Genetics and Pathophysiology of Primary Aldosteronism as a Common Cause of Secondary Hypertension

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Primary aldosteronism, an excessive production of the adrenal steroid aldosterone, is typically due to either aldosterone-producing adenomas or bilateral adrenal hyperplasia and represents a common cause of secondary hypertension. Exome sequencing studies over the past few years have identified somatic mutations in ion channels and pumps in aldosterone-producing adenomas. Similarly, ion channel mutations, when present in the germline, can cause familial hyperaldosteronism. These studies have provided new insight into the pathophysiology of primary aldosteronism, with the potential for novel treatment options.

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