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Dietary Salt and Vascular Function

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Sodium is an essential electrolyte in the body that plays a crucial role in cellular homeostasis and physiological function. Consumption of excess dietary sodium has been linked to increases in blood pressure. Salt-sensitivity of blood pressure in humans varies. Certain groups tend to be more sensitive to salt in the diet than others. Independent of blood pressure, high dietary sodium intake has been shown to have detrimental effects on different organ systems. Recent evidence suggests that sodium impacts the vasculature prior to a change in blood pressure predisposing salt-resistant individuals to increase vascular and organ damage. A proposed mechanism for these deleterious effects is a salt-induced increase in oxidative stress. Interventions such as low salt diets or increased physical activity appear to attenuate these effects. This presentation seeks to review these topics.

Biography:

Dr. Shannon L Lennon is an Associate Professor at the University of Delaware (USA) in the Department of Kinesiology and Applied Physiology. Dr. Lennon has a background in nutrition and exercise physiology. Her laboratory, the Cardiovascular and Nutrition Research Lab focuses on the role of dietary nutrients on the cardiovascular system in healthy and diseased states. Her lab group uses a variety of techniques to study heart and blood vessel function in humans.