mainly attributed to a mono-compartmental undermodelling approach (13, 40, 41). High *frequency of sampling* as performed in the first 10-20 minutes of the IVGTT (1-2 minutes) adds to data resolution, but is difficult to perform, especially by a single person, due to the practical aspects involved in sampling and keeping track of timing. In our experience, a sample every 5 minutes is feasible, better every 10 minutes if less transient dynamics are observed. By disregarding the initial 10 minutes after glucose or insulin administration, the DISST does not only avoid overfitting of unmodelled kinetics, but also concentrates on the latter part of the data which better matches the model structure of a single glucose compartment (40), avoiding parameter misidentifications.
- Testing and modelling of *analytes commonly tested* by laboratories (glucose, insulin, C-peptide) increases the practical use of the test. Use of glucose tracers, which can be used to estimate EGP (42, 43) could improve the performance of the DISST, but add complexity and cost, and were thus purposefully avoided.

## 2. Modelling

Accuracy of identified model parameters can be improved by ensuring the model used matches the kinetics and dynamics observed and fitted in the data. Problems with Minimal Model fits of IVGTT data have commonly been attributed to undermodelling (13, 40). Whether the problem is undermodelling or overfitting of unmodelled effects remains to be debated. The model used in the DISST has been adapted from the original Minimal Model to better match observed glucose and insulin behaviour at the reduced sampling protocol, and to attempt to reduce misidentification issues observed in the past (13, 44). Furthermore, a modelling approach has been followed that attempts to match assumptions made in the EIC to ensure good correlation with this gold standard test. These modelling aspects include:

- Single compartment glucose kinetics: By acknowledging intravascular mixing and disregarding the first 10 minutes of the glucose decay curve, the DISST approach concentrates on the latter part of the decay curve, which follows a mono-exponential decay and can be identified well with a single compartment model. This approach avoids the use of glucose tracers and the requirement of more frequent sampling to identify the fast exponential.
- Insulin independent clearance  $p_G$  fixed: Robust identification of  $p_G$  requires a glucose decay signal in which insulin concentrations are low. As such a state is not existent during the chosen protocol, the value of  $p_G$  is fixed at a value identified in other studies (40, 44-46). This is a well recognized problem with the original Minimal Model, which identifies  $S_G$  from the final stages of the IVGTT in which insulin is

low. As counterregulatory effects lead to increased EGP at this stage,  $S_G$  incorporates this effect and is clearly overestimated (13, 39, 42). The DISST value of  $p_G=0.004 \text{ min}^{-1}$  is lower than commonly found Minimal Model values, because it only represents insulin independent uptake, and does not lump suppression of EGP and basal glucose uptake into the same parameter (46).

- Constant endogenous glucose production EGP: EGP can only be estimated with the use of tracers (42, 47), and due to the lack of tracers, cannot be estimated in the DISST. To minimize inter-subject variability by adding this dynamic, EGP is kept constant at a value estimated from the basal state. This assumption is likely a source of error, but the suppression effect at low insulin dosing is expected to be reduced at the low doses used in the DISST (48). Monte Carlo simulations of this unmodelled effect showed only a small influence on the overall estimation of  $S_I$  (18).
- Physiologic insulin kinetics: By applying a physiologic insulin kinetics model, the estimated concentration of interstitial insulin, driving glucose uptake by the cells (36), can be used directly to estimate insulin sensitivity  $S_I$ . A constant steady state concentration ratio of  $Q_{ss}/I_{ss}=1/2$  is chosen (49, 50) to a-priori identify the diffusion rate  $n_I$  between both insulin compartments. This constraint removes another source of inter-subject variability, and ensures a closer model match to the assumptions of the EIC.
- Insulin clearance  $n_L$  constant: Hepatic insulin clearance  $n_L$  has been postulated to be variable, particularly at the early stage of an IVGTT in which first phase insulin secretion is very large (51). This is likely due to a saturation of the receptor-based

clearance pathway (52, 53), and is dependent on the magnitude of the first phase response. In the DISST,  $S_I$  estimation is mostly influenced by the insulin signal after insulin administration and it is very unlikely that a constant  $n_L$  will have a significant effect on it.

### 3. Model Identification

The model identification approach is a very important component of an integrated model-based diagnostic method. The goal is to ensure a robust overall parameter estimation that requires minimal human intervention and still delivers repeatable and reliable results. The DISST has been designed to correlate well with the Euglycaemic clamp (EIC), by attempting to assess similar physiologic effects, while requiring a shorter and more physiologic protocol. The key model identification aspects to achieve this are:

- Constrain variability to SI: Insulin independent clearance,  $p_G$ , is fixed at a population value, as explained before. This ensures, that the glucose decay is purely attributed to insulin mediated effects, represented by  $S_I$ , matching EIC assumptions.
- Concentration on strong insulin signal: By concentrating parameter estimation on data periods with high insulin concentrations, robustness of  $S_I$  estimation is improved. Due to the external administration of insulin, identification problems in low-sensitivity groups, commonly reported in the IVGTT (22, 23, 54) are eliminated.
- Convex fitting method: The integral-based method used in the DISST is a convex parameter identification method that is not starting point dependent (35). Due to the integration steps involved, the method further acts as a low pass filter, reducing the effects of measurement noise.

## Appendix B

The models and methods used to fit the experimentally sampled data are shown here.

More details on the development of the models and the fitting method employed can be found in (18-20, 35, 55).

$$\frac{dG(t)}{dt} = -p_{GU}(G(t) - G_B) - S_I G(t)Q(t) + \frac{P(t)}{V_G} + EGP(t) \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{dI(t)}{dt} = -n_K I(t) - n_L \frac{I(t)}{1 + \alpha_I I(t)} - \frac{n_I}{V_P} (I(t) - Q(t)) + \frac{u_{ex}}{V_P} + (1 - x_L) \frac{u_{en}}{V_P} \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{dQ(t)}{dt} = -n_C Q(t) + \frac{n_I}{V_Q} (I(t) - Q(t)) \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{dC(t)}{dt} = k_2 Y(t) - (k_1 + k_3) C(t) + u_{en}(t) \quad (6)$$

$$\frac{dY(t)}{dt} = k_1 C(t) - k_2 Y(t) \quad (7)$$

Where  $G(t)$  represents plasma glucose concentration,  $G_B$  basal plasma glucose,  $V_G$  glucose distribution volume,  $P(t)$  glucose input into plasma,  $S_I$  insulin sensitivity,  $p_{GU}$  non-insulin dependent glucose uptake,  $EGP(t)$  endogenous glucose production,  $I(t)$  plasma insulin,  $Q(t)$  interstitial insulin,  $V_P$  plasma volume,  $V_Q$  interstitial volume,  $u_{ex}$  exogenous insulin input into plasma,  $u_{en}$  pancreatic insulin secretion,  $n_K$  renal insulin clearance rate,  $n_L$  hepatic insulin clearance rate,  $n_I$  diffusion constant for insulin transport between plasma and interstitium,  $x_L$  fractional first pass hepatic extraction of pancreatic insulin,  $\alpha_I$  hepatic insulin clearance saturation,  $n_C$  insulin clearance at tissue cells,  $C(t)$

plasma C-peptide,  $Y(t)$  interstitial C-peptide,  $k_1$ - $k_2$  transport rates between C-peptide compartments,  $k_3$  renal clearance of C-peptide.

The pharmacokinetic (PK) and pharmacodynamic (PD) models shown in Equations (3) – (7) are fitted to the sampled profiles of C-peptide, insulin and glucose to obtain model-based information about the physiological response. The fitting process is performed in three steps:

1. Step 1, insulin secretion: Estimation of pancreatic insulin secretion  $u_{en}(t)$  is performed with the model and methods presented by Eaton et al (55) and Van Cauter et al (56). Estimation of insulin secretion rate is performed with an integral-based identification method (35) resulting in a minute-wise step function of secretion rate. From this result, insulin secretory performance of the pancreas can be assessed in basal state, and during first phase secretion in response to an intravenous glucose loading. Values calculated in this study are basal secretion rate  $u_B$  (pmol/min), total insulin secreted over basal in the first 10 minutes after glucose injection  $AUC_{10}$  (Area Under Curve, in pmol), and peak first phase secretion rate  $S_{max}$  (pmol/min).
2. Step 2, insulin kinetics: Insulin kinetics model parameters are estimated by fitting the model to the insulin profile data as described in (19). Briefly, model parameters are estimated a-priori where possible, using parallels to C-peptide kinetics, and remaining key parameters  $n_L$  and  $x_L$  estimated from the insulin

profile. Estimated pancreatic secretion profile  $u_{en}(t)$  from Step 1 is used as input to the insulin PK model. The fitting method employed is again the integral-based approach (19, 35), which has the advantage of being convex and less sensitive to assay variability.

3. Step 3, glucose pharmacodynamics: Insulin sensitivity  $S_I$  is estimated by fitting the glucose PK model to the glucose profile, using modelled interstitial insulin  $Q(t)$  from Step 2 and known glucose administration  $P(t)$ . Non-insulin dependent glucose uptake  $p_{GU}$  cannot be identified reliably given the strong insulin signal in this experimental protocol. It was thus kept constant at a population value of  $p_{GU}=0.004 \text{ min}^{-1}$  (46, 57) to avoid well known mis-identification problems encountered by others (13). Endogenous glucose production  $EGP$  cannot be measured easily and is assumed to stay constant throughout the test at a steady state value calculated from Equation 3,  $EGP=S_I G_B Q_B$ , with  $Q_B$  being basal interstitial insulin. A constant assumption for  $EGP$  ensures the bias of this unknown dynamic effect to be systematic, compared to a nonlinear assumption that would introduce additional inter-subject variability to the outcome.

## Appendix C

### Diagnostic relevance

Figure 3 shows example results of the full DISST analysis on three subjects, including Normal Glucose Tolerant (NGT), Impaired Fasting Glucose (IFG) and Type 2 Diabetes (Type2).

The progression of the disease can be visualised well on the examples shown in Figure 3. The NGT example, Subject 14, has an insulin sensitivity of  $S_I=11.7\times 10^{-4}$  l/mU/min, a fasting glucose level of 81.0 mg/dl and fasting insulin level of 20.8 pmol/l. Basal insulin secretion rate is  $u_B=146.5$  pmol/min. The first phase  $\beta$ -cell response to a bolus injection of glucose is very distinct and large, peaking at  $S_{max}= 1278$  pmol/min above the basal rate  $u_B$  and releasing a total amount of insulin above the basal rate of  $AUC_{10}= 4841$  pmol. The first phase insulin secretion lasts about 5-10 minutes, after which the secretion rate immediately drops back to nearly its basal rate.

The second example shows an IFG individual, Subject 16. IS is very low at  $S_I=3.2\times 10^{-4}$  l/mU/min, fasting glucose is elevated at 113.4 mg/dl and fasting insulin is also elevated at 115.3 pmol/l. Basal insulin secretion rate is three times as high as in the NGT subject, at  $u_B = 460$  pmol/min. In response to the glucose bolus, the pancreas increases its output, but a distinct first phase secretion peak is not pronounced. Insulin secretion peaks at  $S_{max} = 569$  pmol/min above its basal secretion rate  $u_B$  and continues to produce at this rate until the end of the test. The  $\beta$ -cells can only release additional  $AUC_{10} = 4014$  pmol over

the basal rate during the first phase. The pancreas is not able to fully compensate the low IS and blood glucose levels drop only slowly. In addition to low IS, significant damage in  $\beta$ -cell function is evident in this subject.

The third example shows Subject 11, who has been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. IS is higher than in the IFG example at  $SI=6.7\times 10^{-4}$  l/mU/min, which could be due to lasting effects of Metformin, normally taken by this subject. The fasting glucose level is at 122.4 mg/dl just below the type 2 diabetes diagnostic threshold of 126 mg/dl (58), and fasting insulin is elevated at 9.2 mU/l. Basal insulin secretion rate is  $u_B= 235.4$  pmol/min not nearly as high as in the IFG subject, a possible sign of  $\beta$ -cell exhaustion. Insulin secretion rate is slightly increased in response to the glucose bolus, but only  $AUC_{10}= 1577$  pmol are produced above the basal rate  $u_B$ , with a secretion peak of only  $S_{max}= 201$  pmol/min above the basal rate. The strongly diminished  $\beta$ -cell function cannot compensate for the insulin resistance, resulting in fasting hyperglycaemia.

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**Table 1: Subject characteristics and tests performed on each subject.** \* IFG denotes subjects who have not been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (T2D) but who have elevated fasting glucose levels > 100 mg/dl, qualifying for an ADA diagnosis of impaired fasting glucose (IFG) at the day of the test.

Subj.	Gend.	Age (yrs)	Weight (kg)	BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Fasting glucose (mg/dl)	Fasting insulin (pmol/L)	T2D or IFG*	Tests			Part	
								5g 0.5U	10g 1U	20g 2U	1	2
1	f	57	89	33.9	104.4	213.9	IFG	1	1		X	
2	f	59	67	25.5	106.2	9.7	IFG		1	1	X	
3	f	59	87	39.2	84.6	86.8			3			X
4	f	21	78	25.2	90.0	36.1		1	1		X	
5	m	41	76	21.7	72.0	3.5			2	1	X	X
6	f	45	76	25.4	73.8	11.8			2	1	X	
7	m	55	73	24.1	81.0	30.6		1	1		X	
8	f	51	67	27.2	77.4	9.7		1	1		X	
9	f	35	66	24	86.4	45.8			1	1	X	
10	f	30	50	19.5	75.6	22.2		2	1		X	X
11	f	55	85	30.1	122.4	63.9	T2D	2	1		X	X
12	m	60	76	23.7	79.2	22.2			1			
13	f	48	91	33.4	93.6	66.0			3			X
14	f	41	111	41.3	81.0	27.1			2	1	X	X
15	m	29	84	25.9	91.0	17.4		2	1		X	X
16	m	49	105	35.1	113.4	115.3	IFG	2	1		X	X

**Table 2: Results from model fit to experimental data from Part 1 of the study.** Shown are insulin sensitivity  $S_I$ , change at higher dose  $\Delta S_I$ , basal insulin secretion rate  $u_B$ , total first phase insulin secretion  $AUC_{10}$ , change at higher dose  $\Delta AUC_{10}$ , peak insulin secretion rate  $S_{max}$  and change at higher dose  $\Delta S_{max}$ .

low/medium (P=0.50)								
Subject	Dose	$S_I$ [L/mU/min]	$\Delta S_I$ [%]	$u_B$ [pmol/min]	$AUC_{10}$ [pmol]	$\Delta AUC_{10}$ [%]	$S_{max}$ [pmol/min]	$\Delta S_{max}$ [%]
4	5 g	13.39		136.1	1536		246	
	10 g	16.49	23.1	145.2	1764	14.8	292	18.8
7	5 g	19.33		172.9	2910		748	
	10 g	18.06	-6.6	171.5	5458	87.5	1061	41.9
8	5 g	18.64		79.2	2638		608	
	10 g	13.61	-27.0	88.9	5782	119.1	1327	118.0
10	5 g	43.73		95.1	3330		745	
	10 g	17.40		93.8	4364	25.8	1040	
	5 g	29.19	-52.3	108.3	3611		852	30.2
11	5 g	6.88		251.4	1400		189	
	10 g	6.73		235.4	1574	16.2	203	
	5 g	5.75	6.5	293.1	1308		220	-0.9
15	5 g	8.28		138.9	2776		795	
	10 g	7.39		144.5	4501	69.4	1007	
	5 g	8.99	-14.4	153.5	2538		728	32.3
16	5 g	3.27		435.5	1702		299	
	10 g	3.17		459.8	4011	213.8	569	
	5 g	3.16	-1.4	395.9	856		178	138.6
mean			-10.3			78.1		54.1
SD			24.3			71.7		52.7
medium/high (P=0.87)								
1	10 g	3.13		492.4	2732		435	
	20 g	2.69	-14.1	478.5	7133	161.2	1222	180.9
2	10 g	19.47		61.8	1214		226	
	20 g	13.43	-31.0	83.3	1563	28.8	271	20.0
5	10 g	26.45		99.3	2851		529	
	20 g	25.07		75.7	3918	48.5	905	
	10 g	19.97	8.0	77.1	2425		481	79.3
6	10 g	14.84		118.1	2694		440	
	20 g	12.83	-13.6	119.5	3851	60.9	563	27.9
14	10 g	11.70		146.5	4837		1278	
	20 g	14.12		132.6	4630	-7.1	1003	
	10 g	11.65	20.9	179.2	5129		1252	-20.7
mean			-6.0			58.5		57.5
SD			20.4			62.9		77.6

**Table 3: Results from model fit to experimental data from Part 2 of the study.** Shown are insulin sensitivity  $S_I$ , change at higher dose  $\Delta S_I$ , basal insulin secretion rate  $u_B$ , total first phase insulin secretion  $AUC_{10}$ , change at higher dose  $\Delta AUC_{10}$ , peak insulin secretion rate  $S_{max}$  and change at higher dose  $\Delta S_{max}$ .

<b>Low dose (5g glucose, 0.5U insulin) (P=0.75)</b>							
<b>Subject</b>	<b><math>S_I</math> [L/mU/min]</b>	<b><math>\Delta S_I</math> [%]</b>	<b><math>u_B</math> [pmol/min]</b>	<b><math>AUC_{10}</math> [pmol]</b>	<b><math>\Delta AUC_{10}</math> [%]</b>	<b><math>S_{max}</math> [pmol/min]</b>	<b><math>\Delta S_{max}</math> [%]</b>
<b>10</b>	43.73		95.1	3330		745	
	29.19	19.9	108.3	3612	4.0	852	6.7
<b>11</b>	6.88		251.4	1400		189	
	5.75	8.9	293.1	1308	3.4	220	7.6
<b>15</b>	8.28		138.9	2776		795	
	8.99	4.1	153.5	2538	4.5	728	4.4
<b>16</b>	3.27		435.5	1702		299	
	3.16	1.7	395.9	856	33.1	178	25.3
<b>Medium dose (10g glucose, 1U insulin) (P=0.56)</b>							
<b>3</b>	10.18		236.8	8390		1679	
	8.59		269.5	9892		1879	
	7.37	16.8	300.0	9140	8.2	2195	14.4
<b>5</b>	26.45		99.3	2851		529	
	19.97	14.0	77.1	2425	8.1	481	4.7
<b>13</b>	16.31		247.2	3155		506	
	13.51		251.4	3782		845	
	21.20	24.7	236.8	4125	11.9	706	23.2
<b>14</b>	11.70		146.5	4837		1278	
	11.65	0.2	178.5	5129	2.9	1252	1.0

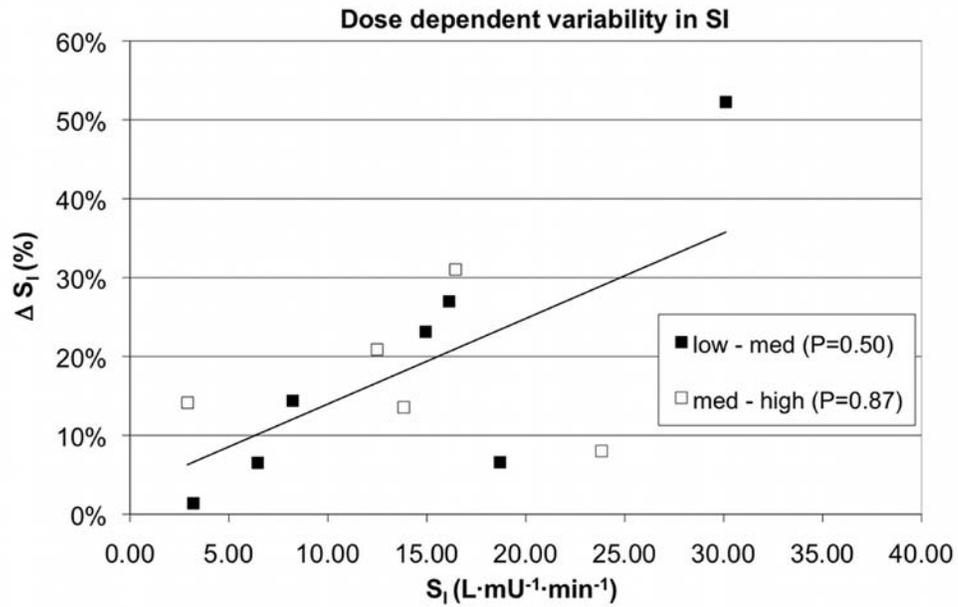


Figure 1: Part 1 dose-dependent variability in insulin sensitivity  $S_I$  as a function of  $S_I$ . Black squares show relative percentile differences in estimated  $S_I$  values between the low and medium dose protocols, white squares between the medium and high dose protocols.

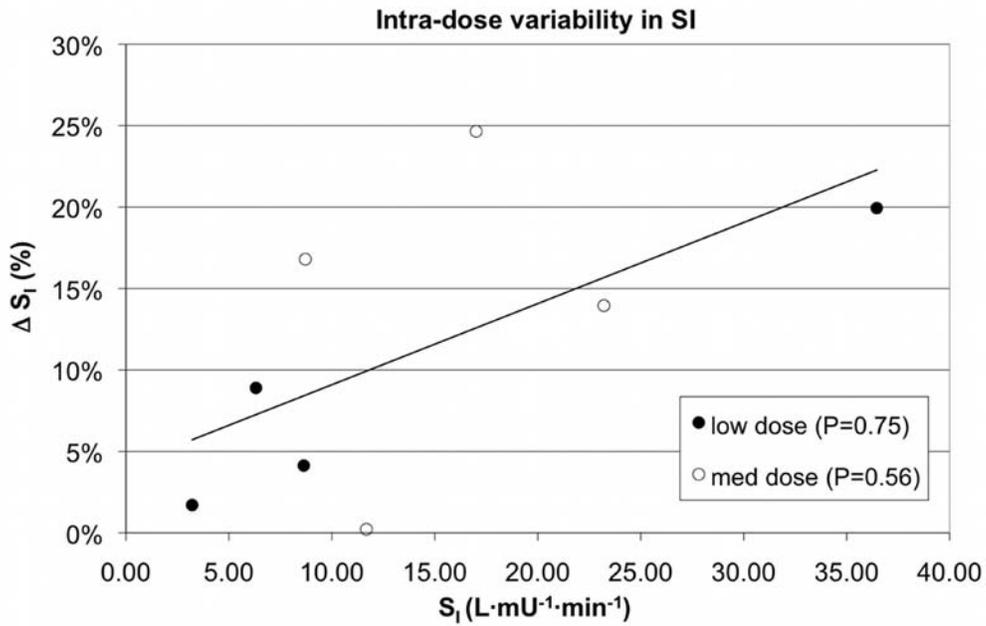
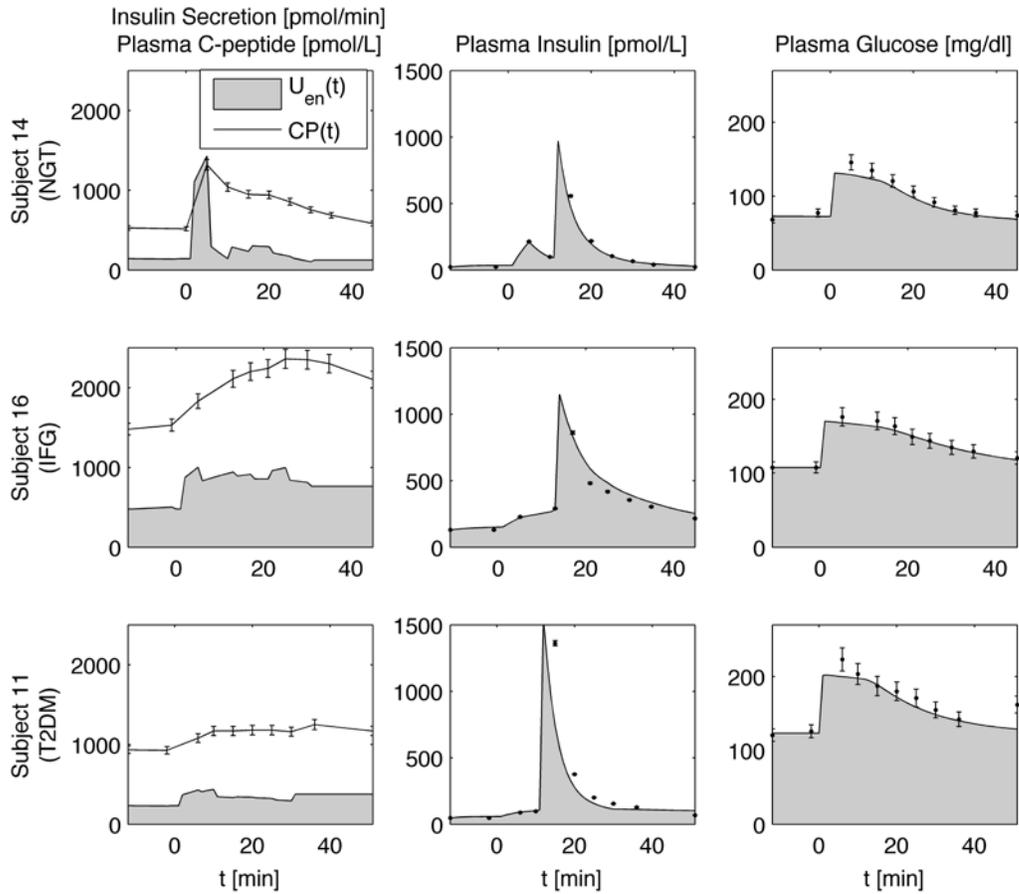
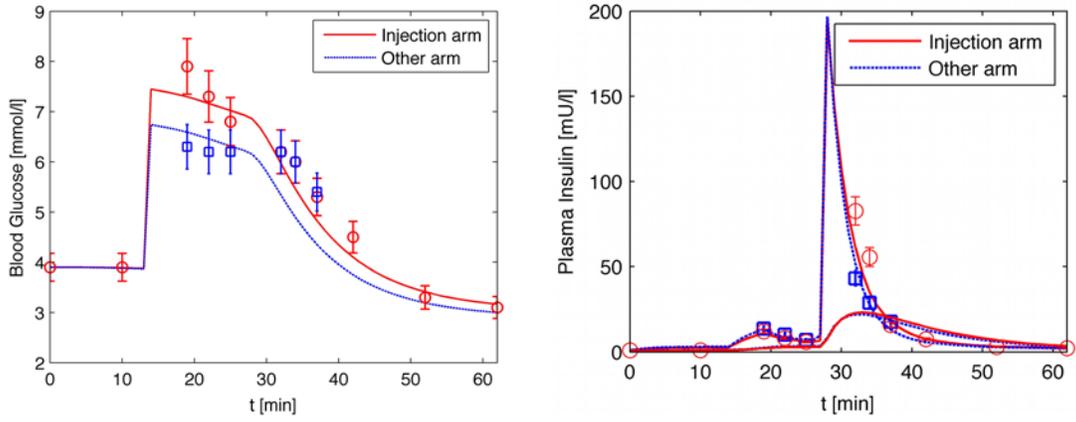


Figure 2: Part 2, accuracy in repeatability of estimated insulin sensitivity  $S_I$  as a function of  $S_I$ . Black circles show relative percentile differences around the mean of estimated  $S_I$  values during the low dose protocol, white circles during the medium dose protocol.



**Figure 3:** The exemplary test results using 10g glucose and 1 U insulin on a normal glucose tolerant (NGT, top), impaired fasting glucose (IFG, middle) and Type 2 diabetes subject (Type 2, bottom). Shown are, from left to right, the estimated endogenous insulin secretion rate with overlaid plasma C-peptide concentration, the plasma insulin concentration and the blood glucose concentration. Samples are shown with error bars and areas show the model fits. The scale in the first column shows pmol/min for insulin secretion rate, and pmol/L for plasma C-peptide concentration.



**Figure 4:** Effects of mixing. Shown are samples taken from both arms of the same subject after administration of glucose and insulin. Concentrations take about 10-15 minutes to equalize in both arms, a clear sign of intravascular mixing.