Coronary Prevention in Current Diabetic Practice

A series of papers presented at a Symposium held on 16 November 1990 at Bolton, Lancs.

Introduction – P.N. Durrington

Coronary heart disease in diabetes mellitus: antecedents and associations – P.H. Winocour.


The smoker with diabetes: a difficult challenge – I.A. MacFarlane.


Hypertension in non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus and its management – M.D. Feher.

Specific lipid-lowering therapy in the management of diabetes – P.N. Durrington.

Introduction

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If it were the case that the morbidity and premature mortality from atheromatous disease in diabetes was inevitable and wholly unavoidable, then it would, of course, be the height of foolishness to try to remedy matters. What does appear to be the case is, however, that a great deal has been learnt, certainly about coronary heart disease (CHD) and its prevention, and that the application of this knowledge in diabetic practice is long overdue. The purpose of the symposium was to review what practical measures could be applied to coronary prevention in the diabetic clinic on the basis of present knowledge. Winocour, Bain and Dodson, in the first two articles, discuss some of the factors, which allow us, as clinicians, to identify patients at particular risk of CHD. MacFarlane provides us with some depressing statistics about smoking in diabetes and makes one question whether the message is being driven home hard enough to our patients. The importance of considering the effect of dietary and pharmacological measures to control glycaemia on CHD risk is discussed by Merrin and Elkeles. Feher makes a strong case for not treating hypertension in diabetes as if it were an isolated risk factor and for considering the whole patient when selecting antihypertensive agents. Finally, I round off the discussion with the view that the time has come for active management of hyperlipidaemia in diabetes, if we are to take coronary prevention seriously.

In Britain, as far as CHD prevention goes, we may be getting a little too close to the second line of Pope’s couplet and it is time to redress the balance. ‘Be not the first by whom the new are tried, Nor yet the last to lay the old aside’.

Acknowledgements

The organizers thank Parke-Davis Ltd for providing financial support for the meeting.
Introduction

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doi: 10.1136/pgmj.67.792.916

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