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Rachel C. Drew
*University of Massachusetts Boston*

*Et al.*

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ALTERED BAROREFLEX-MEDIATED CARDIOVASCULAR RESPONSES TO ACUTE HYPOTENSION IN HEART FAILURE PATIENTS COMPARED TO HEALTHY ADULTS

Rachel C. Drew, PhD1,2, Chelsea N. Lindblad, MS3, Soraya M. Samii, MD, PhD2, Cheryl A. Blaha, RN2, Michael J. White, PhD4, Lawrence I. Sinoway, MD2

1Department of Exercise and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Boston; 2Penn State Heart and Vascular Institute, Penn State College of Medicine, Hershey, PA; 3Penn State College of Medicine, Hershey, PA; 4School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

Patients with heart failure (HF) exhibit baroreflex dysfunction, which is associated with increased morbidity and mortality. Orthostatic hypotension, a decrease in blood pressure (BP) upon standing, is a condition that often occurs in HF, and may be linked with altered baroreflex responsiveness in this population. However, data on baroreflex-mediated cardiovascular responses to acute hypotension in HF patients are limited. Therefore, 8 HF patients (7 men; mean±SEM 65±3y; ejection fraction 30.5±3.1%) and 7 healthy control (CON) adults (6 men; 65±2y) underwent 7.5 minutes of unilateral lower-limb ischemia via inflation of a thigh cuff on one leg to non-pharmacologically induce acute hypotension upon cuff deflation. Beat-to-beat systolic BP, diastolic BP, and mean arterial BP (MAP; photoplethysmographic finger cuff) and heart rate (HR; electrocardiogram) were recorded continuously before, during, and after cuff inflation. Statistical analysis involved independent-samples t-tests. Baseline values were not different between groups (systolic BP: 128±8 vs. 128±4mmHg; diastolic BP: 73±3 vs. 82±5mmHg; MAP: 90±3 vs. 97±4mmHg; HR: 62±2 vs. 56±2b.min−1 for HF and CON, respectively; P>0.05). The magnitude of the induced decrease in MAP was similar in both groups (HF -11±1 vs. CON -12±2mmHg; P>0.05). However, the time-to-peak MAP decrease was significantly longer in HF compared to CON (HF 11±2 vs. CON 6±1s; P<0.05). The magnitude of the resultant HR increase was not different between groups (HF 2±1 vs. CON 4±1mmHg; P>0.05). However, the time-to-peak HR increase was longer in HF compared to CON (HF 9±1 vs. CON 6±1s; P<0.05). In conclusion, these results demonstrate that in response to acute hypotension, HF patients exhibit prolonged hypotension and a delayed tachycardic response. These findings suggest that baroreflex-mediated cardiovascular responses to acute hypotension are altered in HF compared to CON, which may be linked to the higher occurrence of orthostatic hypotension experienced in this population.

Contact:
Rachel Drew
University of Massachusetts Boston
rachel.drew@umb.edu