Effect of Captopril in Bartter’s Syndrome

R.J. Hené
H.A. Koomans
P. Boer
E.J.D. Dorhout Mees

Department of Nephrology and Hypertension, University Hospital, Utrecht, The Netherlands

R.J. Hené, Department of Nephrology and Hypertension, University Hospital, Catharijnesingel 101, 3511 GV Utrecht (The Netherlands)

Dear Sir,

We read with great interest the article ‘Effect of Captopril on Blood pressure, Renal Function, the Electrolyte Balance and the Renin-Angiotensin System in Bartter’s Syndrome’ (Nephron 33: 274–278, 1983) by Aurell and Rudin. They concluded that ‘captopril had no effect on the mechanism leading to hypokalaemia in Bartter’s syndrome’. This conclusion is only correct for short-term treatment. We treated 2 patients having this disease with captopril on a long-term base. Like in the patients of Aurell and Rudin, no effect on serum potassium excretion was noticed during the first days of treatment; the long-term results were different.

In both patients serum potassium increased from values below 3.0 mmol/l to 3.5 mmol/l after 1 month, and this level has maintained for 18 and 6 months, respectively. The plasma aldosterone concentration was reduced in both patients to 25–50% of control levels.

The findings in our 1st patient are published elsewhere [1], those of our 2nd patient are shown in table I. Thus, it is possible to increase serum potassium levels in patients with Bartter’s syndrome by long-term treatment with captopril, probably by a sustained decrease in plasma aldosterone concentration.

Table I. Patient with Bartter’s syndrome treated by 25 mg captopril three times daily

| sK = Serum potassium; PRA = upright plasma renin activity (reference value: 0.15–1.0 pmol/l/s); PAC = upright plasma aldosterone concentration (reference value: 0.10–1.0 nmol/l; BP = blood pressure. References