

**Table 1.** Clinical, biochemical and sonographic characteristics of the three groups of investigated subjects

	<b>Group A</b> <b>(HT patients)</b>	<b>Group B</b> <b>(Non-HT patients with nodular goiter)</b>	<b>Group C</b> <b>(Healthy controls)</b>	
Total no. of patient	55	30	25	
Sex				
male	5	4	3	
female	50	26	22	
Age, mean $\pm$ SD (range)	38 $\pm$ 17 (15-70)	43 $\pm$ 14 (26-78)	40 $\pm$ 12 (21-71)	NS <sup>a</sup>
TSH (mIU/L)*	2.1 $\pm$ 1.1	1.6 $\pm$ 0.6	1.8 $\pm$ 0.7	NS <sup>a</sup>
FT3 (pmol/L)*	4.6 $\pm$ 0.7	4.7 $\pm$ 0.7	4.2 $\pm$ 0.9	NS <sup>a</sup>
FT4 (pmol/L)*	16.8 $\pm$ 3.24	16 $\pm$ 2.7	15.3 $\pm$ 2.5	NS <sup>a</sup>
Tg-Ab (U/L)*§	388.5 (134-4000)	Absent	Absent	
TPO-Ab (U/L)*§	255 (44-8070)	Absent	Absent	
Thyroid volume (ml)*	14.8 $\pm$ 4.8	20.87 $\pm$ 4.1	10.9 $\pm$ 3.4	NS <sup>a</sup>

\*Data are mean  $\pm$  SD, except Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab which are median (range). Normal values are specified under Material and Methods. The volume of thyroid lobes was calculated with the ellipsoid formula ( $p/6 \times \text{height} \times \text{width} \times \text{dept}$ , each diameter being expressed in centimetres).

<sup>a</sup> Comparison between means was made by the Student t-test.

§ Of the 38 HT patients who tested positive for Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab or both, 31 (56%) were Tg-Ab +ve, 33 (60%) were TPO-Ab +ve and 26 (47%) were Tg-Ab +ve and TPO-Ab +ve. Consequently, 17/55 HT patients were negative for both Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab, despite the finding of the typical US features of chronic thyroiditis.