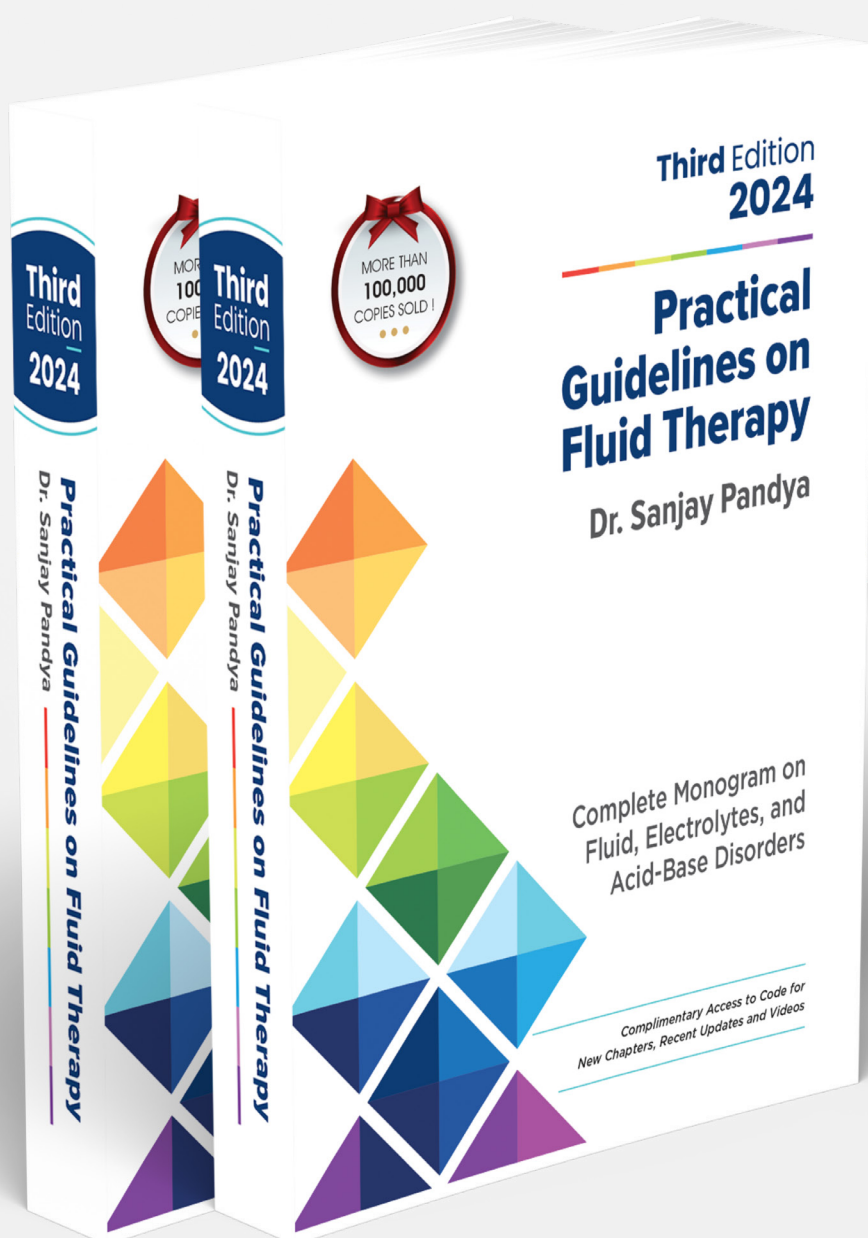


Chapter 20: Hyponatremia



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Table of Contents

Part 1 Physiology

Overview of total body fluid distribution, water balance, and electrolyte compartments.

Chapter 1

Part 2 Basics of Intravenous Fluids and Solutions

Introduction to crystalloids and colloids, their composition, clinical use, precautions, and contraindications.

Chapter 2-5

Part 3 Fluid Replacement Strategies

Principles of fluid therapy, including maintenance, resuscitation, and special considerations for the elderly.

Chapter 6-9

Part 4 Parenteral Additives

Composition, clinical applications, and precautions for various parenteral additives.

Chapter 10-14

Part 5 Hemodynamic Monitoring

Principles and techniques for assessing fluid status and cardiac output, using basic and advanced methods.

Chapter 15-19

Part 6 Electrolyte Disorders

Causes, presentation, diagnosis, and management of various electrolyte imbalances.

Chapter 20-29

Part 7 Acid-Base Disorders

Concepts, interpretation, and management of metabolic and respiratory acid-base disorders.

Chapter 30-33

Part 8 Fluid Therapy in Medical Disorders

Guidelines for fluid management in conditions like GI diseases, liver disorders, respiratory issues, and diabetic emergencies.

Chapter 34-41

Part 9 Fluid Therapy in Surgical Disorders

Fluid management before, during, and after surgery, including TURP syndrome and burns.

Chapter 42-47

Part 10 Fluid Therapy in Pediatrics

Special considerations for fluid management in children and neonates, including resuscitation, maintenance, and oral rehydration.

Chapter 48-50

Part 11 Fluid Therapy in Obstetrics

Fluid management strategies for pregnancy, cesarean delivery, preeclampsia, and labor-related hyponatremia.

Chapter 51-54

Part 12 Parenteral Nutrition

Principles, indications, and administration of parenteral nutrition, with disease-specific guidelines and complication management.

Chapter 55-57

20 | Hyponatremia

SODIUM PHYSIOLOGY

Water Regulation 220

Sodium Regulation..... 221

HYPONATREMIA

Classification 224

Etiology 224

Clinical Features..... 225

Step by Step Diagnosis..... 225

Etiologies of Special Importance... 230

Diuretics 230

SIADH 230

Cerebral salt wasting..... 230

Exercise-associated hyponatremia.. 230

Management..... 231

Goal of therapy..... 232

Severely symptomatic
hyponatremia..... 232

Hypertonic saline..... 232

Loop diuretics 233

Initial correction goal 233

Rate of correction 233

Chronic hyponatremia 234

Treatment based on volume status.. 234

Formulas for correction 235

Vasopressin receptor antagonists.. 236

General guidelines 236

Monitoring..... 236

SYNDROME OF INAPPROPRIATE ANTIDIURETIC HORMONE SECRETION

Etiology 237

Pathogenesis 237

Clinical Features..... 238

Diagnostic Criteria..... 238

Treatment 238

Fluid restriction 238

Hypertonic saline..... 239

Loop diuretics 241

High solute intake..... 241

Vasopressin receptor antagonists.. 241

Demeclocycline and lithium..... 242

SODIUM PHYSIOLOGY

A basic understanding of physiology is essential for the proper approach and treatment of water balance and sodium balance disorders in clinical practice.

Water excess or deficit in the body leads to hyponatremia and hypernatremia. Therefore disorders of sodium

concentration occur primarily due to water imbalance and not due to changes in total body sodium content. The below-mentioned equation will help to clarify the above statement.

$$\text{Serum Sodium Concentration} = \frac{\text{Total Body Sodium}}{\text{Total Body Water}}$$

In the above equation, serum sodium concentration will decrease when total body water increases, leading to hyponatremia. Similarly, serum sodium concentration will increase when total body water decreases, leading to hypernatremia. So, to understand sodium disorders, we need to know about the physiology of water balance.

As serum osmolality is determined mainly by sodium salts (equation below) [1], the regulation of water balance is

also discussed as the regulation of body fluid osmolality (osmoregulation). Normal serum osmolality is 275–290 mOsm/kg. Hyponatremia is usually associated with low serum osmolality.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Serum Osmolality (Calculated)} \\ = 2 [\text{Na}^+] + \frac{\text{Glucose}}{18} + \frac{\text{BUN}}{2.8} \end{aligned}$$

Where osmolality is in mOsm/kg, sodium in mEq/L, glucose in mg/dL, and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) in mg/dL.

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