High prevalence of undetected elevated blood pressure in Kerala population: Diabscreen Kerala 22

Abstract:

Aim:

Though high Blood Pressure is an established cause of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in 50-70% of patients, it remains undiagnosed. With increasing stress in the job and life styles, age of onset of hypertension has come down in recent years and no longer remains as a disease in above 50 years. Diabscreen Kerala is a population screening, education and treatment project of P. Kesavadev Trust, periodically conducting camps across various geographical locations in the state of Kerala, South India. Despite the highest literacy rate in India, Kerala has the highest prevalence of diabetes and its complications. During the screening of population for blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol, we stumbled upon the ground reality of the higher prevalence of untreated elevated BP across the state.

Methods:

Blood Pressure data from 400 camps measured using calibrated blood pressure monitors was analyzed. Subjects with a blood pressure >140/90 mmHg were considered hypertensive and >120/80 mmHg were considered pre-hypertensive. Age ranged from 21-80 years; 67% were male.

Results:

Data of 9673 patients were analyzed. 39.32% were in the pre-hypertensive stage. 42.55% were revealed to be hypertensive. 32.44% of the patients despite being on anti hypertensives had uncontrolled blood pressure. Age and blood pressure showed a linear correlation from 21-60 years with 33.92% of patients in the age range of 51-60 years having the highest blood pressure.

Conclusions:

Despite 98% literacy rate, morbidity due to diabetes, hypertension and subsequent complications are highest in Kerala. The prevalence of untreated hypertension especially among the 25-60 year old urgently calls for focused awareness programs imparting scientific knowledge and providing adequate advise on drug therapy and life style changes.

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