

A STUDY OF SERUM SODIUM AND POTASSIUM AND BLOOD PRESSURE IN ADULT KASHMIRIS

Sir,

It is known that normal sodium and potassium levels in serum vary from 136 to 145 mEq/litre and 3.5 to 5.0 mEq/litre respectively (3) and that increased intake of sodium chloride effects the levels of arterial blood pressure (1,5). In Kashmir a large number of adults are heavy drinkers of salt-tea thus having a more than usual intake of salt. We undertook a study to find out if there is any correlation between the serum potassium, sodium and chloride with increased salt intake of such Kashmiris and if any changes in these levels is reflected on their systemic arterial pressure.

A selection of 50 normal healthy adult Kashmiris (36 males and 14 females ages between 18 and 50 years) was drawn at random from the subordinate staff of SMHS Hospital (Medical College) Srinagar. The blood pressure was measured in lying down position. Serum sodium and potassium was estimated by a flame photometer. In these individuals serum sodium was found to be  $138.74 \pm 10.3$  mEq/litre and potassium  $4.06 \pm 0.9$  mEq/litre. These figures are consistent with those of other authors (3). The mean blood pressure came to systolic— $130 \pm 10$  and diastolic  $80 \pm 5$  and does not differ from the B.P. levels in normal population elsewhere (6). The variables i.e. serum sodium, potassium and blood pressure did not indicate any significant correlation, however a significant relationship between serum sodium and potassium did exist. The degree of relationship was measured by the correlation coefficient  $r=0.353$  established at  $p < 0.02$ . The lack of relationship between sodium and potassium and blood pressure in individuals of high salt intake of this study may be due to excessive excretion of salt by the kidneys (4).

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