**Effects of hypertension on hemodynamic response and serum nitrite concentration during graded hemorrhagic shock in rats**

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**Abstract**

**BACKGROUND:** Hypertensive patients have higher morbidity and mortality from hemorrhage. In this study, we investigated hemodynamic responses and serum nitrite concentrations during graded hemorrhagic shock and resuscitation in hypertensive (HT) and normotensive (NT) rats.

**METHODS:** Thirteen male rats were divided into two groups, namely HT (n = 6) and NT (n = 7). Hypertension was induced by deoxycorticosterone acetate (DOCA)-salt method in uninephrectomized rats. After 8 weeks, graded hemorrhagic shock was induced during 34 minutes in four steps separated by 8-minute intervals (totally 16 ml/kg). The animals were kept in this condition for 120 minutes (shock period). Then, they were resuscitated with blood withdrawal. Mean arterial pressure (MAP) and heart rate (HR) were measured throughout the experiment. Blood samples were taken before and after shock induction and at the end of the shock period.

**RESULTS:** HT rats experienced more MAP and HR reduction during the shock period and less improvement of hemodynamic response after resuscitation compared with the NT group (p < 0.05). The survival rate 72 hours post-hemorrhage in the HT group was significantly lower than the NT group (16.7% vs. 71.4%, respectively) (p < 0.05). Serum nitrite level in HT animals was lower than the NT group (2.45 ± 0.18 vs. 3.35 ± 0.26 µmol/lit, respectively; p < 0.05). In addition, it increased during the shock period in both NT and HT groups (p > 0.05).

**CONCLUSIONS:** More reduction of MAP after hemorrhagic shock, less improvement of MAP and HR after resuscitation and low survival rate in HT animals suggested the impairment of cardiovascular system adaptation of HT animals during blood loss and it should be considered in management of hypertensive subjects.

**KEYWORDS:** Hypertension, Hemorrhagic Shock, Nitric Oxide, Blood Pressure.

It has been shown that hypertensive patients have higher morbidity and mortality from hemorrhage¹, ² which may be a result of deficit in responding to blood loss. Therefore, knowledge regarding the hemodynamic changes and underlying mechanisms is important in early diagnosis and appropriate management of hemorrhagic shock in these patients.

Hemorrhagic shock leads to a sequence of hemodynamic and neuroendocrine responses in the cardiovascular system.³ This sequence consists of a reduction in blood pressure, an initial increase in heart rate (HR) followed by bradycardia, and then tachycardia in severe or prolonged hypotension.⁴ In the decompensation phase, hemorrhagic shock is characterized by decreased response to vasopressors and hypoperfusion of peripheral tissues.⁵ It is indicated that endothelial dysfunction during hemorrhagic shock leads to tissue injury.⁶

Several paracrine and endocrine factors are involved to modulate cardiovascular response during shock. Nitric oxide (NO) is an important endothelium-derived relaxing factor which modulates vascular tone, blood pressure and tissue perfusion⁷, ⁸ which may play a major role in pathogenesis of various types of
shocks.\textsuperscript{9-11} It has been suggested that unre-
sponsiveness to angiotensin II in hemorrhagic
shock may be resulted from the high genera-
tion of NO.\textsuperscript{12}

In this study, we investigated hemody-
namic changes and serum NO concentration
during graded hemorrhagic shock and resusci-
tation in deoxycorticosterone acetate (DOCA)-
salt hypertensive and normotensive rats.

Methods

Animals
Experiments were performed on thirteen male
Wistar rats weighting between 300-420 grams.
The animals were kept in an animal room un-
der a 12/12 h light/dark cycle at 20–25°C. They
received standard rat chow. Animal care was
in accordance with the guidelines of the Ethics
Committee of Isfahan University of Medical
Sciences.

Experimental design
The animals were randomly divided into two
groups, namely hypertensive (HT; n = 6) and
normotensive (NT; n = 7). Hypertension in un-
inephrectomized was induced by subcutane-
ous injection of DOCA (Aboureihan Co., Iran)
(30 mg/kg in almond oil, two times a week)
rats and also by providing NaCl 1% and KCl
0.2% in their drinking water.\textsuperscript{13} The NT group
was also nephrectomized and injected with
subcutaneous solvent of DOCA. However, tap
water was used as their drinking water. Systo-
tolic blood pressure of all rats was recorded by
tail cuff method every week. Rats with a sys-
tolic blood pressure higher than 140 mmHg
were considered hypertensive.\textsuperscript{14}

After 8 weeks, the animals were anaesthe-
tized with intraperitoneal injection of ketamin
(100 mg/kg) and xylazine (5 mg/kg). Right
femoral artery and vein were cannulated with
polyethylene catheter (PE-50) for blood pres-
sure and HR monitoring and blood with-
drawal during shock induction, respectively.
Then, the animals were given a 30-minute rest
period for recovery. Afterwards, graded hem-
orrhagic shock was induced by blood with-
drawal from venous catheter during 34 min-
utes in four steps separated by 8-minute inter-
vals (totally 16 ml/kg) as shown in figure 1.\textsuperscript{15}
Blood samples were preserved in 1 ml (50
units) heparinized syringe at room tempera-
ture. After the induction of hemorrhagic shock,
the animals were kept in the same condition
for 120 minutes which was considered as the
shock period. Then, they were resuscitated
with withdrawn blood at a rate of approxi-
mately 1 ml/min. During the shock induction,
shock period and resuscitation, arterial blood
pressure was recorded continuously. Thereaf-
ter, catheters were removed and the incisions
were sutured with 3-0 silk thread and rats
were returned to cages for recovery. The sur-
vival rate was determined during the first 4
hours and every 12 hours up to 72 hours.
Blood samples were taken before and after
shock induction and at the end of the shock
period. The blood collected was accounted in
the total hemorrhage volume. Samples were
centrifuged at 3000 rpm for 15 minutes and
serums were stored at \(-70\)°C.

Blood pressure and HR were recorded us-
ing a physiograph (Hugo Sachs Electronic,
Germany) connected to a computer. Data was
collected and analyzed with a Windows com-
patible software. Mean arterial pressure (MAP)
and HR were determined at specific time
points.

Serum nitrite measurement
Serum nitrite concentrations were determined
by Griess reaction method using available re-
agents and kit (Promega, USA) with a detec-
tion limit of 2.5 µmol/lit.

Statistical analysis
The results are expressed as mean \(\pm\) standard
error. Data was compared between groups
using repeated measured ANOVA and inde-
pendent t-test. Pre-shock and post-shock val-
ues were analyzed using paired t-test. The sur-
vival rate was evaluated by Fischer exact
test. A \(p < 0.05\) was considered statistically
significant.
Results
Changes of hemodynamic parameters
Figure 2 illustrates the time course of MAP and HR changes during the shock period and resuscitation in experimental groups. As shown in Figure 2A, in baseline condition (before hemorrhage), MAP in the HT group was significantly higher than the NT group (122 ± 3.9 mmHg vs. 75.8 ± 3.23 mmHg; Systolic BP: 164.5 ± 2.7 mmHg vs. 102.83 ± 3.6 mmHg, respectively; p < 0.01). Graded hemorrhage caused significant decreases in MAP in the NT (75.83 ± 3.23 mmHg vs. 51.18 ± 4.54 mmHg; p < 0.05) and HT (122 ± 3.9 mmHg vs. 76.17 ± 5.13 mmHg; p < 0.05) groups. Hemorrhage also caused a significant decrease in HR in both the NT (323.9 ± 17.83 vs. 181.38 ± 13.6; p < 0.05) and HT (268.8 ± 16.42 vs. 205 ± 25.58; p < 0.05) groups. Although, the percentage of MAP reduction was not significantly different between the two groups, the magnitude of the decrease in blood pressure caused by hemorrhage in the HT group was higher than that in the NT group (45.83 ± 4.38 vs. 24.25 ± 5.89 mmHg, respectively; p < 0.05) (Figure 3A). In addition, the HT group showed a higher reduction in HR compared with the NT group (142.53 ± 11.98 vs. 63.83 ± 17.22 beat/min, respectively; p < 0.05) (Figure 3B).

Resuscitation increased MAP and HR in both groups. However, the increases in the two groups were not significantly different (p > 0.05) (Figure 2B).

Serum nitrite concentration
Serum nitrite concentrations in the HT group were significantly lower than the NT group before the hemorrhagic shock (2.45 ± 0.18 vs. 3.35 ± 0.26 µmol/lit, respectively; p < 0.05). Graded hemorrhage caused significant increases in serum nitrite concentration in both groups (p < 0.05) (Figure 4). Although serum nitrite concentrations in the HT group were still lower than the NT group at the end of the shock period, the difference was not statistically significant (Figure 4).

Survival analysis
Figure 5 illustrates the survival rate of each group after resuscitation. One HT rat died during the shock period. Six out of seven (85.3%) in the NT and two out of five (40%) rats in the HT groups were alive during the first 12 hours after resuscitation. Five out of seven (71.4%) NT rats and only one out of six (16.7%) HT rats were alive 72 hours after the experiments.

Discussion
Hemorrhagic shock is associated with multiple organ damage which may increase poor outcomes and mortality in injured and traumatic patients.16 HT patients have higher vascular resistance and sympathetic tone than NT subjects and may demonstrate aberrant responses.
In the present study, we showed that HT animals had greater MAP and HR depression during hemorrhage and less improvement of MAP and HR during the shock period and resuscitation. In addition, we found that mortality rate of HT animals was higher than the NT group. In agreement with our results, it was shown that hemorrhagic shock induction with withdrawing 25% of the total blood volume in spontaneous HT rats caused significantly more MAP depression and acidosis than NT rats. Moreover, the mortality rate...
due to hemorrhage in HT rats was more than that of the normal group. HT subjects have a defect in baroreflex response even in recovery phase which may be important in their management. In addition, it has been demonstrated that tissue ischemia and organ failure in spontaneous HT rats were more than NT animals at the same blood pressure after hemorrhagic shock which may explain higher mortality in HT animals.

Vascular hyporeactivity to vasoconstrictors and vasodilators during hemorrhagic and other kinds of shocks has been documented in several studies. Many factors have been proposed to be involved in vascular hyporeactivity including NO. NO has been impli-
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Figure 4. Serum nitrite level in NT and HT rats at baseline, after hemorrhage (34th minute) and at the end of the shock period (120 minutes after shock induction).
*: p ≤ 0.05 compared with NT. †: p ≤ 0.05 compared with baseline.

Figure 5. Survival counts in NT and HT groups after the experiment.
* indicates a significant difference between the two groups (p ≤ 0.05).
improved the vascular response to angiotensin II. A recent study also found that hemorrhage is associated with vascular decompensation due to low NO bioavailability. Furthermore, gene expression of inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) and eNOS in selected vasculatures increased during hemorrhagic shock. It is suggested that vascular hyporeactivity during hemorrhagic shock is related to different expressions of NOS and some cytokines after shock. Increased activity of iNOS and constitutinal NOS in liver, spleen, lung, and various organs during shock has been documented. Excessive NO production and vascular hyporeactivity not only play an important role in development of shock, but also reduce the effectiveness of shock therapy by vasoactive agents. Moreover, excessive formation of NO may contribute to damage to multiple organs such as heart, lung and liver during shock.

In conclusion, serum NO concentration was increased in NT and HT animals after hemorrhagic shock induction and during the shock period. More reduction of MAP after hemorrhagic shock, less improvement of MAP and HR after resuscitation and low survival rate in HT animals suggested the impairment of cardiovascular system adaptation of HT animals during blood loss and it should be considered in management of hypertensive subjects.

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Conflict of Interests
Authors have no conflict of interests.

Authors' Contributions
A.N contributed in the study design, BB and M.Kh involved in study design, conducting the experiments and writing the manuscript.

References