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## GROWTH HORMONE RESPONSE TO CONTINUOUS AND INTERMITTENT EXERCISE

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Running Head: Growth Hormone In Exercise

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ABSTRACT: GROWTH HORMONE RESPONSE TO CONTINUOUS AND INTERMITTENT EXERCISE

To test a possible association between growth hormone (hGH) secretion during exercise and anaerobiosis, equivalent continuous and intermittent bouts of bicycle ergometer work were employed to observe the relationship between circulating levels of hGH, free fatty acids (FFA), blood glucose (GLUC), alanine (ALA), lactic acid (LA), and pyruvic acid (PA). Ten males (20 to 30 yrs.) were observed during 40 min. of continuous exercise (CE, 45% of the minimum load which elicited VO2 max.), and during 20 bouts of intermittent exercise (IE, 1 min. on/off @ 2x CE work rate). Resting hGH was 1 to 2 ng/ml. After a 15 min. lag, hGH rose continuously, but during IE hGH tended to be higher  $(12.1 \pm 1.4)$  than during CE  $(9.7 \pm 1.6 \text{ ng/ml}, X \pm \text{SEM})$ . In both exercise conditions FFA demonstrated an initial fall and then a continuous secondary rise with higher peak values during CE (0.516 ± .058) than during IE (0.388 ± .048 mEq/L.). PA and LA rose initially during CE, but then declined before reaching steady levels. During IE, LA and PA increased continuously reaching values 3x greater than during CE. ALA rose progressively during CE and IE, but was significantly higher during IE (442.2 ± 29.3 vs. 367.9 ± 30.9 uM). GLUC also tended to be higher during IE (84.0 ± 5.8) than during CE (76.5  $\pm$  5 mg%). Considering both CE and IE, no significant correlation was found between peak values of hGH and metabolite concentrations, rectal T., or 0, deficit. The results are interpreted to mean that hGH response to work is not directly related to "anaerobiosis".

Key Words: Exertion, Work, Growth Hormone, Blood, Metabolism, Lactic Acid, Anaerobiosis.

### INTRODUCTION

Since Yalow and Berson (31) developed radioimmunoassays for detection of hormones present in minute concentrations, the secretion of human growth hormone (hGH) has been studied under a variety of conditions. During fasting hGH plays a role in mobilizing free fatty acids in response to declining blood glucose. During exercise, a number of factors have been associated with the control of hGH secretion. Hartog, <u>et al.</u> (14) reported a rise of hGH during exercise which did not depend upon a prior mobilization of fatty acids and therefore, suggested that fat mobilization could inhibit the continued secretion of hGH. Sutton, <u>et al.</u> (28) have supplied data which suggest a relationship between blood hGH and lactate concentrations. However, Lassarre, <u>et al.</u> (17) have reported no correlation between hGH and lactate, but instead their data suggested a significant relationship between hGH and  $O_2$  deficit. A change of internal temperature during exercise has also been correlated with hGH response by Buchler (3).

In view of the possible role of lactate and other by-products of metabolism in determining the hGH response to exercise, we sought an approach which would maintain an equivalence of external work, but which would result in divergent patterns of blood lactate and other metabolities. For this reason we employed work equivalent bouts of continuous (CE) and intermittent (IE) exercise.

### METHODS

Table 1

Ten healthy, fit, male volunteers, with no family history of diabetes or other endocrine diseases (Table 1), were used as subjects in this study. All subjects were familiar with bicycle ergometer exercise and other laboratory procedures prior to testing. Prior to experimentation, written informed consent was obtained and subjects were tested twice for the determination of VO, max. Experimental testing was carried out in the morning after an overnight fast. Upon reporting to the laboratory a catheter was placed in a forearm vein for sampling of blood. After a half hour rest period, subjects performed either 40 minutes of continuous exercise, or 20, one minute exercise bouts which were interspersed with one min. rest periods. For IE the work was 90% of the minimum which elicited VO<sub>2</sub> max. during CE. For CE the external work output was half that during IE. The order of continuous and intermittent exercise sessions was rotated and balanced across subjects. Blood was sampled intermittently during rest, exercise and recovery for determination of hGH, lactate (LA), glucose (GLUC), free fatty acids (FFA), pyruvate (PA), and alanine (ALA). Blood samples for LA, GLUC, PA, and ALA determinations were drawn with a minimum of stasis and immediately deproteinized in cold 6% HClO<sub>11</sub> by Vortex mixing and centrifugation. Blood samples for FFA and hGH were collected in chilled, heparinized tubes and quickly cold centrifuged.

Lactate and pyruvate were determined enzymatically (enzyme kits, Sigma Chemical Co.). Glucose concentration was determined by the glucose oxidase method (Glucostat Reagent Kit, Worthington Biochem. Co.). Alanine was determined enzymatically as described by Pfleiderer (22). Free fatty acids

were determined colorimetrically by the method of Falhot, <u>et al.</u> (6), and hGH was determined by the radiommunoassay method of Yalow and Berson as modified by Garcia, <u>et al.</u> (8). Initial  $O_2$  deficit was computed as the difference between the steady-rate  $VO_2$  and the actual  $VO_2$  during the first five minutes of work for continuous exercise. Rectal temperature  $(T_R)$  and electrocardiogram (ECG) were recorded on a Gilson recorder. Inspired ventilatory volume was recorded on the servo channel of the Gilson recorder from the potentiometer output of a Parkinson-Cowan gasometer. The entire expired air sample was collected in meteorological ballons during  $VO_2$  determination periods and analyzed on Applied Electrochemistry S3A  $O_2$  and Beckman LB-2  $CO_2$ , analyzers. The correction for  $H_2O$  vapor was made as outlined by Beaver, et al. (1).

For statistical purposes, means and variances were calculated and paired t-tests and correlation analyses were performed.

#### RESULTS

- Figure 1 Prior to exercise hGH was on the order of 1 to 2 ng/ml. (Figure 1). During both continuous and intermittent exercise, hGH remained essentially unchanged for 15 minutes and then began a continuous rise reaching maximum levels of 9.7  $\pm$  1.6 and 12.1  $\pm$  1.4 ng/ml. ( $\bar{X} \pm$  SEM) for CE and IE, respectively. Although hGH concentrations tended to be higher during IE, the difference did not reach statistical significance (as determined by paired t-tests) until 20 minutes of recovery.
- Figure 2 Blood lactate concentrations (Figure 2) at rest were found to be 0.871 <sup>±</sup> .072
  and 0.955 <sup>±</sup> .125 mM prior to CE and IE, respectively. During CE LA increased
  initially from resting levels to 2.080 <sup>±</sup> .282 mM after 10 min. of exercise,
  but then declined before reaching steady levels of approximately 1.5 mM.

During IE LA increased from resting levels to 4.513 ± .709 mM at the end of exercise reaching values of about five times greater than during rest.
Figure 3 Pyruvate (Figure 3) followed the same trend as LA. From resting levels of 59.1 ± 5.3 uM prior to CE, PA increased during CE to 73 ± 7.5 uM at 20 min., and then declined before reaching a steady level of approximately 70 uM. During IE, PA increased from resting levels of 69.2 ± 6.5, to 187 ± 20 uM.

- Figure 4 Blood glucose concentrations (Figure 4) were found to be  $74 \pm 4.8$  and  $75 \pm 5.3 \text{ mg}$  prior to CE and IE, respectively. Although GLUC concentration during IE tended to be higher than during CE, the difference reached statistical significance only at 30 min. of exercise, where the mean values for CE and IE were  $75 \pm 3.8$  and  $87 \pm 3.4 \text{ mg}/100 \text{ ml}$ , respectively (p < .05).
- Figure 5 Alanine concentration (Figure 5) rose progressively from resting levels of 255  $\pm$  26 and 264  $\pm$  28 uM, to 381  $\pm$  26 and 452  $\pm$  28 uM at 30 min. of CE and IE, respectively. Alanine concentration was significantly higher toward the end of IE than during the comparable period of CE (p < .05).
- Figure 6 Free fatty acids (Figure 6) at rest were found to be on the order of 0.438 ± .052 and 0.458 ± .036 mEq./liter prior to CE and IE, respectively. FFA demonstrated an initial fall in both experimental conditions, but then increased reaching levels of 0.516 ± .058 and 0.388 ± .048 mEq/liter for CE and IE at the end of exercise periods. During recovery, the secondary rise to 0.751 ± .088 mEq/liter following CE was statistically greater than that following IE (0.480 ± .040 mEq/liter)(p < .05).</p>
- Figure 7 Rectal temperature (Figure 7) rose from  $37.3 \pm 0.17$  and  $37.1 \pm 0.19^{\circ}C$ at rest, to  $38.1 \pm 0.14$  and  $38.3 \pm 0.13^{\circ}C$  at the end of CE and IE, respectively.

# 0 0 0 0 4 8 0 3 0 0 5

After 20 min. of recovery,  $T_R$  declined to 37.8 and 37.9°C following both CE and IE, respectively.

To rest for a possible association between blood borne metabolites and other physiological variables with hGH levels, correlation analyses were performed. Parameters in the correlation matrices included: hGH, LA, PA, ALA, GLUC, FFA,  $T_R$ ,  $\% VO_2$  max,  $VO_2$  (L./min.), RQ, and  $O_2$  deficit. With pooled data the only significant correlations were between LA and PA, and between  $\% VO_2$  max and  $VO_2$ . When correlations were run at specific time points within exercise treatments, the only significant correlations were between hGH and PA at rest, and between hGH and  $T_R$  at 30 and 40 min. of CE.  $O_2$  deficit during CE could also not be correlated with peak hGH. Although the ALA response to exercise (Figure 5) was similar to that for LA (Figure 2) and PA (Figure 3), ALA did not correlate significantly with either PA or LA.

### DISCUSSION

Observations of blood lactate concentration suggested a combination of elevated lactate production and diminished removal associated with circulatory lag during intermittent exercise. Despite three-fold greater LA levels during IE than CE (Figure 2), we were unable to establish a clear difference between hGH responses in the two exercises (Figure 1). Therefore, we must conclude that lactate concentration is not a determining factor in controling the circulating level of hGH during exercise. In this regard our data are similar to those of Hartley, <u>et al.(12,13)</u>. Our data further show that concentrations of PA and ALA (Figures 3 and 5), other consequent products of rapid glycolysis, are also apparently not related to hGH levels.

Our inability to correlate  $O_2$  deficit with hGH response is further evidence that hGH secretion is unrelated to anaerobiosis during exercise. We, therefore, interpret our results to indicate that hGH response is not correlated with the accumulation of an "anaerobic metabolite" or to systemic hypoxia. Indeed it seems difficult to see how the  $O_2$  deficit could constitute a viable stimulus for the secretion of hGH.

Previously, Schwarz, <u>et al</u>. (27) obtained results similar to ours and could not correlate hGH responses with metabolite concentrations during exercise. They, therefore, attributed the hGH response to physical stress rather than to an increase in energy expenditure. In our experiments, subjects perceived IE to be more stressful than CE, but hGH responses were similar in both treatments. Our results are, therefore, not consistent with the hypothesis that stress is a major determinant of hGH response during exercise.

During CE and IE an initial fall of plasma FFA concentration (Figure 6) was followed by a gradual increase probably as a result of enhanced lipolysis.

This was particularly evident during the CE, where there occured a large FFA overshoot during the post-exercise period. Similar results have been shown by Carlson (4) and Gollnick (9). Although hGH was slightly higher during IE than CE, during IE the FFA concentrations were found to be significantly lower than during CE, and the post-exercise overshoot was less profound. This could be attributed to the three-fold higher concentration of lactate during IE, which may have inhibited lipolysis (15,16).

Lipman, et al. (18) have shown that infusion of lipids during sleep, which resulted in an elevation of FFA, could induce inhibition of sleep-related hGH release. This negative feedback effect of FFA on hGH was not apparent in the present study. Support for this conclusion is to be found in the data of Hansen (11) who has shown that hGH hyper-response to exercise is unaffected by intravenous infusion of lipids and heparin.

Our finding of higher blood glucose during IE than during CE (Figure 4) may reflect a greater participation of catecholamines during IE. On the basis of our respiratory exchange data and the glycogen depletion studies of others, we can assume that the elevated blood glucose during IE was due to greater mobilization of carbohydrates rather than to lesser utilization. Although an increase in glucose uptake and utilization by exercising muscle has been reported (26), we cannot support the possibility that this increase in glucose uptake results from an increase of insulin secretion during exercise. If anything, circulating insulin levels are decreased during exercise (12,13, 23). Dieterle, <u>et al.</u> (5) have suggested that the increased GLUC and FFA uptake by exercising muscle could be stimulated by high concentration of LA. This is not confirmed yet for glucose, but Issekutz, <u>et al.</u> (15,16) have shown the concentration of FFA in blood can be decreased by LA infusion in exercising dogs. In addition to the possible effects of catecholamines on

blood GLUC concentration during exercise, increased glucagon secretion could have enhanced hepatic glycogenolysis and gluconeogenesis during IE (7,10).

Conflicting reports concerning the role of catecholamines on growth hormone release may be attributable to species differences. Whereas Meyer and Knobil (19) and Muller, et al. (20) have shown a stimulatory effect of elevated catecholamines on growth hormone in monkeys and rats, several studies on humans indicate an inhibitory response of elevated catecholamine concentration on hGH release (2,24,25). In humans an elevated insulin concentration results in elevated plasma concentration of hGH (21). However, using infusions of insulin combined with epinephrine, Muller-Hess, et al. (21) have shown that exogenous epinephrine inhibits the effects of insulin on hGH release at rest. Muller-Hess, et al., therefore, suggested that elevated epinephrine levels inhibit the insulin induced hGH release. If catecholamines were elevated during IE in our study, and if their effects were to diminish the hGH response, our failure to observe a greater hGH response during IE may be explained.

In conclusion, our results suggest that hGH response to exercise is not correlated with the accumulation of an "anaerobic" metabolite. This interpretation is in agreement with the most recent findings of Sutton, <u>et al.</u> (29). Our results do not agree with those of Lassare, <u>et al.</u> (17) who related the rise of hGH during exercise with  $0_2$  deficit. It appears that further research into the control of hGH response in exercise is required.

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Subject (		Age (years)	Weight (kg)	VO max (L <sup>2</sup> . min-1)	VO2 max (ml <sup>2</sup> min <sup>-1</sup> )	Actual VO * (L.· min <sup>-2</sup> 1)	<sup>0</sup> 2 Deficit** (L.)	Actual* work load (KPM .min <sup>-1</sup> )
1.	GB	30	80.7	3.70	45.70	1.866	.863	800
2.	WI	26	93.0	4.38	46.26	2.305	•990	1000
3.	GG	25	81.5	4.70	57.95	2.238	1.244	1100
4.	MH	29	84.0	3.75	43.10	1.913	1.581	800
5.	SH	25	79.8	3.80	48.40	2.052	1.565	800
6.	CD	23	92.6	3.56	39.06	2.001	1.763	800
7.	RR	28	66.1	3.60	54.50	1.791	1.104	800
8.	oc	23	88.6	3.55	40.90	1.960	1.185	700
9.	ND	21	73.2	3.75	51.20	1.934	1.213	800
10.	SS	22	66.8	3.65	54.00	1.808	1.066	800
Mean		25.2	80.64	3.84	48.11	1.990	1.257	840
SEM		•9	3.00	.12	1.97	.054	.045	37.1

\*\*  $O_2$  deficit calculated for CE only.

Table 1. Descriptive anthropometric and metabolic data on subjects.

### Legends To Figures

- Figure 1: Plasma growth hormone concentration  $(\bar{x}^{\pm} SEM)$ during rest, exercise and recovery.
- Figure 2: Blood lactate concentration (X + SEM) as a function of time during rest, exercise and recovery.
- Figure 3: Elood pyruvate concentration (X ± SEM) during rest, exercise and recovery.
- Figure 4: Blood glucose concentration  $(\bar{X} \pm SEM)$  during rest, exercise and recovery.
- Figure 5: Blood alanine concentration  $(X \pm SEM)$  during rest, exercise and recovery.
- Figure 6: Plasma free fatty acid concentrations ( $\bar{X} \pm SEM$ ) during rest, exercise and recovery.

Figure 7: Rectal temperature  $(\bar{x} \pm SEM)$  during rest, exercise and recovery.







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Fig. 3

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Fig. 4

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Fig. 6



Fig. 7

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