LONG-TERM TREATMENT OF HYPERTENSION WITH GUANFACINE ALONE AND IN COMBINATION THERAPY

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TWENTY-ONE out of 27 patients suffering from moderate to severe essential hypertension completed a one-year clinical trial with guanfacine (BS 100-141) alone and combined with other hypotensive agents. Nineteen patients were treated with guanfacine and a thiazide diuretic; four with guanfacine alone; three with guanfacine, a thiazide diuretic and at times a β -adrenoceptor blocker (pindolol); and one patient with guanfacine, a thiazide diuretic and during some time a vasodilator (hydrallazine). Eighteen patients on guanfacine and thiazide and three patients on guanfacine completed the first year study. Two patients on guanfacine and four patients on guanfacine with a thiazide diuretic completed the second year study. One patient suffering from systemic lupus erythematosus was on prednisone 10 mg daily. The design of the trial is shown in Figure 1. The blood pressure therapy with guanfacine in mmHg was $164 \pm 19/118 \pm 10$; at the end of guanfacine before therapy it was $125 \pm 14/96 \pm 7.4$; and after withdrawal of guanfacine $166 \pm 35/122 \pm 14.3$. In 26 patients a good blood pressure response was achieved. Twenty-five patients reported on occasion 53 side-effects, mainly dryness of the mouth (22) and drowsiness (17), from guanfacine. These side effects usually

disappeared at the end of 3 months of treatment. Rebound hypertension on discontinuation of therapy occurred in five patients. The factors which may have predisposed to rebound hypertension were:

(1) Dose of guanfacine: All patients who developed rebound hypertension in this study were treated with doses of 5 mg or more.

(2) Duration of therapy: All patients were treated for 1 year.

(3) Combination therapy: All patients who had rebound hypertension were treated with guanfacine combined with a thiazide diuretic and in one patient on steroid therapy.

(4) Severity of hypertension: All patients had initially a diastolic blood pressure of 120 mmHg or more.

Six patients (two males, four females) aged 32-60 yrs with mild hypertension completed a second year of treatment with guanfacine alone or with a thiazide diuretic (1-6 mg once daily at night). Two patients received guanfacine without additional antihypertensive therapy. The remaining four patients received guanfacine in combination with a diuretic during the first 6 months. In five patients the blood pressure became normal. Four patients reported side-effects (dryness of the mouth in four

Figure 1 Design of study.

patients and drowsiness in one patient). A global assessment at the end of the second year of treatment compared with previous treatment showed better results in all patients.

Guanfacine alone or in combination with other hypotensive agents is a potent antihypertensive agent. Long-term tolerance is not a problem. Details of this study have been published elsewhere (Seedat, 1978).

Reference

- SEEDAT, Y.K. (1978). Long-term treatment of hypertension with guanfacine (BS 100-141) alone and in combination therapy. *Curr. ther. Res.*, **24**, 288-298.