

PRACTOLOL IN HYPERTENSION: REDUCTION IN SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS AND RENIN RESPONSES

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The β -adrenergic blocker, practolol, effectively lowered blood pressure (BP) in a controlled trial of 16 essential hypertensives. After 2 months' placebo, practolol in a dose of 200-800 mg daily satisfactorily lowered BP in 14 subjects. Urinary noradrenaline response to head-up tilt before treatment was correlated with subsequent BP reduction ($r=0.62$, $p > 0.001$). In 8 patients, responsiveness to tilt was retested after BP

had been controlled for 6 months: changes in BP and heart rate were significantly less with practolol. The urinary noradrenaline response was also significantly less ($+0.50 \mu\text{g/hr}$ against $+1.64$ pretreatment; $p < 0.02$). The renin response to tilt was also significantly less on treatment. A third head-up tilt after stopping practolol showed return to pretreatment values of BP, noradrenaline and renin responses.

Conclusion: the antihypertensive effect of practolol may be due to reduction in reflex sympathetic nervous system activity. Response to treatment is greater in sympathetic nervous "overresponders", as judged by noradrenaline and BP responses to tilt.

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