Enzyme may create new approach to hypertension therapy

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New research from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine has found that an alternative therapy may be possible for treating some types of hypertension using an enzyme called ACE2.

The research, conducted on mice in the laboratory of Daniel Batlle, M.D., professor of medicine at the Feinberg School and staff nephrologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, will appear in the January issue of *Hypertension* in a paper by lead author Jan Wysocki, a post-doctoral fellow in nephrology at the Feinberg School.

According to Batlle, while current hypertension therapies such as ACE inhibitors work to block the formation of angiotensin II — a protein that causes blood vessels to constrict and drives blood pressure up — the approach with ACE2 is novel because it focuses on breaking down angiotensin II already in the system.

"This therapeutic approach can also be superior to existing therapies that block the activity of the renin-angiotensin system, but only partially, and therefore, provide a more complete and effective suppression of this system to treat not just hypertension but many other medical conditions where angiotensin 2 overactivity is undesirable," Batlle said.

Provided by Northwestern University

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