高血圧はありふれた疾患であるが、脳出血や脳梗塞などの脳卒中、心筋梗塞や心不全、不整脈などの心疾患、腎不全、大動脈瘤や閉塞性動脈硬化症といった血管疾患など、種々の循環器疾患の主要な危険因子でもある。高血圧の治療は、それらの心血管疾患を予防して予後を改善することが目的となり、薬物療法により予後が改善することは明らかである。多くの優れた降圧薬が使用できるようになり高血圧の治療は容易になってきたが、現在でも治療を受けていない人や血圧がコントロールされていない人は少なくない。本稿では高血圧の病態と治療について、降圧薬による薬物療法を中心として解説する。



主な異常所見と病気のしくみ

() 自血圧の概念と商帳()

● 高血圧の概念と疫学

血圧とは血管内の圧力で、通常は動脈圧を意味している。血圧は心臓の収縮期に最も高く(収縮期血圧)、拡張期に最低(拡張期血圧)となる。血圧の単位はmmHgで、測定に用いる水銀柱の高さとなっている。血圧は心臓や血管、腎臓、神経系や内分泌系などの多くの因子の影響を受けており、また精神、身体活動などにより常に変動している¹⁾.

高血圧とは血圧が高い病態である。血圧の正常値は収縮期140mmHg未満,拡張期90mmHg未満であり,これ以上ならば高血圧となる。高血圧は血圧レベルによりさらに細分化され,最近の日本高血圧学会のガイドライン (JSH 2004) による分類を表1に示す。また,正常血圧であっても,高めであればより低い場合に比べると心血管系のリスクが増大することから,130~139/85~89mmHgは正常高値血圧で,至適血圧は120/80mmHg未満とされている。

高血圧は普遍的であり、その有病率はきわめて高い。わが国では30歳以上の成人の30%以上は高血圧で3³、その数は約3,500万人にのほると考えられる。血圧は加齢とともに上昇するが、高血圧の頻度も年齢とともに増加し、高齢者の約2/3は高血圧となっている^{3,4}。また、一般に男性は女性より血圧が高く、これはとくに若中年期では明らかである。しかし、高齢者では血圧の性差はほとんどなくなる。また、収縮期血圧は加齢とともに上昇を続けるが、

表 】 成人における血圧値の分類 (単位 mmHg)

分類	収縮期血圧	19 Jan 19	拡張期血圧				
至適血圧	< 120	かつ	<80				
正常血圧	<130	かつ	<85				
正常高値血圧	130~139	または	85~90				
軽症窩血圧	140~159	または	90~99				
中等症离血圧	160~179	または	100~109				
重症高血圧	≧180	または	≧110				
収縮期窩血圧	≧140	かつ	<90				

(文献2)より引用)

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拡張期血圧は50歳代に最高となり以後は低下してくる、したがって、高齢者では脈圧(収縮 期血圧と拡張期血圧の差) が大きくなり、収縮期血圧は高く拡張期血圧は正常な収縮期高血 圧 (isolated systolic hypertension) を呈する者が多くなる.

② 高血圧の病態

高血圧は全身の細動脈硬化や大血管の粥状硬化,心肥大をもたらし,心血管系の主要な危 険因子となる。高血圧が関与する疾患には、脳出血や脳梗塞などの脳卒中、心筋梗塞や狭心 症、心不全、不整脈などの心疾患、腎不全、大動脈瘤や大動脈解離、閉塞性動脈硬化症と いった血管疾患などが含まれる。これらの心血管疾患のリスクは、血圧値に伴って直線的に 増加する(図1)5. 高血圧は高齢者の認知症にも関連しており、また全死亡率を上昇させる.

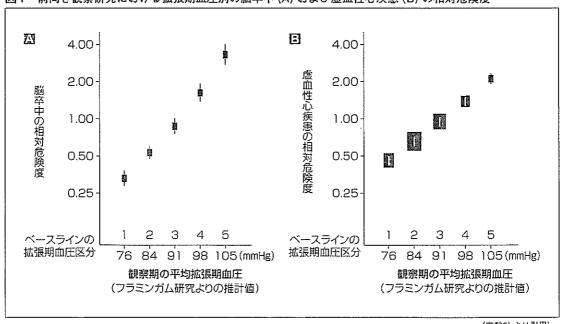
臓器障害や予後については、若年者では拡張期血圧も重要であるが、高齢者では収縮期血 圧がより強く関連する。。高齢者では、収縮期血圧が同じであれば拡張期血圧は低いほうが むしろ予後不良であることも示されている。 したがって、脈圧は大きいほどよくないとい える.

高血圧は頭痛や頭重感、ふらつき感、動悸などの自覚症状を伴うこともあるが、無症状の ことが多い、しかし、無症状であっても心血管系への悪影響は明らかであり、高血圧は silent killer (沈黙の殺し屋) とも称される. 一方では、軽症であるが種々の自覚症状を訴え る者も少なくなく、高血圧は心身症の1つにも含まれている7.

❸ 高血圧の診断

高血圧の診断は病歴と身体所見、臨床検査によるが、高血圧の重症度(血圧レベルと臓器 障害)と、ほかの心血管危険因子、および高血圧の原因(二次性高血圧の可能性)についての 評価が重要である.

図 1 前向き観察研究における拡張期血圧別の脳卒中(A) および虚血性心疾患(B) の相対危険度



(文献5)より引用)

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高血圧の診断は一度だけの血圧測定によるべきではなく、くり返しの測定によってなされるべきである。受診回数とともに馴れにより血圧が下がってくる場合が少なくない。また、くり返しの測定でも診察室では高血圧を呈するが24時間血圧や家庭血圧は正常であることも多く、白衣高血圧あるいは診察室高血圧といわれる。. 逆に、検診や診察室では正常血圧であるが24時間血圧や家庭血圧は高い場合もあり、仮面高血圧あるいは逆白衣高血圧といわれる。. 白衣高血圧は、予後は持続性高血圧に比べれば良好であるが、臓器障害を伴ったり持続性高血圧に移行する場合があり、無害とはいえない。仮面高血圧は、臓器障害や予後不良を示す報告が多く、注意すべき病態と考えられる。

高血圧の臓器障害については、心電図や心エコーにより心肥大の有無を、尿や血液検査により腎障害の有無を調べる。胸部X線では心臓や大動脈、眼底検査では細動脈が観察できる。高血圧以外の危険因子では、喫煙、糖尿病、脂質代謝異常、肥満、微量アルブミン尿、高齢、心血管病の家族歴などが重要である。これらの危険因子や高血圧に関連する臓器障害や心血管病が存在すれば心血管リスクが高くなることから、高血圧患者の診療にあたっては血圧値と危険因子、臓器障害などによりリスクを層別化して治療方針を決定することが重要となる(表2)².

高血圧患者の大部分(約90%)は、明らかな原因を特定できない本態性高血圧であり、一部(約10%)は腎や副腎などに原因を有する二次性高血圧である。本態性高血圧の成因は完全には解明されていないが、遺伝因子と環境要因とがともに重要である。前者に関しては、いくつかの候補遺伝子が見出されているが、大部分の高血圧患者の原因となるような遺伝子は知られていない。後者は生活習慣が主となり、食塩、肥満、ストレス、アルコール、運動不足、ミネラル不足などであるでは、ただし、遺伝と環境は独立したものではなく、生活習慣による血圧上昇にも多くの遺伝子が関係すると考えられる。

二次性高血圧は種々の原因によるが、腎性高血圧が最も多い、これには慢性糸球体腎炎などによる腎実質性高血圧と、粥状動脈硬化などによる腎血管性高血圧がある。副腎性高血圧のなかでは、アルドステロンを産生する腫瘍や過形成による原発性アルドステロン症が多い、薬剤が高血圧の原因になることもあり、注意を要する。交感神経系の刺激薬、ステロイドや非ステロイド性抗炎症薬、甘草を含む漢方薬などである。

装2 高血圧患者のリスクの層別化

血圧分類 血圧以外の リスク要因	軽症高血圧 140~159/90~99mmHg	中等症高血圧 160~179/100~109mmHg	重症高血圧 ≥180/≥110mmHg
危険因子なし	低リスク	中等リスク	高リスク
糖尿病以外の1~2個の危険因子 あり	中等リスク	中等リスク	高リスク
糖尿病, 臓器障害, 心血管病, 3個以上の危険因子, のいずれか がある	高リスク	高リスク	高リスク

(文献2)より引用)



処方のポイント

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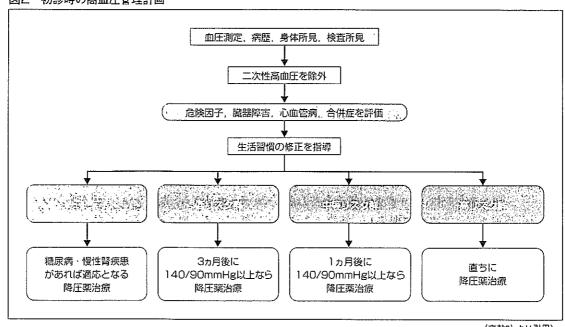
高血圧患者の診療にあたっては、高血圧の確認とともに、個々の患者のリスクを評価し、治療の開始時期や方法について考慮する必要がある。高血圧患者は治療しなければ正常血圧者に比べて予後不良であり、治療により予後は改善する。降圧薬による治療で脳卒中、心血管疾患、全死亡などがともに減少することは、中年者や収縮期拡張期高血圧のみでなく、高齢者や収縮期高血圧においても証明されている(表3) ... したがって、高血圧は治療することが原則であり、放置してはいけない。JSH2004による初診時の高血圧管理計画を、図2に示す。

表3 収縮期高血圧における降圧薬治療による心血管病と死亡のリスクの低下

. *	発症	列数	HAZOET.	
* 2	実薬 (n=7,936)	プラセボ (n=7,757)	リクスの低下 %(95%Ci)	CAR PARKET
全脳卒中	379	523	30(18~41)	<0.0001
全虚血性心疾恶	486	617	23(10~34)	< 0.0001
全心血管病死亡	647	835	26(17~34)	<0.0001
心血管病死亡	329	392	18(14~29)	0.01
全死亡	656	734	13(2~22)	0.02

(文献2)より引用)

図2 初診時の高血圧管理計画



(文献2) より引用)

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重症高血圧の一部は高血圧緊急症と呼ばれ、放置すれば予後不良であり、直ちに(数時間以内に)降圧治療を要する¹²¹. これには高血圧性脳症、急性心不全や急性大動脈解離を伴う高血圧などが含まれる. 速効性の降圧薬を用いて血圧をコントロールするが、急激な血圧低下は避けなければならない. 薬剤選択は病態によるが、カルシウム(Ca)拮抗薬のニカルジピン、ジルチアゼムの注射薬がよく用いられる.

それ以外の高血圧患者については、食事などの生活習慣の修正(非薬物療法)は全例に勧めるが、薬物療法の適応と時期については血圧値とともに臓器障害やほかの危険因子などを考慮して決定する(表2,図2).すなわち、高リスクであれば速やかに(数日以内に)降圧薬を開始すべきである。中等リスクでは、1ヵ月後に140/90mmHg以上であれば降圧薬を開始する。低リスクであれば、3ヵ月後の血圧値により降圧薬治療を決定する。また、正常血圧であっても、高めで糖尿病や慢性腎疾患がある場合には薬物療法の適応となる。

高血圧管理における血圧の目標値は140/90mmHg未満であるが、腎疾患や糖尿病を伴う場合にはより低い130/85mmHg未満となる³. JSH2004は, 若中年者の目標血圧も130/85mmHg 未満と低くしている.

家庭血圧や24時間血圧は、日常生活における血圧を評価できるので、高血圧の診断や治療において高い意義を有している。とくに家庭血圧の測定は簡便であり、強く勧められる「ホ」はただし、これらは一般に外来血圧より低いので、家庭血圧では135/85mmHg以上であれば高血圧であり、目標とする血圧値も低くなる。2.

降圧治療によっても血圧がコントロールできない場合には、その原因を調べながら対策を立てる必要がある¹⁵¹.治療抵抗性高血圧の原因はさまざまであるが、患者(コンプライアンス不良など)、医師(薬の使い方が悪いなど)あるいは高血圧自体(著しい白衣現象や二次性高血圧など)に問題があると考えられる.

高血圧の治療における非薬物療法(生活習慣の修正)は、高血圧の基礎的な治療法として 降圧薬治療に先立って開始し、薬物治療中も継続することが推奨される。JSH2004のガイド ラインを表4に示すが、食塩制限、野菜や果物の摂取とコレステロール制限や飽和脂肪の制 限、適正体重の維持、運動、アルコール制限、禁煙が基本となる。生活習慣の修正は有用 であるが、降圧効果が比較的小さいことと、達成と維持が困難な点が限界となっている。

食塩(ナトリウム)と高血圧との関係はよく知られており、食塩はまた血圧とは独立して心血管系に悪影響を及ぼす、食塩制限の効果には個人差があるが、1gあたり約1mmHgの降圧が期待できる。日本人の食塩摂取は平均11~12g/日と多いが、6g/日未満が望まれる^{7.100}.

野菜や果物は、ミネラルや繊維を多く含んでいる.カリウム、カルシウム、マグネシウムは、 摂取不足が高血圧に関係し、補給により血圧は低下する^{10,16}. それぞれの効果は小さいが、 野菜と果物、低脂肪の乳製品に富む食事をとれば、かなりの降圧が期待できる.

肥満者においては、カロリー制限を主とした減量が重要となる。減量の効果は明らかで、1kgあたり1mmHg程度の血圧低下が期待できる^{10,17}。減量はまた、糖・脂質代謝に好影響を及ぼす。

運動は減量にも有効であるが、これとは別に独立した降圧効果がある。ウォーキングのよ

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- 1) 食塩制限6g/日未満
- 2) 野菜・果物の積極的摂取²² コレステロールや飽和脂肪酸の摂取を控える
- 3) 適正体重の維持: BMI(体重(kg)÷[身長(m)]²)で25を超えない
- 4) 運動療法:心血管病のない高血圧患者が対象で、有酸素運動を毎日30分以上を目標に定期的に行う
- 5) アルコール制限: エタノールで男性は20~30mL/日以下, 女性は10~20mL/日以下
- 6)禁煙

生活習慣の複合的な修正はより効果的である

※:ただし、野菜、果物の積極的摂取は、重篤な腎障害を伴うものでは、高カリウム血症をきたす可能性があるので推奨されない、また、果物の積極的摂取は摂取カロリーの増加につながることがあるので、糖尿病患者では推奨されない (文献2)より引用)

うな比較的軽い運動を, 定期的に行うことが勧められる^{2 ™}. ただし, 運動中は血圧が上昇 することに注意を要する.

アルコールは、 1日30mL以内(ビール大1本まで),女性ではその半量までが望ましい.しかし,アルコール制限により朝の血圧は下がるが夜の血圧は上昇し,24時間血圧はあまり変わらない^{10,180}.アルコール摂取量と循環器病死亡や全死亡との間にはU字型やJ字型の関係があり,制限は勧められるが禁止すべきではない.

喫煙は動脈硬化を促進し、虚血性心疾患の主要な危険因子となっている.喫煙者は非喫煙者に比し循環器病、がん、全体の死亡率がそれぞれ1.5~2倍であり、禁煙はこれらのリスクを大幅に低下させる $^{2.7}$. ニコチンガムやニコチンパッチの使用は、禁煙の補助として勧められる.

食事や生活に関するその他のことは、高血圧の一般的な治療法としてはあまり認められていない。しかし、魚油や食物繊維には軽度の降圧や脂質代謝改善の効果がある。ストレスも高血圧や心血管事故に関係するので、ストレスの多い生活はなるべく避けるべきであろう。

CENTER SHOW THE EXPERT

生活習慣の修正による高血圧の治療には限界があり、多くの患者は薬物療法の適応となる、薬物治療の有用性は主に降圧効果そのものによるので、積極的な適応のない場合には主要降圧薬の中から適するものを第1次選択薬として用いる(表5)²、薬剤の選択にあたっては、患者の年齢や性別、心血管危険因子、臓器障害、心血管病、降圧薬の副作用や薬価、QOLへの影響などを考慮する。降圧薬には多くの種類があるが、主なものはCa拮抗薬、アンジオテンシンⅡ受容体拮抗薬(ARB)、アンジオテンシン変換酵素(ACE)阻害薬、利尿薬、β遮断薬、α遮断薬である。ほかに、中枢性交感神経抑制薬や血管拡張薬も用いられる。

各降圧薬の詳細は他稿で解説されるので省略するが、主要降圧薬の積極的な適応と禁忌を表6に示す。Ca拮抗薬は現在最もよく用いられている。降圧効果は確実で、狭心症にも有効である。ARBは主要臓器の保護効果がある。副作用は少ないが、腎障害時にはよい適応となる一方、注意を要する。ACE阻害薬も主要臓器の保護作用を有する。腎不全患者では減量と高カリウム血症への注意を要する。利尿薬はほかの降圧薬の多くと相乗的あるいは相加的に働く、サイアザイド系利尿薬とループ利尿薬およびK保持性利尿薬がある。β遮断薬は虚血

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表5 降圧薬選択の基本

- ・降圧薬治療の有用性は主に降圧効果そのものによる
- ・積極的な適応のない場合には、主要降圧薬の中から最も適するものを第1次薬として使用
- ・各患者の年齢、性別に加え、心血管危険因子(高脂血症、肥満、耐糖能異常)、標的臓器障害、心血 管病などの病態に合わせ、降圧薬の副作用、薬価、QOL、性機能への影響を考慮し、最も適するも のを選択
- ・主要降圧薬はCa拮抗薬、アンジオテンシンI受容体拮抗薬 (ARB)、アンジオテンシン変換酵素 (ACE) 阻害薬、利尿薬、 β 遮断薬、 α 遮断薬
- ・他の主要降圧薬に比較し、 α 遮断薬のエビデンスは少ない
- ・病態に合わせてこれらの薬剤のいずれかを用い、降圧目標に違しない場合は、増量するか、他薬に 変更するか、併用投与とする

(文献2) に基づき作成)

表6 主要降圧薬の積極的な適応と禁忌

降圧薬	積極的な適応	禁忌
Ca拮抗薬	脳血管疾患後,狭心症,左室肥大,糖尿病,高齢者	房室ブロック(ジルチアゼム)
ARB	脳血管疾患後,心不全,心筋梗塞後,左室肥大,腎障害, 糖尿病,高齢者	妊娠、高カリウム血症、両側腎動脈狭窄
ACE阻害薬	脳血管疾患後,心不全,心筋梗塞後,左室肥大,腎障害。 - 糖尿病,高齢者	妊娠、高カリウム血症、両側腎動脈狭窄
利尿薬	脳血管疾患後、心不全、腎不全(ループ利尿薬)、高齢者	痛 風
β遮断薬	狭心症,心筋梗塞後,頻脈,心不全	喘息、房室ブロック、末梢循環障害
α遮断薬	高脂血症,前立腺肥大	起立性低血圧

(文献2)より引用)

性心臓病への効果が大きく、頻脈性不整脈にも有効である。 α 遮断薬は糖・脂質代謝への改善作用があり、また前立腺肥大による排尿障害を改善する.

降圧薬治療においては、通常は単剤で少量から開始し、血圧値や副作用に注意しながら徐々に増やしていく、血圧の急激な低下は避け、2~3ヵ月かけて目標に達すればよい。しかし、中等症以上の高血圧の場合には、はじめから中等量を用いたり2種の降圧薬を併用してもよいであろう^{2 157}. 最初に選択した降圧薬では不十分の場合には、①増量する、②他の群の薬剤に変更する、③ほかの群の薬剤を追加する、のいずれかにより血圧コントロールに努める。しかし単一の薬剤を大量に用いるよりも、作用機序の異なる薬剤を少中等量で併用するほうが降圧効果や副作用の点で望ましい(図3)。また、利尿薬以外の2剤の併用で効果不十分の場合には、利尿薬を加えることが原則となる。厳格な降圧には多剤併用を要することも少なくない²⁰. 処方例のいくつかを下記に示す。

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処方例 合併症のない軽症高血圧 -

1) ノルバスク** またはアムロジン** 2.5~5mg 分1 朝食後または

1) ブロプレス®

4~8mg 分1 朝食後

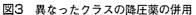
または

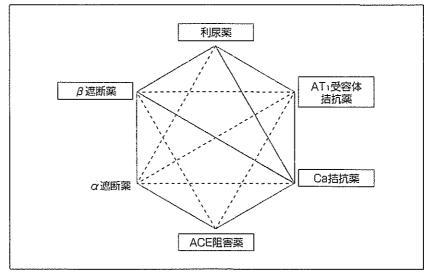
1) ナトリックス™

1mg 分1 朝食後

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注) 最も妥当な併用は実線で示す 枠で囲んだ降圧薬は介入対照試験において有効であることが示されているものである (文献19)より引用)

処方例 狭心症を有する中等症高血圧

- 1) アダラート*CR 40mg 分1 朝食後
- 2)メインテート* 5mg 分1 朝食後

処方例 腎障害を伴う重症高血圧 --- ---

- 1) ニューロタン* 50mg 分2 朝・夕食後
- 2) シナロング* 10mg 分2 朝・夕食後
 - 3) ラシックス* 40mg 分2 朝・夕食後
 - 4) アーチスト* 20mg 分2 朝・夕食後

処方例 早朝高血圧を呈する中等症高血圧 - - -

- 1) ノルバスク* またはアムロジン* 2.5~5mg 分1 朝食後
- 2) ミカルディス* 20~40mg 分1 朝食後
- 3) カルデナリン* 1~4mg 分1 夕食後(または就寝前)

高血圧の管理では24時間にわたる血圧コントロールが重要であり、長時間作用性の薬剤が好ましい。降圧薬治療中の患者においても白衣高血圧や仮而高血圧を呈する者は多く、家庭血圧の測定が勧められる^{8,13}、前者の場合には、家庭血圧が十分低ければ降圧薬の減量が可能であろう。後者は早朝高血圧の形をとることが多く、その多くが前日の降圧薬の薬効減弱によることに注意を要する²¹、早朝高血圧の病態は一様ではないが、その対策を表7に示す。

表7 早朝高血圧の治療

- ① 生活習慣に注意する(飲酒,食塩,ストレス)
- ② 長時間作用性の降圧薬を使用する
- ③ 降圧薬を夜に用いる(あるいは朝と夜に分ける)
- ④ 交感神経系の抑制(α遮断薬, αβ遮断薬を夜に用いる)
- ⑤ 体液量のコントロール(利尿薬を追加する)



医師が患者へ説明するときのポイント

血圧が高い状態が続けば、自覚症状の有無にかかわらず、動脈硬化や心臓肥大が進む、高 血圧は脳卒中や心筋梗塞の危険因子であり、腎臓病や認知症にも関係している。血圧を下げ ることによってこれらをかなり予防できることが、多くの大規模な研究で確かめられている。 したがって、高血圧はきちんと治療することが望まれる。

薬は副作用があり恐いと思いがちであるが、降圧薬で治療した人は治療しなかった人より、脳卒中や心臓病、さらに全体の死亡率も少ないことがわかっている。したがって、薬をのまないことがもっと恐いわけである。薬にはいろいろな副作用はあるが、高血圧の治療に使う薬は重い副作用は少なく、副作用が出てもほとんどの場合には薬をやめればよくなる。また、血圧の薬は一生のみ続けないといけないと思われがちだが、生活習慣をしっかり守って血圧が低くなればやめることも可能である。ただし、降圧薬は高血圧の原因をとる薬ではないので、原則としてはのみ続ける必要がある。

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食塩制限やカロリー制限など、食事療法は高血圧治療の基本なので、ぜひ守る必要がある. 運動と禁煙も重要である。アルコールは大量はいけないが、やめる必要はない。これらの生活習慣の修正は、血圧を下げるだけでなく、ほかの危険因子も改善し、副作用はなく、費用もほとんどかからない。しかし、なかなかできないことが問題である。血圧が高いままであれば、いつまでも生活習慣の修正に頼らずに、薬をのみ始めるほうがよい。しかし、薬で治療している人でも、生活習慣をきちんと守れば、薬を減らしたりやめたりできるようになる。

おわりに

高血圧の治療は、現在では多くの優れた降圧薬が使用できることから、血圧のコントロールは比較的容易になってきた、薬物治療(降圧薬)へのコンプライアンスは、非薬物療法(生活習慣の修正)に比べると優れているが、薬をのみ忘れたり、意図的にのまなかったりする人は少なくない。また、高血圧患者の病態は一様ではなく、とくに高齢者ではほかの疾患を合併していることが多く、複数の医療施設から処方が出されている場合がある。各症例に応じたきめ細かな指導と治療が必要であり、高血圧治療における薬剤師の役割は大きいと考えられる。

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Original Article

Genetic Variations of *HSD11B2* in Hypertensive Patients and in the General Population, Six Rare Missense/Frameshift Mutations

Kei KAMIDE¹⁾, Yoshihiro KOKUBO²⁾, Hironori HANADA³⁾, Junko NAGURA²⁾, Jin YANG¹⁾, Shin TAKIUCHI¹⁾, Chihiro TANAKA³⁾, Mariko BANNO³⁾, Yoshikazu MIWA¹⁾, Masayoshi YOSHII¹⁾, Tetsutaro MATAYOSHI¹⁾, Hisayo YASUDA¹⁾, Takeshi HORIO¹⁾, Akira OKAYAMA²⁾, Hitonobu TOMOIKE^{1),2)}, Yuhei KAWANO¹⁾, and Toshiyuki MIYATA³⁾

Mutations in the gene encoding 11β-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type 2, HSD11B2, cause a rare monogenic juvenile hypertensive syndrome called apparent mineralocorticoid excess (AME). In AME, defective HSD11B2 enzyme activity results in overstimulation of the mineralocorticoid receptor (MR) by cortisol, causing sodium retention, hypokalemia, and salt-dependent hypertension. Here, we have studied whether genetic variations in HDS11B2 are implicated in essential hypertension in Japanese hypertensives and the general population. By sequencing the entire coding region and the promoter region of HDS11B2 in 953 Japanese hypertensives, we identified five missense mutations in 11 patients (L14F, n=5; R74H, n=1; R147H, n=3; T156l, n=1; R335H, n=1) and one novel frameshift mutation (4884Gdel, n=1) in a heterozygous state, in addition to 19 genetic variations. All genetic variations identified were rare, with minor allele frequencies less than 0.005. Four of 12 patients with the missense/frameshift mutations showed renal failure. Four missense mutations, L14F, R74H, R147H, and R335H, were successfully genotyped in the general population, with a sample size of 3,655 individuals (2,175 normotensives and 1,480 hypertensives). Mutations L14F, R74H, R147H, and R335H were identified in hypertensives (n=6, 8, 3, and 0, respectively) and normotensives (n=8, 12, 5, and 0, respectively) with a similar frequency, suggesting that these missense mutations may not strongly affect the etiology of essential hypertension. Since the allele frequency of all of the genetic variations identified in this study was rare, an association study was not conducted. Taken together, our results indicate that missense mutations in HSD11B2 do not substantially contribute to essential hypertension in Japanese. (Hypertens Res 2006; 29: 243-252)

Key Words: HSD11B2, missense mutation, genetic variation, essential hypertension, salt-sensitivity

Introduction

In mineralocorticoid target organs, the 11β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (HSD11B) catalyzes the interconversion of

the endogenous cortisol and cortisone in humans. Two distinct forms, HSD11B1 and HSD11B2, of HSD11B have been characterized and cloned (I-3). HSD11B1 is expressed in most tissues. In contrast, HSD11B2 has been identified in a limited range of tissues, such as the distal tubules of the kid-

From the "Division of Hypertension and Nephrology, "Preventive Cardiology, and "Research Institute, National Cardiovascular Center, Suita, Japan. This study was supported by the Program for Promotion of Fundamental Studies in Health Science of the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) of Japan and by a research grant from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare.

Address for Reprints: Kei Kamide, M.D., Ph.D.. Division of Hypertension and Nephrology, National Cardiovascular Center, 5-7-1 Fujishirodai, Suita 565-8565, Japan. E-mail: kamide@hsp.ncvc.go.jp

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ney (2, 4, 5). In mineralocorticoid-responsive cells, HSD11B2 converts cortisol to cortisone, which is not a ligand for the mineralocorticoid receptor, permitting aldosterone to occupy the receptor.

Apparent mineralocorticoid excess syndrome (AME) is an autosomal recessive disorder that results in severe low-renin hypertension and other characteristic clinical features (6-8). Typical patients present with severe hypertension, hypokalemia, and undetectable aldosterone. Most patients also have low birth weight, polyuria and polydipsia, failure to thrive, and nephrocalcinosis. The syndrome has been associated with sudden fatality. The HSD11B2 deficiency has been demonstrated in patients with AME and explains the pathogenesis of the disease, which results from excess cortisol binding to the mineralocorticoid receptor due to a failure to convert cortisol to cortisone (9-11). Over the last two decades, various genetic mutations in the HSD11B2 gene have been reported (12-17). In Japanese patients with AME, two missense mutations (S180F, R208H) and a deletion of 3 nucleotides resulting in R337H and delta Y338 have been identified (14, 18).

In 1998, a mild form of this disease characterized by P227L mutation in the *HSD11B2* gene was reported (19). In contrast to the patients with AME, this patient had low-renin hypertension and hypoaldosteronism but no other phenotypic features that would lead to the diagnosis of AME. Afterwards, it was reported that the defective allele frequency in a cohort of Mennonites was 1.7% (20). The genetic mutation in the *HSD11B2* gene, which results in a mild HSD11B2 deficiency, may represent an important cause of low-renin hypertension, the diagnostic basis of which is mostly unknown. Together, these findings suggest that, because 40% of patients with essential hypertension have low renin, these patients may have a mild form of AME.

In the HSD11B2 gene, the 535G>A polymorphism (synonymous mutation at E178) in exon 3, which can be distinguished by Alu I cleavage and the polymorphic microsatellite marker (21), have been reported. The minor allele frequency of the 553G>A polymorphism was 0.086 in a healthy Caucasian population and 0.180 in a group of renal transplant patients (n=61), indicating association of this polymorphism with end-stage renal disease. This polymorphism was not associated with essential hypertension (22). As for the microsatellite marker, a total of 12 alleles were detected. The urinary ratio of cortisol to cortisone metabolites was higher in subjects homozygous for the A7 microsatellite allele than in the corresponding control subjects. Thus, the association of a polymorphic microsatellite marker of the HSD11B2 gene with reduced HSD11B2 activity suggests that variants of the HSD11B2 gene contribute to enhanced blood pressure response to salt in humans (23). The study demonstrated that a salt-induced blood pressure increase is associated with impaired HSD11B2 activity, as measured by the urinary excretion ratio of cortisol to cortisone metabolites in young Caucasian salt-sensitive men.

The present study was undertaken 1) to identify the genetic

Table 1. General Characteristics of Patients with Hypertension

Number	953
Age (years)	65.1 ± 10.5
Gender (M/F)	522/431
Body mass index (kg/m²)	24.2±3.3
SBP (mmHg)	145.5±19.2
DBP (mmHg)	84.8±13.4
Essential hypertension	880
Secondary hypertension	73
Renal hypertension	36
Renovascular hypertension	23
Primary aldosteronism	11
Hypothyroid-induced hypertension	2
Renal impairment/failure*	110
Ischemic heart disease	102
Stroke	145

Values are expressed as mean±SD. *Serum creatinine ≥1.4 mg/dl. M, male; F, female; SBP, systolic blood pressure; DBP, diastolic blood pressure.

variants in the *HSD11B2* gene in Japanese hypertensives, 2) to address whether individuals with heterozygous missense/frameshift mutations show hypertension or renal impairment, and 3) to explain the genetic contribution to a mild form of hypertension including low-renin hypertension and hypoal-dosteronism. We sequenced the promoter and exon regions of *HSD11B2* in Japanese hypertensives and genotyped the rare missense/frameshift mutations in the general population. We assessed the role of these genetic variations in hypertension and clarified their contribution to hypertension in Japanese.

Methods

Hypertensive Patients

A total of 953 hypertensive patients (522 men and 431 woman; average age: 65.0±10.5 years) were recruited from the Division of Hypertension and Nephrology at the National Cardiovascular Center as reported previously (24-27). Briefly, 92% of study subjects (880 subjects) were diagnosed with essential hypertension, and the rest had secondary hypertension (Table 1). Hypertension was defined as systolic blood pressure (SBP) of ≥140 mmHg, and/or diastolic blood pressure (DBP) of ≥90 mmHg, or current use of antihypertensive medication. Hyperlipidemia was defined by total cholesterol ≥220 mg/dl or current use of antihyperlipidemia medication. Diabetes mellitus was defined by fasting plasma glucose ≥126 mg/dl or HbA1c ≥6.5% or current use of anti-diabetic medication. Study subjects had routine laboratory tests including electrolytes, renal function, blood glucose, HbA1c, plasma renin activity and plasma aldosterone concentration.

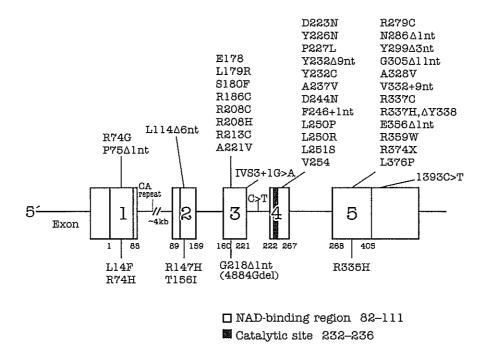


Fig. 1. Summary of the reported genetic polymorphisms in HSD11B2. All polymorphisms in the upper section were reported previously, and the six polymorphisms in the lower section were identified in present study.

Sequencing of the HSD11B2 Gene

We sequenced all exons and the promoter region of HSD11B2 in 953 Japanese hypertensive patients. Blood samples were obtained from hypertensive patients and genomic DNA was isolated from peripheral blood leukocytes. All exons with their flanking sequences and about 1.6 kb of the upstream region were directly sequenced with an ABI PRISM 3700 DNA analyzer (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, USA) using seven sets of primers, as described previously (28). Information on the primers and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) conditions is available on request. The obtained sequences were examined for the presence of variations using Sequencher software (Gene Codes Corporation, Ann Arbor, USA), followed by visual inspection. The A of the ATG of the initiator Met codon is denoted as nucleotide +1. The nucleotide sequence (GenBank Accession ID: NT_010498) was used as a reference sequence.

General Population (the Suita Study)

The sample selection and study design of the Suita Study have been described previously (29, 30). Briefly, the subjects visited the National Cardiovascular Center every 2 years for general health checkups. In addition to performing a routine blood examination that included lipid profiles, glucose levels, blood pressure, anthropometric measurements, a physician or

nurse administered questionnaires covering personal history of cardiovascular diseases, including angina pectoris, myocardial infarction, and/or stroke. Blood pressure was measured after at least 10 min of rest in a sitting position. SBP and DBP were means of two measurements performed by well-trained doctors using a mercury sphygmomanometer (with a 3-min interval). The subjects were classified as current drinkers if they drank at least 30 ml ethanol per day, nondrinkers if they had never drunk, and past drinkers if they previously had drunk above 30 ml ethanol per day.

Genotyping of Genetic Variations in the General Population

Genotyping was attempted for six rare missense/frameshift mutations using the TaqMan-PCR method (31). The sequences of PCR primers and probes for the TaqMan-PCR method are available on request. Genotyping for two of the six rare mutations—4582C>T (encoded T156I) and 4884Gdel (a frameshift mutation)—failed. Thus, four genetic variations were successfully genotyped in 3,655 participants (1,709 men and 1,946 women) of the large cohort known as the Suita Study. All of the participants for genetic analysis in the present study gave their written informed consent. All clinical data and sequencing and genotyping results were anonymous. The study protocol was approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the National Cardiovascular Center.

Table 2. Sequence Variations in the Promoter Region and All Exons in HSD11\(\beta\)2 Identified in Approximately 953 Japanese Patients with Hypertension and/or Renal Failure

SNP name	Region	Amino acid	Allele 1	Allele 2		Geno-
SIAL HAIRE	Region	substitution	freq.	freq.	Flanking sequence	typing
-879C>T	promoter		0.999	0.001	TCCTCTGACA[C/T]CCCACCCTCC	
-687C>A	promoter		0.999	100.0	CAGGGGTGAG[C/A]GCGCCTTAGG	
-596 to -595 CGGCAGins	promoter		0.999		GCAGCGGCAG[CGGCAG]CGGAGACCGG	
-562G>T	promoter		0.999	0.001	TGGTTCCTCG[G/T]GGTGTTCCTG	
-74C>G	promoter		0.999	0.001	ACTCCGCGCC[C/G]CGGCCTAGAA	
40C>T	exon 1	L14F	0.997	0.003	CGCCTGGCTG[C/T]TCGTGGCTGC	done
42C>A	exon 1	L14L	0.999	0.001	CCTGGCTGCT[C/A]GTGGCTGCCC	
82C>T	exon 1	L28L	0.999	100.0	GCGCTCAGAC[C/T]TGCGTCTGGG	
221G>A	exon I	R74H	0.999	0.001	CGCCTGGCGC[G/A]CCCGCAGCGC	done
4554G>A	exon 2	R147H	0.999	0.001	GACATTAGCC[G/A]CGTGCTAGAG	done
4582C>T	exon 2	T156I	1.000		AAGGCCCACA[C/T]CACCAGCACC	failed
4681G>A	intron 2		1.000	0.000	GCTGACCTAA[G/A]GCTTCCCTCC	
4884Gdel	exon 3	frame shift	1.000	0.000	TGACTGTGGG[G]AGCCCAGCGG	failed
4910C>G	intron 3		0.995	0.005	TGCCCCCC[C/G]ACTGGAGCAA	
4902insC(8-10)	intron 3		0.998	0.002	GCCCCCCC[C]ACTGGAGCAA	
4964C>G	intron 3		0.999	0.001	GAGCCCCTTG[C/G]CAAAGCTGAG	
5017G>A	exon 4	P227P	0.997	0.003	TGCCATATCC[G/A]TGCTTGGGGG	
5205G>A	intron 4		0.999	0.001	TATGGGGCA[G/A]GTCAGGTTTG	
5267G>A	intron 4		0.999	0.001	CAGACCTGGC[G/A]CGGGTTAAAC	
5334C>T	intron 4		0.999	0.001	GCCACTCCTT[C/T]CCCAGAGTCA	
5422C>T	exon 5	Y295Y	1.000		TGCAGGCCTA[C/T]GGCAAGGACT	
5541G>A	exon 5	R335H	1.000	0.000	GCTCGGCCC[G/A]CCGCCGCTAT	done
5698G>A	exon 5	Q387Q	1.000		CCCCACCACA[G/A]GACGCAGCCC	
5759A>G	3'-UTR		1.000		TCGGTGAGCC[A/G]TGTGCACCTA	
5784C>T	3'-UTR		0.996		CCAGCCACTG[C/T]AGCACAGGAG	

The A of the ATG of the initiator Met codon is denoted nucleotide +1, as recommended by the Nomenclature Working Group (37). The nucleotide sequence (GenBank Accession ID: NT_010498) was used as a reference sequence. UTR, untranslated region; frequency. Missense mutations were genotyped for general population except two mutations of which genotypes were not determined.

Results

Identification of Genetic Variations in *HSD11B2* in a Japanese Hypertensive Population

We sequenced the promoter and exon regions of *HSD11B2* in 953 hypertensives. As a result, we did not identify the reported common genetic variations in Caucasians and causative genetic variations of AME in the *HSD11B2* gene. Instead, we identified five novel missense mutations and one frameshift mutation in *HSD11B2* (Fig. 1, Table 2). Five patients had a C-to-T substitution at nucleotide 40 in exon 1, which led to an amino acid substitution from L to F at position 14 (L14F). One patient had a G-to-A substitution at nucleotide 221 in exon 1, resulting in an amino acid substitution from R to H at position 74 (R74H). Three patients had a G-to-A substitution at nucleotide 4554 in exon 2, leading to an amino acid substitution from R to H at position 147 (R147H). One patient had a C-to-T substitution at nucleotide 4582 in

exon 2, leading to an amino acid substitution from T to I at position 156 (T156I). One patient had a G-to-A substitution at nucleotide 5541 in exon 5, resulting in an amino acid substitution from R to H at position 335 (R335H). We also found one patient with a frameshift mutation that resulted from a guanine deletion at position 4884 in exon 3 (4884Gdel). These missense/frameshift mutations were all found in the heterozygous form.

We also identified five synonymous polymorphisms, which encoded for L14 (42C>A in exon 1) with a minor allele frequency of 0.001%, L28 (82C>T in exon 1) with a minor allele frequency of 0.001%, P227 (5017G>A in exon 4) with a minor allele frequency of 0.003%, Y295 (5422C>T in exon 5) with a minor allele frequency of 0.0003% and Q387 (5698G>A in exon 5) with a minor allele frequency of 0.0003%. Fourteen additional genetic variations in the promoter, intronic, and 3'-untranslated regions were also identified. All of the genetic variations were rare, with minor allele frequencies less than 0.005 (Table 2).

Table 3. Clinical Profiles of Twelve Hypertensive Patients with Missense/Frameshift Mutations in HSD11\(\theta\)2 Gene

						Case						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Polymorphism	L14F	L14F	L14F	L14F	L14F	R74H	R147H	R147H	R147H	T156I	4884Gdel	R335H
Age (years old)	73	71	64	51	59	70	76	69	85	78	75	67
Sex	male	female	male	female	male	male	male	male	male	male	female	female
BMI (kg/m²)	21.39	20.45	20.20	24.09	30.30	27.92	24.03	22.12	26.17	21.69	29.97	21.50
Diagnosis	EHT, HL, HU,	Renal	EHT	ETH,	EHT,	EHT,	EHT,	EHT,	EHT,	EHT	RVHT,	ЕНТ,
	CRF, NIDDM,	HT,		HL	HL,	HL,	HU,	HU,	AF,		NIDDM,	HL
	hypothyroidism	HL,			obesity	obesity	OCI	OCH,	AAA,		HL,	
		CGN						CRF	obesity		obesity	
HT duration (years)	24	21	24	<1	9	15	19	20	21	8	30	41
HT initial onset age												
(years old)	49	50	40	_	50	55	57	49	64	70	45	26
HT family history	none	none	none	father	none	father,	mother,	none	none	mother	none	farther,
						brother	brother					mother,
												brother
SBP (mmHg)	138	136	152	140	130	140	134	138	154	134	170	148
DBP (mmHg)	70	80	88	68	80	86	72	70	84	68	90	80
Antihypertensive	CCB, ARB	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,	CCB	CCB,	CCB,	CCB,
drugs		ACEI	BB,	BB,	ARB,	BB	AB	ACEI,		ACEI,	ACEI	BB
			diuretics	AB	BB			AB		AB		
Na+ (mEq/l)	141	141	140	142	140	141	141	140	143	143	140	139
K+ (mEq/l)	4.4	5.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.6	4.2	5.2	4.5	4.2	4.6	5.0
Cl ⁻ (mEq/l)	110	109	104	107	102	107	106	108	104	111	104	103
Creatinine (mg/dl)	2.7	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.1	1.3	2.9	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.8
Overt proteinuria	-(-	+	_	-	+	+	+	_	-	_	-	_
PRA (ng/ml/h)	3.8	0.9	6.3	0.1	0.5	2.9	1.9	no data	3.4	13.2	19.8	3.2
PAC (ng/dl)	8.8	8.5	no data	27.6	12.4	18.9	43.5	no data	7.7	14.6	7.0	14.1
FBS (mg/dl)	128	92	105	89	113	105	95	91	95	96	137	101
HbAlc (%)	6.0	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.6	6.0	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.0	8.7	5.7

BMI, body mass index; EHT, essential hypertension; HL, hyperlipidemia; HU, hyperuricemia; CRF, chronic renal failure; NIDDM, non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus; HT, hypertension; CGN, chronic glomerulonephritis; OCI, old cerebral infarction; OCH, old cerebral hemorrhage; AF, atrial fibrillation; AAA, abdominal aortic aneurysma; RVHT, renovascular hypertension; SBP, systolic blood pressure; DBP, diastolic blood pressure; CCB, calcium channel blocker; ARB, angiotension II receptor blocker; ACEI, angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor; BB, β-adrenergic blocker; AB, α-adrenergic blocker; PRA, plasma renin activity; PAC, plasma aldosterone concentration; FBS, fasting blood sugar. Normal values in our institute: Na*, 136–146 mEq/l; K*, 3.6–4.9 mEq/l; C1⁻, 99–109 mEq/l; creatinine, 0.6–1.1 mg/dl; PRA, 0.2–2.7 ng/ml/h; PAC, 2–13 ng/dl.

Characteristics of Patients with Rare Missense/ Frameshift Mutations in the Hypertensive Population

The characteristics of the 12 hypertensive patients who had missense/frameshift mutations (L14F, n=5; R74H, n=1; R147H, n=3; T156I, n=1; 4884Gdel, n=1; R335H; n=1) are shown in Table 3. Five patients out of the twelve had renal impairment including protein urea. Two (cases 1 and 2) of five patients with the L14F mutation had chronic renal failure (CRF) and chronic glomerulonephritis (CGN), and one (case 8) of three patients with the R147H mutation also had CRF. A patient with 4884Gdel (case 11) was diagnosed with renovas-

cular hypertension caused by atherosclerosis with type 2 diabetes, hyperlipidemia and obesity (body mass index [BMI]: 29.97 kg/m²). This patient was 75 years old, female, and had never smoked or drunk alcohol. This patient had microalbuminurea (urinary albumin excretion: 30.8 mg/g creatinine) without renal dysfunction (creatinine clearance: 112.5 ml/min) or cardiac hypertrophy (left ventricular mass index: 126.4 g/m²). The average onset age of hypertension of the 12 patients with these missense mutations was 50.5 years. A patient with the R335H mutation (case 12) showed hypertension at her age of 26. Serum sodium levels of all patients were within normal range. There were no patients with hypokalemia as seen in AME.

Table 4. Basic Characteristics of Subjects in the General Population

	Women	Men
	(n=1,946)	(n=1,709)
Age (years)	63.3±11.0	66.3±11.1*
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	128.0±19.7	131.8±19.4*
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg)	76.5±9.8	79.7±10.7*
Body mass index (kg/m²)	22.3±3.2	23.3±2.9*
Total cholesterol (mg/dl)	215.6±30.6*	197.9±30.3
HDL-cholesterol (mg/dl)	64.5±15.3*	55.0±14.1
Current smokers (%)	6.3	30.2 [†]
Current drinkers (%)	29.6	67.2 [†]
Present illness (%)		
Hypertension	38.0	47.3 [†]
Hyperlipidemia	54.4 [†]	27.8
Diabetes mellitus	5.2	12.8 [†]

Values are expressed as mean \pm SD. Hypertension: systolic blood pressure \geq 140 mmHg and/or diastolic blood pressure \geq 90 mmHg or antihypertensive medication; hyperlipidemia: total cholesterol \geq 220 mg/dl or antihyperlipidemia medication; diabetes: fasting plasma glucose \geq 126 mg/dl or non-fasting plasma glucose \geq 200 mg/dl or HbA1c \geq 6.5% or antidiabetic medication. *p<0.05 between women and men by Student t-test. †p<0.05 between women and men by χ^2 test. HDL, high-density lipoprotein.

Characteristics of Individuals with Rare Missense/Frameshift Mutations in the General Population

The characteristics of the 3,655 subjects comprising the Japanese general population group (1,709 men, 1,946 women) are summarized in Table 4. Age, SBP, DBP, BMI, percentage of current smokers, percentage of current drinkers, and prevalence of hypertension and diabetes mellitus were significantly higher in men than in women. Total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL)-cholesterol, and percentage of hyperlipidemia were significantly higher in women than in men. In this population, 1,480 subjects were diagnosed with hypertension.

We successfully genotyped four genetic variations in the general population, which had a sample size of 3,655 individuals (2,175 normotensives and 1,480 hypertensives), but the genotyping failed for two of the genetic variations, T156I and 4884Gdel. In the general population, a missense mutation, R335H, was not present. The remaining three mutations, L14F, R74H, and R147H, were found in both hypertensive and normotensive subjects (Table 5). We identified 14 individuals with the L14F mutation. Six individuals with the L14F mutation had hypertension and eight were normotensive. We identified 20 individuals with the R74H mutation. Among them, eight showed hypertension and 12 were normotensive. We identified 8 individuals with the R147H mutation. Among them, three showed hypertension and five were

normotensive. There were no statistically significant differences in any clinical characteristics between the subjects with the three missense mutations of *HSD11B2* and the subjects in the general population (Table 5).

Comparison of Missense/Frameshift Mutations in HSD11B2 between Normotensives and Combined Hypertensives

As seen in Table 6, there was no difference in the prevalence of missense/frameshift mutations of *HSD11B2* between the combined subjects with hypertension and the normotensives.

Discussion

A missense mutation, P227L, in *HSD11B2* was previously identified in a patient with mild low-renin hypertension (32). This patient did not demonstrate the typical features of AME. The authors suggested that patients with mild low-renin hypertension may carry the mutations in the *HSD11B2* gene. In our study, we did not identify the P227L mutation in 953 Japanese hypertensives.

Genetic analyses of HSD11B2 have been reported in two Japanese AME probands (14, 18). In one family, the proband had a compound heterozygous mutation with a missense mutation, R208H, and a deletion of 3 nucleotides in codons 337-338 resulting in a substitution of Arg337 to His and a deletion of Tyr338 (CGCTAT to CAT: R337H and delta Y338) (18). Their family members, a father, mother, and elderly sister, who carried the heterozygous mutation were all normotensive and normokalemic, and had normal ratios of urinary [THF plus aTHF]/THE (THF, tetrahydrocortisol; aTHF, allotetrahydrocortisol; THE, tetrahydrocortisone). Another Japanese patient with AME had the homozygous missense mutation, S180F. The enzymatic activity of this mutant was 1.8% compared with the wild-type enzyme when cortisol was used as the substrate and 5.7% when corticosterone was used as the substrate (14). Figure 1 summarizes the reported polymorphisms in HSD11B2. In our study, none of the three causative genetic defects was identified, indicating that those mutations were not accumulated in the Japanese population.

We identified five novel missense mutations and one frameshift mutation in *HSD11B2* (Fig. 1, Table 2). As shown in Fig. 2A, five of the missense mutations occurred in residues that were highly conserved among the three different species, indicating that these mutations may result in functional changes in *HSD11B2*. However, neither hypertensive patients nor general subjects with these novel missense mutations showed any distinctive clinical characteristics during their health-check-ups.

We identified one hypertensive patient having renal artery stenosis with a frameshift mutation (4884Gdel) in *HSD11B2*. This deletion caused the frameshift at S219 with a premature stop codon at position 270 (Fig. 2B). A recent report indicated

Table 5. Accumulated Clinical Profiles of Subjects with Missense Mutations in HSD11B2 in the General Population

	L14F	R74H	R147H
Number	14	20	8
Age (years old)	67.7±12.3	64.8±13.3	61.5 ± 12.0
Sex (M/F)	7 /7	9/11	5/3
Body mass index (kg/m²)	23.4±4.0	22.4±2.9	23.9 ± 1.7
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	125.4±23.0	I28.7±23.4	124.9±19.9
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg)	75.4±11.0	78.2 ± 10.0	75.8±12.9
Total cholesterol (mg/dl)	213.9±34.0	213.8±37.0	199.3±36.4
HDL-cholesterol (mg/dl)	57.9±12.1	63.1±16.9	52.1±18.5
Triglyceride (mg/dl)	93.8±49.3	120.1±93.4	140.7±90.1
Creatinine (mg/dl)	0.8 ± 0.2	0.7 ± 0.2	0.8 ± 0.2
Over proteinuria (yes/no)	1/13	0/20	0/8
FBS (mg/dl)	100.4±20.9	94.5±10.3	99.6±22.3
HbA1c (%)	5.7±0.8	5.4 ± 0.7	5.6±0.9
Current smoker (yes/no)	2/12	4/16	1/7
Current drinker (yes/no)	5/9	9/11	4/4
Hypertension (yes/no)	6/8	8/12	3/5
Hyperlipidemia (yes/no)	10/4	11/9	6/2
Diabetes mellitus (yes/no)	6/8	2/18	2/6
Antihypertensive treatment (yes/no)	4/10	2/18	2/6

Values were expressed as mean \pm SD. Hypertension: systolic blood pressure \geq 140 mmHg and/or diastolic blood pressure \geq 90 mmHg or antihypertensive medication; hyperlipidemia: total cholesterol \geq 220 mg/dl or antihyperlipidemia medication; diabetes: fasting plasma glucose \geq 126 mg/dl or non-fasting plasma glucose \geq 200 mg/dl or HbA1c \geq 6.5% or antidiabetic medication. M, male; F, female; HDL, high-density lipoprotein; FBS, fasting blood sugar.

Table 6. Number of Subjects with Missense/Frameshift Mutations in the Hypertensive and the General Populations

	I I v = o = t o p o : v o	General population			
Mutations	Hypertensive population (n=953)	Hypertensive subjects (n=1,480)	Normotensive subjects (n=2,175)		
L14F	5	6	8		
R74H	1	8	12		
R147H	3	3	5		
T156I	1	n.d.	n.d.		
4884Gdel	1	n.d.	n.d.		
R335H	1	0	0		
Total	12	17	25		

n.d., not determined.

that the heterozygous carriers with the defective allele of the *HSD11B2* gene showed essential hypertension (16). It is evident that this frameshift mutation results in the dysfunction of HSD11B2. The allele frequency of this mutation was very low (0.052%, 1 allele/1,906 alleles) in the Japanese hypertensive population. However, it is worth noting that this defective allele might be prevalent in other ethnic populations, because the frequency of some genetic mutations varies with ethnicity. Recently, rare genetic mutations collectively contributing to a quantitative trait variation, such as plasma levels

of HDL-cholesterol, have been reported (33). We have performed large-scale sequence analyses of five hypertension candidate genes, WNK4, SCNN1B, SCNN1G, NR3C2 and RGS2, to evaluate this hypothesis and found that a low but significant percentage of the hypertensive subjects had missense/frameshift mutations (24–26, 34). Collectively, these rare mutations may make an at least partial contribution to hypertension.

The deduced NAD-binding sites reside in the conserved region from T82 to A111 (2), and the deduced catalytic site resides in the conserved region from Y232 to K236 (35). So far, more than ten genetic defects in patients with AME, most of whom had a severe deficiency of enzymatic activity confirmed by the expression analysis, have been reported and none of them overlap with the five missense mutations identified in the present study. Therefore, the effects on the HSD11B2 enzymatic activity of the mutations are not clear. In the future, an *in vitro* expression study should be performed to evaluate the activity of mutants and the ratios of urinary cortisol to cortisone metabolites in carriers of the mutations.

In the Caucasian population, a mutation at E178 that is synonymous with 553G>A which can be distinguished by Alu I restriction enzyme digestion, has been identified with a prevalence of 8.6% in the control subjects (21, 23). This polymorphism was associated with end-stage renal disease but not with essential hypertension. We did not identify this polymor-

Α 1 MERWPWPSGGAWLLVAARALLQLLRSDLRLGRPLLAALALLAALD h-HSD MERWPWPSGGAWLLVAARALLQLLRSDLRLGRPLLAALALLAALD m-HSD 45 r-HSD 1 MERWPWPSGGAWLLVAARALIQLLRADLRLGRPLLAALALLAALD 45 h-HSD 46 WLCQRLLPPPAALAVLAAAGWIALSRLARPQRLPVATRAVLITGC 90 46 WLCLRLMPPPAALVVLAGAGWIALSRLARPPRLPVATRAVLITGC m-HSD 90 r-HSD 46 WLCQSLLPPSAALAVLAAAGWIALSRLARPQRLPVATRAVLITGC 90 h-HSD 136 QMDLTKPGDISRVLEFTKAHTTSTGLWGLVNNAGHNEVVADAELS 180 m-HSD 136 QMDLTKAEDISRVLEITKAHTASTGLWGLVNNAGLNIVVADVGLS 180 r-HSD 136 QMDLTKPADISRALEFTKAHTTSTGLWGLVNNAGHNDVVADVELS 180 h-HSD 316 SDLTPVVDAITDALLAARPRRRYYPGQGLGLMYFIHYYLPEGLRR 360 m-HSD 316 PDLSPVVDAIIDALLAAQPRSRYYPGRGLGLMYFIHHYLPEGLRR 360 r-HSD 316 PDLSPVVDAITDALLAARPRPRYYPGRGLGLMYFIHYYLPEGLRR 360 В ACTGTGGGGAGCCCAGCGGGGGACATGCCA 216 G S Α G 225 Ρ D M Wild type TTCAAGACAGAGTCAGTGAGAAACGTGGGT 265 K T E S R N V 274 ACTGTGGGAGCCCAGCGGGGGACATGCCAT 216 VGAQRG T C H 225 4884Gdel allele TCAAGACAGAGTCAGTGAGAAACGTGGGTC 265 Q S

Fig. 2. Partial amino acid sequence surrounding the mutations in HSD11B2. A: Alignment of partial amino acid sequences of HSD11B2 from two species and human HSD11B2. HSD11B2 sequences are from Homo sapiens (h), Mus musculus (m), and rabbit (r). Numbers indicate the position of amino acid sequence. The asterisks indicate the positions at which missense mutations occur (L14F, R74H, R147H, T156I, R335H) B: Nucleotide and amino acid sequences of wild-type allele and 4884Gdel allele. Numbers indicate the amino acid residues. An asterisk indicates the base deleted in the 4884Gdel allele, which causes a frameshift mutation from S218. This results in a 51-amino-acid extension that is is terminated by a stop codon (indicated by three asterisks).

phism in our Japanese population.

In the Caucasian population, an intensive genetic study on the *HSD11B2* gene using 587 subjects, including 260 patients with end-stage renal disease, has been conducted, in which one missense mutation, L148V, and three synonymous mutations, T156, E178, and D388, were identified by the combination of single strand conformational polymorphism analysis and DNA sequencing (36). The results showed that allele frequencies did not differ significantly between control subjects and end-stage renal disease patients or between patients with hypertension and patients with end-stage renal disease. We did not identify these mutations in our Japanese population. Our results support their findings that the mutations in the *HSD11B2* gene do not affect hypertension.

In summary, we suggest that rare mutations in HSD11B2,

L14F, R74H, R147H, T156I, R335H, and 4884Gdel may not collectively contribute to the pathogenesis of hypertension, although it was not clear whether abnormalities of electrolytes, renin activity, or aldosterone concentration were present, since our hypertensive patients with these missense/frameshift mutations were taking antihypertensive drugs. Further functional analyses of *HSD11B2* mutants are necessary to clarify the functional defects caused by these genetic variations in Japanese.

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