Converting Enzyme and Kininase II
To the Editor:
The article by Quilley et al.1 in the recent issue of Hypertension contains an error that I should like to correct. It is stated on page 294 (last two lines) that “converting enzyme is identical to kininase II,” and Reference 11 (here, Reference 2) is cited as the origin of this statement. While the statement is indeed correct, the article2 cited to support the statement (which, by the way, has also been cited by others for the same reason) contains the opposite conclusion. When discussing the inhibition of the conversion of angiotensin I and the inactivation of angiotensin II and bradykinin by lung fractions, Bakhle2 concludes:

There is no reason to assume that the structure responsible for inhibition of bradykininase is identical with, or even related to, that responsible for inhibition of converting enzyme or of destroying enzyme. It is, however, possible to differentiate between the converting enzyme and the bradykininase activities in the P, fraction with 2-mercaptoethanol and 8-hydroxyquinoline. One possible hypothesis to explain the results is to postulate at least two different enzymes with bradykininase activity in the lung, one appearing in the S, the other in the P, fraction, and both differing from the converting enzyme.

Indeed, after the discovery of kininase II in human plasma and animal kidney,3-5 the identity of the two enzymes was shown only after partial purification and after characterizing the enzyme activity with substrates that were not derivatives of bradykinin or angiotensin I.6,7

I hope this note will help to clarify the issue.

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