Editorial

Korotkov sounds – what do we know about this 100 year old discovery?

This year, 2005, is the 100th anniversary of one of the most famous discoveries in the field of hypertension: the auscultative method of blood pressure measurement. The method, named after the Russian physician and scientist Nikolai Sergeievich Korotkov (1874–1920), has now been widely used for one century. Unfortunately, while the method itself and the name of its inventor are world famous, much less is known about the history of this outstanding discovery and the real role of Korotkov in the interpretation of the discovered sounds and the implementation of the new method into clinical practice.

Korotkov was only 31 years of age when he made a short presentation at the Scientific Meeting of the Military Hospital of the Imperial Military Academy about an easy, non-invasive method of blood pressure measurement. This was on November 5, 1905. The brief title of his presentation was “Concerning the problem of the methods for investigating blood pressure”. He described the following sequence of sounds: first sound, ten murmurs, loud sounds, decreasing sounds and complete disappearance. These observations are now classified as different phases of the Korotkov sounds. Later, Russian scientists and investigators all over the world continued to find an explanation for the auscultative phenomenon. Although our modern understanding of the nature of the sounds has changed, the method remains the standard for hypertension diagnosis and management. Even today, 100 years later, devices are being developed to measure blood pressure using Korotkov’s method.

WHL News

Report from the 6th International Symposium on Hypertension and Related Diseases from October 15–18, 2004 in Beijing, China

On the occasion of this Symposium, the World Hypertension League (WHL) held a Regional Meeting on the Prevention of Hypertension. It was chaired by Prof. Liu Lisheng, Vice President of the WHL, Prof. Zhou Beifan, and Dr. Claude Lenfant, President of the WHL. There were 8 presentations describing research and public health activities in the respective countries.

Dr. Lenfant summarized 4 studies from the United States which exemplify the significance and effectiveness of programs to reduce excess weight, to encourage physical exercise, and to reduce salt and alcohol consumption to maintain, or reduce blood pressure (BP) to a normal level (i.e. <140/85 mmHg). He noted that to control hypertension we have the choice between pharmacological and preventive interventions: he concluded that preventive interventions are effective and far less costly than pharmacological regimens.

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Report from 6th International Symposium continued

Prof. Choudomir Nachev, President of the Bulgarian Hypertension League, reported on the ongoing activities in his country: research, education and development of guidelines to ensure effective control of hypertension. The targets for action are high risk individuals as well as the general population. It became very clear that education and community involvement are very effective tools. For example, clubs to foster positive life-style “Move and Win” have been developed. A recent evaluation after 8 years has shown that average BP and salt consumption have decreased while physical activity, vegetables, fruits and fish consumption have increased. Prof. Nachev stated that so far the results are positive, but not yet “satisfactory”; revised policies and new approaches are being developed to increase and accelerate the positive emerging trends.

The next speaker was Prof. Padmavati, President of the All India Heart Foundation, and Director of the National Heart Institute, India. She began her presentation with an overview of the hypertension prevalence in India since 1942 (34 successive surveys). However, because the accepted level of normal BP has changed during this long period of time, comparing prevalence and its changes is not possible. Today, the overall prevalence of hypertension is 30.9%. India is undergoing an important demographic transition with increasing life expectancy, urbanization, changes in life-styles and dietary habits. Obesity, smoking and alcohol consumption all bear on the hypertension incidence and prevalence. The country and several relevant professional organizations are using the media to develop effective community programs.

The life of N.S. Korotkov in brief

Nikolai Sergeievich Korotkov was born in Kursk, Russia, on February 13, 1874. He entered medical school in 1893, graduated at the Moscow University in 1898, and then worked at the surgical clinic of the Moscow University. He began the work on his doctoral thesis in 1905, only a few months before the presentation of his discovery at the Imperial Military Academy, and received his doctorate in 1910. In the following years he served as a surgeon at various locations before he became physician-in-chief of the Metchnikov Hospital in Leningrad. There he died in 1920 at the early age of 46.

Bibliography:

- To the question of methods of determining the blood pressure (from the clinic of Professor S. P. Federov) [Russian]. Reports of the Imperial Military Academy 1905, 11: 365-367.
- Contribution to the methods of measuring blood pressure; second preliminary report 13 December 1905 [Russian]. Vrach Gaz 1906, 10: 278.

Dr Yuan-Teh Lee from the Taiwan University gave a very interesting report on the status of...
Report from 6th International Symposium continued

Hypertension

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<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Treated</th>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>43 to 59%</td>
<td>32 to 47%</td>
<td>15 to 21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>53 to 79%</td>
<td>45 to 64%</td>
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Efforts are underway to further improve these numbers and mainly consist of programs to: improve and augment hypertension control, develop community-based strategies and develop of clinical guidelines.

Prof. A. Berbari from the American University in Lebanon presented data on the rate of hypertension, obesity and diabetes in his country. The population of Lebanon is experiencing an increase in BMI. In reaction to this trend, the Lebanese Hypertension League has been working with national professional societies and practicing physicians to adopt specific management approaches to improve prevention and pharmacological regimens.

Prof. Zhou Beifan from the Fu Wai Hospital and the Beijing Union Medical College presented the Chinese guidelines for the prevention and control of overweight and obesity in Chinese adults and its impact on public health. This very important and timely presentation showed the increase of the BMI in the Chinese population; both the incidence and prevalence of overweight are increasing in all segments of the population: north and south, men and women, and rural and urban. She pointed out the consequential increase in cardiovascular disease and diabetes risk factors, including hypertension. In response to this emerging epidemic the Chinese health officials have developed guidelines emphasizing the non-pharmacological approaches to prevent and control overweight as well as possible drug interventions in the extreme and resilient cases.

Finally, data from the 2002 Chinese Nutrition and Health Survey were presented by Prof. Liu Lisheng. Details can be found on the WHL website.

The entire WHL Regional Meeting gave a most interesting and informative view of the state of hypertension in the countries that were represented. It was evident that in all these countries very pro-active programs are planned to reduce the prevalence of hypertension. There is no doubt that the audience benefited from the presentations as was evidenced by the intensity of the discussions during the sessions and breaks. The WHL is very pleased to have been associated with this Symposium and all the League’s members who participated extend their gratitude and thanks to Prof. Liu Lisheng to have made this possible, and for the very warm hospitality that she and her colleagues extended to the visitors.

Dr. Claude Lenfant
President

New WHL Member

The WHL is pleased to welcome the Nepal Hypertension Society as a new member:

Dr. M. R. Pandey, President, PO Box 2587, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Phone: (+977) 1 426 2879
Fax: (+977) 1 426 2838
E-mail: msmtp@healthnet.org.np
People

The Thai Hypertension League (THL) has been changed formally to the Thai Hypertension Society (THS).

Dr. Yingnoi Uboldejpracharuk has been elected President of the THS. Secretary General is Dr. Taworn Suithichaiyakul.

The address of the society is: 10th Floor, Royal Golden Jubilee Building, 2 Soi Soonvijai, New Petchburi Road, Bangkapi Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320, Thailand.

Tel. (+66) 0-2716-6448
Fax (+66) 0-2716-6449
Website: http://www.anet.net.th

Calender

WHL Regional Meeting with the 9th Annual Meeting of the Egyptian Hypertension Society
April 6–9, 2005
Cairo, Egypt
Information: Mrs. Rehab Mohammad
1 El-Diwan Str., Garden City
Cairo 11519, Egypt
Fax: (+202) 794-8879
E-mail: ehs@link.net

12th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Nigerian Hypertension Society
“Optimal Management of Hypertension”
April 21–22, 2005
Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Information: Dr. Basden J. C. Onwubere
University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital
Dept. of Medicine
Enugu, Nigeria
Fax: (+234) 42-300476
E-mail: bjconwub@yahoo.com

XIIIth Annual Scientific Meeting of the SHAM and the XVIth Scientific Meeting of the IASH
April 21–23, 2005
Cancun City, Quintana Roo, Mexico
Information: Dr. Martin Rosas
Sociedad de Hipertensión Arterial de México (SHAM)
Fax: (+55) 55 73 09 94
Email: martinrp02@yahoo.com.mx

15th Congress of the European Society of Hypertension
June 17–20, 2005
Milan, Italy
Information: AISC & MGR – Aim Group
Via A. Ristori 38, I-00197 Rome, Italy
Fax: (+390) 6808 8491
E-mail: esh2004@aisc.it

N. Korotkov International Memorial Meeting
September 15–17, 2005
St. Petersburg, Russia
Information: Research Institute of Cardiology
Prospect Parchomenko 15
194156 St. Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: konradi@niic.ru
Website: http://www.niic.ru

Impressum

The objectives of the WHL are to promote the detection, control and prevention of arterial hypertension in populations. The World Hypertension League (WHL) is a federation of leagues, societies and other national bodies devoted to this goal. Individual membership is not possible. The WHL is a division of the International Society of Hypertension (ISH), and is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO).

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