

Diuretics: A Review

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Abstract:

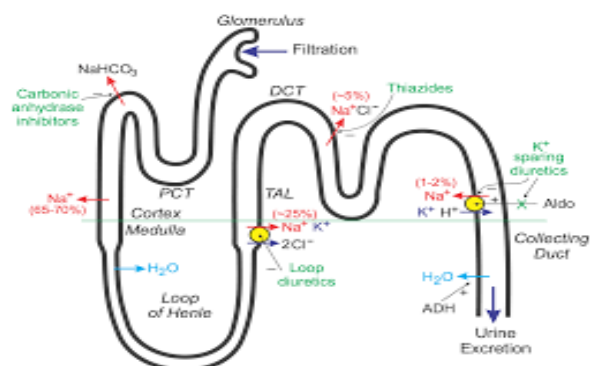
Diuretics represent a cornerstone in managing various conditions by enhancing diuresis and natriuresis. Acting at different segments of the renal tubule, they offer a versatile approach to fluid management. Loop diuretics, such as acetazolamide, find utility in acute heart failure, exerting antihypertensive effects and mitigating fluid overload with minimal electrolyte disturbances. Thiazide and thiazide-related diuretics, while effective antihypertensives, warrant vigilance due to potential complications like hyponatremia and hypokalemia. In contrast, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists exhibit multifaceted benefits, including antihypertensive, nephroprotective, and cardioprotective effects, albeit increasing the risk of hyperkalemia. In contrast, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists exhibit multifaceted benefits, including antihypertensive, nephroprotective, and cardioprotective effects, albeit increasing the risk of hyperkalemia. SGLT2 Inhibitors emerge as promising agents with antihypertensive and cardio-renal protective effects, without adverse impacts on natremia. Understanding the mechanisms and clinical implications of diuretics is crucial for optimizing therapeutic strategies in conditions such as heart failure, nephrological disease, and hypertension.

INTRODUCTION

Diuretics are drugs that increase the excretion of water and sodium in urine, known for their natriuretic effect. Different diuretics act on sodium reabsorption across various segments of the nephron, including the proximal tubule, loop of Henle, distal tubule, and collecting tubule. Diuretics affect sodium reabsorption in all sections of the nephron.

- **Regulation of Sodium Balance in the Kidneys:**
- **Filtration in Glomerulus:** 100% of sodium (Na⁺) is filtered.

- **Proximal Tubule Reabsorption:** 60-70% of Na⁺ reabsorption occurs via the action of 3Na⁺/2K⁺ ATPase and SGLT2.



- Loop of Henle Reabsorption: 20-30% of Na⁺ reabsorption occurs via NKCC2, affected by loop diuretics.
 - Distal Tubule Reabsorption: 5-7% of Na⁺ reabsorption occurs through NCC, influenced by thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics.
 - Collection Tubule Reabsorption: 2-3% of Na⁺ reabsorption is facilitated by ENaC, modulated by mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists.
- A. SGL2 Inhibitors:**
- Function: Sodium-glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors reduce the reabsorption of glucose and sodium primarily in the proximal tubule.
 - Mechanism in Proximal Tubule: SGLT2 Inhibitors decrease glucose and sodium reabsorption in the S1 and S2 segments of the proximal tubule.
 - Increased Natriuresis: Use of SGLT2 inhibitors leads to dose-dependent increases in natriuresis.
 - Diuretic Effects: SGLT2 Inhibitors have been shown to increase diuresis, contributing to their overall therapeutic effect.
 - Weight Loss Effect: Initially, SGLT2 inhibitors cause weight loss mainly due to a decrease in total body water volume. Later, weight loss may be attributed to their effects on adipose tissue metabolism, including increased lipolysis and reduced lipid accumulation.
 - Reduction of Water Content: SGLT2 Inhibitors reduce water content both inside cell and in the extracellular space, contributing to their diuretic and weight loss effects.
 - Site of Action of Diuretics: These reduce glucose and Na⁺ reabsorption in the proximal tubule without significantly impacting extracellular space sodium levels, unlike loop diuretics.
 - Effects of SGLT2 Inhibitors:
 1. Vascular Effects: SGLT2 inhibitors improve vascular endothelial function, reducing stiffness and stimulating nitric oxide production.
 2. Reduction of Sodium Content: They decrease sodium content in subcutaneous tissue, mainly within intracellular and non-osmotic sodium stores.
 3. Antihypertensive Effects: SGLT2 inhibitors have a moderate antihypertensive effect, reducing both systolic and diastolic to meta-analyses.
 - Benefits of SGLT2 Inhibitors in Cardiovascular and Kidney Disease:
 1. Reduction of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Progression:
 - Meta-analysis of 13 randomized Clinical trials involving over 90,000 patients demonstrated a reduced risk of CKD progression with SGLT2 Inhibitors.
 - Significant risk reduction observed in patients without diabetes.
 2. Cardiovascular Risk Reduction:
 - SGLT2 Inhibitors decrease the risk of death from cardiovascular complications and exacerbation of heart failure, as well as all-cause mortality.
 3. Effects on Urinary Albumin-to-Creatinin Ratio (UACR):
 - Dapagliflozin treatment resulted in a significant reduction in UACR compared to placebo.
 - Clinical Trials: DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY:
 1. DAPA-CKD Study (Dapagliflozin 10 mg/day):
 - Reduced risk of developing a renal function endpoint, including a permanent reduction in estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) by at least 50%, end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or death due to kidney disease.
 - Also reduced the risk of death from cardiovascular complications or heart failure exacerbation and all causes mortality.

2. EMPA-KIDNEY Study(Empagliflozin 10 mg/day):

- Showed a reduction in the risk of CKD progression and death due to cardiovascular complications.
- Decreased risk of hospitalization and well tolerated by patients.

• **Mechanism of eGFR Reduction :**

1. Hemodynamic Mechanism:

- Initial reduction in eGFR attributed to reversible hemodynamic effects, including decreased glomerular capillary pressure.
- Resulting from the contraction of afferent vessels and dilation of efferent vessels due to increased sodium and chloride delivery to the macula densa.

2. Tubuloglomerular Feedack :

- Increased release of adenosine due to activation of tubuloglomerular feedback.
- Experimental and clinical studies demonstration the impact of SGLT2 inhibitors on hyperfiltration and tubuloglomerular feedback mechanisms.

• **Impact of SGLT2 Inhibitors on Cardiovascular and Kidney Disease:**

1. Reduction in Action :

- Meta-analysis of 13 randomized clinical trials, including over 90,000 patients, confirms the ability of SGLT2 inhibitors to reduce the risk of cardiovascular and kidney disease progression .
- Notable reductions observed in chronic kidney disease (CKD) progression, regardless of diabetes status.

2. Specific Risk Reduction:

- SGLT2 inhibitors decrease the risk of death from cardiovascular complications, exacerbation of heart failure, and all-cause mortality.

• **Clinical Trials Findings: DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY:**

1. DAPA-CKD Study (Dapagliflozin 10 mg/day):

- Involving 4,304 CKD patients, dapagliflozin significantly reduced the

risk of developing renal function endpoints, including a permanent reduction in estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or kidney related mortality.

- Also reduced the risk of death from cardiovascular complications or heart failure exacerbation and all-cause mortality.

2. EMPA-KIDNEY Study (Empagliflozin 10 mg/day):

- Conducting with, 6,609 CKD patients, empagliflozin demonstrated a reduction in CKD progression and cardiovascular-related mortality.

- Showed reduced risk of hospitalization and was well tolerated by patients.

• **Mechanism of eGFR Reduction:**

1. Hemodynamic Effects:

- SGLT2 inhibitors induce a reversible decrease in glomerular capillary pressure by affecting afferent and efferent vessel dynamics.

- 2. Experimental Evidence: Studies on diabetic mice and patients with diabetes illustrate the impact of SGLT2 inhibitors on glomerular feedback mechanisms.

RESULT: SGLT2 inhibitors exhibit significant protective effects against cardiovascular and kidney diseases, supported by robust clinical trial evidence and mechanistic understanding of their actions on renal hemodynamics.

A. Impact of Dapagliflozin on Intraglomerular Pressure:

RED Study Findings: Dapagliflozin usage leads to reduced intraglomerular pressure and efferent vessel wall resistance, as demonstrated by Van Bommel *et al.*

B. Acetazolamide:

Mechanism of Action : Acetazolamide decreases hydrogen ion secretion in the proximal tubule, thereby inhibiting sodium reabsorption via sodium-hydrogen exchanger 3 (NHE3). It is also used in

treating glaucoma, altitude sickness and acute congestive heart failure.

Clinical Trial(ADVOR): Mullens *et al.* conducted a trial with 519 patients with acute congestive heart failure, showing that acetazolamide, in combination with loop diuretics, increased natriuresis and reduced fluid retention.

- **Comparison with SGLT2 Inhibitors:**

Short-Term Treatment Duration:

Acetazolamide treatment typically lasts around 3 days, unlike SGLT2 inhibitors. Meta-analysis by Schmickl *et al.* identified adverse effects of acetazolamide, including paresthesia, dysgeusia, polyuria and fatigue.

- **Electrolyte Balance and Diuretic Effects:**

- Unlike other diuretics, SGLT2 inhibitors do not cause electrolyte imbalances.
- Meta-analyses and clinical trials demonstrates no significant impact on serum sodium and potassium levels.

- **Effect on Hyperkalemia:** Studies show that SGLT2 inhibitors reduce risk of hyperkalemia, particularly in patients treated with renin-angiotensin system agents.

B. Loop Diuretics:

Mechanism of Action : Loop diuretics inhibit the sodium-potassium-chloride cotransporter 2 (NKCC2) in the thick ascending limb of the loop of Henle, increasing sodium, potassium, and chloride excretion in urine.

Clinical Guidelines: Recommended for patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) and signs/symptoms of fluid retention. It can also be used as antihypertensive drugs in specific eGFR ranges according to ESC and ESH guidelines.

RESULT: SGLT2 inhibitors offer antihypertensive and nephroprotective benefits without impacting electrolyte balance, contrasting with the adverse effects

and short term usage of acetazolamide . Loop diuretics remain vital in managing heart failure and hypertension according to current clinical guidelines.

Role of Loop Diuretics in CKD:

1. **Impact on Overhydration:** Overhydration exacerbates CKD progression due to reduced renal perfusion, increased sodium retention, elevated glomerular capillary pressure, and worsened heart failure. Loop diuretics play a crucial role in reducing overhydration in CKD patients.
 2. **Clinical Evidence:** Esmeray *et al.* demonstrated that CKD patients without clinical signs of overhydration had a higher risk of disease progression when not treated with diuretics. Increased plasmin levels associated with significant proteinuria contribute to overhydration by stimulating sodium reabsorption, highlighting the importance of addressing underlying mechanisms.
 3. **Resistance Mechanisms:** Resistance to loop diuretics may occur due to increased expression of pendrin in collecting tubules, enhancing sodium reabsorption. In hypertensive patients, loop diuretics effectively reduce both systolic and diastolic blood pressure.
 4. **Electrolyte Imbalance:** Electrolyte imbalances with loop diuretics, such as hyponatremia and hypokalemia, are relatively rare in CKD patients. Studies indicate a reduced risk of hospitalization associated with hyponatremia in patients using loop diuretics.
 5. **Management of Resistance:** Strategies to manage resistance include dose adjustment, frequency modification, or adding on different nephron segments.
- ### **C. Thiazide and Thiazide-like Diuretics:**
- **Mechanism of Action :** Thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics reduce sodium and chloride reabsorption by inhibiting the

sodium-chloride symporter (NCC) in the distal tubule.

- **Antihypertensive Effect:** Thiazide monotherapy significantly reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in hypertensive patients, as evidenced by clinical trials. Thiazide-like diuretics exhibit stronger antihypertensive effects compared to traditional thiazides.
- **Thiazide and Thiazide-like Diuretics in CKD:**
 - Thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics significantly reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure in hypertensive patients with CKD.
 - Meta-analyses demonstrate their efficacy in lowering mean blood pressure levels.
 - Clinical guidelines recommend chlorthalidone use in CKD patients with eGFR in the range of 15-30 mL/min/1.73m².
 - TIH is a specific type of hyponatremia resulting from impaired prostaglandin transport, leading to increased water resorption.
 - Factors increasing TIH risk including old age, low body weight, and high diuretic doses.
 - Recent observational studies refute concerns about thiazide or thiazide-like diuretics accelerating the progression of autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD).
 - Thiazide or thiazide-like diuretic use does not hasten ADPKD progression or adversely affect renal function in patients with ADPKD and CKD.
- **Hyponatremia and Hypokalemia Risks:**
 1. **Hyponatremia Prevention and Management:** Monitoring symptoms and educating patients about hyponatremia signs. Regular sodium testing during thiazide or thiazide-like diuretic treatment. Immediate cessation of diuretic use occurrence of thiazide-

include hyponatremia (THI). Avoidance of future thiazide or thiazide-like diuretic use and excessive water intake.

2. **Hypokalemia Incidence and Management:** Thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics increase urinary potassium excretion, leading to hypokalemia risk. Hypokalemia occurs in a small percentage of patients, with similar incidence between thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics. Close monitoring and appropriate management of hypokalemia symptoms are essential during diuretic therapy.
 - **Mineralocorticoid Receptor Antagonists (MRAs) in Hypertension and CKD:**
 1. **Blood Pressure Reduction:** Steroidal MRAs significantly reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure in hypertensive patients. Clinical trials demonstrate the efficacy of spironolactone in reducing blood pressure, particularly in CKD patients with treatment-resistant hypertension.
 2. **Use in Treatment-Resistant Hypertension and CKD:** MRAs are effective in treating treatment-resistant hypertension and managing heart failure (HF) and CKD. They are divided into steroidal (spironolactone, eplerenone) and non-steroidal (finerenone) types.
 3. **Urinary Protein Excretion Reduction:** Combination therapy with steroidal MRAs and renin-angiotensin system inhibitors reduces urinary protein excretion in CKD patients.
 - **Skin Cancer Risk Associated with Cancer Risk:**
 1. **Hydrochlorothiazide and Skin Cancer Risk:** Prolonged use of hydrochlorothiazide increases the risk of squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma, especially with higher cumulative doses and longer durations of use. Thiazide diuretics, particularly

hydrochlorothiazide, are associated with an increased risk of various skin cancers, necessitating regular dermatological monitoring and sun protection recommendations. In summary, while thiazide and thiazide-like diuretics effectively manage hypertension, their use requires vigilant monitoring for electrolyte imbalances and awareness of potential skin cancer risks. Steroidal MRAs, such as spironolactone, demonstrate efficacy in reducing blood pressure and urinary protein excretion, particularly in CKD patients with treatment-resistant hypertension.

- Comparison of Mineralocorticoid Receptor Antagonists: Higher risk of hyperkalemia with spironolactone. Greater risk of hyperkalemia with spironolactone due to longer plasma half-life and stronger natriuretic effect.
- Safety and Efficacy of Finerenone: Zhang et al. meta-analysis: Reduced risk of eGFR decrease, ESRD, and cardiovascular complications; decreased urinary albumin/creatinine ratio. Clinical trial safety: Risk of adverse reactions similar to placebo (RR=1.00; 95% CI: 0.98-1.01).
- Overall Risk of Electrolyte Imbalances: Mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists may elevate the risk of electrolyte imbalances.
- Hyponatremia Incidence with Finerenone: Found in 1.4 % of patients treated with finerenone.
- Overall Conclusion on Mineralocorticoid Receptor Antagonist: Characterized by antihypertensive, nephroprotective, and cardioprotective effects. Increase risk of hyperkalemia (lower with finerenone).
- Finerenone's Impact on Diabetic Kidney Disease Progression: Reduces progression of diabetic kidney disease.

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