

Placebo-controlled trial of potassium supplements in black patients with mild essential hypertension.

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Abstract:

Forty-eight black patients with mildly increased blood pressure (BP) that had not yet been subjected to treatment took part in a double-blind clinical trial of the efficacy and tolerability of oral potassium supplements (64 mmol daily) versus a matching placebo (made of starch with coating) in a 16-week study. Potassium supplements produced a significant decrease in mean supine and standing BP within 4 weeks after treatment inception. Urinary potassium excretion increased significantly in the 24 patients who received potassium supplements (p less than 0.001). No significant changes occurred in plasma sodium and potassium concentrations or in urinary excretion of sodium during the study. All patients completed the trial without experiencing any notable untoward effects. These results are consistent with the premise that oral potassium supplements may exert hypotensive effects of clinically significant degree in patients with mild hypertension