Effects of hydration in rats and mice with polycystic kidney disease

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Hopp K, Wang X, Ye H, Irazabal MV, Harris PC, Torres VE.
Effects of hydration in rats and mice with polycystic kidney disease. Am J Physiol Renal Physiol 308: F261–F266, 2015. First published December 10, 2014; doi:10.1152/ajpren.00345.2014.—Vasopressin and V2 receptor signaling promote polycystic kidney disease (PKD) progression, raising the question whether suppression of vasopressin release through enhanced hydration can delay disease advancement. Enhanced hydration by adding 5% glucose to the drinking water has proven protective in a rat model orthologous to autosomal recessive PKD. We wanted to exclude a glucose effect and explore the influence of enhanced hydration in a mouse model orthologous to autosomal dominant PKD. PCK rats were assigned to normal water intake (NWI) or high water intake (HWI) groups achieved by feeding a hydrated agar diet (HWI-agar) or by feeding a hydrated diet containing 5% glucose to the drinking water (HWI-glucose), with the latter group used to recapitulate previously published results. Homozygous Pkd1 R3277C (Pkd1RC/RC) mice were assigned to NWI and HWI-agar groups. To evaluate the effectiveness of HWI, kidney weight and histomorphometry were assessed, and urine vasopressin, renal cAMP levels, and phosphodiesterase activities were measured. HWI-agar, like HWI-glucose, reduced urine vasopressin, renal cAMP levels, and PKD severity in PCK rats but not in Pkd1RC/RC mice. Compared with rat kidneys, mouse kidneys had higher phosphodiesterase activity and lower cAMP levels and were less sensitive to the cystogenic effect of 1-deamino-8-D-arginine vasopressin, as previously shown for Pkd1RC/RC mice and confirmed here in Pkd2WS2S/WS2S−/− mice. We conclude that the effect of enhanced hydration in rat and mouse models of PKD differs. More powerful suppression of V2 receptor-mediated signaling than achievable by enhanced hydration alone may be necessary to affect the development of PKD in mouse models.

POLYCYSTIC KIDNEY DISEASES (PKDs) are characterized by the development and growth of cysts arising from renal tubules and associated with enlargement of the kidneys and destruction of the renal parenchyma. Autosomal dominant PKD (AD-PKD), the fourth leading cause of end-stage kidney disease in adults, is caused by mutations to either of two genes, PKD1 or PKD2. Autosomal recessive PKD (ARPKD), an important cause of end-stage renal disease and mortality in infants and children, is caused by mutations to polycystic kidney and hepatic disease 1 (PKHD1) (9, 23).

A large body of evidence indicates that vasopressin and V2 receptor signaling promote the progression of PKD via cAMP and PKA (22). Administration of the V2 receptor antagonist 1-deamino-8-D-arginine vasopressin (DDAVP) aggravates the disease in orthologous models of ARPKD and PKD1 (10, 28). Genetic elimination of circulating vasopressin markedly inhibits the development of PKD in PCK rats, an effect that was reversed by the administration of DDAVP (28). Treatment with selective V2 receptor antagonists (mozavaptan or tolvaptan) inhibits renal cyst development in cpk mice (8) and in orthologous models of ARPKD (7, 26), PKD1 (10, 14), PKD2 (24, 25), and juvenile nephronophthisis (2, 7). A phase 3 randomized, double-blind clinical trial has shown that tolvaptan administered over 3 yr slows kidney growth and renal function decline in patients with ADPKD (20).

The effects of V2 receptor agonists and antagonists on PKD beg the question of whether suppressing vasopressin release through enhanced hydration can also delay disease progression. Indeed, Nagao et al. (16) showed that enhanced hydration by adding 5% glucose to the drinking water increased urine output 3.5-fold and slowed the progression of PKD in the PCK rat. Recently, the demonstration that phlorizin-induced glycosuria and osmotic diuresis are protective in Han:SPRD cy/+ rats has raised the question of whether the protective effect of 5% glucose in PCK rats could be due to glycosuria and increased urine flow rather than due to the suppression of vasopressin release (29). In addition, at this stage, no hydration studies have been performed in a mouse model or an orthologous ADPKD model. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine whether suppressing vasopressin release through enhanced hydration using a hydrated agar diet would be protective in PCK rats and Pkd1RC/RC mice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animal models. PCK rats (30) and C57BL/6 Pkd1RC/RC (10, 11), Pkd2WS2S/WS2S, and Pkd2−−/− (33) mice were maintained in the Animal Facilities of the Department of Veterinary Medicine of the Mayo Clinic (Rochester, MN). Pkd2+/+ and Pkd2WS2S/WS2S were crossed to generate double-heterozygous Pkd2WS2S−/− mice. The Institutional Animal Care and Utilization Committee approved all experimental protocols for the work described within this report.

Increased hydration protocols. PCK rats were randomly assigned at 4 wk of age to control normal water intake (NWI) or to one of two high water intake (HWI) groups. HWI was achieved by adding 5% glucose to the drinking water (HWI-glucose) or by feeding a hydrated diet containing 5% glucose to the drinking water (HWI-agar) or by feeding a hydrated diet containing 5% glucose to the drinking water (HWI-glucose), with the latter group used to recapitulate previously published results. Homozygous Pkd1 R3277C (Pkd1RC/RC) mice were assigned to NWI or HWI-agar groups. To evaluate the effectiveness of HWI, kidney weight and histomorphometry were assessed, and urine vasopressin, renal cAMP levels, and phosphodiesterase activities were measured. HWI-agar, like HWI-glucose, reduced urine vasopressin, renal cAMP levels, and PKD severity in PCK rats but not in Pkd1RC/RC mice. Compared with rat kidneys, mouse kidneys had higher phosphodiesterase activity and lower cAMP levels and were less sensitive to the cystogenic effect of 1-deamino-8-D-arginine vasopressin, as previously shown for Pkd1RC/RC mice and confirmed here in Pkd2WS2S/− mice. We conclude that the effect of enhanced hydration in rat and mouse models of PKD differs. More powerful suppression of V2 receptor-mediated signaling than achievable by enhanced hydration alone may be necessary to affect the development of PKD in mouse models.

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Table 1. Effect of enhanced hydration on the development of polycystic kidney disease in PCK rats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Animals</th>
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<th>Female Animals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWI</td>
<td>HWI-agar</td>
<td>HWI-glucose</td>
<td></td>
<td>NWI</td>
<td>HWI-agar</td>
<td>HWI-glucose</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Body weight, g</td>
<td>398.7 ± 19.5</td>
<td>363.6 ± 16.7‡</td>
<td>392.7 ± 19.8</td>
<td>243.7 ± 17.9</td>
<td>228.8 ± 9.92*</td>
<td>246.1 ± 14.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total kidney weight, g</td>
<td>5.72 ± 0.84</td>
<td>3.63 ± 0.39‡</td>
<td>4.45 ± 0.68*</td>
<td>2.97 ± 0.21</td>
<td>2.31 ± 0.18‡</td>
<td>2.52 ± 0.22‡</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidney weight, % body weight</td>
<td>1.44 ± 0.24</td>
<td>1.00 ± 0.12‡</td>
<td>1.13 ± 0.14‡</td>
<td>1.22 ± 0.02</td>
<td>0.99 ± 0.07‡</td>
<td>1.02 ± 0.07‡</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidney cystic index, %</td>
<td>21.9 ± 6.13</td>
<td>15.1 ± 6.56*</td>
<td>17.0 ± 3.74*</td>
<td>18.1 ± 3.75</td>
<td>14.3 ± 3.60*</td>
<td>14.4 ± 4.11*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidney fibrotic index, %</td>
<td>2.24 ± 1.62</td>
<td>0.81 ± 0.47†</td>
<td>0.83 ± 0.71*</td>
<td>2.14 ± 0.59</td>
<td>1.02 ± 0.43*</td>
<td>1.08 ± 0.35†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renal cAMP, pmoles/mg protein</td>
<td>16.3 ± 5.67</td>
<td>12.0 ± 2.33*</td>
<td>11.3 ± 5.26*</td>
<td>16.4 ± 8.0†</td>
<td>8.29 ± 2.20*</td>
<td>8.78 ± 2.92*</td>
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<td>Plasma urea, mg/dl</td>
<td>50.7 ± 3.65</td>
<td>42.7 ± 2.35§</td>
<td>41.9 ± 2.25§</td>
<td>48.6 ± 4.48</td>
<td>41.4 ± 3.93†</td>
<td>38.0 ± 3.20†</td>
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<td>Plasma creatinine, mg/dl</td>
<td>0.36 ± 0.05</td>
<td>0.31 ± 0.04*</td>
<td>0.36 ± 0.02</td>
<td>0.39 ± 0.04</td>
<td>0.35 ± 0.03*</td>
<td>0.36 ± 0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-h urine, ml</td>
<td>15.8 ± 4.08</td>
<td>62.6 ± 13.5‡</td>
<td>61.5 ± 27.2†</td>
<td>9.20 ± 1.48</td>
<td>53.5 ± 3.5†</td>
<td>53.7 ± 17.0†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urine vasopressin, pg/24 h</td>
<td>830 ± 400</td>
<td>251 ± 61‡</td>
<td>43 ± 47‡</td>
<td>607 ± 172</td>
<td>301 ± 67‡</td>
<td>81 ± 16‡</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blood pressure, mmHg</td>
<td>117.5 ± 7.75</td>
<td>119.5 ± 5.99</td>
<td>120.0 ± 5.77</td>
<td>119.5 ± 6.85</td>
<td>120.5 ± 7.25</td>
<td>119.7 ± 5.66</td>
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Values are means ± SD; n = 10 animals/group. NWI, normal water intake; HWI-agar, high water intake (HWI) with the addition of a hydrated agar diet; HWI-glucose, HWI with the addition of 5% glucose to the drinking water. *P < 0.05, †P < 0.01, and ‡P < 0.001 compared to the NWI group.
cAMP, with a marked protective effect on the development of PKD, as reflected by lower kidney weights, cystic and fibrotic indexes, plasma urea, and (HWI-agar only) plasma creatinine (Table 1 and Fig. 1A). Furthermore, ERK phosphorylation and cell proliferation pathways stimulated by vasopressin were significantly downregulated in HWI rats (Fig. 2, A, C, and E). There was no detectable effect on tail cuff blood pressures (Table 1).

**Effect of HWI-agar in Pkd1RC/RC mice.** As in PCK rats, urine flow rates were markedly increased in HWI-agar (n = 12 male mice and 12 female mice) compared with NWI Pkd1RC/RC mice (Table 2). This, however, was not accompanied by significant effects on urine vasopressin, renal cAMP, ERK phosphorylation, kidney weight, cystic and fibrotic indexes, and plasma urea or plasma creatinine levels (Table 2 and Figs. 1B and 2, B, D, and F).

**cAMP PDE activities and cAMP levels in PCK rats versus Pkd1RC/RC mice.** In a previous study (27), we showed that renal PDE activities are higher in wild-type and PKD (Pkd2WS25/) mice compared with wild-type and PKD (PCK) rats (27). Hence, we wondered whether the inability to demonstrate a beneficial effect of enhanced hydration in Pkd1RC/RC mice could be due to increased PDE activity and lower basal levels of renal cAMP, which would require a more powerful suppression of V2 receptor-mediated signaling than that achievable by enhanced hydration alone. Indeed, renal PDE activities were significantly higher and cAMP levels were significantly lower in Pkd1RC/RC mice compared with PCK rats (Fig. 3).

**Effects of DDAVP in Pkd1 and Pkd2 mouse models compared with PCK rats.** If the different ability to demonstrate an effect of water hydration in Pkd1RC/RC mice compared with PCK rats was due to higher PDE activity, we reasoned that rat models of PKD would be more sensitive than mouse models to the cystogenic effects of the V2 receptor agonist DDAVP. In previous studies (10, 28) where we ascertained the effect of DDAVP on the development of PKD, this appeared to be larger in PCK rats than in Pkd1RC/RC mice. To confirm this observation in a different mouse model of PKD, we treated Pkd2WS25/ mice with DDAVP. The combined results show that the administration of DDAVP at 10 ng·100 g−1·h−1 increased the kidney weight-to-body weight ratio by 256% and 301% in PCK rats, whereas DDAVP at 30 ng·100 g−1·h−1 increased the kidney weight-to-body weight ratio by only 38% and 46% in Pkd1RC/RC mice and by 27% and 79% in Pkd2WS25/ mice (both male and female mice, respectively; Fig. 4).

**DISCUSSION**

A large body of evidence indicates that the vasopressin V2 receptor and cAMP signaling play an important role in the pathogenesis of PKD (22). Based on this evidence, a recommendation has been made that patients with ADPKD and normal renal function increase the amount of solute-free water drunk evenly throughout the day to decrease plasma vasopressin concentrations and mitigate the action of cAMP on renal cysts (19). Although the hypothesis that enhanced hydration may slow the progression of ADPKD has not been adequately tested in patients, Nagao et al. (16) showed that enhanced hydration induced by the addition of 5% glucose to the drinking water suppressed vasopressin/V2 receptor signaling, reduced the renal levels of cAMP, and inhibited the development of PKD in the PCK rat, a model orthologous to ARPKD. The possibility that the beneficial effect of adding 5% glucose to the drinking water was due to the induction of glycosuria and increased urine flow rather than to the suppression of vasopressin has been raised by a recent report (29) showing that the development of glycosuria and osmotic diuresis by phlorizin-induced inhibition of Na+–glucose cotransporters ameliorated PKD in Han:SPRD Cy/+ rats. Our study has shown an equally protective effect when hydration was induced by the utilization of 5% glucose to the drinking water.
of a hydrated agar diet. This was associated with reduced urine vasopressin excretion and renal levels of cAMP, making it unlikely that the beneficial effect of adding 5% glucose to the drinking water was due to the induction of glycosuria or due to metabolic effects of the glucose load.

In contrast to its protective effect in the PCK rat model, enhanced hydration did not slow PKD progression in Pkd1<sup>RC/RC</sup> mice, and urine vasopressin levels remained unchanged in HWI mice despite their 10-fold greater urine output. This lack of urine vasopressin suppression may be consistent with a report (1) of inappropriate expression of vasopressin in the brain of Pkd1<sup>/H</sup>/H<sup>/H</sup> mice despite chronic low plasma osmolality or due to higher urine concentrating abilities of mice compared with rats, which thus require greater water loading to reduce vasopressin levels (34). Furthermore, it should be considered that urine vasopressin levels do not reliably reflect generation or plasma levels of vasopressin (4, 17, 18). For example, diuresis from a large water load may be accompanied by a transient paradoxical rise in vasopressin excretion while plasma osmolality decreases (17). Therefore, we cannot definitely conclude from our results that vasopressin release was not suppressed in HWI Pkd1<sup>RC/RC</sup> mice and how this correlated with the lack of disease alleviation.

Additional factors might have contributed to these unexpected results. Since vasopressin V2 receptor antagonists are effective in PCK rats, Pkd1<sup>RC/RC</sup> mice (10), and Pkd2<sup>WS25/</sup>/H<sup>/H</sup> mice (24, 25), it seems unlikely that the genes mutated (PCK rat: Pkhd1; Pkd1<sup>RC/RC</sup> mouse: Pkd1; and Pkd2<sup>WS25/</sup> mouse: Pkd2) were responsible for the observed effects.

### Table 2. Effect of enhanced hydration on the development of polycystic kidney disease in Pkd1<sup>RC/RC</sup> mice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Animals</th>
<th>Female Animals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWI</td>
<td>HWI-agar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body weight, g</td>
<td>28.0 ± 2.6</td>
<td>29.1 ± 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total kidney weight, g</td>
<td>0.58 ± 0.12</td>
<td>0.58 ± 0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney weight, %body weight</td>
<td>2.05 ± 0.29</td>
<td>2.00 ± 0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney cystic index, %</td>
<td>13.0 ± 4.5</td>
<td>15.66 ± 4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney fibrotic index, %</td>
<td>1.50 ± 1.35</td>
<td>1.58 ± 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal cAMP, pmol/mg protein</td>
<td>6.55 ± 3.73</td>
<td>7.07 ± 3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasma urea, mg/dl</td>
<td>46.8 ± 13.4</td>
<td>45.9 ± 6.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasma creatinine, mg/dl</td>
<td>0.22 ± 0.03</td>
<td>0.22 ± 0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-h urine, ml</td>
<td>1.7 ± 0.4</td>
<td>13.7 ± 2.0†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urine vasopressin, pg/12 h</td>
<td>172 ± 66</td>
<td>196 ± 113</td>
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Values are means ± SD; n = 12 animals/group. *P < 0.05 and †P < 0.001 compared with the NWI group.
account for the different effects of hydration in these animal models.

Instead, differences in intrinsic susceptibility to the development of PKD between rats and mice may be a contributory factor. In this regard, it is telling that the PCK rat exhibits renal cysts at or soon after birth (13), whereas most 

\[ \text{Pkd1} \]

knockout mice only develop renal cysts at an advanced age or not at all (3, 5, 6, 15, 31, 32). The renal phenotype of 

\[ \text{Pkd1} \] or 

\[ \text{Pkd2} \] heterozygous knockout mice is similarly normal or very mild; unfortunately, no 

\[ \text{Pkd1} \] or 

\[ \text{Pkd2} \] rat model currently exists (21).

Furthermore, in previous studies, we and others (12, 27) reported higher PDE activities in kidneys from mice compared with those from rats. Since the hydrolytic capacity of PDEs far exceeds the maximum rate of synthesis by adenylyl cyclases, cellular levels of cAMP may be more sensitive to changes in PDEs compared with those in adenylyl cyclases. Therefore, a variation in cyclic nucleotide PDE activities may determine variable susceptibility to renal cystic disease. The observations in the present study, namely, the lower renal cAMP PDE activities and higher cAMP levels, as well as the increased susceptibility to the cystogenic effect of DDAVP in rats compared with mice, provide support for this hypothesis.

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DISCLOSURES

No conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, are declared by the author(s).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS


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