Frozen serum samples were thawed at room temperature and 300 μl of each sample were added to a total of 300 μl of a sodium phosphate buffer at pH 7.4 (75 mM Na2HPO4, 20 % (v/v) D2O, 0.025 % (v/v) NaN3 and 0.8 % (w/v) sodium trimethylsilyl[2,2,3,3-22H4]propionate (TMSP)). From the mixture, 450 μl were transferred into a 4.25 mm NMR disposable tube, acquired from Bruker BioSpin srl.