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Hypertension is a major global public health concern that affects millions of adults worldwide, leading to an estimated 1.28 billion people aged 3079 years having the condition. The consequences of uncontrolled hypertension are far-reaching, including heart attacks, strokes, and premature deaths. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, occurs when the pressure in blood vessels exceeds 140/90 mmHg. Many people with high blood pressure may not experience symptoms, making it essential to have regular blood pressure checks. Risk factors for developing high blood pressure include older age, genetics, being overweight or obese, a lack of physical activity, and a high-salt diet. Lifestyle changes such as eating a healthier diet, quitting tobacco, and becoming more physically active can help lower blood pressure. However, some people may still require medication to manage their condition. Blood pressure is typically measured in two numbers: systolic (the pressure when the heart contracts) and diastolic (the pressure when the heart rests). Hypertension is a leading cause of cardiovascular disease and death worldwide. If left untreated, it can lead to complications such as kidney disease, heart disease, and stroke. In some cases, very high blood pressure can cause severe symptoms like headaches, blurred vision, and chest pain. High Blood Pressure Medicines and Prevention: A Comprehensive Guide

Advocacy Incubator, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and U.S. CDC. Since 2017, 7.5 million people in low- and middle-income countries have accessed protocol-based hypertension treatment via person-centred care models. These programs prove standardized hypertension control is feasible and effective. World Hypertension Day, observed on May 17, raises awareness about hypertension prevention, detection, and management. This year celebrates its 20th anniversary with the theme "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer!" Hypertension, dubbed a silent killer, remains a major public health issue due to its high prevalence among adults. Over 294 million people in the WHO South-East Asia Region are affected. Risk factors like tobacco and alcohol use, high salt intake, sedentary lifestyles, poor diets, and stress drive hypertension growth. Uncontrolled hypertension leads to severe outcomes, including heart disease, stroke, kidney damage, and cardiovascular diseases (CVD). Preventing risk factors and bridging treatment gaps through early diagnosis and timely therapy is urgent. Hypertension is controlled when systolic BP stays below 140 mmHg and diastolic BP below 90 mmHg, achievable via medication and lifestyle changes. To address rising hypertension and CVD burden, the South East Asia Regional Committee's 76th Session endorsed SEAHEARTS: Accelerating prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases in the region. The resolution pushes countries to adopt cost-effective interventions to meet four milestones, including placing 100 million people with hypertension and diabetes on protocol-based management by 2025. Measures include tobacco control, salt reduction, trans-fat acid elimination, and improving treatment cascades through primary health care. In Sri Lanka, one-third of adults face hypertension. The 2021 Sri Lanka NCD risk factor survey (STEPS) found 34.8% of adults aged 30-70 have raised BP, a 25% rise from 2015. Over half (54%) of those with raised BP remain unaware. Among aware individuals, 20% lack treatment, and only 40% achieve controlled BP despite medication. Sri Lanka expanded screening, diagnosis, and management under SEAHEARTS to reduce treatment gaps. The survey also revealed alarming risk factors: one-third of adults are inactive, 70% consume insufficient fruits and vegetables, and 48% have high cholesterol (5.0 mmol/l or 190 mg/dl), nearly doubling since 2015. This reflects rising overweight and obesity rates. Daily salt intake averages 8.5 grams, exceeding WHO's 5-gram recommendation. World Hypertension Day 2025: "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer." Courtesy: Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Health has intensified health system initiatives, multisectoral actions, and public awareness campaigns. Sri Lanka launched targeted programs, including healthy lifestyle centers to enhance adult screening. A straightforward hypertension treatment protocol based on 2021 WHO Guidelines for pharmacological treatment in adults has been developed. Pilot projects in... Provinces worldwide have shown promise in enhancing case detection and management for individuals prescribed medication, with Sri Lanka leading the way in implementing mandatory front-of-pack traffic-light labeling regulations for processed foods. This initiative employs color coding to highlight sugar, salt, and fat content, aiming to boost physical activity among all age groups and in workplace settings. Notably, only 1.5 million of Sri Lanka's nearly 4.3 million hypertensive adults are currently receiving treatment, underscoring the need for improved case detection and treatment coverage. The WHO Sri Lanka is collaborating with the Ministry of Health to implement the SEAHEARTS initiative, which seeks to enhance hypertension coverage by providing protocol-based treatment for an additional one million individuals over three years. The initiative also aims to improve engagement of healthcare workers in case identification and treatment adherence. Multisectoral advocacy efforts will be sustained to promote healthy lifestyles and implement national guidelines on nutritious diets and physical activity, with the goal of achieving 50% treatment coverage by 2025. On World Hypertension Day 2025, it is essential that we come together to address this pressing issue. Hypertension screening clinics are underway, and it is crucial that every individual can lead a longer, healthier life free from preventable complications associated with hypertension. Measuring blood pressure at home is a simple process that helps you understand your overall health. Many people have higher readings in one arm than the other, so it's essential to take both sides into account. To combat erratic blood pressure, it is recommended to take two readings, one minute apart, morning and evening, before medications are taken. Regularly check the accuracy of your blood pressure monitor every year. Labile blood pressure can be caused by heart problems, hormonal issues, neurological conditions, or psychological factors. Identifying and treating the underlying cause can significantly improve the condition. Reducing salt intake is not always effective for lowering blood pressure. While some people with high blood pressure consume a low-sodium diet, further restriction may not be beneficial. A target of 1500 milligrams per day may be sufficient for some individuals, while others may require less than 1000 milligrams. It can take weeks for blood pressure to improve and stabilize. Lowering blood pressure without medication is possible through physical activity, weight loss, limiting alcohol consumption, reducing sodium intake, and increasing potassium-rich foods. The best medication for hypertension depends on individual factors, including medical history and physiology. Your doctor will assess your unique situation to recommend the most effective treatment. Certain medications can harm kidneys, but small changes in kidney function tests should not be taken as evidence of harm. Regularly communicate with your medical team about your goals and concerns. Staying informed and working together with your team is crucial for managing blood pressure effectively. High blood pressure affects 1 in 3 adults worldwide, causing approximately 76 million deaths between 2023 and 2050 if left untreated. The World Health Organization's report emphasizes the importance of addressing this silent killer through increased coverage and awareness. Hypertension threatens millions worldwide with heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage, affecting nearly half of those unaware of their condition, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where older age and genetics increase the risk. Modifiable factors like diet, activity levels, and alcohol consumption contribute to hypertension. Adopting healthier diets, quitting tobacco, and increasing physical activity can help lower blood pressure. Medicines are often effective in controlling hypertension, but many people with the condition remain untreated. Strengthening hypertension control programs is crucial for universal health coverage. Varying by more than ten-fold between countries, team-based care improves patient outcomes when a team collaborates to adjust blood pressure medication regimens according to doctor orders and protocols. Patient-centred services also play a crucial role in reducing barriers to care by providing easy-to-take medication regimens, free medications, and close-to-home follow-up visits, making blood pressure monitoring readily available. Information systems are user-centric, simple, and facilitate rapid recording of essential patient-level data, reducing the healthcare worker data entry burden and supporting rapid scale-up while maintaining or improving the quality of care. According to Dr Tom Frieden, President & CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, over 1,000 people die every hour from strokes and heart attacks, with high blood pressure being a major cause. Most of these deaths are preventable, and good hypertension care is affordable and within reach, strengthening primary health care. However, the challenge now is to take it to the next level by making hypertension care "reached," requiring commitment from governments worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) has partnered with Resolve to Save Lives to implement the HEARTS technical package a strategic approach to support countries in strengthening hypertension care in primary health care settings. Since 2017, Bloomberg Philanthropies has supported WHO and Resolve to Save Lives global efforts to save lives, with a focus on major public health initiatives such as reducing tobacco use, promoting healthy food policy, and improving road safety. The HEARTS technical package comprises six modules and aims to improve cardiovascular health in countries. It provides essential tools for hypertension prevention, control, and surveillance, offering a roadmap towards a healthier future. With over 10 million people dying each year from high blood pressure, more than all infectious diseases combined, it is crucial for governments to take action and make hypertension care "reached." The HEARTS technical package presents a comprehensive strategy for enhancing cardiovascular health in countries through its six modules and implementation plan. A key component of this initiative is the noncommunicable diseases data portal, designed to heighten awareness about progress made in combating NCDs and their associated risk factors. By showcasing data on current NCD mortality rates, morbidity, and exposure to risk factors, as well as global and national progress toward specific targets, the portal facilitates identification of common challenges and provides pointers to valuable resources. Hypertension, or elevated blood pressure, plays a pivotal role in the development of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, premature mortality, and disability. Notably, hypertension often lacks noticeable symptoms during its initial stages, leading to widespread undiagnosed cases. Those diagnosed may face significant barriers to accessing treatment, resulting in prolonged uncontrolled illness. In China, an estimated 270 million individuals suffer from hypertension, with only a modest 13.8% possessing their condition under control. The accessibility of primary care services in remote areas is critical for early detection and effective management of hypertension, which can prevent life-threatening complications. By implementing this strategy, significant health benefits and cost savings can be achieved through early detection, proper treatment, and sustained blood pressure regulation. Regular blood pressure checks are essential for all adults to ensure timely intervention and minimize cardiovascular disease incidence. Adopting a balanced diet, reducing alcohol consumption, incorporating physical activity, and quitting tobacco use can effectively mitigate hypertension risk factors. Failure to address these risk factors may result in increased incidence of cardiovascular diseases, including hypertension.

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