

Selective Alpha-1 Blockers

Selective α_1 blockers can be recalled by their drug names, with end with an "osin" suffix. This class of drugs exerts its action by blocking α_1 adrenergic receptors in smooth muscle, arteriolar and central nervous tissues. They are used to treat hypertension, while tamsulosin is specifically indicated for treatment of urinary retention in BPH. These drugs limit the body's ability to maintain blood pressure homeostasis, and the symptoms of syncope and orthostatic hypotension are seen in patients, especially in their first dose of medication. Tamsulosin also has the side effect of priapism.



PLAY PICMONIC

"-osin" suffix

Ocean

These medications can be remembered by having an "osin" suffix in their drug names: Tamsulosin, Prazosin, Terazosin, Doxazosin

Mechanism of Action

Blocks Alpha1 Receptors

Blocking the Afro (1) Wand Receptor

These medications selectively block α_1 adrenergic receptors in smooth muscle, arteriolar and central nervous system tissues. This leads to vasodilation in arteries. Tamsulosin is selective for α_{1a} receptors, which belong in the prostate, and is indicated for BPH while having little activity on hypertension.

Indications

Hypertension

Hiker-BP

By acting on α_1 adrenergic receptors in arteriolar smooth muscle and causing vasodilation, these medications treat hypertension.

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)

Bunny Plum Hiker-plates

Tamsulosin is a drug which is selective for α_{1a} receptors, which exist in the prostate. Thus, it is helpful in treating urinary retention in BPH, but has little effect on blood pressure.

Side Effects

Syncope

Sink-of-peas fainting

This drug class may cause syncope, and this is especially seen with Prazosin. The body cannot adequately maintain cerebral blood pressure without α_1 activity and this leads to syncope and dizziness.

Orthostatic Hypotension

Oar Hippo-BP

These medications are known for causing orthostatic hypotension, as the body poorly controls blood pressure without β_1 input. Patients are cautioned to stand up slowly while on this medication. There is a "1st dose phenomenon" which occurs the first time a patient is introduced to an α_1 blocker, where a sudden and severe fall in blood pressure occurs with body position changes. Tamsulosin has been linked to priapism.