



INTRODUCTION

Hypertension and the adrenergic system

DR. IRVINE PAGE first proposed his mosaic theory of hypertension in 1949. The mosaic theory encouraged clinicians and researchers to look at hypertension as a multifactorial disturbance in the regulation of arterial blood pressure. In this month's review, "Current antihypertensive therapy: the role of adrenergic drugs," Dr. Harold Itskovitz reminds us that current antihypertensive therapy has been designed to diminish or enhance one or more of the various regulatory influences depicted in Page's original mosaic theory.

■ See Itskovitz (pp 79–93).

It is noted that the influences of the adrenergic nervous system on the circulation are so pervasive that many investigators suspect abnormalities of this system to be the major cause of primary hypertension. Dr. Itskovitz provides a comprehensive and understandable review of the multiple influences of the adrenergic

nervous system on the major determinants of blood pressure—cardiac output and peripheral vascular resistance. The reader will gain a better understanding of the mechanisms of action and usefulness of selected classes of the alpha- and beta-adrenergic agents that are currently available and useful in our approach to blood pressure control.

Finally, he reviews the role of the adrenergic drugs from the standpoint of individualizing or tailoring initial and subsequent therapy to today's hypertensive population. In this context, comparison with other classes of currently available antihypertensive drugs has been included in an effort to assist the clinician in making appropriate choices of antihypertensive therapy.

DONALD G. VIDT, MD
Section Editor
Chairman, Department of Hypertension and Nephrology
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation
One Clinic Center
9500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44195