Cerebrovascular CO\textsubscript{2} Reactivity in Normotensive and Hypertensive Man

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SUMMARY  Cerebrovascular reactivity to CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation and voluntary hyperventilation was studied in seven normotensive subjects and nine hypertensive patients without clinical or angiographical signs of arteriosclerosis. Cerebral blood flow (CBF) was measured by the intracarotid \textsuperscript{133}Xe clearance method and calculated as the initial slope index. Three to five CBF measurements were made in each patient in the Paco\textsubscript{2} range of 20 to 55 mm Hg. No difference was observed in reactivity between hypertensive and normotensive patients, either during CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation or during hyperventilation. The shape of the CBF:Paco\textsubscript{2} curve suggested a decrease in reactivity below a Paco\textsubscript{2} of 30 to 35 mm Hg in both groups. Above a Paco\textsubscript{2} of 35 mm Hg, exponential regression analysis yielded a mean reactivity of 6 ± 2%, whereas below a Paco\textsubscript{2} of 30 mm Hg it was about 2%. The rise in CBF during CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation was not influenced by the intravenous infusion of a small dose of trimethaphan which blocked the concomitant rise in blood pressure.

IN CHRONIC ARTERIAL HYPERTENSION the cerebrovascular reactivity to blood pressure variations is abnormal. This reactivity, the autoregulation of cerebral blood flow (CBF), is reset to higher pressure levels with both the lower and upper limits of the autoregulatory plateau being found at higher pressures than that in normotensives. In this context it was felt to be of interest to study in hypertensive man another important cerebral vasomotor regulatory function, viz., the cerebrovascular reactivity to variations in arterial carbon dioxide tension (Paco\textsubscript{2}). We report here such studies in a group of fairly young patients having no clinical or angiographical signs of cerebrovascular disease.

Methods

The study was carried out in seven normotensive subjects and nine hypertensive Japanese patients without any neurological deficits. Clinical data are given in table 1. The nature of the study was carefully explained to the patients, and consent was obtained. They fasted approximately 17 hours before the study. Neither premedication nor general anesthesia was applied. All patients had bilateral carotid angiography, and no significant arteriosclerosis or other abnormality of the cerebral vessels was discovered. The study of regional cerebral blood flow (rCBF) was done in connection with one of the carotid angiograms. In one of the normotensive subjects, rCBF was studied in both hemispheres with an interval of one week.

Prior to the first rCBF measurement, 5,000 units of heparin were injected intravenously. rCBF was measured by the intracarotid \textsuperscript{133}Xe method, using a 16-channel system of collimated NaI detectors (Meditronic Cerebrograph Model 165). Approximately 3 mCi of \textsuperscript{133}Xe dissolved in 2 to 3 ml of saline were injected as a bolus into the internal carotid artery. By means of a computer (JEC-7D), rCBF was calculated from the initial slope of the first two minutes of the semilogarithmically transformed \textsuperscript{133}Xe clearance curves. Mean hemispheric CBF was calculated by the sum of the clearance curves from all 16 detectors.

rCBF was measured three to five times in each patient with a 15-minute interval between the measurements. Following one measurement in the resting state, 5% to 10% CO\textsubscript{2} in room air was inhaled via a face mask for 1.5 minutes prior to and two minutes during one or two subsequent rCBF measurements. In three normotensive subjects and four hypertensive patients, rCBF measurement during CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation was repeated during intravenous infusion of a small dose of trimethaphan camsylate (Arfonad, Roche), 0.4 to 1.7 mg per minute. This had little influence upon resting blood pressure, but completely abolished the rise in blood pressure caused by CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation. Then the patients were asked to perform voluntary hyperventilation. In half of the cases, end-tidal CO\textsubscript{2} was monitored with a capnograph (Godart N.V., type 119) and was found to be constant during hyperventilation. The latter was maintained for 1.5 minutes prior to and two minutes during rCBF measurement. Some patients hyperventilated at two or three different Paco\textsubscript{2} levels. In some cases, the order of CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation and hyperventilation was reversed.

The mean arterial blood pressure (MABP) was monitored continuously from the catheter in the internal carotid artery by means of a strain-gauge transducer (Statham, P23Db). Arterial blood was sampled from the catheter immediately before the \textsuperscript{133}Xe injection and analyzed for Paco\textsubscript{2} by means of a pH gas analyzer (IL Inc., Model 113). In four cases, Paco\textsubscript{2} was checked again one minute after \textsuperscript{133}Xe injection and was found to be unchanged.

Results

No patient showed any significant interregional flow variation. Consequently, only the mean CBF values are dealt with below. The resting values of CBF, Paco\textsubscript{2} and MABP in the normotensive group were 49.6 ± 3.6 ml/100 gm per minute, 37.9 ± 2.5 mm Hg, and 93 ± 14 mm Hg, respectively (values given as mean ± 1 SD). In the hypertensive group, these values were 48.0 ± 6.8 ml/100 gm per minute, 37.5 ± 1.7 mm Hg and 132 ± 9 mm Hg, respectively. CO\textsubscript{2} inhalation caused a mean rise in the MABP in the normotensive group of 11 ± 8 mm Hg, and in the hypertensive group of 16 ± 13 mm Hg. Intravenous trimethaphan prevented this increase of blood pressure but not that of CBF. Consequently, in the graphs and calculations below, all CBF measurements are included.
TABLE 1  Clinical Data in Normotensive (#1 Through 17) and Hypertensive (#8 Through 16) Patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case no.</th>
<th>Age, sex</th>
<th>Clinical BP (mm Hg)</th>
<th>Known duration of hypertension (years)</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18, M</td>
<td>125/80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychoneurosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19, F</td>
<td>105/55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Schizophrenia, improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29, M</td>
<td>120/70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Mild tranquilizer</td>
<td>Occipital neuralgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37, F</td>
<td>115/75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychoneurosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>35, M</td>
<td>140/75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Mild tranquilizer</td>
<td>Myogenic headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>33, M</td>
<td>135/80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychoneurosis, myogenic headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>47, F</td>
<td>120/70</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mенин's disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>27, M</td>
<td>150/60</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Essential hypertension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>63, M</td>
<td>200/100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essential hypertension, gastric</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ulcer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>165/95</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>225/120</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Essential hypertension, myoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>methyl dopa, benzothiazide</td>
<td>uterus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>34, M</td>
<td>175/120</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Primary aldosteronism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>62, F</td>
<td>160/100</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Essential hypertension, migraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>34, M</td>
<td>160/100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Essential hypertension, mild</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>41, F</td>
<td>190/115</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hydralazine, methyl dopa,</td>
<td>Essential hypertension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>benzothiazide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

whether or not trimethaphan was given. (Tables with the detailed data will be sent by the authors on request.)

The individual CBF-Paco\textsubscript{2} curves of the patients are shown in figure 1. In figure 2, all measurements are plotted in a semilogarithmic system. From this graph it would appear that the relationship between CBF and Paco\textsubscript{2} cannot be satisfactorily described by one exponential function but rather by two merging into each other at Paco\textsubscript{2} of 30 to 35 mm Hg.

In table 2, the least square method has been used to calculate individual values for cerebrovascular CO\textsubscript{2} reactivity. The calculations are based on the equations suggested by Olesen et al.\textsuperscript{3} if

\[
\text{CBF} = e^{k \cdot \text{Paco}_2} + b
\]

where k and b are constants, then the CBF values at two different Paco\textsubscript{2} values will be

\[
\text{CBF}_1 = e^{k \cdot \text{Paco}_{21}} + b \quad \text{and} \quad \text{CBF}_2 = e^{k \cdot \text{Paco}_{22}}
\]

and

\[
\ln \text{CBF}_1 - \ln \text{CBF}_2 = k \cdot \text{Paco}_{21} - k \cdot \text{Paco}_{22}
\]

or

\[
\frac{\ln \text{CBF}_1}{\text{CBF}_1} = k \cdot \ln \frac{\text{Paco}_{21}}{\text{Paco}_{22}}
\]

or

\[
\frac{\text{CBF}_1}{\text{CBF}_2} = e^{k \cdot \ln \frac{\text{Paco}_{21}}{\text{Paco}_{22}}}
\]

or

\[
\text{CBF}_1 = \text{CBF}_2 \cdot e^{k \cdot \ln \frac{\text{Paco}_{21}}{\text{Paco}_{22}}}
\]

Figure 1. Individual CBF-Paco\textsubscript{2} curves from normotensive (left panel: circles) and hypertensive (right panel: triangles) patients. Resting values shown by closed circles or closed triangles.

Figure 2. All CBF values measured at various Paco\textsubscript{2} levels shown in a semilogarithmic coordinate system. Symbols as in figure 1.
The relation between CBF and Paco\textsubscript{2} is often described as autoregulation. However, in some cases, the flow is not regulated by autoregulation but by other factors such as hypocapnic flow decrease. As reviewed by Olesen,\textsuperscript{7} at more pronounced hypocapnia, impending brain hypoxia will counteract further flow decrease. As reviewed by Olesen,\textsuperscript{10} the Bohr effect will operate during hypocapnia and add to the threat of cerebral hypoxia. Finally, it may be that adenosine contributes to the modification of cerebral vasoconstriction at hypcapnia, as it has recently been shown in rats that this substance is formed in the brain along with lactate during hyperventilation.\textsuperscript{11}

When the effect of a pharmacological substance or a function test on the brain circulation is to be assessed, changes caused by CO\textsubscript{2} variations must be taken into consideration and, if possible, corrected. Olesen et al.\textsuperscript{3} found a mean 4% CO\textsubscript{2} reactivity in patients with a recent history of stroke or brain tumor. The corresponding figure in the present study is 6%, with occasional figures as high as 11% in younger patients. As pointed out by Olesen et al.\textsuperscript{3} the approximation exemplified in Equation (8) is only valid for correction purposes with small Paco\textsubscript{2} differences, i.e., 2 to 3 mm Hg. At greater Paco\textsubscript{2} differences, the exponential Equation (7) may be used. However, it emerges from the present study that the correction procedure should not include CBF measurements at Paco\textsubscript{2} less than 30 to 35 mm Hg.

No difference was observed in the cerebrovascular CO\textsubscript{2} reactivity between hypertensive and normotensive subjects. The patients were selected so as to exclude cerebral arteriosclerosis, which is known to impair the CO\textsubscript{2} response independent of coexisting hypertension.\textsuperscript{12} The decreased response to hyperventilation found in hypertensive patients in another study\textsuperscript{13} may have been related to cerebral arteriosclerosis. Hypertensive vascular disease per se is located in the arterioles which are narrowed with thickened walls, and this causes a shift to high pressure of both the lower and upper limits of CBF autoregulation.\textsuperscript{1,4} In a similar fashion, the ability to maximal dilatation of resistance vessels is decreased in the forearms of hypertensive patients.\textsuperscript{14} Maximum CO\textsubscript{2}-induced vasodilatation was not reached in the present study, but would be expected to be decreased in the hypertensive patients. On the other hand, the present results show that cerebrovascular resistance is completely adapted to the hypertension in the Paco\textsubscript{2} range 20 to 55 mm Hg.

### Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank Dr. K. Yamaguchi and Dr. K. Watarai for helping with the angiograms, Mr. I. Kanno and Mrs. Y. Miura for the computerized calculations of CBF, and Mr. T. Hachya for technical assistance.
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Cerebrovascular CO2 reactivity in normotensive and hypertensive man.
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Stroke. 1976;7:507-510
doi: 10.1161/01.STR.7.5.507

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
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