

## **Knowledge, awareness, attitude and practice with regards to hypertension in a cohort of hypertensive patients**

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It is crucial for hypertensive patients to have an adequate knowledge and awareness about hypertension, its complications and its control in order to build up better attitudes and practice to achieve treatment goals and prevent complications of hypertension. The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge, awareness and attitude regarding hypertension and the practice of treatment and follow up among a cohort of hypertensive patients. The study was conducted at the Teaching Hospital Peradeniya, Sri Lanka involving 357 hypertensive patients who were followed up in hypertension clinics or medical wards using an interviewer administered questionnaire.

The results indicated that 62.75% had a history of hypertension over five years and the majority (53.78%) was diagnosed to have hypertension in routine medical control while 19.33% were at emergency services and 7.84% were at screening programmes. 52.1% were diagnosed at and 60.22% were followed up at a tertiary care hospital. 52.1% undergoes blood pressure checkups once in 3 months while 45.94%, once a month. 59.1% were aware that they have a positive family history of hypertension. 96.64% were aware that they were on antihypertensives and 76.47% revealed that they take their medications regularly. Among the 23.53% who do not take medications regularly, 55.95% disclosed that they forget to take them, 13% didn't like the side effects and 8.33% take them only when they get symptoms. 79.27% were aware of the major complications of hypertension and 71.71% revealed that they were advised to change their life style in order to control their blood cholesterol level and blood pressure by a health care professional.

In conclusion we suggest that screening programmes should be upgraded to detect more cases and health care professionals should stress the importance of taking medications regularly and regular follow up in order to improve patient compliance.