

HYPERTENSIONWATCH

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BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

Office BP Readings Problematic— Home Monitoring Preferred

Several presentations at the recent 22nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Hypertension echoed the same message. The measurement of blood pressure (BP) during a physician visit is laden with problems.

The American Heart Association guidelines call for BP to be measured at least 5 minutes after patients arrive for their visit or while they are sitting down with their arm supported. The guidelines, however, are not usually followed.

As a result, some cases of hypertension are missed or some patients are misclassified. The findings emphasized the need for patients to monitor their BP at home to determine if they are at risk for morning hypertension. For information on these presentations, visit www.morningbp.com/pt16

Home BP Monitoring Is More Reliable

A study, reported in the *American Journal of Hypertension* (May 2007), found that home blood pressure (BP) monitoring is more useful, compared with physician's office readings and 24-hour BP monitoring for tracking heart risk. For the study, 163 patients underwent 24-hour ambulatory BP monitoring. The following day, 3 BP measurements were taken at the physician's office. The patients then took their BP at home in the morning and the evening.

Overall, "home monitoring is the best way of looking at changes over long periods of time" and for giving data needed for medication adjustments, commented study author Thomas Pickering, MD. For information on this study, visit www.morningbp.com/pt18

Nocturnal BP Dipping Raises Heart Risk

A new study examining the predictive value of circadian blood pressure (BP) variations in 1472 treated patients with hypertension suggested that patients with either no or extreme nighttime dips in BP face greater cardiovascular risk, compared with patients with moderate change.

The study included 338 patients with a moderate dipping BP pattern, 745 patients with no dipping pattern in BP, and 339 patients with extreme BP dipping. BP was assessed using a 24-hour ambulatory BP monitoring system. The results indicated that 116 cardiovascular events occurred,

with a greater number of events in the nondipping and extreme-dipping groups.

Because the rise in BP in the morning is associated directly with stroke risk, the findings reinforced the need for patients to be active participants in treating their condition by monitoring their BP at home. The findings were recently presented at the 22nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Hypertension. For more information on morning hypertension, visit www.morningbp.com/pt17

Improved BP Education Is Needed

A majority of patients with hypertension understand that increased blood pressure (BP) is a major risk for cardiovascular disease. An online questionnaire completed by 1245 hypertensive patients found that >90% correctly associated high BP with heart attacks and stroke. The study also found, how-

ever, that misconceptions related to hypertension are common.


Of the respondents, 12% (and nearly 25% of all blacks) still believe that high BP means an individual is tense or anxious. Approximately 25% of the respondents incorrectly believe that weight loss is enough to reduce BP. The find-

ings underscore the need for better education on high BP and the importance of monitoring BP on a regular basis. The data were recently presented at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Hypertension. For information on the data, visit www.morningbp.com/pt19

Hypertension: One Billion and Counting..

An analysis of the global impact of high blood pressure (BP) found that almost 1 billion people worldwide have the condition. Researchers are hoping that the statistics will push world governments to fight high BP.

Experts assembled 2 teams of specialists to map what they are calling the "coming crisis of hypertension." The group recently provided copies to governments and health officials around the globe, which called for a cultural change. The increase in BP problems is being fueled by the world's

population aging and getting fatter. Surprisingly, the report cited worse hypertension rates in much of Western Europe, compared with the United States. The most significant increase is forecast for developing countries and nations quickly moving to more Western-style economies, warned the experts. Therefore, hypertension needs to be addressed across all populations, and strategies are needed to curtail this growing problem. For information on morning hypertension, visit www.morningbp.com/pt20 

FAST FACT: Early-morning rise in blood pressure, which is accompanied by an increase in heart rate, also corresponds to an increased release in hormones, which constricts blood vessels.