A Syndrome of Renal Sodium Loss and Hyponatremia Probably Resulting from Inappropriate Secretion of Antidiuretic Hormone*

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This paper is a report of studies of two patients with bronchogenic carcinoma in whom hyponatremia developed as the result of unexplained failure of renal sodium conservation. The data indicate that sustained inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone was probably responsible for the disorder of sodium metabolism. The physiologic abnormality appears to be analogous to that which can be produced by the continuous administration of pitressin® and water to normal subjects.

CASE REPORTS

CASE 1. W.A., a sixty-year old hat cleaner, complained of coughing up bright red blood for the previous six weeks, and loss of 15 pounds of weight. On physical examination, he was well nourished. The blood pressure was 120/70 mm. Hg. There was marked clubbing of the fingers and toes which the patient said had been present all his life. Physical and neurologic examination was otherwise within normal limits.

Initial routine laboratory studies revealed no abnormalities in the hemogram. Urine examination was negative. Intravenous pyelogram revealed normal structure and excellent dye concentration in both kidneys.

X-ray revealed a 4 by 5 cm. ill-defined mass in the region of the right pulmonary artery. A biopsy by bronchoscope demonstrated anaplastic carcinoma of the right main stem bronchus, and an exploratory thoracotomy revealed an inoperable tumor at the right hilum infiltrating the esophagus and aorta. In the postoperative period empyema developed, which was satisfactorily controlled with antibiotics and saline solution irrigations. Two weeks after operation serum electrolytes and protein concentrations were measured as a routine procedure. The following values were obtained: sodium, 121 mEq./L.; potassium, 4.6 mEq./L.; chloride, 88 mEq./L.; carbon dioxide content, 24 mEq./L.; calcium, 10.0 mg. per cent; inorganic phosphate, 4.0 mg. per cent; albumin, 2.1 gm. per cent; globulin, 3.7 gm. per cent. The hemoglobin was 9.8 gm. per cent. The patient was given small amounts of normal saline solution and on the following day his serum sodium was 114 mEq./L. and his blood pressure was 120/70.

In 1955, a patient with bronchogenic carcinoma was admitted to the New England Medical Center with a puzzling syndrome of severe, unexplained hyponatremia and renal salt wasting. His BP was normal, and there was no evidence of volume depletion. Detailed studies revealed normal renal and adrenal function. The blood urea nitrogen concentration was notably low at 6 to 8 mg/dl. No explanation was at hand to account for the salt-wasting disorder, but the findings were similar to those in several puzzling cases reported in association with meningitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, and bronchogenic carcinoma.

Absent any hypothesis to account for this mysterious disorder, we decided simply to place the patient on a balance study using a constant diet (but not a constant water intake). Our hope was that by careful observation, the underlying forces promoting sodium excretion would reveal themselves, perhaps in response to maneuvers such as salt loading and DOCA administration. Such proved not to be the case. After 36 days of meticulous observation, we were still at sea. The serum sodium fluctuated between 136 and 103 mEq/L without an apparent explanation. Sodium infusions raised the serum sodium concentration transiently, but the sodium load was promptly excreted. At the end of the studies, we still had no answer, but in reviewing the data for the entire month, one fact suddenly took hold in my mind. Despite the dramatic reduction in the serum sodium concentration, the urine osmolality remained consistently hypertonic to the plasma, thus providing compelling evidence for the presence of antidiuretic hormone (ADH). Taken together with the evidence of normal volume status and BP as well as normal kidney and adrenal function, it seemed almost certain that the syndrome was accounted for by inappropriate...
urea nitrogen was 9 mg. per cent. The urine sodium concentration was 70 mEq./L. At this time the physical examination was within normal limits. The blood pressure was 124/68 mm. Hg. Skin turgor and hydration were good. There was no abnormal pigmentation and axillary and pubic hair were normal. During the next two days he was given hypertonic sodium chloride, despite which his serum sodium concentration fell to 103 mEq./L. During this time the patient was asymptomatic. He was then given small doses of DOCA® and very large amounts of supplementary salt. Three days later metabolic studies were begun as described under “Results.” On the first day of these studies 20 mg. of DOCA were administered.

The patient was discharged from the hospital two months later. It was found that on salt intake ad libitum and slightly restricted fluid intake his serum sodium concentration could be maintained at normal or near normal values without steroids. During the next three months he was readmitted on two occasions for further observation. His final admission occurred eight months after the initial studies and three months after his last period of observation. He was emaciated, and had severe diarrhea and jaundice. Despite supportive therapy his condition progressively deteriorated, and he died three weeks after admission.

Autopsy revealed extensive bronchogenic carcinoma involving numerous mediastinal lymph nodes and the pericardium and invading and obscuring the vagus nerves. Metastases had obstructed the common bile duct and the pancreatic duct. There was extensive invasion of the adrenal area by metastatic tumor: the 5 to 10 per cent of the one adrenal cortex which was found was histologically normal. There were scattered metastases in the kidneys, which were otherwise grossly and microscopically normal. The brain showed metastases in the cerebral hemispheres and cerebellum, and bilateral cystic degeneration in the region of the basal ganglia. The pituitary gland was normal on gross and microscopic examination.

Case II. W. F., a fifty-six year old prizefighter, complained of anorexia, weakness and fatigability of one year’s duration. Five months before admission the symptoms rapidly became more severe, and he was admitted to an outside hospital where he was observed to have severe hyponatremia (serum sodium 105 to 116 mEq./L.). The hyponatremia persisted despite administration of large quantities of salt and was accompanied by continuous loss of sodium in the urine. There was no clinical evidence of salt depletion. The non-protein nitrogen was 26 mg. per cent, and urinalysis was negative. He was found to have a duodenal ulcer. No adequate explanation could be found for the electrolyte disturbance, and he was admitted for further studies.

On physical examination, he was found to have normal skin turgor, normal body hair and no abnormal pigmentation. The blood pressure was 200/110 mm. Hg. Physical and neurologic examination was otherwise within normal limits. The urine was normal on numerous occasions; the hemogram was normal.

Chemical analyses revealed the following serum values: urea nitrogen, 12 mg. per cent; sodium, 133 mEq./L.; carbon dioxide content, 31 mEq./L.; potassium, 5.6 mEq./L.; glucose tolerance test, fasting 92 mg. per cent, thirty minutes 181 mg. per cent; sixty minutes 158 mg. per cent, 120 minutes 65 mg. per cent. Radioactive iodine uptake was normal (44 per cent) as was the basal metabolic rate (minus 5 per cent). Alterations in serum sodium concentration and results of studies of renal and adrenal function are described under “Results.”

X-ray film revealed a prominence in the left hilum, thought to be pulmonary artery, and a duodenal ulcer. The sella turcica was normal.
Metabolic studies were instituted. Shortly thereafter periods of aphasia and disorientation began to appear with increasing frequency and duration. On the fifty-eighth hospital day biparietal burr holes were made revealing normal cerebrospinal fluid pressures. During the next two weeks clouding of the sensorium became progressively deeper and more continuous, and on the seventy-first hospital day a right facial paralysis and a right hemiparesis developed. Shortly thereafter the patient lapsed into coma. On his ninety-seventh hospital day he had hypotension for the first time, and two days later he began passing large amounts of dark red blood by rectum. This persisted, and despite numerous transfusions he failed rapidly; he died on his 101st hospital day.

Autopsy revealed a bronchogenic carcinoma measuring 8 by 4 cm. extending from the arch of the aorta to the left main stem bronchus, surrounding and compressing the left pulmonary artery and vein, involving numerous hilar lymph nodes, and invading and obscuring the vagus nerves. The sole extrathoracic metastasis was a single nodule, 0.8 cm. in diameter, in the medulla of the left adrenal gland, which was otherwise normal in size and structure, as was the right adrenal. The adrenals together weighed 15.5 gm. There were three duodenal ulcers one of which had eroded a small artery. The kidneys were grossly normal and showed only minimal arteriosclerosis. The brain showed encephalomalacia of the left internal capsule and caudate nucleus and of the right globus pallidus, pons and hippocampus. The pituitary gland was normal on gross and microscopic examination.

METHODS

The patients were offered weighed diets which contained little sodium, but were otherwise normal in composition. Sodium chloride was added each day with weighed salt shakers in order to raise the sodium intake to the desired level. On various occasions extra sodium chloride loads were administered intravenously as 2.5 to 5 per cent solutions. In the study of W. A., 40 mEq. of potassium chloride were added to the daily intake from the seventeenth day to the end of the study. Absolute constancy of intake was impossible in W. A. because of frequent rejections of variable amounts of salt and food; and

**FIG. 1.** Urine sodium, urine and serum osmolality, serum sodium concentration, body weight and steroid therapy during a thirty-five-day balance study of W. A. Dietary sodium intake was as follows: Days 1 to 9, 62 mEq. Days 10 to 35, 42 mEq. Supplementary sodium intake is indicated by arrows. For net intake (corrected for refusals) see Table I.
on one occasion the composition of the diet was changed. Food which was refused and vomitus were analyzed. In the studies of W. F., urinary incontinence resulted in occasional incomplete collections; losses were estimated not to have exceeded 100 cc. per day.

Measurements of inulin and p-aminobenzolic clearances were made in the standard manner. The analytic procedures, the methods used in the calculations of results, and other details of the balance technic have been described previously [2, 3]. Osmolality of the urine and blood was estimated from freezing point depression. 17-Hydroxycorticoids were measured with and without the administration of 40 units of ACTH intravenously over an eight-hour period. Urinary aldosterone was measured by a method previously described [4]. The radioosmum, radiosulfate and iodopotasium spaces were determined simultaneously by the method of Burrows, Hine and Ross [5].

RESULTS

Effects of Altering Sodium Intake. (Table 1 and Figs. 1 and 2). Patient W. A. (Table 1 and Fig. 1) was transferred from the Surgical Service, where he had been receiving large amounts of hypertonic saline solution and 10 mg. of desoxy-corticonsterone acetate (DOCA) daily for three days. On the first day of the metabolic study the serum sodium concentration was 136 mEq./L. and the osmolality 282. DOCA, 20 mg., was administered on the first day and then discontinued. The patient was offered a constant diet containing 62 mEq. of sodium per day. During the first six days the serum sodium concentration fell to 108 mEq./L., and the serum osmolality to 220. During this time the urine sodium excretion rose to levels of 150 to 200 mEq. per day with a simultaneous urine osmolality of 300 to 600. The body weight at the end of this period was the same as at the beginning of the study. On day 7 the oral sodium intake was supplemented by intravenous sodium chloride to make a total of 608 mEq. On the following day the serum sodium concentration was 119 mEq./L. During the next three and a half days the serum sodium fell to 103 mEq./L. and osmolality to 202. The urine sodium ranged between 143 and 242 mEq. per day for the syndrome, which remain a mainstay of therapy for many patients with SIADH up to the present time.

Second, even the most careful of studies will not yield much insight into a disease process if interpreted incorrectly; landmark or milestone studies are generally characterized by astute and frequently groundbreaking analysis of the results and their implications. This is certainly the case with this paper. The authors’ hypothesis that the paradoxical urine concentration and natriuresis they observed was “probably” (perhaps modern authors can learn a little about humility from the older literature too!) a result of inappropriate secretion of ADH was proved to be correct, at least for the vast majority of cases, by subsequent studies that used sensitive radioimmunoassays to quantify plasma arginine vasopressin levels in such patients (2). Furthermore, apropos of all high-quality clinical research, the authors’ appreciation of previous experimental studies, such as those of Leaf et al. (3), which showed similar patterns of the kidney responses after infusions of posterior pituitary extract and water loading in normal human subjects, clearly guided their research, as well as influenced their interpretation of the results obtained.

Third, great articles generally have a sense of timelessness about them. They are not just historical landmarks but in fact can be—and are—gainfully referred to for some time in the future. There is little question that this article and the knowledge gleaned from it have admirably withstood the test of time. The criteria for the diagnosis of SIADH that evolved directly from this report (i.e., hyponatremia and hypo-osmolality; continued urinary excretion of sodium; clinical euvolement; urine concentration inappropriate for plasma osmolality; and normal renal, adrenal, and thyroid function (4)) remain the criteria by which this syndrome is defined today, almost a half-century later. Not only are our clinical diagnostic criteria identical to those elucidated through these studies, but also readers can still gain new insights from rereading the paper. For example, recent interest in the possibility of a mineralocorticoid-sensitive variant of SIADH (5) is not that surprising given the salutary responses to mineralocorticoid treatment shown in these original patients (Figure 3). And the absence of weight gain despite large decreases in plasma osmolality during some of the balance studies led to the insight that this syndrome was more complicated than simply water retention and involved critical changes in solute balance as well, although now this is thought to be related more to volume-regulatory losses of electrolytes and organic osmolytes rather than from the originally postulated inactivation of cellular solute (6). Consequently, one always learns more from reexamining a paper such as this one.

Finally, being prophetic does not harm a paper’s chance of becoming a milestone either. The authors clearly noticed the parallels between their cases and other reported cases of hyponatremia and concluded, with an appropriate degree of caution, “It is possible that the hyponatremia previously reported in patients with pulmonary and central nervous disease has a similar pathologic physiology.” As another example, the observation that isotonic volume expansion resulted in a hypotonic diuresis led the authors to speculate that this may represent a type of “escape” from the effects of ADH, two years before the experimental studies in animals that documented the existence of this phenomenon (7).
day and urine osmolality between 345 and 537. The body weight at the end of this period was 1.2 kg, less than at the beginning of the period. Loss of 720 cc. by vomitus contributed to this change. The blood urea nitrogen varied between 5 and 9 mg. per cent, the blood pressure remained in the vicinity of 120/70 mm. Hg, and there was no clinical evidence of dehydration. On days 10 and 11, when hyponatremia was most severe, there was nausea, one episode of vomiting, and marked irritability and aggressiveness. Even when the serum sodium concentration was as low as 103 mEq./L., large amounts of sodium were excreted in the urine and no renal sodium conservation was apparent.

When large quantities of sodium chloride were administered intravenously on days 7, 11 and 12, from one-third to one-half of the administered sodium was found in the urine during the days of infusion. The sodium balance was negative by the following day. These loads produced rises in serum sodium concentration of 2 to 11 mEq./L., the highest value attained being 119 mEq./L. There was no increase in body weight with the increases in serum sodium concentration.

Patient W. F. was given sodium chloride intravenously on two occasions while the dietary sodium intake was 80 mEq. per day (Fig. 2). On the first occasion, when 580 mEq. were administered, the serum sodium concentration rose from 115 to 125 mEq./L. More than two-thirds of the total sodium intake was found in the urine during the day of infusion, and the sodium balance was negative by the following day. Four days later when the serum sodium concentration was 123 mEq./L., the patient received an infusion of 430 mEq. of sodium chloride. The serum sodium concentration rose to 130 mEq./L. and during this day more than 40 per cent of the total sodium intake was found in the urine. Sodium balance was negative by the following day. During the subsequent four days oral sodium intake was maintained at 326 mEq. per day. The sodium balance became negative by the second day of this regimen, and the serum sodium fell from 130 to 114 mEq./L. Body weight throughout this entire twelve-day period of study remained essentially unchanged. It should be noted that the values for urinary sodium excretion are minimal figures; the determined sodium balance would have been more negative (or less positive) had there not been instances of urinary incontinence.

Simultaneous urine and serum osmolality determined on many occasions consistently showed that the urine was hypertonic to the serum even when the serum osmolality was markedly subnormal. Thus while the plasma osmolality ranged from 240 to 260, the urine osmolality ranged between 390 and 590.

Summary: Both subjects showed continuous urinary sodium loss without corresponding loss of water or body weight. Despite progressive falls of serum sodium and osmolality, the urine remained continuously hypertonic to the plasma. Only transient elevations of serum sodium could be produced with large “loads” of hypertonic saline solution.

Effect of Sodium-Retaining Steroids. DOCA, 20 mg., or fluorohydrocortisone, 5 mg., high sodium intake: DOCA, 20 mg. daily, was administered to W. A. (Table I and Fig. 1) for seven days (days fifteen to twenty-one) while the sodium intake was maintained between 265 and 408 mEq. per day by the administration of additional sodium chloride intravenously, as shown in Figure 1. The urine sodium fell steadily for the first five days to reach a lower limit of 68 mEq. on the fifth day (day 19) and then rose to approximately three times this figure despite the continued administration of DOCA [2]. Despite this rise in sodium excretion, sodium balance remained positive throughout the seven-day period with a total positive sodium balance of

When looking back at milestones in a given field, it is useful to look ahead as well. Water metabolism—and disorders of water metabolism, such as SIADH—remains an area of ongoing intense research. Perhaps the most striking area of recent advance in our knowledge has been the discovery of the aquaporin family of water channels, which has allowed an understanding of the urinary concentration process at the cellular and molecular levels and specifically the mechanisms through which vasopressin interacts with its receptor in the collecting tubule principal cells to cause antidiuresis (8). We now know that ongoing vasopressin secretion despite the presence of hypo-osmolality, whether from ectopic tumoral secretion, as was likely in the original two cases of Schwartz et al., or from nonosmotic secretion from other stimuli, causes increased aquaporin-2 expression and apical membrane insertion, thereby leading to the inappropriate antidiuresis of SIADH. Conversely, the apparent escape noted by Schwartz et al. seems to be caused by a downregulation of the vasopressin-stimulated aquaporin-2 expression in the collecting tubules (9). Paralleling these advances in our basic knowledge of vasopressin action are emerging new therapies that will allow more efficacious treatment of SIADH via blocking the actions of vasopressin or any other antidiuretic substance on its renal receptors, thereby producing a free water diuresis, or “aquaresis,” with resulting correction of hyponatremia in patients with SIADH (10); such therapeutic advances are built on the knowledge gained from clinical research studies such as this one.

We have obviously come a long way since 1957 in our understanding of water metabolism and its disorders, but this is in large part because the foundation of this field was so well established initially by the pioneering clinical research of Schwartz et al., which in many ways can be considered to be one of the first milestones in this field that then set the tone for clinical and basic investigators for years to come.

References
**Table I**

**Balance Data for a Thirty-Five Day Study of Patient Y. A.**

| Day | D/W/A (lb.) | Body Weight (kg.) | Fluid (ml./day) | Na (mEq./day) | K (mEq./day) | Cl (mEq./day) | N (Gm./day) | Vol (cc.) | mOsmol./day | Total Na (mEq./day) | Na (mEq./day) | K (mEq./day) | Cl (mEq./day) | N (Gm./day) | mOsmol./day | Total K (mEq./day) | NuH1 (mEq./day) | Trivalent ani. (mEq./day) | N (Gm./day) | mOsmol./day | Total Cl (mEq./day) | NuH1 (mEq./day) | Trivalent ani. (mEq./day) | N (Gm./day) | mOsmol./day | Total N (mEq./day) | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol./day | mOsmol/.
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1,154 mEq. The urine osmolality ranged between 332 and 470. During this time the serum sodium concentration rose from 115 to 135 mEq./L. and serum osmolality from 230 to 271. The body weight rose during the first five days by a total of 3 kg. and then fell abruptly to the initial level. This weight loss was attributable to removal by enema of a large quantity of feces which had been accumulating throughout the entire study. The serum potassium fell from 4.1 mEq./L. to 2.3 mEq./L. during administration of DOCA, and returned to the initial level after DOCA was stopped. Hydrogen ion excretion, as estimated from urine ammonium and titratable acidity, rose when DOCA was administered, and fell again when it was discontinued.

Fluorohydrocortisone, 5 mg. daily, was administered to W. F. (Fig. 3) after a preliminary four-day period during which his serum sodium concentration had been maintained at levels of approximately 120 mEq./L. by daily administration of 520 mM. of sodium chloride. On this medication the serum sodium concentration rose in stepwise fashion to 137 mEq./L., and the body weight rose by 3 kg. Urine sodium fell to approximately 1,000 mEq./L. during the treatment. The actual figure may have been somewhat less, because there were small losses of urine, estimated to be less than 5 per cent of the average daily volume. The study was discontinued because of severe hypokalemia.

DOCA, 20 mg., low sodium intake (Table I and Fig. 1): DOCA in a dose of 20 mg. daily was given to patient W. A. for an additional six days (days twenty-two to twenty-seven), with a sodium intake of 42 mEq. daily. The urine sodium fell abruptly with institution of the low sodium regimen but did not become as low as the intake until the sixth day. There was a total negative sodium balance of 151 mEq. during this six-day period. Urine osmolality fell from 490 to 198. During this time the serum sodium concentration fell from 135 mEq./L. to 121 mEq./L. and serum osmolality from 271 to 248. The body weight rose a total of 1 kg. during this six-day period.

DOCA, 5 mg., low sodium intake (Table I and Fig. 1): DOCA, 5 mg. daily, was given to W. A. for four days (days twenty-eight to thirty-one) together with a sodium intake of 42 mEq. per day. The urine sodium rose to approximately 100 mEq. per day. There was a total negative sodium balance of 224 mEq. Urine osmolality ranged from 167 to 311. The serum sodium concentration was 121 mEq./L. at the beginning and 119 mEq./L. at the end of the period. Body weight fell 0.5 kg.

Withdrawal of DOCA (Table I and Fig. 1): DOCA was withdrawn from patient W. A. (Table I, Fig. 1) and the effects observed for a four-day period (days thirty-two to thirty-five) with a dietary sodium of 42 mEq. per day. The urine sodium excretion rose further, and there was a total negative balance of 392 mEq. The urine osmolality ranged from 178 to 215. The serum sodium concentration was 119 mEq./L. at the beginning and 117 mEq./L. at the end of the period. Body weight fell by 2.8 kg.

Summary: Both subjects responded to salt-retaining steroids with normal sodium retention. The serum sodium concentration and body weight rose.

Effect of Changes in Fluid Intake (Figs 4, 5 and 6.) Three months after the initial metabolic studies, W. A. (Fig. 4) was admitted to the hospital for study of the effects of dehydration on electrolyte excretion. He was given a daily water intake of approximately 2,000 cc., a value about twice that which he had been taking, and approximately 10 mEq. of sodium. After a three-day control period he was subjected to dehydration for six days and then a liberal intake of fluid was resumed. During the first three days, when the fluid intake was liberal, the patient’s urine sodium varied between 75 and 109 mEq. per day, and urine osmolality between 490 and 641. The serum sodium concentration decreased from 127 to 114 mEq./L. Body weight did not change significantly. With dehydration the urine sodium decreased steadily to a minimum value of 6 mEq. per day. During the afternoon and evening the first day of dehydration, 290 mEq. of sodium chloride were given intravenously as a 5 per cent solution. In contrast to the very large sodium diuresis produced by similar procedures previously, the sodium excretion fell to 36 mEq. per day. The serum sodium concentration rose from 114 to 123 mEq./L., and during the next five days increased to 135 mEq./L. The body weight fell by 4.9 kg. With rehydration, the urine sodium rose progressively as the serum sodium fell. Body weight rose by 2.6 kg. On the third day 56 mEq. of sodium was excreted on an intake of 10 mEq. When sodium loads were given after rehydration (Fig. 4, days thirteen and fifteen), there were again large increases in urinary sodium. The blood urea nitrogen showed a transitory rise during dehydration.

In W. F. (Fig. 5) after the fluid intake had been 2,000 cc. per day for a two-week period, with maintenance of a normal serum sodium concentration and an essentially constant body weight, the fluid intake was increased to 3,000 cc. per day. There promptly followed a marked rise in urinary sodium excretion to figures greater than the intake (140 mEq. per day), and a fall in serum sodium concentration from 142 mEq./L. to 120 mEq./L., while body weight rose 2 kg.
W. A. was subjected to a rapid expansion of extracellular fluid by the administration of 2,000 cc. of sodium chloride solution intravenously over a two-hour period, at a time when his serum tonicity was subnormal (sodium 116 mEq./L., 234 mOsm.). (Fig. 6.) The concentration of sodium in the infusion was 142 mEq./L. This was sufficient to raise the serum sodium and osmolality by small but significant amounts during the infusion. The procedure resulted in a rise in urine flow from between 1 and 2 cc. to 17 cc. per minute. Urine osmolality fell progressively from 449 to 151 and the osmolar U/P ratio from 1.75 to 0.60. Concomitantly the sodium excretion rose from initial values of approximately 100 μEq./minute to 1,000 μEq./minute at the height of the diuresis.

Summary: In both subjects fluid restriction led to sodium retention and a return of the serum sodium concentration to normal. Restoration of liberal fluid intake re-established the sodium-losing syndrome. One subject was given a rapid infusion of saline hypertonic to his plasma; this was followed promptly by a reduction in urine osmolality to values below those of the plasma, with copious diuresis.

“Space” Estimations. Radiosulfate, radiosodium and radiopotassium spaces: On day nine (Fig. 1), when the serum sodium concentration was 112 mEq./L., radiosulfate, radiosodium and radiopotassium spaces were determined in W. A. The twenty-minute radiosulfate and radiosodium spaces were 17.2 and 17.3 L. respectively, a volume of distribution equal to about 26 per cent of body weight. These values are approximately 50 per cent greater than those obtained in normal subjects by these methods [6, 7]. At twenty-four hours the “total body sodium” exchangeable with the isotope was estimated at 2,388 mEq. or 36.3 mEq./Kg. This value is approximately 25 per cent below that obtained in normal subjects by this method. If, however, the sodium which had been lost by the patient during the time his serum sodium was falling from normal levels be added to it, then the “corrected” total body sodium is normal (44.8 mEq./Kg.). At twenty-four hours the “total body potassium” exchangeable with the isotope was estimated at 2,193 mEq. or 33.3 mEq./Kg. This value is approximately 25 per cent below that obtained in normal subjects by this method. Even when the apparent expansion of extracellular fluid volume is taken into consideration, the corrected per Kg. value remains below normal.

“Chloride space” changes: From the data in Table 1, chloride spaces were calculated for W. A. They showed (1) a net decrease of 0.3 L. during metabolic days 1 through 6 (Fig. 1) before administration of any salt loads, (2) a net decrease of 0.4 L. during metabolic days 1 through 9, which included a salt load on day 7, (3) an increase of 5.7 L. during metabolic days 15 through 21 when DOCA was administered with a high salt intake, (4) a decrease of 0.2 L. during metabolic days 22 through 31 when DOCA was given with a low salt intake, and (5) a decrease of 2.3 L. during metabolic days 32 through 35 after DOCA was discontinued.

Summary: The extracellular fluid volume appeared to be substantially above normal in the one subject in whom it was estimated. In this subject, chloride space did not decrease significantly as hyponatremia developed but increased markedly during administration of DOCA.

Adrenal Function. The clinical findings relevant to adrenal function were as follows: There was no abnormal pigmentation, axillary and pubic hair were normal, and blood pressure was normal in one subject and persistently high in the other. Even with severe hyponatremia, there was no evidence of dehydration, blood pressure remained unchanged, and there was no fever, diarrhea or rise in serum potassium concentration. In both patients (vide supra) a normal serum sodium concentration could be maintained for extended periods by simple fluid restriction with low or moderate sodium intake.

In W. A., circulating eosinophils fell from 700 to 187 after eight hours of administration of ACTH; twenty-four-hour uri-
nary 17-hydroxy-corticoids rose from 6.4 to 12.7 mg. Aldosterone excretion was measured twice on low and twice on high sodium intakes while the serum sodium concentration ranged from 103 to 115 mEq./L., and showed a range from 3 to 5 μg. per day. In W. F., circulating eosinophils fell from 188 to 13 after eight hours of administration of ACTH; plasma 17-hydroxycorticoids rose from 8 to 35 μg. per 100 cc., and twenty-four-hour urinary 17-hydroxycorticoids rose from 9 to 22 mg. Aldosterone excretion was measured on a normal sodium intake (80 mEq. per day), while the serum sodium concentration was 120 mEq./L., and was found to be 5 μg. per day.

The pathologic findings (vide supra) showed normal adrenal cortices in the subject who died shortly after the studies were completed, and extensive invasion of the adrenal cortices in the other who died eight months after the studies were made.

Summary: Both subjects showed normal adrenal cortical function as judged from clinical and biochemical evidence.

Renal Function: The urine was normal on numerous occasions in both subjects, as was the blood urea nitrogen. In W. A. the inulin clearance was 120 cc./minute and the p-amino-hippurate clearance 694 cc./minute, when the serum sodium concentration was 108 mEq./L. In W. F. the inulin clearance was 170 cc./minute and the p-aminohippurate clearance 650 cc./minute, when the serum sodium concentration was 124 mEq./L.

The pathologic findings (vide supra) showed that the kidneys were normal both grossly and microscopically except for scattered metastases in one subject and minor arteriosclerotic changes in both.

Summary: Both subjects showed normal renal function as judged from urinalyses, glomerular filtration rates and renal plasma flows.

COMMENTS

These two patients with mediastinal tumors presented a syndrome in which the cardinal feature was hyponatremia. Renal and adrenal cortical function was normal. As hyponatremia and hypotonicity of the extracellular fluid developed, the urine was persistently hypertonic to the plasma. According to current concepts, hypertonicity of the urine, in the presence of a normal glomerular filtration rate, constitutes prima facie evidence for the presence of anti-diuretic hormone (ADH) [8–10]. It is postulated that there was sustained, inappropriate secretion of ADH in these subjects, and that this was responsible for the disorder of sodium metabolism. When pitressin and abundant fluids are given continuously to normal subjects a similar pattern of hyponatremia with persistently concentrated urine also is observed [11]. Normal subjects treated in this fashion* exhibit negative sodium balance, as did the patients in the present study [11]. When, on the other hand, pitressin is given continuously to normal subjects and fluid intake is restricted, hyponatremia and urinary sodium loss do not occur; similarly, sodium loss ceased and serum sodium concentration rose to normal values when the patients’ fluid intake was restricted.

The production of ADH in these subjects could not have been governed by normal osmo-regulatory mechanisms [13], since it persisted in the face of progressive reduction in the tonicity of the plasma. Reduction of extracellular fluid volume may lead to elaboration of an hypertonic urine, possibly via the secretion of ADH [14]. There was no clinical evidence of dehydration in the subjects reported here. Indeed, the values for the twenty-minute radiosulfate and radiosodium spaces indicated that the extracellular fluid volume in W. A. was increased at a time when the serum sodium concentration was far below normal. In the absence of any known stimulus to ADH production, it appears likely that its continued inappropriate secretion was a result of the disease process.

It is unlikely that the continued production of ADH in these subjects represented a lowered threshold for stimulation of osmoreceptors (such as might result from primary reduction of

*Normal subjects given pitressin while unaware of the nature of the medication and offered water ad libitum continued to drink water in sufficient quantities to develop and maintain a severe sodium-wasting syndrome with progressive hyponatremia for as long as two weeks [12].
the osmolality of cells), since hypertonicity of the urine persisted in spite of a plasma osmolality as low as 202. The response to sodium-retaining steroids furnishes further evidence that the hypertonicity was probably not a result of a very low “setting” of an osmoregulator controlling the secretion of ADH. If this were the case the sodium retained on steroid therapy should, by producing hypertonicity of body fluid relative to this setting, lead to further output of ADH and further water retention, thus maintaining the hypertonic state. In these subjects, however, serum tonicity rose markedly with steroid therapy, and the urine did not even approach its maximum osmolar concentration.

It should be noted that it is not necessary that the urine be hypertonic to the plasma in order that the tonicity of the serum fall below normal or be maintained at subnormal levels; it is essential only that the “osmolality of the total intake” be lower than or equal to that of the urine.* (Fig. 7.) Indeed, all available evidence indicates that when the urine is not maximally dilute, this alone, in the presence of a normal glomerular filtration rate, constitutes evidence for the continued presence of ADH.

When W. A. was subjected to a rapid expansion of his extracellular fluid with saline slightly hypertonic to his serum, there ensued a copious diuresis of hypotonic urine (17 cc./minute with osmolar U/P .61). A response such as this to expansion of body fluid volume may explain the failure of these subjects to retain water indefinitely. It is likely that a critical expansion of volume would be reached spontaneously which would set in operation a similar train of events. It is not certain from the evidence at hand whether this phenomenon is the result of a decrease in the production of ADH or represents an “escape” from ADH as that described in normal subjects given mannitol during constant infusions of pitressin [15].

During days 1 through 6 of the metabolic study in W. A. there was no weight change and the serum osmolality fell by 62. If it is assumed that osmotic equilibrium is maintained between intracellular and extracellular fluid, and that total body water is not less than 50 per cent of the body by weight, this implies the removal of approximately 2,000 mOsmol during the six-day period. In fact, there was a slightly positive potassium balance during this period and the negative sodium and chloride balance accounted for only about 1,000 mOsmol. The hazards inherent in the rigid interpretation of cumulative metabolic data are well recognized, but this “osmotic” discrepancy appears to be significant even after liberal allowances are made for skin loss. A similar calculation for the period ending on day 11 gives comparable results. It follows, therefore, if our assumptions are correct, that progressively larger amounts of intracellular solute must have become osmotically “inactive” as the serum tonicity decreased. Whether this was a result or could possibly have been a cause of the inappropriate secretion of ADH postulated here cannot be determined from the information at hand.

During the first six days the fall in serum osmolality would have been expected to result in a gain of approximately 9 L. of intracellular water. However, as there was no increase in body weight, intracellular dilution could not have resulted from a positive water balance. There was no clinical or laboratory evidence that significant amounts of fluid had shifted from the extracellular to the intracellular space. The chloride space did not change, and the radiosodium and radiosulfate determinations showed an abnormally large extracellular volume. The blood pressure did not fall, there were no symptoms suggestive of vascular collapse, and the glomerular filtration rate was normal. One is therefore forced to the conclusion that, as suggested, intracellular solute had become osmotically “inactive.”

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*The “osmolality of the total intake” is here taken to mean the osmolality of an hypothetic solution in which all the actual and potential solute particles in the diet destined for urinary excretion are dissolved in an amount of fluid equal to that in the diet (including water of oxidation) minus that of the “insensible loss”.

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![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

**Fig. 7.** Diagram to illustrate the production of serum hypotonicity despite urine osmolality below that of plasma. Both subjects are shown as accumulating 200 cc. per day.
Weight gain did not occur in either subject when the serum sodium concentration was raised with hypertonic saline solution. When, in contrast, the serum sodium concentration rose as the result of increased tubular reabsorption of sodium produced by steroids, body weight increased and the urine volume decreased. It is unlikely that the water retention with the steroids can be attributed to increased secretion of ADH in response to the rise in serum osmolality [1,3], as in that case it should have occurred with hypertonic saline solution as well. Furthermore, the ADH output in these patients appeared in all other respects to be independent of serum tonicity. If the action of ADH is to allow a dilute tubular urine to become isonic with plasma at a distal site [10,16], then a steroid-induced increase of sodium reabsorption proximally thereto might be expected to allow it to induce more water reabsorption.

After the serum sodium had been raised by infusion of hypertonic saline solution, weight loss did not occur in either subject during the subsequent spontaneous fall in the serum sodium concentration. When steroid therapy was discontinued, however, loss of weight accompanied the sodium loss. The toxicity of the urine fell. This phenomenon may be in part a reversal of the one discussed. It is likely, however, that it represents also a response to overexpansion of the extracellular fluid, exactly analogous to that produced when W. A. was given an infusion of sodium chloride (Fig. 6.). It should be noted (Fig. 1) that the loss of sodium and water began even before DOCA was discontinued, at a time when the chloride space showed an expansion of 5.7 L. A similar escape from the influence of DOCA has been described for normal subjects [2].

These studies do not explain the mechanism whereby continued inappropriate secretion of ADH might have been produced in these patients. Each patient had a mediastinal tumor, and it may be that the stimulus arose as a result of a direct effect on some intrathoracic structure, such as the vagus nerves [17]. Each patient also had brain disease, and this may have served in some fashion to produce continued secretion of ADH. The mechanism by which inappropriate ADH in turn allows sodium loss probably involves (1) an increase of glomerular filtration rate [3] and (2) a failure of aldosterone secretion to rise as it would from the volume contraction which ordinarily accompanies sodium depletion [3].

Asymptomatic hyponatremia with appreciable sodium in the urine has been reported in patients with pulmonary tuberculosis and meningitis [18–21] and in one patient with bronchogenic carcinoma [18]. These patients resembled those reported here in showing no dehydration, vascular collapse or nitrogen retention as the serum sodium fell. In fact, normal to high extracellular fluid volumes have been observed in patients with hyponatremia and tuberculous meningitis [21,22]. Patients with so-called asymptomatic hyponatremia previously reported on differ from our subjects in that their serum sodium concentration tended to stabilize at moderately reduced levels. It is possible that the mechanism whereby hyponatremia was produced and maintained in some of the reported cases was related to that in our two patients, but critical data bearing on this point are not available.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Studies are reported on two subjects with bronchogenic carcinoma who had marked progressive hyponatremia with urinary sodium loss, despite normal renal and adrenal function. The urine was persistently hypertonic to the plasma, and contraction of body fluid volume did not occur as sodium depletion and hypotonicity of the plasma progressed. It is postulated that the underlying disease process induced in some manner a sustained, inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone, and that the syndrome was a consequence of the resultant expansion of body fluid volume.

All the essential features have been produced in normal subjects by continuous administration of pitressin and water. As with the normal subjects, restriction of fluids in the patients reported here prevented sodium loss and hyponatremia.

It is possible that the hyponatremia previously reported in patients with pulmonary and central nervous disease has a similar pathologic physiology, but critical data to settle this question are not available.

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