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The effect of ice-slushy consumption on plasma vasoactive intestinal peptide during prolonged exercise in the heat

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of exercise in the heat on thermoregulatory responses and plasma vasoactive intestinal peptide concentration (VIP) and whether it is modulated by ice-slushy consumption. Ten male participants cycled at 62% $\dot{V}O_2$max for 90 min in 32 °C and 40% relative humidity. A thermoneutral (37 °C) or ice-slushy (−1 °C) sports drink was given at 3.5 ml kg^{-1} body mass every 15 min during exercise. VIP and rectal temperature increased during exercise (mean ± standard deviation: 4.6 ± 4.4 pmol L^{-1}, P=0.005; and 1.3 ± 0.4 °C, P < 0.001 respectively) and were moderately associated (r=0.35, P=0.008). While rectal temperature and VIP were not different between trials, ice-slushy significantly reduced heat storage (P=0.010) and skin temperature (time × trial interaction P=0.038). It appears that VIP does not provide the signal linking cold beverage ingestion and lower skin temperature in the heat.

1. Introduction

It has been suggested that the temperature of fluids ingested during exercise may influence thermoregulation (Lee and Shirreffs, 2007). The hormone vasoactive intestinal peptide (VIP) is a potent vasodilator (Jenssen et al., 1988) that can alter peripheral blood flow (Said and Mutt, 1970b) and may have a role in circulatory and thermoregulatory adaptations to exercise (Hilsted et al., 1980). The rationale behind the present study was to investigate whether there was a link between changes in plasma VIP and cold beverage ingestion.

It is well documented that endurance exercise in a hot environment increases body core temperature which triggers sweating and an increase in skin blood flow (SBF) which helps to dissipate body heat (Gisolfi and Wenger, 1984). As substantial fluid loss from sweating results in a decrease in plasma volume which may further contribute to the rise in rectal temperature (Tr) (Montain and Coyle, 1992), regular and adequate fluid ingestion is recommended (Sawka et al., 2007). Recently, there has been interest in consumption of cold beverages to enhance thermoregulation and exercise performance in the heat. Cold beverage ingestion has been observed to decrease rectal (Tr) and skin temperature (Tsk) compared to thermoneutral beverages (Armstrong et al., 1985; Lee and Shirreffs, 2007; Lee et al., 2008b; Wimer et al., 1997). The mechanism underpinning the effect of cold beverage ingestion on thermoregulation (Tr, Tsk and heat storage) during prolonged exercise requires further investigation. Specifically, the association between cold beverage consumption and lowered Tsk suggests that a signal may exist between the two factors.

Skin temperature is considered a quasi-index of SBF (Charkoudian, 2003) which increases during exercise in the heat to assist with heat loss via convection, radiation and sweat evaporation (Gisolfi and Wenger, 1984). A reduction in Tsk and/or SBF coupled with a reduction in heart rate (HR) is consistent with a reduction in cardiovascular strain following cold beverage ingestion (Armstrong et al., 1985; Lee and Shirreffs, 2007; Lee et al., 2008b; Wimer et al., 1997). This reduction in Tsk and skin blood flow may be due to a decrease in the circulating hormone VIP. Previous studies have demonstrated that VIP increases with exercise duration (4–20 pmol L^{-1}) (Galbo et al., 1979; Hilsted et al., 1980; Schaffalitzky de Muckadell et al., 1977) and with passive

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heat exposure (Jenssen et al., 1988). VIP is known to have receptors in both the skin and gastrointestinal (GI) tract and is a potent vasodilator, including of the skin (Bennett et al., 2003; Said and Mutt, 1970a) and is a candidate for the signal between cold beverage ingestion and decreased Tsk. A possible mechanism is that ingestion of the cold beverage inhibits release of VIP from nerve fibres in the gut into the plasma which leads to lower cutaneous vasodilatation and reduced skin blood flow and skin temperature. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the effect of serial consumption of a cold beverage during exercise on VIP and thermoregulatory responses. We hypothesised that during prolonged exercise in the heat, serial consumption of ice-slushy (ICE) would reduce Tsk and VIP compared to a thermoneutral control beverage (CON).

2. Methods

Healthy, male, naturally heat acclimatised, endurance cyclists or triathletes were targeted for recruitment. After completing a medical screening questionnaire, participants gave written informed consent which was obtained according to the Declaration of Helsinki. Ten participants (data given as mean ± standard deviation; age: 30.1 ± 7.0 years; height: 175 ± 6.5 cm; body mass: 75.1 ± 9.4 kg; estimated body fat 12.3 ± 2.7%; $\dot{V}O_2$max: 61.8 ± 5.6 ml kg^{-1} min^{-1}) completed the study which was approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee.

2.1. Preliminary measures

At the beginning of the first visit, participants were measured for nude body mass (Mettler ID 1, Albstadt, Germany) and stretch stature to the nearest 0.5 cm using a stadiometer (Harpenden, United Kingdom). Hydrostatic weighing was used to estimate body composition. Participants wore a nose-clip, expired maximally and were submerged sitting on a chair suspended from a scale (Chatillon, New York). Weight was recorded when participants were motionless under water. Residual volume was estimated (van der Ploeg et al., 2000) by assessing the composition of oxygen and carbon dioxide in rebreathed air (5 L pure oxygen). Body density (Goldman and Buskirk, 1961), fat free mass and percent body fat (Siri, 1956) were calculated. Underwater weighing was repeated three times and the result accepted if at least 2 measures were within 1%.

Peak aerobic capacity was measured on a cycle ergometer (Lode Excalibur, Groningen, Netherlands). The test consisted of four sub-maximal steady-state power outputs of five min each (100, 150, 200, 250 W) followed by an incremental increase in power (30 W min^{-1}) until volitional fatigue. Expired air was collected using a Douglas bag for a minimum of 40 s during each stage and prior to fatigue. Samples were analysed with Servomex Pm1111E and Ir1507 sensors (Servomex, Crowborough, UK) to determine oxygen and carbon dioxide fractions. Gas volume was measured with a dry gas meter (Harvard, UK). Power output and $\dot{V}O_2$ during the sub-maximal exercise was used to calculate workload for the following trials using linear regression.

2.2. Experimental design

Participants attended the laboratory for three sessions: a preliminary (described above) and two experimental trials, ingesting either ice slushy −1 °C (ICE) or thermoneutral 37 °C (CON) beverages. The experimental trials were performed in a randomised order separated by 7–21 days.

During the experimental trials, participants cycled on the ergometer at steady state for 90 min in a climate chamber at 32 °C, 40% relative humidity (RH) and wind speed set at 3.6 km h^{-1}. The selected power output based on the previous peak aerobic capacity test was calculated to elicit 60% of $\dot{V}O_2$peak using self-selected cadence. A commercially available 7.4% carbohydrate-electrolyte sports drink (Powerade Isotonic, Coca-Cola Amatil, Australia) was consumed every 15 min at 3.5 ml per kg body weight in both trials. The temperature of CON was controlled by a thermostatic water bath (E-5A, Julabo, Germany) and ICE was made using a commercial 'slush' machine (Iceotonic, Essential Slush, Australia). Beverage temperature was checked prior to consumption using an electronic thermometer (Thermistor 400 series, Cole Parmer, Illinois, USA). Beverage composition and carbohydrate consumption was the same for both trials.

Heart rate (S410, Polar Electro, Kempele, Finland) was taken every minute during SS. Expired air was collected using a Douglas bag for 1 min at 10, 30, 60 and 90 min. Rectal temperature was recorded via a custom made rectal probe every minute. Skin temperature was recorded every minute using four skin thermistors (DS1921H-F5 ibutton, Maxim, USA) placed on the left side (upper chest, mid humerus, mid calf and mid thigh) and were combined to give an overall temperature: $Tsk = 0.3\,T_{chest} + 0.3\,T_{arm} + 0.2T_{thigh} + 0.2T_{leg}$ (Ramanathan, 1964). Whole body skin blood flow was calculated from Tr and Tsk measurements using the following equation: $\dot{Q}_{sk} = 1/C \times h/(Tr - Tsk)$, where $\dot{Q}_{sk}$ is skin blood flow, C is specific heat of blood (≈ 0.87 kcal °C^{-1} l^{-1}) and h is work measured by $\dot{V}O_2$ (L min^{-1}) (Rowell, 1986). Body heat storage (HS, W min^{-2}) was estimated as: $(0.8\Delta Tr + 0.2\Delta Tsk)c_p$, where c_p is specific heat of body tissue (Havenith et al., 1995). The specific heat of body tissue was adjusted for percent fat mass (3.49 kJ °C^{-1} kg^{-1}; (Aoyagi et al., 1996)).

To control for the effect of diet and hydration status, guidelines to consume a minimum of 6 g of carbohydrate per kilogram of body-mass were provided to participants and they were instructed to drink fluid at 30 ml per kilogram of body mass. To improve compliance to dietary control, these guidelines were based on food consumed when participants completed a three day food diary prior to commencement of the study. This recommended diet was consumed in the 24 h prior to each visit and confirmed with a 24 h food diary. Dietary intake was analysed using Australian dietary analysis software (FoodWorks Version 7.0.2921, Xyris Pty Ltd.). Participants refrained from strenuous activity and alcohol and replicated caffeine consumption for 24 h before fasting for 6 h (except water consumption) prior to presenting to the lab. Participants commenced each trial at the same time each day.

2.3. Blood analysis

2.3.1. Osmolality

At rest, a cannula was inserted into the antecubital vein. Prior to and post exercise 4 ml blood was collected, left to clot, centrifuged, the serum removed and osmolality determined by a cryoscopic osmometer (Osmomat 030, Gonotec, Berlin, Germany). Euhydration was considered to be a blood osmolality < 290 mOsmol/kg.

2.3.2. VIP

At rest, 30 min, 60 min and post exercise, 6 mL blood was collected in EDTA tubes containing Trasylol (3000 KIU in a 6 ml tube) and the tube placed in an ice bath. Following centrifugation at 4 °C the plasma was removed and stored at −85 °C. Samples were analysed for VIP using a commercial RIA kit (EURIA-VIP, Euro Diagnostica, Malmo, Sweden). Tubes were counted using a Wizard 1470 gamma counter (Perkin Elmer, MA, USA). The sensitivity of the VIP assay was 3 pmol L^{-1}.