Who Has Hypertension? / Survey Results

MedicineNet Health Research Survey Report

Who Has Hypertension?
Survey Results

Prepared by MedicineNet.com
June 2005
All Rights Reserved

http://www.medicinenet.com/hypertension_survey_results/article.htm
Table of Contents

Table of Contents................................................................................................................ 2
Health Research Survey Reports ........................................................................................ 4
Executive Summary ............................................................................................................ 5
Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 6
THE SURVEY POPULATION........................................................................................... 6
Findings............................................................................................................................... 8
AGE AND HYPERTENSION ....................................................................................... 8
PREVALENCE OF RISK FACTORS ........................................................................... 9
TREATMENT OPTIONS ............................................................................................ 10
MEDICATIONS........................................................................................................... 11
PATIENT COMPLIANCE.......................................................................................... 12
Conclusions....................................................................................................................... 13
MedicineNet.com – Additional Resources ....................................................................... 14
Health Research Survey Reports

MedicineNet Takes Your Pulse!

MedicineNet produces original medical market research reports on consumer opinions to help explore important health and medical topics. Survey data is collected by polling our readers visiting MedicineNet.com. You may use information in this report as long as you provide proper attribution and, if on the Internet, a link back to MedicineNet.com.

Example:
Source: MedicineNet.com
(http://www.medicinenet.com)

For a complete list of MedicineNet Health Research Survey Reports, visit:

http://www.medicinenet.com/healthreport/article.htm

MedicineNet.com is an online healthcare publishing company, creating proprietary consumer information that is produced by a network of U.S. board-certified physicians. Since 1996, it has been the trusted source for easy-to-read, in-depth, authoritative medical information via its robust, user-friendly, interactive Web site at www.medicinenet.com. The Doctors of MedicineNet are also proud to author the Webster's New World™ Medical Dictionary now in its second edition, published by Wiley Publishing, Inc.

For more health and medical information please visit:
http://www.medicinenet.com
Executive Summary

According to recent estimates, nearly one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure (hypertension). High blood pressure killed 49,707 Americans in 2002. It was listed as a primary or contributing cause of death in about 261,000 U.S. deaths in 2002. However, high blood pressure is called the “silent killer,” because nearly one-third of those people with hypertension don't know they have it. Many adults develop high blood pressure after the age of 50. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack or kidney failure.

Although its underlying causes are mostly unknown, high blood pressure is easily detected. However, once diagnosed, it cannot be cured; it can only be controlled. For many patients this means consistent monitoring and modifying of previous behaviors and lifestyle habits associated with high blood pressure. Overweight, high cholesterol, tobacco and alcohol use, salt-heavy diet and low exercise have been found to contribute to high blood pressure. To control hypertension, patients must be vigilant regarding these aspects of behavior and lifestyle for the remainder of their lives.

For many patients lifestyle modification alone will not reduce blood pressure to normal ranges. These patients must take medication to regulate their blood pressure. A number of medications are available, but patients must continue to take these drugs for the remainder of their lives or face the consequences of untreated high blood pressure. As with any long term disease process, patient compliance is essential for long term positive outcomes.

This MedicineNet.com survey, delivered anonymously, probes consumer attributes and activities related to high blood pressure and its treatment in the following area:

- What types of information are health consumers seeking?
- How old is the population with hypertension and what risk factors are present?
- What treatment options and medications have physicians recommended?
- What medications are hypertensive patients using?
- What is the level of patient compliance with the treatment plan?

This survey was conducted between April 25, 2005 and April 29, 2005. The data reflects the opinions of a self-identified panel of 929 individuals visiting MedicineNet.com who indicated a personal interest in high blood pressure (hypertension).
Methodology

MedicineNet.com used a seven-question pop-up online survey to query 929 individuals responding to the question: “Do you or someone you care about have high blood pressure (hypertension)?” There were 629 respondents of the total survey population, who indicated that they personally have high blood pressure (hypertension). The results reported in this study focus on the segment of the survey population who indicated that they suffered from hypertension. All were visitors to the blood pressure content of the MedicineNet.com site. Responses were completely anonymous, and no visitor received the survey more than once, so the aggregated results represent unique individual respondents.

THE SURVEY POPULATION

Survey respondents (929 individuals) included those who suffer from high blood pressure (hypertension), their family members and those who are interested in learning more about hypertension. A portion of the sample did not answer this question. Among survey respondents 68% indicated that they suffer from hypertension. Family members of hypertension sufferers represented 21% of the surveyed population. Respondents interested in hypertension were 10% of the surveyed population. 2% of the survey population did not indicate why they are interested in hypertension but completed the survey (See Figure 1: Survey Respondents and Hypertension).

Figure 1: Survey Respondents and Hypertension
n=929

- Hypertension (HBP) Patient - 68%
- Family Member with HBP - 21%
- Interested in HBP - 10%
- Did Not Answer - 2%
Survey respondents were asked to identify what type of information about hypertension is of interest to them. The choices included general information, information about how hypertension is diagnosed, available treatment options or information on specific medications. The 620 respondents with hypertension were most interested in getting more information on hypertension (53%) and information on treatment options (25%). 24% wanted information on specific medications used to treat hypertension and 19% wanted information on how hypertension is diagnosed. A portion (8%) did not specify their interests (See Figure 2: Information Sought Online by Hypertension Sufferers).

Figure 2: Information Sought Online by Hypertension Sufferers
n=620

[Diagram showing the distribution of interests among hypertension sufferers]

- General Information - 53%
- Hypertension Treatment Options - 25%
- HBP Medications - 24%
- How HBP is Diagnosed - 19%
- No Specific Interest Given - 8%
Findings

The survey investigated five areas of interest: the age of hypertension sufferers, the presence of risk factors, lifestyle changes recommended for treatment, the use of specific medications for treatment and patient compliance with taking recommended medication.

AGE AND HYPERTENSION

Hypertension is most prevalent among those over 50 years old; however, the prevalence of hypertension in the sub-50 year old population is increasing. The increase in obesity and sedentary lifestyles within the overall population are contributing to these increases. Among survey respondents indicating that they have high blood pressure, 53% are 50 years or older, 26% are in their 40s, 15% are in their 30s and 5% are less than 30 years old. Figure 3: Age and Incidence of High Blood Pressure suggests that consumers should not consider high blood pressure an affliction of advancing years but need to be conscious of their blood pressure in their 30s and 40s.

Figure 3: Age and Incidence of High Blood Pressure
n=627

- 53% 50 years or older
- 26% 40-49 years old
- 15% 30-39 years old
- 4% 20-29 years old
- 1% <20 years old
PREVALENCE OF RISK FACTORS

Although the underlying causes of hypertension are largely unknown, lifestyle and heredity play a significant role in determining who will develop high blood pressure. The survey plumbed these factors by asking respondents to indicate which of the risk factors they have. As Figure 4: Prevalence of Risk Factors shows, the most common risk factors reported were having a family history of high blood pressure (54%) and being overweight (52%). High cholesterol (27%) and an inactive lifestyle (25%), often connected with obesity, are strong risk factors for high blood pressure. 15% of the survey respondents smoke, 5% reported having heart disease and 6% reported having diabetes. 13% reported being African-American, a population with a heightened risk of developing high blood pressure. The data clearly shows that consumers should heed warnings to monitor and modulate their blood pressure if they are overweight or have a family history of high blood pressure.

Figure 4: Prevalence of Risk Factors
n=626
TREATMENT OPTIONS

There are several options for the treatment of hypertension. They include changes in lifestyle as well as medication. Many patients with high blood pressure are able to regulate their hypertension through lifestyle management strategies such as reducing the salt in their diet, losing weight, quitting smoking, exercising more and reducing their alcohol intake. For those with high blood pressure who are unable to bring their blood pressure down, medication is often added to their treatment regimen. Figure 5: Lifestyle Changes Recommended shows that exercise (56%), weight loss (53%) and reduction of dietary salt (49%) are recommended most often. Exercise and a reduced calorie diet are recommended strategies for weight loss. Since obesity was a leading risk factor in the survey population, these two lifestyle changes are directed at weight management.

Figure 5: Lifestyle Changes Recommended
n=568
MEDICATIONS

There are a number of medications used for the treatment of hypertension. The options presented to survey respondents included diuretics (Hydrochlorothiazide, Lasix, Diuril, etc.), Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors (Capoten, Latensin, Vasotec), II Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB) such as Atacand, Tevetan, Cozaarm Avapro, Mycardis, Beta Blockers (Sectral, Tenormin, Lopressor), Calcium Channel Blockers (Sular, Procardia, Cardene) and herbals. As Figure 6: Medications Used for Treating Hypertension indicates, diuretics (37%) and Beta Blockers (22%) are used most frequently. Calcium Channel Blockers (7%) and herbals (7%) are used least often. It should be noted that 426 of 629 (68%) survey respondents with hypertension are using medication.

Figure 6: Medications Used for Treating Hypertension
n=426
PATIENT COMPLIANCE

Because hypertension is chronic, treatment must be maintained over an extended period of time. It is not uncommon for patients to relax lifestyle adjustments or stop taking medications when their symptoms abate. To determine patient compliance, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they take their medication: regularly, as recommended by their physician; fairly regularly, but sometimes forget; not as often as recommended because medication is expensive and not as often as recommended because the treatment plan is hard to follow. The survey showed that most patients prescribed medication (73%) comply with their physicians’ treatment plans, taking their medication on a regular basis (See Figure 7: Patient Compliance).

Figure 7: Patient Compliance
n=464

- Regularly - 94%
- Sometimes Forget - 3%
- Too Expensive - 2%
- Hard to Follow Plan - 1%
Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this survey:

- Those who suffer from high blood pressure continue to seek information on their condition. 53% of survey participants were looking for general information, as opposed to information on diagnosis, treatment or medications.
- The majority of individuals with high blood pressure are over 50 years old (53%); however, 26% of respondents with high blood pressure are between 40 and 50 years old. This signals a need for health consumers to begin monitoring their blood pressure younger.
- Family history (49%) and obesity (47%) are the leading risk factors present in the survey population with high blood pressure. This suggests that health consumers need to manage their lifestyle to maintain normal blood pressure.
- Lifestyle changes can help modulate high blood pressure. Increased exercise (56%) and weight reduction (53%) are the primary lifestyle changes recommended by physicians to survey respondents. Physicians also urged respondents to reduce their salt intake (49%). Reducing obesity is the target of these recommendations.
- Diuretics (37%) and Beta Blockers (22%) are the medications most frequently prescribed to the survey population.
- 68% of survey participants with high blood pressure indicated that they used medication to treat their hypertension.
- The survey showed that patients are heeding their physicians’ warnings about the dangers of not treating their hypertension. 94% of survey respondents indicated that they take their medication regularly, as their physicians recommended.
MedicineNet.com – Additional Resources

Below are links to additional information available on MedicineNet.com.

The doctor-produced articles on MedicineNet are:

- **Reliable and objective** -- each article is written, edited, and reviewed by more than one U.S. Board Certified doctor.
- **User-friendly** -- articles are written by doctors in easy-to-understand language.
- **Comprehensive** -- doctors not only present scientific knowledge, they also explain how they make treatment and diagnostic decisions.
- **Relevant** -- doctors select articles and news items that are clinically relevant.

**MedicineNet.com’s High Blood Pressure Overview**
[http://www.medicinenet.com/high_blood_pressure/index.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/high_blood_pressure/index.htm)

**MedicineNet.com’s High Blood Pressure Main Article**
[http://www.medicinenet.com/high_blood_pressure/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/high_blood_pressure/article.htm)

**MedicineNet Home Page**
[http://www.medicinenet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com)

**Diseases and Conditions**
[http://www.medicinenet.com/diseases_and_conditions/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/diseases_and_conditions/article.htm)

**Symptoms and Signs**
[http://www.medicinenet.com/symptoms_and_signs/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/symptoms_and_signs/article.htm)

**Procedures and Tests**
[http://www.medicinenet.com/procedures_and_tests/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/procedures_and_tests/article.htm)

**Medications (non-prescription and prescription drugs)**

**MedTerms™ Online Medical Dictionary**
[http://www.medterms.com](http://www.medterms.com)

Please pass this Health Report along to your friends and family. For other survey reports, please visit: