This invention relates to a method for treating and preventing hypertension by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment. Additionally, the scope of the invention includes a method of treating coronary heart disease by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.
FIG. 3A

FIG. 3B
FIG. 5A

FIG. 5B
FIG. 8

Systolic Blood Pressure (mmHg)

Weeks

baseline 2 4 5 6 7

- enalapril (1mg/kg/day) - oxonic acid - L-arginine (1%)

* * * * * *
FIG. 10A

Arteriolar Intimogenesis

50 40 30 20 10 0

FIG. 10B

Fold Increase Over Type IV Collagen Expression in VEH Group

20 16 12 8

FIG. 10C

Fibrosis Score (H&E)

20 16 12 8

FIG. 10D

Fold Increase Over Macrophage Infiltration in VEH Group

20 16 12 8

FIG. 10E

Fold Increase Over OPN Expression in VEH Group

20 16 12 8
TREATMENT FOR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

[0001] This application claims priority from co-pending provisional application Ser. No. 60/214,825 filed on Jun. 28, 2000.

[0002] The U.S. Government has a paid-up license in this invention and a right in limited circumstances to require the patent owner to license others on reasonable terms as provided for by the terms of National Institute of Health Grant No. DK 47659.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Uric acid is a purine metabolite that in most animals is degraded by the hepatic enzyme uricase to allantoin. However, several mutations of the gene for this enzyme occurred during early primate development with the consequence that man and other primates have relatively higher levels of serum uric acid [Wu, X., Muzny, D. M., Lee, C. C., and Caskey, C. T. Two independent mutational events resulted in the loss of urate oxidase during hominid evolution. J. Mol. Evol. 34:78-84 (1992)]. The adaptive benefit of this deletion is not known nor has the modern day consequences of these mutations been fully understood. It has been hypothesized that the loss of uricase provided a protective benefit to prehistoric man who was known to have a very low sodium diet [Eaton, S. B., Konner, and M., Paleolithic nutrition: A consideration of its nature and current implications. N Engl J Med 312: 283-289 (1985)] but in modern times these mutations resulted in the development of hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases. In most subjects, the loss of uricase appears to be of no significance, but for the 10 to 15 percent of the general population with the highest uric acid levels (>6.0 mg/dl in women and >6.5 mg/dl in men), there is an increased risk for the development of hypertension, atherosclerosis, and other cardiovascular diseases. Additionally 25 to 50% of hypertensive individuals have elevated serum uric acid, based upon the current standards 7 mg/dl [Cannon, P. J., Sason, W. B., Demartini, F. E., Sommers, S. C., and Laragh, J. H., Hyperuricemia in primary and renal hypertension. N Engl J Med 275:457-464 (1966)]. This invention demonstrates for the first time mechanistic evidence that uric acid is directly related to the development of increased blood pressure.


Hyperuricemia, defined as serum uric acid levels >7.0 mg/dl in man and >6.0 mg/dl in women, is a common metabolic abnormality that is observed in 4 to 6% of the population (Wynagarden J. B. and Kelley W. N., Epidemiology of hyperuricemia and gout. In *Gout and Hyperuricemia*, Grune and Stratton, New York, 1976, pp 21-37). The major risks classically attributed to hyperuricemia have been the risk of developing gout and/or uric acid renal stones. Patients


[0010] A novel pathway has been demonstrated where uric acid, a purine metabolite present in the blood, actually causes hypertension and renal disease. It is known that markedly elevated uric acid can crystallize in the tubules of the kidney and cause kidney failure. The invention disclosed here is that mildly elevated uric acid levels can also cause renal disease and hypertension. Furthermore, it has been shown that this action is mediated in part by activation of the renin-angiotensin system in the kidney and by the inhibition of nitric oxide synthases (NOS) within the kidney.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0011] This invention relates to a method for treating and preventing hypertension by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment. Additionally, the scope of the invention includes a method of treating coronary heart disease by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment. The agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels is selected from the group consisting of gene therapy, a xanthine oxidase inhibitor, a uricosuric agent, supplements of the uric acid protein and a urate channel inhibitor or combinations thereof. Also within the scope of the invention is a pharmaceutical composition, comprising a renin angiotensin system (RAS) inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and the agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof capable of reducing uric acid levels, and a pharmaceutical carrier, or a combination therapy comprising the concomitant, simultaneous or sequential administration of the RAS inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and the agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0012] The file of this patent contains at least one drawing executed in color. Copies of this patent with color drawing(s) will be provided by the Patent and Trademark Office upon request and payment of the necessary fee.

[0013] FIG. 1—A Model of Mild Hyperuricemia in Rats. Rats treated with oxonic acid (2%) develop mild hyperuricemia compared to controls on a normal salt diet (FIG. 1A). Light microscopy (PAS, 50x) at 7 weeks is normal (FIG. 1B) and no urate crystals are present by DeGalaLlanta (50x) stain of 100% ethanol-fixed tissue (FIG. 1C). For comparison, we have included a DeGalaLlanta stain in rats with acute urate nephropathy showing intratubular urate crystals (FIG. 1D). [Key: ▲ oxonic acid; ▼ control]

[0014] FIG. 2—Hyperuricemia Elevates Blood Pressure in Rats. Rats placed on oxonic acid (2%) develop a modest elevation of blood pressure after 3 weeks on a normal sodium (0.26% NaCl) diet. *p<0.05 versus control. [Key: ▲ oxonic acid; ▼ control]
[0015] FIG. 3—Hyperuricemia Maintains and Elevates Blood Pressure in Rats on a Low Salt diet. Control rats placed on a mild salt restriction (0.125% NaCl diet) have a fall in blood pressure after several weeks; this is prevented in the presence of oxonic acid (2%). Rats placed on oxonic acid and low salt diet that are also administered allopurinol do not show the increase in blood pressure. FIG. 3A shows the blood pressures, and FIG. 3B shows the uric acid levels. [Key: ■, oxonic acid; □, control; ○, allopurinol+oxonic acid] * p<0.05 vs. oxonic acid alone.

[0016] FIG. 4—Hyperuricemia Correlates with Blood Pressure. Shown are the serum uric acid levels in individual rats on a low salt diet (closed circles), low salt+oxonic acid (open circles) and on a low salt diet+oxonic acid+allopurinol (triangles) at 7 weeks with the corresponding systolic blood pressures. A strong correlation is present (r=0.7, n=52, p<0.001).

[0017] FIG. 5—Effect of Allopurinol Intervention or Oxonic Acid Withdrawal on Blood Pressure in Hyperuricemic Rats. Rats were placed on low salt diet plus oxonic acid (2%) for 7 weeks and then matched on basis of uric acid level and blood pressure into 3 groups (Oxonic acid plus low salt diet (OA/LSD); Withdrawal of oxonic acid but continuation of the LSD (OA withdrawal); and the addition of allopurinol (150 mg/L drinking water) with continuation of the OA/LSD diet (Allopurinol). FIG. 5A shows the blood pressures, and FIG. 5B shows the uric acid levels. [Key: ■, oxonic acid; □, oxonic acid withdrawal; ○, allopurinol+oxonic acid].

[0018] FIG. 6—Renal Fibrosis Develops in Hyperuricemic Rats. Rats treated with oxonic acid (2%) and a low salt diet for 11 weeks develop significant striped interstitial fibrosis, as shown by immunostaining for interstitial type III collagen (FIG. 6A). Control rats on a low salt diet do not develop any evidence of interstitial disease (FIG. 6B). Renal fibrosis was less in oxonic acid-treated rats in which allopurinol was administered for 4 weeks prior to sacrifice (FIG. 6C).

[0019] FIG. 7—Renin Correlates with Serum Uric Acid in Rats on a Low Salt Diet. There was a direct correlation between renin (measured as the % of glomeruli with juxtaglomerular renin staining) and serum uric acid levels in rats on a low sodium diet (r=0.7, n=18, p<0.0006). [Key: ○, oxonic acid; ●, low salt diet control; □, allopurinol+oxonic acid].

[0020] FIG. 8—The Elevated BP in Hyperuricemic Rats is Prevented by Treatment with an ACE inhibitor or with L-Arginine. Rats placed on a low salt diet with oxonic acid develop an elevated blood pressure (OA/LSD), which is prevented if enalapril (1 mg/kg/d) or L-Arginine (1%) is added to the drinking water. *p<0.05 versus OA/LSD. [Key: ■, oxonic acid; ●, L-arginine; □, enalapril].

[0021] FIG. 9—Hyperuricemia exacerbates chronic cyclosporine nephropathy. Cyclosporine alone results in classic chronic tubulointerstitial disease [A], which is worse in rats that are also hyperuricemic [B] (striped fibrosis indicated by arrows). Similarly, Cyclosporine-Oxonic Acid rats show greater osteopontin expression [D], macrophage infiltration [F] and type III collagen deposition [H], compared to respective controls [C,E,G]. (Magnification: hematoxylin-eosin ×50, OPN ×25, ED-1 ×100, type III collagen ×50).

[0022] FIG. 10—Effect of Hyperuricemia alone and in combination with cyclosporine on renal interstitium. Group 3, cyclosporine treated rats (CSA, gray columns) presented increased interstitial fibrosis score [A], arteriolar hyalinosis [B], osteopontin expression [C], macrophage infiltration [D] and type III collagen deposition [E], compared to Group 1, vehicle treated rats (VEH, white columns). These findings are greatest in group 4, rats treated with both cyclosporine and oxonic acid (CSA-OA group, black columns). (*p<0.05 compared to VEH. **p<0.05 compared to VEH and CSA).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] This invention relates to a method of treating hypertension comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment. A reduction in uric acid levels would reduce the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, renal dysfunction, cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. Current standards for elevated uric acid levels are 7 mg/dl. However, patients with uric acid levels of 10 mg/dl are at risk for the above-noted cardiovascular conditions, between 6 and 10 mg/dl are at an increased risk for the above-noted cardiovascular conditions, or a reduced risk with uric acid levels of >4 and <6 mg/dl.

[0024] A method of preventing hypertension comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

[0025] A method of treating coronary heart disease comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

[0026] A method of treating and preventing eclampsia comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

[0027] An agent capable of reducing uric acid levels by about 0.2 mg/dl. The agent capable of reducing uric acid levels, which is selected from the group consisting of: gene therapy, a xanthine oxidase inhibitor, a uricosuric agent; supplements of the uricase protein and a urate channel inhibitor, or combinations of these agents. Specific examples of agents that are capable of reducing uric acid levels include but are not limited to:

[0028] a gene therapy such as one that targets the expression of uricase, the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of uric acid to allantoin;

[0029] a xanthine oxidase inhibitor, such as allopurinol, and carprofen;

[0030] a uricosuric agent, which is defined as an inhibitor of the organic anion transport channels and/or voltage sensitive transport channels acting in the kidney, such agents include but are not limited to: losartan, benzbromarone, benzdoradine, probenecid, sulfpirmerazone ethosbenedic, orotic acid, trecynaen and zoazolamide;

[0031] a supplement of the uricase protein which might be delivered as a conjugate with polyethylene glycol or another delivery system; and

[0032] a urate channel inhibitor, is a means for interfering with the uric acid transport mechanism by blocking the influx of uric acid into cells.

[0033] A pharmaceutical composition comprising a renin angiotensin system (RAS) inhibitor or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and the agent capable of reducing uric acid levels or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as recited above and a pharmaceutical carrier. The renin angiotensin system inhibitor, such as an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor; an angiotensin II antagonist and a renin inhibitor. Representative RAS inhibitors include: captopril,
cilazapril, enalapril, lisinopril, quinapril, ramipril, zofenopril, candesartan cilexetil, eprosartan, irbesartan, losartan, tasosartan, tehisartan, and valsartan, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof. Also within the scope of this invention is the combination of an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels with a combination RAS inhibitor with a diuretic, such as hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide, etc. Specific examples, include but are not limited to the above RAS inhibitors with hydrochlorothiazide.

[0034] A combination therapy comprising the administration, concomitantly, simultaneously or sequentially, of therapeutically effective amounts of a RAS inhibitor and the agent capable of reducing uric acid levels as recited above. Also within the scope of this invention is the combination therapy as recited above that includes an agent capable of reducing uric acid levels with a combination RAS inhibitor with a diuretic, such as hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide, etc. Specific examples, include but are not limited to the above RAS inhibitors with hydrochlorothiazide.

[0035] Also within the scope of the invention is a pharmaceutical composition comprising an agent which stimulates nitric oxide production via endothelial and/or neuronal nitric oxide synthase or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and the agent capable of reducing uric acid levels or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as recited above and a pharmaceutical carrier. An agent which stimulates nitric oxide production via endothelial and/or neuronal nitric oxide including, but not limited to L-Arginine, nitrates and nitrate mimetics and gene therapy, such as one that targets the overexpression endothelial and/or neuronal nitric oxide synthase.

[0036] The studies were performed on rats in which the serum uric acid was raised to a mild (1.5 to 2.0-fold) degree, using an enzyme inhibitor of uricase, an enzyme involved in the degradation of uric acid. Rats made mildly hyperuricemic developed significant hypertension within a few weeks, and this was associated with stimulation of renin (documented by renin staining in the kidney) and by a fall in neuronal NOS in the macula densa (a tubular segment in the kidney involved in regulation of renal blood flow) and of endothelial cell NOS. Associated with these findings was the development of renal fibrosis with increased collagen deposition and macrophage infiltration. These changes could be prevented by lowering the uric acid with allopurinol.

[0037] The studies provide a mechanism for the long-observed association of uric acid with hypertension, cardiovascular disease and renal disease, and for the first time provides direct experimental evidence that uric acid is causal rather than simply a marker for associated cardiovascular risk factors. It thus provides the first direct rationale for lowering uric acid as a means for not only preventing the development of hypertension but also for its treatment—a substantial finding given that 25% of the world's population will become hypertensive. It is also relevant to a number of other diseases, including eclampsia (a disease afflicting pregnant women associated with hypertension, renal disease and an elevated uric acid but in which the latter was thought only to be a marker), to cyclosporine nephropathy (one of the complications of transplantation in which hypertension, renal disease and an elevated uric acid are central features), to progressive renal disease, and even to aging associated hypertension and renal disease. The observation that blacks have higher uric acid levels also provides a mechanism to explain the reason they are more susceptible to hypertension.

[0038] The studies show that increasing the uric acid level in the rat will cause hypertension and renal disease, and that lowering it will lower the blood pressure and prevent the development of renal disease. So far we have used pharmacological agents for this purpose—such as the use of allopurinol, losartan, or benzlodarone. However, there are numerous other possible ways to lower uric acid—these could include repleting humans with uricase (the enzyme that degrades uric acid to allantoin). Unlike most mammals, man had a series of mutations of the uricase gene early in his evolution—we have hypothesized that during this period, when man was on a very low salt diet, that the increase in uric acid would have helped maintain blood pressure under those conditions. Indeed, this was confirmed by our experimental studies in the rat. However, it may be now prudent to replace uricase in man as a means for preventing the development of hypertension—this could be done by gene therapy or by supplying the uricase protein, such as by conjugation with polyethylene glycol or other method. Future therapies might also be directed at blocking the influx of uric acid into cells by interfering with the uric acid transport mechanism.

juvenile hyperuricaemic nephropathy? J Inher Metab Dis 20:351-353 (1997). The documentation that an elevated uric acid causes hypertension also helps resolve the clinical and epidemiological controversies surrounding the role of uric acid in cardiovascular disease, as multivariate analyses would not be expected to show uric acid to be an independent risk factor when controlled for variables to which it is causally linked [Johnson, R. J., and Tuttle, K., Much ado about nothing, or much to do about something: The continuing controversy on the role of uric acid in cardiovascular disease. Hypertension 35:E10-E10 (2000)].

**[0040]** While the data suggests that an elevated uric acid can increase blood pressure and induce renal disease through a mechanism that involves activation of the renin angiotensin system and inhibition of neuronal nitric oxide synthase, it is important to recognize that there may be additional mechanisms by which uric acid contributes to cardiovascular disease. Indeed, there are other studies that have shown that uric acid remains an independent cardiovascular risk factor even after controlling for hypertension and renal disease [Fang, J., and Alderman, M. H., Serum uric acid and cardiovascular mortality. The NHANES I Epidemiologic Follow-up Study, 1971-1992 JAMA 283:2404-2410 (2000), Bengtsson, C., Lapidus, L., Stendahl, C., and Waldenström, J., Hyperuricaemia and risk of cardiovascular disease and overall death. Acta Med Scand 224:549-55 (1988), and Alderman, M. H., Cohen, H., Madhavan, S., and Kivlighn, S., Serum uric acid and cardiovascular events in successfully treated hypertensive patients. Hypertension 34:144-150 (1999)].

**[0041]** Finally, the observation that inhibition of uricase can prevent the fall of blood pressure under low salt conditions provides a mechanism to explain why the mutations of the uricase gene, giving rise to an elevated uric acid, were preferentially conserved during early primate development. Indeed, studies had suggested that humans were on a very low sodium diet (20-40 mmol/day of sodium) for the great majority (99.8%) of the last 3.5 million years, and it is only in the last several thousand years that man has been on the modern day, high salt diet [Eaton, S. B., and Konner, M., Paleolithic nutrition: A consideration of its nature and current implications. N Engl J Med 312:283-289 (1985)]. It is also of interest that studies of primitive societies have documented a low prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular disease [Young, D. B., Lin, H., and McCabe, R. D., Potassium’s cardioprotective mechanisms. Am J Physiol 268:R825-R837 (1995), and Tobin, J. Salt and hypertension. Lessons from animal models that relate to human hypertension. Hypertension 17(suppl I]:152-158 (1991)], suggesting that the current ‘epidemic’ of cardiovascular disease and hypertension may be a consequence of modern society. While this mutation may have benefited early humans, it is hypothesized that in modern societies it plays a critical role in the pathogenesis of hypertension and cardiovascular disease.


**[0044]** The first finding was that CSA, independent of oxonic acid, was associated with an increase in serum uric acid with a tendency for a reduction in fractional urate excretion. In rats receiving CSA and oxonic acid, the serum urate levels were higher but the fractional urate excretion remained low to normal. These findings are similar to those observed in humans [Hoyer, P. F., Lee, I. K., Oemar, B. S., Krohn, H. P., Offner, G., and Brodhel, J., Renal handling of uric acid under cyclosporine A treatment. Pediatr Nephrol 1988; 2:18, and Cohen, S. L., Boner, G., Rosenfeld, J. B., et al., The mechanism of hyperuricemia in cyclosporine-treated renal transplant recipients. Transplant Proc 1987; 19:1829;] and document the clinical relevance of this model.
The second important finding of this study was that hyperuricemia significantly exacerbated the tubulointerstitial disease and arteriolal hyalinosis induced by cyclosporine. Parameters analyzed included osteopontin, which is a sensitive marker of tubulointerstitial injury, interstitial and glomerular macrophage accumulation and interstitial deposition of type III collagen. Interestingly, all of these parameters were significantly worse in rats treated with CSA and OA compared to rats treated with CSA alone.

The mechanism by which hyperuricemia exacerbates renal disease is of intense interest. An important finding in our study is that it does not involve intrarenal crystal deposition. Utilizing different stains for uric acid we were unable to identify crystals in these lesions. Furthermore, the pattern of tissue injury was more consistent with an "ischemic" pattern [Duncan, H., and Dixon, A. S., Gout, familial hyperuricemia and renal disease. Q.J Med 1960; 29: 127.] as opposed to an "obstructive" pattern as seen with crystal induced intratubular deposition [Waisman, J., Mwasi, L. M., Bluestone, R., and Klinenberg, J. R., Acute hyperuricemic nephropathy in rats. An electron microscopy study. Am J Pathol 1975; 81(2): 367, and Tykarski, A., Evaluation of renal handling of uric acid in essential hypertension: hyperuricemia related to decreased urate secretion. Nephron 1991; 59:364]. In addition the ability of CSA to reduce the fractional excretion of urate resulted in urinary levels lower than that associated with the acute urate nephropathy model, in which urinary urate excretion is typically increased [Bluestone, J., Waisman, J., and Klinenberg, J. R., Chronic experimental hyperuricemic nephropathy. Biochemical and morphological characterization. Lab Invest 1975; 33(3): 273].


The presence of hyperuricemia in rats with CSA-induced nephropathy is associated with significantly worse tubulointerstitial renal injury, but does not involve intrarenal crystal deposition. This finding has significant implications not only in our understanding of the pathogenesis of CSA nephropathy, but also in the role of hyperuricemia in the progression of renal disease.

The following examples illustrate this method of treatment/prevention, and as such are not to be considered as limiting the invention set forth in the claims appended hereto.

EXAMPLES

Experimental Design

All studies utilized adult male Sprague-Dawley rats (Simonsen Laboratories, Gilroy Calif.) (200-250 g).

Example 1

Rats were placed on a low sodium diet (NaCl, 0.125%) with or without 2% oxonic acid for 7 weeks. A third group were administered allopurinol in the drinking water (150 mg/L) with weekly adjustments of the dose depending on the uric acid level.

Example 2

Rats were placed on a low sodium diet (NaCl, 0.125%) with or without 2% oxonic acid for 7 weeks. A third group were administered allopurinol in the drinking water (150 mg/L) with weekly adjustments of the dose depending on the uric acid level.

Example 3

Rats were placed on the low sodium diet with oxonic acid for 7 weeks, and then were matched based on uric acid level and blood pressure in various groups to either receive allopurinol, have the oxonic acid withdrawn from the diet, or continue the oxonic acid/low salt diet. A control group of six rats were placed on the low sodium diet alone for 11 weeks. All of these rats were sacrificed at week 11.

Example 4

Rats were placed on either low salt diet, low salt diet with 2% oxonic acid, low salt diet with oxonic acid and enalapril (1 mg/kg/d in drinking water), or low salt diet with oxonic acid and L-Arginine (1% in drinking water).

Example 5

Systolic blood pressure was measured by tail cuff sphygmonanometer using an automated system with photoelectric sensor (ITTC, Life Science) that has been shown to closely correlate with intra-arterial blood pressure measurements [Fischer E., Schnermann, J., Briggs, J. P., Kriz, W., Ronco, P. M., and Bachmann, S., Ontogeny of NO synthase and renin in juxtaglomerular apparatus of rat kidneys. Am J Physiol 268:F1164-76, 1995].

Example 6

Systolic blood pressure was measured by tail cuff sphygmonanometer using an automated system with photoelectric sensor (ITTC, Life Science) that has been shown to closely correlate with intra-arterial blood pressure measurements [Fischer E., Schnermann, J., Briggs, J. P., Kriz, W., Ronco, P. M., and Bachmann, S., Ontogeny of NO synthase and renin in juxtaglomerular apparatus of rat kidneys. Am J Physiol 268:F1164-76, 1995].

Example 7

Systolic blood pressure was measured by tail cuff sphygmonanometer using an automated system with photoelectric sensor (ITTC, Life Science) that has been shown to closely correlate with intra-arterial blood pressure measurements [Fischer E., Schnermann, J., Briggs, J. P., Kriz, W., Ronco, P. M., and Bachmann, S., Ontogeny of NO synthase and renin in juxtaglomerular apparatus of rat kidneys. Am J Physiol 268:F1164-76, 1995].

Functional Data:

Serum and urine uric acid were measured by a carbonate phosphotungstate method [Henry, R. J., Sobel, C., and Kim, J., A modified carbonate phosphotungstate method for the determination of uric acid and comparison with the spectrophotometric uricase method. Am J Clin Pathol 1957;
Serum blood urea nitrogen was measured by a standard kit (Sigma, St Louis, Mo.).

Renal Immunohistochemistry:

[0060] Renal biopsies were fixed in Methyl-Carnoy’s, 10% formalin or 100% ethanol and embedded in paraffin. The presence of uric acid crystals was evaluated by staining 4-μm ethanol-fixed sections with de Galantha and modified Von Kossa stains. Kidney tissue from rats with acute uric acid nephropathy, induced with oxonic acid and uric acid administration was used as a positive control [Stavric, B., Johnson, W. J., and Grice, H. C., Uric acid nephropathy: An experimental model, Proc. Soc. Exp. Biol. Med. 130: 512-16 (1969)]. Light microscopy was performed in 4-μm sections of Methyl-Carnoy’s fixed tissue stained with periodic acid Schiff (PAS) reagent or with hematoxylin and eosin.

[0061] Methyl-Carnoy’s fixed tissue sections were analyzed by indirect immunoperoxidase [Lombardi, D., Gordon, K. L., Polinsky, P., Suga, S., Schwartz, S. M., and Johnson, R. J. Salt sensitive hypertension develops after transient exposure to angiotensin II, Hypertension 33:1013-1019, 1999] staining with the following primary antibodies: OP199, a goat polyclonal antibody against osteopontin (OPN) (gift of C. Giachelli, Univ of WA, Seattle); ED-1, a monoclonal antibody to rat monocytes and macrophages (Serotec); goat anti-human type III collagen (Solen Biotechnology Associates Inc, Birmingham Ala.); and anti-renin, a mouse antibody to human renin (Sanofi Recherche, Montpellier, France). Sections were incubated with a secondary antibody followed by horseradish peroxidase-conjugated avidin D (Vector Laboratories, Burlingame, Calif.), diaminobenzidine (Sigma) with or without nickel chloride as a chromogen, and counterstained with methyl green.

[0062] NOS1 was detected on formalin fixed tissue sections with a rabbit anti-rat neuronal nitric oxide synthase (Transduction Laboratories, Lexington, Ky.), followed by a biotinylated secondary antibody, diaminobenzidine with nickel chloride and counterstained with nuclear fast red.

Quantification of Morphologic Data:

[0063] AU quantification was performed blinded. The tubular expression of osteopontin (OPN), which is a sensitive marker of tubulo-interstitial injury, was calculated as the percent of renal cortex occupied by OPN-positive tubules [Lombardi, D., Gordon, K. L., Polinsky, P., Suga, S., Schwartz, S. M., and Johnson, R. J. Salt sensitive hypertension develops after transient exposure to angiotensin II, Hypertension 33:1013-1019, 1999]. Utilizing computer-assisted image analysis software (Optimas V6.2, Media Cybernetics, Silver Springs, Md.) and digitized images, the percent area occupied by OPN positive tubules per 4 mm2 field at a magnification of 50x was measured and the mean percent area calculated for each biopsy. The interstitial deposition of collagen type III was calculated as the % of renal cortex occupied by collagen III, noted by immunostaining, by computer image analysis. The mean number of interstitial macrophages (ED-1+ cells) in each biopsy was calculated in a blinded manner by counting the total number of positive interstitial cortical cells in 20 sequentially selected 0.25 mm2 grids at 200x magnification. Renin expression was quantified by the number of glomeruli with positive staining for juxtaglomerular renin using a minimum of 100 glomeruli in each biopsy as previously described [Eng, E., et al., Renal proliferation and phenotypic changes in rats with two-kidney, one-clip Goldblatt hypertension, Am J Hypertens 7:177-185 (1994)]; this has been shown previously to correlate with intrarenal renin content [Eng, E., et al., Renal proliferation and phenotypic changes in rats with two-kidney, one-clip Goldblatt hypertension, Am J Hypertens 7:177-185 (1994)]. NOS1 was quantified by a blinded counting of the number of positive macula densa cells staining with anti-NOS1 antibody using a minimum of 100 glomeruli per biopsy [Eng, E., et al., Renal proliferation and phenotypic changes in rats with two-kidney, one-clip Goldblatt hypertension. Am J Hypertens 7:177-185 (1994)]. Previous studies have shown that the number of NOS1 cells correlates with intrarenal NOS1 activity [Fischer, E., Schnerrmann, J., Briggs, J. P., Kriz, W., Ronco, P. M., and Bachmann, S., Ontogeny of NO synthase and renin in juxtaglomerular apparatus of rat kidneys. Am J Physiol 268: F1164-76, 1995]. Statistical Analysis

[0064] All values are expressed as mean±standard error, unless otherwise stated. Statistical significance (p<0.05) was evaluated by ANOVA and unpaired Student’s t test with appropriate correction for multiple comparisons.

An Animal Model of Mild Hyperuricemia

[0065] An animal model of mild hyperuricemia was developed using the rat. Several previous groups had reported that hyperuricemia could be induced in rats by feeding them oxonic acid, which is a uricase inhibitor [Stavric, B., Johnson, W. J., and Grice, H. C., Uric acid nephropathy: An experimental model, Proc Soc Exp Biol Med 130:512-16 (1969)]. In most studies uric acid supplements were also added to the diet. Unfortunately, this model usually results in a six to ten-fold increase in serum uric acid levels with marked uricosuria, resulting in acute renal failure from obstruction of the renal tubules with urate crystals [Stavric, B., Johnson, W. J., and Grice, H. C., Uric acid nephropathy: An experimental model, Proc Soc Exp Biol Med 130:512-16 (1969)]. Likewise, targeted deletion of the uricase gene in mice also results in marked hyperuricemia, interstitial urate crystal deposition, and renal failure [Bradley, A., and Caskey, C. T., Hyperuricemia and urate nephropathy in urate oxidase deficient mice. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 91:742-746 (1994)]. While these latter models mimic the acute urate nephropathy syndrome observed in occasional patients with cancers following chemotherapy ("tumor lysis syndrome") [Robinson, R. R., and Yarger, W. E., Acute uric acid nephropathy Arch Int Med 17:839-840 (1977)], they are inappropriate models for the mild hyperuricemia observed in patients with cardiovascular disease.

[0066] Hyperuricemia was induced in rats by feeding 2% oxonic acid in the diet, resulting in a mild increase in the serum uric acid level. Although urinary uric acid increased two-fold, it was not at a level sufficient to cause interstitial crystal deposition (FIG. 1). Routine light microscopy of the kidney revealed normal histology at 7 weeks, and special stains for uric acid crystals were negative (FIG. 1). Rats administered the oxonic diet also appeared completely healthy, although the body weight at the end of the study (7 weeks) was slightly lower in the hyperuricemic animals (367. 6±17 vs. 394±18 g body weight, oxonic acid diet vs. control, p<0.05).

Hyperuricemia Induces Blood Pressure Elevation

[0067] A remarkable finding was that rats with hyperuricemia developed increased blood pressure within 4 weeks after
commencing the diet (FIG. 2). Systolic blood pressures averaged 10 to 30 mm Hg higher in the hyperuricemic rats compared to controls. The observation that an elevated uric acid induced an increase in blood pressure, suggests that it might act to help maintain blood pressure in conditions associated with a low salt intake, such as occurred during early hominoid evolution [Eaton, S. B., and Konner, M., Paleolithic nutrition: A consideration of its nature and current implications. *N Engl J Med* 312: 283-289 (1985)]. As shown in FIG. 3, control rats placed on a modest sodium restricted diet had a fall in blood pressure within 3 weeks. In contrast, hyperuricemic rats on a low salt diet showed a significant increase in blood pressure resulting in 30 to 40 mmHg differences between groups. Blood pressures showed a direct correlation with uric acid levels in both experiments (n=52, r=0.7, p<0.0001) for the low salt study, n=12, r=0.7, p<0.0001 for the normal salt study (FIG. 4). An increase of 0.5 mg/dl in uric acid resulted in an increase in systolic blood pressure of 20 mm Hg (FIG. 4). At uric acid levels of 2 mg/dl or higher (corresponding to a 50% increase in uric acid over baseline) blood pressures were in the hypertensive range (systolic blood pressure>140 mm Hg). Interestingly, rats on an oxonic acid diet that did not develop hyperuricemia did not have elevated blood pressures (FIG. 4).

To document that the elevation in blood pressure was due to the hyperuricemia and not a nonspecific effect of the oxonic acid, hyperuricemic rats were co-administered the xanthine oxidase inhibitor, allopurinol, with the oxonic acid. Allopurinol administered from the initiation of the oxonic acid diet prevented the development of hyperuricemia and hypertension (FIGS. 3A and B). Furthermore, in hypertensive, hyperuricemic rats, either withdrawal of the oxonic acid or adding allopurinol also resulted in a reduction in the blood pressure in association with a fall in serum uric acid values (FIGS. 5A and B).

Mild Hyperuricemia Causes Renal Fibrosis

In an attempt to understand the mechanism for the hypertensive effect of hyperuricemia, we carefully examined the kidneys of the hyperuricemic and control animals. At 7 weeks both routine light microscopy (FIG. 1) and blood urea nitrogen levels were normal in the hyperuricemic rats. However, special immunohistochemical stains showed a striped pattern of early interstitial fibrosis, with increased deposition of interstitial collagen, macrophage accumulation, and with tubular expression of osteopontin, which is a sensitive marker of tubular injury [Lombardi, D., Gordon, K. L., Polinsky, P., Suga, S., Schwartz, S. M., and Johnson, R. J., Salt sensitive hypertension develops after transient exposure to angiotensin II. *Hypertension* 33:1013-1019, 1999]. The administration of allopurinol from the time the diet was initiated prevented the development of the fibrotic changes (Table 1).

A second study was also performed in which allopurinol was added or oxonic acid withdrawn at 7 weeks and then the rats were followed for an additional 4 weeks before they were sacrificed (FIG. 5). In this study the hyperuricemic rats showed more pronounced renal fibrosis and a statistical increase in blood urea nitrogen (Table 1) (FIG. 6). Rats in which the hyperuricemia was treated by either the addition of allopurinol or by the withdrawal of oxonic acid showed significantly less renal fibrosis and lower blood urea nitrogen levels (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type III</th>
<th>ED-1</th>
<th>OPN</th>
<th>BUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collagen (%)</td>
<td>(cells/mm²)</td>
<td>(%) increase</td>
<td>(mg/dl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.3</td>
<td>18.3 ± 1.3</td>
<td>0.9 ± 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA + LSD</td>
<td>8.8 ± 1.5*</td>
<td>27.2 ± 1.9*</td>
<td>1.8 ± 0.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA/LSD+</td>
<td>6.2 ± 0.6</td>
<td>20.5 ± 0.6</td>
<td>1.3 ± 0.1*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3: Effect of Oxonic Acid (OA) withdrawal or addition of Allopurinol (AP) at 7 weeks on Renal Findings at 11 weeks.

| Control | 7.2 ± 0.6 | 21.8 ± 1.4 | 0.7 ± 0.8 | 16.6 ± 0.9 |
| LSD | | | | |
| OA + LSD | 13.9 ± 0.6* | 36.5 ± 1.4* | 1.33 ± 0.14* | 24.1 ± 1.7* |
| OA withdrawal | 8.9± | 33.0 ± 1.6* | 1.08 ± 0.06* | 18.8 ± 0.8 |
| OA/LSD+ | 9.6± | 25.2 ± 2.6| 0.97 ± 0.03* | 17.7 ± 0.5 |
| Allopurinol | 0.3±* | | | |

Abbreviations:
BUN, blood urea nitrogen;
ED-1, macrophages;
LSD, low NaCl diet (0.125%);
OA, oxonic acid;
TI, tubulointerstitial.
*p < .05 vs. control; 24.1 ± 1.7*
p < .05 vs. LSD/ OA.

Hyperuricemia Activates the Renin Angiotensin System and Inhibits Intrarenal Neuronal Nitric Oxide Synthase

The *‘striped’* fibrotic pattern of renal injury is characteristic of chronic vasoconstriction and/or ischemia, which is of interest given Messeri’s observation that hyperuricemia in man is associated with renal vasoconstriction [Messeri, E., Messeri, F. H., Frohlich, E. D., Dreslinski, G. R., Suarez, D. H., and Aristimuno, G. G., Serum uric acid in essential hypertension: An indicator of renal vascular involvement. *Ann Int Med* 93:817-821, 1980.] The renal expression of two important vasoactive mediators were examined in these rats (Table 2). The percentage of glomeruli with juxtaglomerular renin staining was markedly increased in the hyperuricemic animals, a finding that correlates with increased renal renin content [Eng, E., et al., Renal proliferation and phenotypic changes in rats with two-kidney, one-clipped Goldblatt hypertension. *Am J Hypertens* 7:177-185 (1994)]. There was also a direct correlation of serum uric acid levels with the percentage of renin-positive glomeruli, both in the studies using a low salt diet (r=0.7, n=18, p=0.0006, FIG. 7) and in the study using a normal salt diet (r=0.6, n=12, p=0.05). Interestingly, Saito et al., have previously reported that uric acid levels correlate with plasma renin activity in patients with essential hypertension [Saito, I., et al. Serum uric acid and the renin-angiotensin system in hypertension. *J Am Geriatrics Soc* 26:241-2471976.].

The effect of hyperuricemia on neuronal nitric oxide synthase (NOS1) expression in the macula densa, which is involved in regulating afferent arteriolar tone and tubuloglomerular feedback were also examined. As shown in Table 2, the number of neuronal nitric oxide synthase (NOS1) positive cells in the macula densa was decreased in hyperuricemic rats. This is particularly relevant, as chronic inhibition of NOS1 has been reported to elevate blood pressure in rats [Ollersten, A., Pittner, J., Persson E. G., and Thorup, C.,]
Increased blood pressure in rats after long-term inhibition of the neuronal isoform of nitric oxide synthase. J Clin Invest 99:2212-2218, 1997.) As with renin, the decrease in NOS-1 positive cells was largely prevented by allopurinol treatment (Table 2).

[0073] To further document a role for these mediators, we administered enalapril, an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor, or L-Arginine, which is a substrate for nitric oxide production, to the hyperuricemic rats from the outset. As shown in Fig. 8, hyperuricemic control rats have an approximately 20 mm Hg increase in systolic blood pressure over the 7 week dietary period. L-Arginine treatment largely prevented this increase. Enalapril-treated hyperuricemic rats had the lowest systolic blood pressures. At 7 weeks, the systolic blood pressures in the L-Arginine and enalapril groups averaged 25 mm Hg lower than the hyperuricemic controls (p<0.05). This suggests that the hypertension and renal disease induced by hyperuricemia are dependent on both angiotensin II and nitric oxide system.

### TABLE 2

| Hyperuricemia Induces Changes in Vasoactive Mediators
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (LSD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA + LSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA/LSD + Allopurinol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2. Renal Findings at 7 weeks after Oxonic Acid (OA) in presence/absence of Allopurinol (AP)

| Control (LSD)    | 41.0 ± 1.9                          | 104.6 ± 11.5           |
| OA + LSD         | 58.4 ± 0.8*                         | 65.6 ± 7.1*            |
| OA withdrawal    | 50.5 ± 2.1*                         | 83.1 ± 10.8            |
| OA/LSD + Allopurinol | 44.2 ± 1.3*                         | 98.6 ± 5.1*            |

**Abbreviations:**

AP, allopurinol; glom, glomeruli; LSD, low NaCl diet (0.125%); OA, oxonic acid; MD, macula dens.

*p < 0.05 vs. control.

Example 5

**Animals**

[0074] Studies were conducted in 20 adult male Sprague-Dawley rats (Simonsen Laboratories, Gilroy, Calif., USA) weighing 200 to 250 grams. All rats were fed a low salt diet (0.125% NaCl) (Zeigler Bros, Gardners, Pa.), with water ad libitum. The use of low salt diet has been shown to accelerate the development of CSA nephropathy [13,26]. In order to induce hyperuricemia, oxonic acid 2% was added to low salt diet. Because rats have uricase, an hepatic enzyme which degrades uric acid to allantoin, the blockade of this enzyme by oxonic acid is necessary.

**Experimental Design**

[0075] After one week on a low salt diet, weight-matched rats were randomly divided into four groups:

[0076] Group 1 (Vehicle (VH); n=6): These rats received a daily subcutaneous (SC) injection of olive oil, for 7 weeks.

[0077] Group 2 (Oxonic acid plus vehicle (OA); n=4): these rats received a daily SC injection of olive oil, 1 mg/kg, and a supplement of 2% oxonic acid in their chow, for 7 weeks.

[0078] Group 3 (Cyclosporin (CSA); n=6): these rats received a daily injection of cyclosporine 15 mg/kg, for 7 weeks.

[0079] Group 4 (Cyclosporine plus oxonic acid (CSA-OA); n=4): these rats received a daily injection of cyclosporine 15 mg/kg, and a supplement of 2% oxonic acid in their chow for 7 weeks.

**Functional Data**

[0081] Serum and urine creatinine were measured by a standard picric acid method (Sigma Diagnostics creatinine kit, St. Louis, Mo.). Serum and urine uric acid were measured by a modified carbonate-phosphotungstic acid method [Henry, R. J., Sobel, C., and Kim, J. A modified carbonate phosphotungstic acid method for the determination of uric acid and comparison with the spectrophotometric uricase method. Am J Clin Pathol 1957; 28:152]. Fractional uric acid excretion and creatinine clearance were calculated by standard formulas. Cyclosporine levels were measured by high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) of whole blood.

**Drugs**

[0082] Cyclosporine (Novartis) was diluted in olive oil to a final concentration of 15 mg/ml and injected SC in a dose of 15 mg/kg of body weight.

**Renal Morphology and Immunohistochemistry**

[0083] Methyl Carnoy’s fixed tissue was processed and paraffin embedded, and 4 μm sections were stained with PAS reagents and hematoxylin-eosin. Alcohol-fixed tissue was processed and paraffin embedded, and 4 μm sections were stained for uric acid crystals by de Galantha’s and Von Kossa stains. The positive control was kidney tissue from a rat with acute uric acid nephropathy, induced with oxonic acid and uric acid administration [Waisman, J., Bluestone, R. and Klinenberg, J. R., A preliminary report of nephropathy in hyperuricemic rats. Lab Invest 1974; 30:716, Bluestone, J., Waisman, J., Klinenberg, J. R., Chronic experimental hyperuricemia nephropathy. Biochemical and morphological characterization. Lab Invest 1975; 33(3): 273, and Waisman, J., Mwasi, L. M., Bluestone, R., and Klinenberg, J. R., Acute hyperuricemic nephropathy in rats. An electron microscopy study. Am J Pathol 1975; 85(2): 367.]

[0084] Methyl-Carnoy’s fixed tissue sections were analyzed by indirect immunoperoxidase with primary antibodies against osteopontin (OP199, gift of C. Giachelli, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.), monocytes and macrophages, ED-1, Serotec, Oxford, UK) and collagen type III (Southern Biotechnology Associates Inc, Birmingham, Ala., USA).

**Quantification of Morphologic Data**

[0085] Interstitial fibrosis was scored semi quantitatively on biopsies stained with PAS and hematoxylin-eosin, using
the following scoring system: zero—normal interstitium and
tubules, 1—mild fibrosis with minimal thickening between the
tubules, 2—moderate fibrosis with moderate interstitial thick-
ening between the tubules, 3—severe fibrosis with severe interstitial thickening between the tubules.

tial hypertension. Am J Hypertens 1998; 11: 954.], was calculated as the percentage (%) of renal cortex occupied by OPN-positive tubules [Johnson, R. J., Alpers, C. E., Yoshimura, A., et al., Renal injury from angiotensin II mediated hyperten-
sion. Hypertension 1992; 19: 464.], utilizing computer-as-
sisted image analysis software (Optimas V6.2, Media Cyber-
netics, Silver Systems Md.) and digitized images. The % area occupied by OPN positive tubules per 4 mm² field at 50x was measured and the mean % area calculated for each biopsy. The same method was used to quantify the interstitial expres-
sion of collagen III.

[0087] The mean number of interstitial macrophages (ED-1 +
cells/mm²) in each biopsy was calculated in a blinded man-
ner by counting the total number of positive cells in 20 sequentially selected 0.25 mm² grids at 200x magnification. The number of macrophages per glomerular cross section (utilizing a minimum of 100 glomeruli per biopsy) was also determined.

Statistical Analysis

[0088] All values are expressed as mean±SD, unless other-
wise stated. The differences between groups were compared with unpaired Student’s t tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body weight, renal function and uric acid levels at 7 weeks of study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Weight (grams)</th>
<th>Serum Uric Acid (mg/dl)</th>
<th>Urate/creatinine (urine)</th>
<th>FE urate</th>
<th>Serum Creatinine (mg/dl)</th>
<th>Creatinine Clearance (ml/min)</th>
<th>Cyclosporine (mg/dl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>422.2±31.2</td>
<td>1.62±0.3</td>
<td>0.20±0.08</td>
<td>0.12±0.06</td>
<td>0.94±0.24</td>
<td>1.39±0.73</td>
<td>4560.0±602.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>412.2±28.8</td>
<td>4.08±1.22*</td>
<td>0.35±0.27</td>
<td>0.11±0.14</td>
<td>0.88±0.19</td>
<td>1.94±0.73</td>
<td>4765.0±486.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>357.2±28.8*</td>
<td>3.15±0.85*</td>
<td>0.18±0.09</td>
<td>0.07±0.04</td>
<td>1.35±0.52*</td>
<td>0.96±0.43*</td>
<td>351.2±17.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>351.2±17.4*</td>
<td>5.90±1.55*</td>
<td>0.23±0.13</td>
<td>0.06±0.04</td>
<td>1.42±0.32*</td>
<td>0.79±0.29*</td>
<td>351.2±10.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05 compared to Group 1;  
*p < 0.05 compared to Group 2;  
p < 0.05 compared to Group 3.  
FE urate = fractional excretion of uric acid

Uric Acid

[0089] Serum uric acid in control rats on a low salt diet was 1.6±0.3 mg/dl (Table 3). In rats receiving CSA alone, the uric acid levels were increased almost 2-fold, and were similar to the levels in vehicle rats in which uricase was blocked by oxonic acid (OA). Serum uric acid levels were highest in rats treated with CSA and oxonic acid (CSA-OA). (Table 3).

[0090] Urinary uric acid excretion was increased in rats fed oxonic acid (OA alone and CSA-OA groups). CSA treated rats (CSA alone and CSA-OA) had urate/creatinine ratios comparable to normal controls and the fractional urate excretion tended to be lower than either vehicle or OA alone groups (p=0.06). (Table 3).

Cyloporsine Levels

[0091] CSA was measured by HPLC in whole blood at 7
weeks. No difference in CSA levels was observed between CSA and CSA-OA rats. (Table 3).

Renal Function

[0092] Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) evaluated by serum creatinine and creatinine clearance, were reduced in both. CSA and CSA-OA groups, but no statistical difference was observed between CSA and CSA-OA groups (Table 3).

Histological Analysis

Tubulointerstitial and Micro Vascular Changes

[0093] Rats treated with CSA for 7 weeks displayed classic histological findings of chronic CSA nephropathy, with arteriolar hyalinosis, tubular dilatation and atrophy in a striped pattern extending from medulla to cortex (FIG. 9A). Similar histological findings were observed in CSA-OA rats, except that the changes were more severe, including arteriolar hylanosis (61.8% vs 44.8%, CSA vs. CSA-OA, p<0.05) (FIG. 9B). In contrast, no significant tubulointerstitial changes were noted by light microscopy of PAS stained sections from VEH or OA alone rat kidneys.

Osteopontin Expression

[0094] Osteopontin is a macrophage-adhesive protein that is expressed by tubules in CSA nephropathy and has been shown to correlate with the macrophage infiltration, tubulointerstitial fibrosis and renal function [Pichler, R., France-
schini N., Young, B. A. et al., Pathogenesis of cyloporsine
nephropathy. Roles of angiotensin II and osteopontin. J Am Soc Nephrol 1995; 6: 1186.]. Whereas minimal osteopontin is expressed in normal (VEH) control rats, a significant increase was observed in rats treated with CSA (FIG. 9C). The highest expression was observed in CSA-OA treated rats (FIGS. 9D and 10).

Macrophage Accumulation

[0095] The marked increase in OPN expression in CSA and
CSA-OA treated rats was associated with accumulation of
ED-I+ macrophages in the interstitium (FIG. 9E). Similar to the findings of OPN, CSA-OA had a greater number of macrophages than CSA alone (395.6 ± 92.5 vs. 271.9 ± 43.4 ED-I+ cells/mm², p<0.05). In addition, CSA treated rats exhibited a mild glomerular macrophage accumulation, which was more pronounced in CSA-OA treated animals (1.8 ± 0.5 vs. 3.5 ± 1.7 ED-I+ cells/glomerular cross section, p<0.05) (FIGS. 9E and 10).

Type III Collagen Deposition

[0096] In normal kidney, type III collagen was minimally present in renal cortex, with slight accumulation around interlobular arteries and veins. In rats on CSA, type III collagen was increased in both the cortex and subcapsular area, and displayed a striped interstitial pattern similar to that observed by routine light microscopy (FIG. 9G). This general pattern was more severe in CSA-OA treated rats (FIGS. 9H and 10).

Crystal Deposition

[0097] In order to determine if the increased tubulointerstitial injury observed in CSA-OA was associated with intrarenal crystal deposition, alcohol-fixed tissue was stained for uric acid crystals using both the De Galantha and modified Von Kossa stain. Wherever crystals could easily be identified in positive control tissue from rats with acute urate nephropathy induced by a combination of oxonic acid and uric acid, no crystals were present in any of the experimental groups.

Example 6

Uric Acid Excretion Activity (Excerpted from U.S. Pat. No. 5,260,322, Columns 41-42)

[0098] Twenty-four (24) male adults (25 to 48 years old, 161 cm to 187 cm tall, weighing 48 kg to 85 kg) were divided into 4 groups, 6 per group. Compound No. 9 [COZAAR (losartan potassium)] was orally administered under hunger in the form of capsules in Example 2, in a definite dose (25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg or 200 mg) per person, by varying the dose in each group. Further in order to examine influence of diet on uric acid excretion increasing activity of Compound No. 9, the capsule of Example 2 containing 100 mg of Compound No. 9 was orally administered at 2 weeks after the test under hunger was completed. Concentration of uric acid in urine and blood was determined by the uricase-POD method at every definite period of time after the administration. The results are shown in Tables 11 through 14.

[0099] As is clear from Tables 11 through 14, the concentration of uric acid in serum decreased in 4 hours after medication dose-dependently. However, a tendency that the uric acid concentration was recovered to the concentration level prior to medication was noted 24 hours after. On the other hand, when medicated after meals, the concentration of uric acid in serum was kept as it decreased even 24 hours after.

[0100] The uric acid concentration in urine dose-dependently increased from 0 to 4 hours by administering Compound No. 9 in doses of 25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg per person. In the dose of 200 mg, however, the uric acid concentration in urine did not increase dose-dependently but was kept almost constant. On the other hand, when medicated after meals, the uric acid concentration in increased in 0 to 8 hours.

[0101] The foregoing results reveal that the non-peptide type compounds having an angiotensin II receptor-antagonizing activity in accordance with the present invention are useful as drugs for the prevention or treatment of hyperuricemia.

### TABLE 11

| Change of uric acid concentration in serum with passage of time when administered in hunger |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dose (mg/man)                                 | Concentration of Uric Acid (mg/d) |
| Time (hr)                                     | 25              | 50              | 100             | 200             |
| 0 (when administered)                         | 5.2 ± 0.5       | 6.1 ± 0.4       | 5.9 ± 0.9       | 5.6 ± 0.7       |
| 4                                             | 4.8 ± 0.6       | 5.3 ± 1.3       | 4.6 ± 0.7       | 4.3 ± 0.9       |
| 24                                            | 4.6 ± 0.6       | 5.6 ± 1.4       | 5.2 ± 0.8       | 5.0 ± 0.9       |

### TABLE 12

| Change of uric acid concentration in serum with passage of time after meal |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dose 100 mg/man                              | Concentration of Uric Acid (mg/hr) |
| Time (hr)                                     | 0 (when administered)             | 5.8 ± 1.1     | 4.9 ± 1.0     | 4.7 ± 0.9     |
| 4                                             | 4.8 ± 0.6       | 5.3 ± 1.3       | 4.6 ± 0.7       | 4.3 ± 0.9       |
| 24                                            | 4.6 ± 0.6       | 5.6 ± 1.4       | 5.2 ± 0.8       | 5.0 ± 0.9       |

### TABLE 13

| Change of uric acid excretion in urine with passage of time when administered in hunger |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dose (mg/man)                                | Concentration of Uric Acid (mg/hr) |
| Time (hr)                                     | 0-4             | 52.8 ± 4.3     | 81.2 ± 15.7    | 78.7 ± 15.3    |
| 4-8                                           | 32.4 ± 14.7     | 42.8 ± 8.5     | 30.4 ± 7.7     | 25.4 ± 6.6     |
| 8-12                                          | 28.7 ± 13.6     | 39.1 ± 4.4     | 30.1 ± 6.8     | 19.6 ± 5.2     |
| 12-24                                         | 19.7 ± 9.9      | 22.2 ± 3.8     | 19.2 ± 4.2     | 13.4 ± 2.3     |
| 24-40                                         | 33.2 ± 21.9     | 26.6 ± 5.4     | 28.0 ± 7.2     | 21.0 ± 3.0     |

### TABLE 14

| Change of uric acid excretion in urine with passage of time after meal |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dose 100 mg/man                              | Concentration of Uric Acid (mg/hr) |
| Time (hr)                                     | 0-4             | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     |
| 4-8                                           | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     | 19.7 ± 2.5     |
| 8-12                                          | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     | 29.5 ± 4.1     |
| 12-24                                         | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     | 29.5 ± 4.1     |
| 24-40                                         | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     | 29.5 ± 4.1     |
| 24-40                                         | 75.9 ± 19.0    | 59.0 ± 3.8     | 31.8 ± 4.5     | 29.5 ± 4.1     |

What is claimed is:

1. A method of treating hypertension comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

2. A method of preventing hypertension comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent,
or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

3. A method of treating coronary heart disease comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

4. A method of treating and preventing eclampsia comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels in a patient in need of such treatment.

5. An agent capable of reducing uric acid levels selected from the group consisting of: gene therapy, a xanthine oxidase inhibitor; a uricosuric agent; supplements of the uricase protein and a urate channel inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts, or combinations thereof.

6. The agent capable of reducing uric acid levels, as recited in claim 5, which is gene therapy that targets the overexpression of uricase.

7. The agent capable of reducing uric acid levels, as recited in claim 5, which is a xanthine oxidase inhibitor selected from the group consisting of: allopurinol, and carprofen, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. The agent capable of reducing uric acid levels, as recited in claim 5, which is a uricosuric agent selected from the group consisting of: losartan, benzbromarone, benziodarone, probenecid, sulfinpyrazone, ethenebicid, orotic acid, ticrynafen and zoxazolamine, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

9. The agent capable of reducing uric acid levels, as recited in claim 5, which is a supplement of uricase protein that is delivered as a conjugate with polyethylene glycol or an alternate delivery system.

10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a renin angiotensin system (RAS) inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and the agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels as recited in claim 5, and a pharmaceutical carrier.

11. A combination therapy comprising the administration, concomitantly, simultaneously or sequentially, of therapeutically effective amounts of a RAS inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and the agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels as recited in claim 5.

12. The pharmaceutical composition levels as recited in claim 10, further comprising a diuretic, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

13. A combination therapy comprising the administration, concomitantly, simultaneously or sequentially, of therapeutically effective amounts of a combination of a RAS inhibitor, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with a diuretic, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and the agent, or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, capable of reducing uric acid levels as recited in claim 5.

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