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 PATHOPHYSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE EFFECT OF SACUBITRIL-VALSARTAN
 ON HYPERTENSION-INDUCED CARDIOVASCULAR REMODELING

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საკუბიტრილ-ვალსარტანის მოქმედების პათოფიზიოლოგიური პრინციპები ჰიპერტენზიით
 გამონეული გულ-სისხლძარღვთა რემოდელირების დროს

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რეზიუმე

მიოკარდიუმის რემოდელირება არის პროცესი, რომელსაც კარდიომიოციტები, მიოკარდიუმის სხვა უჯრედები (ენდოთელური უჯრედები, ფიბრობლასტები, პერიციტები და იმუნური უჯრედები), მექანიკური და არა მექანიკური სტიმულის საპასუხოდ ცირკულაციიდან გადმოსროლილი უჯრედები (მაგ., იმუნური და ანთებითი უჯრედები) ახორციელებენ. შედეგად, კარდიომიოციტების, ინტერსტიციული მატრიქსისა და კორონარული სისხლძარღვების შემადგენლობა, მოცულობა და ფიზიოლოგია ურთიერთდაკავშირებულ ცვლილებებს განიცდის. ეს ცვლილებები საზიანო გავლენას ახდენს ჰიპერტენზიული პაციენტების კლინიკურ შედეგებზე - გაზრდილი პარკუჭის რიგიდულობა იწვევს სისტოლურ ან დიასტოლურ დისფუნქციას და ზრდის ფიბრილაციის რისკს. ამიტომ, გულ-სისხლძარღვთა რემოდელირების შემცირება არის ამ პაციენტების კლინიკური მართვის მთავარი მიზანი. რამდენიმე წამალი, როგორცაა ანგიოტენზინ-გარდამქმნელი ფერმენტის ინჰიბიტორები, ბეტა ბლოკატორები და ალდოსტერონის ანტაგონისტები, მუდმივად ამცირებენ მიოკარდიუმის რემოდელირებას ცხოველურ მოდელებსა და კლინიკურ კვლევებში, ამიტომ, ამ მიზნით, ისინი ფართოდ გამოიყენება პრაქტიკაში.

ნეპრილიზინის ინჰიბიტორ - საკუბიტრილისა, და ანგიოტენზინის რეცეპტორების ანტაგონისტ - ვალსარტანის კომბინაცია, რომელსაც დადებითი კლინიკური შედეგები აქვს შემცირებული განდევნის ფრაქციის მქონე გულის უკმარისობიან პაციენტებში, ბოლო დროს მეცნიერების დიდი ყურადღება მიიპყრო შენარჩუნებული განდევნის ფრაქციის მქონე გულის უკმარისობიანი პაციენტების სამკურნალოდაც. ამ ორი პრეპარატის კომბინაცია იწვევს ნატრიურული პეპტიდების დაგროვების (რომლებსაც ნატრიურული და სისხლძარღვების გლუვი კუნთების მოსაღუნებელი ფუნქციები აქვს) და რენინ-ანგიოტენზინ-ალდოსტერონის სისტემის ეფექტების შემცირებას, რაც კარდიოპროტექტორული და ანტიჰიპერტენზიული ეფექტებით გამოიჩინება და ამცირებს გულ-სისხლძარღვთა ფიბროზს.

აღსანიშნავია, რომ საკუბიტრილ/ვალსარტანს ანგიოტენზინ-გარდამქმნელი ფერმენტის ინჰიბიტორ, პერინდოპრილთან შედარებით, ვირთავებში უკეთესი ეფექტი ჰქონდა გულის რემოდელირებისა და განდევნის ფრაქციაზე. თუმცა, ეს მხოლოდ წინასწარი მონაცემებია და უფრო ფართო კვლევები უნდა ჩატარდეს როგორც ექსპერიმენტულ, ასევე კლინიკურ გარემოში, რათა სრულად გამოვლინდეს პრეპარატის მოქმედების მექანიზმები სხვადასხვა ტიპის არტერიული ჰიპერტენზიის მართვაში.

Introduction. One of the major effects of hypertension on the heart is diffuse myocardial fibrosis. Fibrosis is caused by increased deposition of extracellular matrix (ECM), particularly collagen type I and type III fibers within the interstitium and coronary arteries [3]. Excessive collagen within the myocardium in HHD results from several steps: [12,15] resident fibroblasts and other cells differentiate into myofibroblasts; synthesis and secretion of procollagen increase; procollagen is converted into microfibril-forming collagen by proteinases; collagen microfibrils assemble to form fibrils; and a lysyl oxidase cross-links the fibrils to form collagen fibers. The key points are the following: myocardial stretch releases growth factors such as TGF- β and angiotensin II [24], both of which induce fibrosis

[16,19]; and TGF- β 1 upregulates lysyl oxidase, which creates collagen crosslinks [21]. Therefore, there are known mechanisms both for the stretch-up-regulated production of collagen and its cross linking. While myocardial hypertrophy can potentially compensate for fibrosis [8,9], ECM deposition is almost always pathological due to the risk of fibrillation and increased ventricular stiffness leading to systolic or diastolic dysfunction [5].

The hypertrophy of cardiomyocytes is another consequence of cardiovascular remodeling secondary to hypertension. It is the main mechanism by which the wall stress imposed on the LV wall by pressure overload decreases. Myocardial hypertrophy involves stimulation of intracellular signaling cascades, Janus kinase 2 (JAK2) way, activates gene expression, and promotes protein synthesis [11,28].

The hypertrophy of cardiomyocytes may be linked to their death as well. The dysregulated protein synthesis and processing cause the accumulation of unfolded proteins. This can lead to the activation of the unfolded protein response, which, in turn, may induce cardiomyocyte apoptosis [7]. In cardiomyocytes isolated from spontaneously hypertensive rats with left ventricular hypertrophy (LVH), an association was found between the activation of unfolded protein response and cardiomyocyte apoptosis [26,27]. Additionally, clinical evidence suggests that in the hypertrophied myocardium, there is a deficiency of the factors that prevent apoptosis (eg, gp130/leukemia inhibitory factor receptor survival pathway) [2,4]. Therefore, cardiomyocyte apoptosis is abnormally stimulated in patients with hypertensive heart disease (HHD) [23,13].

In elderly patients, the myocardial contractility is often preserved even when the myocardial relaxation is significantly impaired [25] either due to myocardial fibrosis, hypertrophy, or both. This suggests the existence of a compensatory mechanism that increases contractility and maintains cardiac output despite impaired relaxation.

The arterial baroreflex is one of the factors that regulate blood pressure and cardiovascular variability in the short term. Several humoral, environmental, and behavioral factors can affect the function of the baroreflex, as well as cardiovascular variability. Many central neural structures also regulate blood pressure and contribute to the integrity of the baroreflex. Therefore, brain injuries or ischemia can impair baroreflex and derange blood pressure regulation. Baroreflex dysfunction is also commonly seen in cardiovascular disease. A blunted baroreflex and impaired heart rate variability predict poor outcomes in patients with hypertension, heart failure, and myocardial infarction. The mechanisms underlying these relationships are not well understood and may partly be due to cardiac structural changes secondary to hypertension and/or altered central neural processing of baroreflex signals [54,55].

One such compensatory mechanism is the high activity of the cardiac sympathetic nervous system (CSNS) that increases myocardial contractility [10]. Catecholamines (eg, norepinephrine, epinephrine) stimulate β -receptors in the heart that raises both heart rate and contractility. Similar to fibrosis, increased sympathetic activity is often considered pathological because it is found in dilatation-induced heart failure [18].

Recent studies also indicate the pivotal role of inflammation and immune activation in the pathophysiology of hypertension-induced end-organ damage [17,1]. Experimental evidence shows extensive inflammation in hypertensive animal model-dependent cardiac damage, especially in response to administration of exogenous aldosterone [29], angiotensin II, [2,22] stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system [20] and pressure overload [6]. Injured cardiomyocytes release damage-associated molecular pattern (DAMP) molecules that cause the healthy cardiomyocytes to produce inflammatory mediators such as IL [interleukin]-1 β , IL-6, and TNF- α [tumor necrosis factor α]. Activation of these mediators, in turn, leads to leukocyte stimulation and recruitment [14].

Several factors contribute to cardiovascular remodelings, such as increased production of vasoconstrictor agents and inflammatory cytokines, endothelial dysfunction, myocardial hypertrophy, and oxidative stress [30,31]. This is why a combination of sacubitril, a neprilysin inhibitor, and valsartan, an angiotensin receptor antagonist, has recently gained public and scientific attention. Neprilysin (neutral endopeptidase, also known as NEP) breaks down natriuretic peptide, one of the major targets for treating hypertension. Neprilysin Inhibition increases natriuretic peptide levels. Natriuretic peptides, in turn, induce natriuresis and vasodilation and inhibit the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system.

Neprilysin also breaks down vasoconstrictive peptides such as angiotensin II and endothelin. Therefore, the hypotensive effect of the neprilysin inhibitor is mitigated by increased vasoconstrictive peptides [32]. Although the combined inhibitor of neprilysin and ACE, omapatrilat, has a stronger hypotensive effect than enalapril [33], concomitant use of neprilysin and ACE inhibitors increases the risk of angioedema. This is because inhibition of neprilysin leads to accumulation of substance P while inhibition of angiotensin-converting enzyme leads to accumulation of bradykinin. Substance P and bradykinin both cause angioedema. In contrast, AT1 receptor antagonists do not inhibit bradykinin metabolism. This is why valsartan was selected for combination sacubitril. The positive clinical outcome of sacubitril/valsartan has been well documented in patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction. Additionally, this combination is promising for patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction and hypertension, especially for those with isolated systolic hypertension [34,35,36,37].

Literature Review. While blood pressure is regulated by various interconnected mechanisms, the vasoactive peptides, hormones, and the enzymes involved in their synthesis and degradation play a key role. Peptidases and peptide receptors are important targets for the development of new antihypertensive medications [39]. The combination of a dual-acting, neprilysin (NEP) inhibitor and an angiotensin receptor antagonist (ARB) (LCZ696 or sacubitril/valsartan, called), is a new drug containing the equivalent amount of valsartan and sacubitril. It is the first and, so far, the only representative of this group of drugs [40]. On one hand, these drugs inhibit neprilysin and promote the accumulation of natriuretic peptides. On the other hand, they reduce the effects of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system without accumulation of bradykinin [41]. Natriuretic peptides are structurally similar molecules that activate guanylyl cyclase. They have natriuretic and vascular smooth muscle relaxant properties and, therefore, regulate cardiovascular and renal systems. In general, natriuretic peptides have cardioprotective and antihypertensive effects; they maintain homeostasis and reduce cardiovascular fibrosis [42]. Three forms of the natriuretic peptide are known: atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP), type B natriuretic peptide first isolated from the brain (BNP), and type C natriuretic peptide (CNP). Expression and accumulation of ANP in granules occur mostly in the atrium. However, it is also found in other tissue, such as ventricles and kidneys. It is released in response to the atrial wall stretching as well as the hormones and peptides such as endothelin, angiotensin 1-9, angiotensin 1-7 [43]. BNP is identified in greater numbers in the ventricles, where its gene transcription is regulated by myocardial strain. The amount of both natriuretic peptides increases more than 100-fold in patients with heart failure [38,44]. There is a minimal amount of CNP in the heart so its concentration in plasma does not change in heart failure. CNP is present in large numbers in chondrocytes, and it regulates bone growth. CNP is also found in the endothelium and it causes hyperpolarization and relaxation of the blood vessel wall [45]. Intravenous use of ANP and BNP recombinant peptides has shown positive effects in patients with heart failure. Although pronounced hypotension and a short half-life have limited their use in patients with heart failure [46], more stable analogs are currently being studied. A different approach to increasing the amount of circulating natriuretic peptides is to use a neprilysin (NEP) inhibitor. The use of a NEP inhibitor to lower blood pressure is effective only in combination with renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system inhibitors [47]. Neprilysin (also known as Neutral Endopeptidase 24.11, Enkephalinase or CD10; EC 3.4.24.11) binds to the cell surface. It has a large extracellular catalytic domain C-terminal that degrades physiologically active peptides, namely natriuretic II S, endothelin-1, etc. However, clinical trials have not shown the high efficacy of these drugs [48]. Inhibition of NEP has been shown to increase plasma levels of vasodilatory natriuretic peptides, adrenomedullin, and bradykinin. However, studies have also shown that inhibition of NEP increases the levels of angiotensin II and endothelin-1, which have the vasoconstrictive effect [49]. Angiotensin I is more of a substrate for NEP, so an increase in angiotensin II during inhibition of NEP is more driven by an increase in its production from angiotensin I than a decrease in angiotensin II degradation. Given this fact, the NEP inhibitor was initially proposed in combination with the angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor. However, the ACE / NEP inhibitor, omapatrilat, turned out not promising drug due to the increased risk of angioedema. Angiotensin 1 (AT1) and 2 (AT2) receptors are G protein-coupled receptors. The binding of angiotensin II to the AT1 receptor activates various signaling systems, leading to hypertension, endothelial dysfunction, vascular remodeling, and organ damage. Valsartan is an orally active

nonspecific triazoline product that reduces angiotensin II-induced vasoconstriction and water and salt retention by inhibiting AT1 receptors.

The combination of the NEP inhibitor sacubitril and the angiotensin receptor antagonist valsartan increases NEP activity and inhibits the renin-angiotensin system without interfering with bradykinin accumulation and NEP-associated vasoprotective effects [14]. A large-scale clinical trial of PARADIGM-HF evaluated the use of sacubitril/valsartan in patients with heart failure with impaired ejection fraction (HFrEF) and sustained ejection fraction (HFpEF) and confirmed its superior efficacy over enalapril [50,51]. The use of sacubitril/valsartan was in patients with HfrEF. Despite the clinical benefits of this drug, it has since been used only for heart failure in European and American guidelines. However, the other possible indications for this medication are less explored. This, relatively, could be explained by the so-called " Clinical inertia" [52], which is associated with lower awareness of the drug, refraining from changing treatment in stable patients, and reimbursement problems by insurance companies. Although studies have shown that widespread use of sacubitril/valsartan can reduce mortality and stabilize patient status.

Possible future indications for sacubitril/valsartan include arterial hypertension, heart failure with sustained ejection fraction, myocardial infarction, diabetic nephropathy, stroke. Importantly, sacubitril/valsartan showed a better effect on cardiac remodeling and ejection fraction compared with ACE inhibitor perindopril in rats [53]. It is noteworthy, that based on several small-scale pilot studies, the antihypertensive effect of sacubitril/valsartan was particularly pronounced in systolic blood pressure and isolated systolic hypertension in the elderly. However, these are only preliminary data and it is necessary to conduct additional experimental studies and more extensive randomized clinical trials. It will aid in fully revealing the mechanisms of action of the drug in the management of various types of arterial hypertension, especially in its resistant forms.

Conclusion. Putting together the links between hypertension-induced cardiovascular remodeling and the detrimental clinical outcomes of patients with hypertensive heart disease, aiming to reduce cardiovascular remodeling is key for the overall clinical care of these patients. A combination of sacubitril, a neprilysin inhibitor, and valsartan, an angiotensin receptor antagonist, which has positive clinical outcomes in patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, has recently gained public and scientific attention for patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction and hypertension (especially for those with isolated systolic hypertension). Importantly, sacubitril/valsartan showed a better effect on cardiac remodeling and reversal fraction compared with ACE inhibitor perindopril in rats. However, these are only preliminary data and further research should be conducted in both experimental and clinical settings.

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ПАТОФИЗИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ПРИНЦИПЫ, ЛЕЖАЩИЕ В ОСНОВЕ ВЛИЯНИЯ САКУБИТРИЛ-ВАЛСАРТАНА НА РЕМОДЕЛИРОВАНИЕ СЕРДЕЧНО-СОСУДИСТОЙ СИСТЕМЫ, ВЫЗВАННОЕ ГИПЕРТОНИЕЙ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Ремоделирование миокарда - это процесс, выполняемый кардиомиоцитами, другими клетками в миокарде (эндотелиальные клетки, фибробласты, перициты и иммунные клетки). В результате композиция, объем и физиология кардиомиоцитов, интерстициальной матрицы и коронарных сосудов подвергаются взаимосвязанным изменениям. Эти изменения вредно влияют на клинические результаты пациентов с гипертонической болезнью сердца (ННД) из-за риска фибрилляции и повышенной жесткости желудочков, приводящих к систолической или диастолической дисфункции. Следовательно, уменьшить сердечно-сосудистые ремоделирование является основной целью для общей клинической помощи этим пациентам.

Несколько препаратов, таких как ангиотензиновые ингибиторы фермента, бета-блокаторы и антагонисты альдостерона широко используется для уменьшения ремоделирования миокарда. Комбинация сакубитрила, ингибитора неприлизина и вальсартана, антагониста рецептора ангиотензина, который имеет положительные клинические результаты у пациентов с сердечной

недостаточностью с уменьшенной фракцией выброса, недавно привлекло общественное и научное внимание для пациентов с сердечной недостаточностью с сохраненной фракцией выброса. Способствуя накоплению натрийуретических пептидов, которые обладают натрийуретическими и сосудистыми релаксантами свойствами и снижением влияния системы ренин-ангиотензин-альдостерона, комбинация этих двух препаратов имеет кардиопротективные и антигипертензивные эффекты и уменьшает кардиоподобный фиброз. Следует отметить, что Sacubitril/Valsartan показал лучшее влияние на ремоделирование сердца и фракцию обращения по сравнению с периндоприлом ингибитора ACE у крыс. Тем не менее, это только предварительные данные, и более широкие исследования должны проводиться как в экспериментальных, так и в клинических условиях, чтобы полностью выявить механизмы действия препарата при лечении различных типов артериальной гипертонии.

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**PATHOPHYSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE EFFECT OF SACUBITRIL-VALSARTAN
ON HYPERTENSION-INDUCED CARDIOVASCULAR REMODELING**

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SUMMARY

Myocardial remodeling is a process executed by cardiomyocytes, other cells within the myocardium (i.e, endothelial cells, fibroblasts, pericytes, and immune cells), and cells recruited from the circulation (e.g, immune and inflammatory cells) in response to mechanical and non-mechanical stimuli. As a result, the composition, volume, and physiology of cardiomyocytes, the interstitial matrix, and the coronary vessels undergo interrelated changes. These changes detrimentally affect the clinical outcomes of patients with hypertensive heart disease (HHD), due to the risk of fibrillation and increased ventricular stiffness leading to systolic or diastolic dysfunction. Therefore, to reduce cardiovascular remodeling is the main aim for the overall clinical care of these patients.

Several drugs, such as angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, beta blockers, and aldosterone antagonists, have been consistently shown to decrease remodeling in animal models and in clinical trials, and are currently widely used to decrease myocardial remodeling. A combination of sacubitril, a neprilysin inhibitor, and valsartan, an angiotensin receptor antagonist, which has positive clinical outcomes in patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, has recently gained public and scientific attention for patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. By promoting the accumulation of natriuretic peptides, which have natriuretic and vascular smooth muscle relaxant properties and by reducing the effects of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system, the combination of these two drugs has cardioprotective and antihypertensive effects and reduces cardiovascular fibrosis. It is noteworthy, that sacubitril/valsartan showed a better effect on cardiac remodeling and reversal fraction compared with ACE inhibitor perindopril in rats. However, these are only preliminary data and more extensive studies should be conducted in both experimental and clinical settings in order to fully reveal the mechanisms of action of the drug in the management of various types of arterial hypertension.

Keywords: sacubitril/valsartan, arterial hypertension, cardiac remodeling

