

## Eprosartan

### A Viewpoint by Norman Sharpe

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The angiotensin II receptor antagonists, exemplified by the AT<sub>1</sub> receptor antagonist eprosartan, offer the possibility of an alternative means of blockade of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone (RAA) system to angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, which are well established therapeutic agents. The apparent advantages of angiotensin II receptor antagonism include possibly more complete blockade of the RAA system than that provided through ACE inhibition and freedom from any bradykinin-related effects. ACE inhibitors, through antikinase action, promote kinin accumulation which may mediate the often troublesome

side effect of cough. Angiotensin II receptor antagonists appear remarkably free of adverse effects.

Eprosartan is effective as a blood pressure-lowering agent and approved for use in hypertension in some countries. This approval is due in part to acknowledgement of its 'class effect'. However, consideration of its first-line treatment application, as with other new antihypertensive agents, ideally requires large scale, long term studies to demonstrate efficacy, safety and comparative cost effectiveness.

Angiotensin II receptor antagonists also offer potential advantages in heart failure treatment compared with ACE inhibitors. Clinical trials currently in progress should also define their role in heart failure treatment more exactly during the next several years. ▲