

## **Local and systemic vascular hemodynamic response to passive static stretching in young healthy humans.**

A.V. Bisconti, M. Venturelli, S. Rampichini, E. Cè, E. Limonta, A. Fantauzzi, F. Esposito.

Department of Biomedical Sciences for Health, University of Milan.

The aim of the present study was to determine the acute effects of passive static stretching (PSS) on femoral blood flow (FBF) in a stretched and non-stretched limb. Our hypothesis was that PSS would increase FBF in the stretched limb mainly through local vasodilator mechanisms. PSS effects may be expected also in the non-stretched limb possibly through an imbalance between the systemic hemodynamic control and the local vasodilator response.

To this purpose, eight young healthy individuals (age:  $22\pm 3$  yrs) underwent PSS (5 cycles of 45 s stretch/15 s rest) of the knee extensors of the dominant limb. Femoral artery blood velocity and diameter were taken from both limbs by ultrasound. FBF was then calculated.

PSS increased FBF by  $\sim 78\%$  in the stretched limb (from  $495\pm 110$  to  $882\pm 121$  ml/min;  $P < 0.05$ ). FBF returned to baseline within the end of the 45 s stretch. Conversely, FBF decreased transitory by  $\sim 71\%$  (from  $334\pm 155$  to  $138\pm 17$  ml/min;  $P < 0.05$ ) in the non-stretched limb during PSS maneuver.

In conclusion, PSS increased FBF in the stretched limb, and induced a FBF decrease in the contralateral limb. These findings may suggest the predominance of a local vasodilator mechanism in the stretched limb during PSS maneuver, probably induced by nitric oxide release. On the contrary, a possible systemic vasoconstriction, likely mediated by an elevation of sympathetic nerve activity, may prevail in the contralateral limb.