

Assessment of the Level of Physical Activity and its Awareness among Hypertensive Patients Attending Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya

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Hypertension is a significant global public health concern and approximately 1.28 billion adults aged 30-79 years are hypertensive. Sedentary lifestyles contribute significantly to hypertension, alongside unhealthy diets, tobacco, alcohol, and obesity. WHO recommends 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes/week of vigorous aerobic activity for those aged 18 years and above who are healthy or with chronic conditions including hypertension. The aim of this study was to determine the physical activity level in hypertensive patients and assess the awareness about the association between physical activity and hypertension. This cross-sectional study included 349 hypertensive patients above 20 years of age attending the hypertension clinic at Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya. The International Physical Activity Questionnaire validated for Sri Lanka was used to gather data on awareness, physical activity, demographics, disease characteristics, and risk factors. Blood pressure and anthropometrics were measured following standard protocols. Physical activity levels were measured using the metabolic equivalent of task (MET) scores. Analysis was conducted with SPSS version 20. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya. The mean age was 63 years and consisted of 70.2% females and 29.8% males. The majority (64.75%) had education beyond ordinary levels; 10.6% had education below grade five. Of the sample, 53% were never employed, 24.9% had retired and 22.06% were currently employed. Only 33% identified physical activity as a modifiable risk factor while 54% engaged in low, 37% moderate, and 9% high physical activities. Factors contributing to low levels of physical activity included time constraints (35%), social stigma (7.5%), body aches/discomfort (21%), lack of suitable exercise facilities (5.8%) and other unspecified factors (5.7%). This study concluded that the physical activity level among hypertensive patients attending the Peradeniya hypertensive clinic was low and awareness about physical activity for prevention of hypertension was poor.

Key words: Hypertension, Physical activity, Awareness