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1: [Scand J Gastroenterol.](#) 2005 Dec;40(12):1407-12. [Related Articles, Links](#)

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### Undiagnosed silent coeliac disease: a risk for underachievement?

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**OBJECTIVE:** Silent coeliac disease is reported in 1% of Caucasian populations, but there is a lack of knowledge of its natural course and the risk of complications. The need for population screening is debated. We sought for complications of untreated coeliac disease in a well-defined cohort of Finnish adults. **MATERIAL AND METHODS:** Subjects (n=2427, ages 24-39 years) attending the 21-year follow-up visit of the study "Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns" completed an extensive questionnaire on their health, diet, social situation and family life, and were given a medical examination. Measurement of serum IgA-transglutaminase and IgA-endomysium antibodies identified 21 subjects with silent coeliac disease. **RESULTS:** The subjects with silent coeliac disease did not differ from the rest of the cohort in age, gender, stature, weight, medical diagnoses (autoimmune, malignant), health concerns, use of alternative medications, physical activity, or in the cause of death their parents. They had lower serum HDL-cholesterol (1.12 versus 1.29 mmol/L; p=0.015), as described for active coeliac disease. Fewer (5.3% versus 22.8%; p=0.047) had a university or college degree or worked in managerial or professional positions (28% versus 45%; p=0.112). **CONCLUSIONS:** The underachievement in education and working life observed in subjects with silent coeliac disease is a new and intriguing finding and may be related to the increased prevalence of depressive and disruptive behavioural disorders described in teenagers with untreated coeliac disease. Our findings add a new ingredient to the ongoing discussion regarding the need for population screening for silent coeliac disease.

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