

THE FOURTH HAHNEMANN INTERNATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON HYPERTENSION

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**Regulation of  
Blood Pressure by the  
Central Nervous System**

**GADDO ONESTI  
MICHAEL FERNANDES  
KWAN EUN KIM**

**Editors**

**The Fourth Hahnemann  
International Symposium on Hypertension**

# **Regulation of Blood Pressure by the Central Nervous System**

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**GRUNE & STRATTON**

*A Subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers*

**New York      San Francisco      London**

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Hahnemann International Symposium on Hypertension, 4th,  
Philadelphia, 1975.

Regulation of blood pressure by the central nervous  
system.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Hypertension—Congresses. 2. Blood pressure—  
Regulation—Congresses. I. Onesti, Gaddo.  
II. Fernandes, Michael. III. Kim, Kwan Eun, 1933-  
IV. Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphi-  
a. V. Title. [DNLM: 1. Central nervous system—  
Physiology—Congresses. 2. Hypertension—Physio-  
pathology—Congresses. 3. Antihypertensive agents—  
Pharmacodynamics—Congresses. W3 HA164 1975r / WG340

H148 1975r]

RC685.H8H26 1975 616.1'32 76-10597

ISBN 0-8089-0936-3

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*Grune & Stratton, Inc.*  
*111 Fifth Avenue*  
*New York, New York 10003*

Library of Congress Catalog Number 76-10597  
International Standard Book Number 0-8089-0936-3

Printed in the United States of America

**This Symposium was made possible by  
the generous support of Boehringer Ingelheim, Ltd.**

## **Acknowledgments**

We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Robert Schaefer and his staff of the Division of Continuing Education, Hahnemann Medical College, for the organization of the Symposium.

Similarly, our thanks go to Ms. Fran Dienes, Mrs. Reese Ruiz and Miss Paullette Shamwell for their valuable assistance.

Gaddo Onesti  
Michael Fernandes  
Kwan Eun Kim

## Preface

Since the last Hahnnemann symposium, *Hypertension: Mechanisms and Management*, conducted in 1971, the role of the central system in the regulation of blood pressure has received increasing attention. Recent findings associated with the regulation of blood pressure by the central nervous system are changing the concepts of pathophysiology, and with these changes, our approach to therapy.

It is now well accepted that the central nervous system directly regulates cardiovascular functions. It follows that environmental stimuli may exert profound effects on the circulation. Thus, central nervous system abnormalities and interactions with environmental stimuli may significantly affect blood pressure.

Whether the centrally induced increases in blood pressure result in sustained hypertensive cardiovascular disease, remains to be demonstrated. It is becoming apparent, however, that the kidney may influence the circulation through the centrally mediated effect of angiotensin II. In turn, the secretion of renin by the kidney is modulated by the central nervous system. Therefore, central neurogenic activity may elicit a chain of cardiovascular and humoral events responsible for sustained hypertension.

The consideration of the importance of centrally acting antihypertensive agents follows this concept.

The introduction of clonidine has focused attention on the pivotal role of the central nervous system in the regulation of the blood pressure. The action of clonidine on the central adrenergic neurons results in a spectrum of neural and humoral effects responsible for the decrease in blood pressure. At this time, clonidine represents the prototype drug which affects the blood pressure through the central nervous system.

With these indications of the relevance of the central nervous system in pathophysiology and pharmacology of hypertension, an assessment of knowledge in this area appears necessary.

Scientists from 12 countries have prepared this volume. To them is the credit of this endeavor due.

Gaddo Onesti  
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# PART I

## **Central Control of Blood Pressure**



