Preface

Calcium entry blockers (calcium antagonists) are one of the most fascinating newer groups of therapeutics, because of their clinical relevance, but also because of their fundamental relevance as tools for studying calcium metabolism in physiological, pathological and pharmacological processes. Until very recently their main application was restricted to the cardiovascular field, in particular angina pectoris, hypertension and certain types of cardiac dysrhythmia. Great interest has been aroused as well by their introduction into the treatment of certain neurological disorders. This development, which has been initiated but since the beginning of the eighties, has led to a special symposium on the subject during the 13th World Congress on Neurology in Hamburg in September 1985. After a series of more fundamental presentations on the role of calcium during ischemia and on the background and differentiation of the calcium entry blockers, the various potential clinical applications of the drug were summarized. Much work remains to be done to substantiate the clinical findings, whereas only in a few cases the mechanism of the therapeutic claims or effects is sufficiently understood. However, the summing up of the present knowledge, assembled in this supplement issue of European Neurology, appears most encouraging and promising. Further investigations into this new and fascinating field seem a worthwhile incentive.

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