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COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Infection; advice for patients taking ACE Inhibitors (ACEi) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs)

It has been suggested Arterial Hypertension may be associated with increased risk of death in hospitalized Coronavirus infected subjects. On non-medical social media sites and some newspapers it has been suggested that commonly used drugs ACEi (ending in 'pril' e.g. Ramipril, Lisinopril, Perindopril) and ARBs (ending in 'sartan' e.g. Losartan, Candesartan, Valsartan) may increase both the risk of infection and the severity of SARS-CoV2 (the virus causing this infection), and has led to many patients stopping their medication. This could lead to destabilization of their blood pressure control, heart failure or any other condition they take these drugs for.

This speculation about the safety of ACE-i or ARB treatment in relation to the Coronavirus does not have a sound scientific basis or evidence to support it. Indeed, there is evidence from studies in animals suggesting that these medications might be rather protective against serious lung complications in patients with the Coronavirus infection, but to date there is no data in humans.

As medical professionals we wish to highlight the lack of any evidence supporting harmful effect of ACE-I and ARB in the context of the pandemic Coronavirus outbreak. We strongly recommend that patients **should continue treatment with their usual therapy** because there is no clinical or scientific evidence to suggest that treatment with ACEi or ARBs should be discontinued because of the Coronavirus infection. This applies to patients taking these drugs for heart failure, high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease.

You should take the recommended measures to minimize your risk of contracting the Coronavirus infection:

Wash your hands frequently

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 6ft distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

When to temporarily discontinue the following medications

ACEi, ARBs, Diuretics (e.g. Furosemide or Bumetanide, Spironolactone, Eplerenone) and Anti-inflammatories (e.g. Ibuprofen, Naproxen or Metformin)



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If you develop a dehydrating illness (diarrhea, vomiting, high temperature when you are not eating or drinking enough) you should discuss with your doctor whether you need to **temporarily** stop taking any medicine listed above and any other medicine identified by your health professional. It is very important that you **restart your medicine once you have recovered from the illness**. This would normally be after 24 to 48 hours of eating and drinking normally. When you restart your medicine, take them as prescribed. Do not take extra for the doses you have missed.

Do not stop taking your medication or alter your dosage without speaking with your doctor.

For further information or support, please contact Arrhythmia Alliance;

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