

The importance of health awareness during arterial hypertension treatment

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Abstract

The patient's awareness of hypertension treatment is the factor that conditions non-pharmacological and pharmacological methods of treatment usage in everyday life. The aim of the research was evaluation of the acumen degree of patients within the range of suggested therapeutic activities, and analysis of the health behaviours of the patients. The research was conducted in the Health Care Centre in Jaroslaw, Poland, in 2011, and involved 46 patients suffering from high blood pressure, based on medical data analysis. Analysis of the patients' source of knowledge about high blood pressure is significant to the point that the largest group among those examined (70%) had received the most information about their disease from health-care personnel. Half of the patients (50%) measured their blood pressure every day, 28% measured it twice a week, and 22% once a month. The most popular physical activities among the patients were: walking (70%) and cycling (30%). Among the patients, 93% knew the risk in the case of not curing the disease, 85% were aware of the usefulness of the documentation of blood pressure measurement; however, 46% of the patients kept a self-control diary unsystematically. Over a half of the examined (62%) identified the harmful influence of smoking on blood pressure, despite which 30% of them smoked cigarettes.

Key words

arterial hypertension, patients' knowledge, health behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Hypertension is one of the diseases belonging to the group of civilization diseases connected with an improper lifestyle. There are many factors that are favourable to the disease, such as smoking cigarettes, obesity, high salt consumption, and too little physical activity[1].

The number of the people suffering from high blood pressure is very high, especially in the so-called developed countries. It is estimated that about 8.5 million people in Poland suffer from hypertension, and is the main cause of deaths [1, 2].

Prevention and high blood pressure treatment or its complications belong to the most important issues in contemporary medicine. The patients' awareness of the treatment of high blood pressure is the factor conditioning non-pharmacological and pharmacological methods in everyday life.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the study was evaluation of the degree of acumen of patients in the range of suggested therapeutic activities, and analysis of the health behaviours at the patients.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was conducted in the Health Care Centre in Jaroslaw, Poland, in 2011, and involved 46 patients suffering from high blood pressure' diagnosed on the basis of medical data analysis. The method was a diagnostic opinion poll and the technique used was a questionnaire. The research tool was the author's survey. The results were studied by statistical analysis. In the calculation there were used incidences (numerals and per cents); an MS Excel computer programme was used for the statistic evaluation.

RESULTS

Through analysis of the patient's' source of knowledge about hypertension, it is significant to note that the largest group among those examined (70%) were patients who had the most information about their disease from health-care personnel, 26% found the information on the Internet, radio or TV. Only 4% of the examined found the information in the press.

The results obtained, connected with acquaintance with the norms, showed that 28% of respondents claimed that they do not know the boundary norms for high blood pressure. Furthermore, the rest of the examined had inaccurate information: 35% believed that the norm was 120/80 mmHg, 20% - 140/80 mmHg, 11% - 130/90 mmHg, and 6% thought the norm was over 140 mmHg.

Most of the ill (93%) knew the danger involved in the case of the disease remaining untreated, but 7% were unaware of complications in the case of untreated high blood pressure.

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Over a half of the patients (89%) took medicine regularly, but 11% did not. The patients' behaviour in the case of blood pressure increase was a significant element in the disease therapy. Over a half of the patients (61%) took additional doses of medicine, 28% of them took nothing, while 11% administered herbal tea.

In the examined group, a half of the patients (50%) measured their blood pressure every day, 28% measured it twice per week, and 22% measured their blood pressure once a month.

A significant role in the treatment of hypertension treatment is played by the self-control diary. 85% of the examined were aware of the usefulness of the collection of documentation of blood pressure measurements. Analysis of results connected with keeping a blood pressure measurement diary showed that 39% of the respondents wrote the values systematically, 46% lead the diary unsystematically, whereas 15% of examined did not keep a diary.

From the research, it is found that the highest percentage of the examined patients (50%) were overweight, 17% obese, and 33% had a proper body mass.

Analysis of the results further showed that 22% of the respondents did not have advice about their diet, 78% did have information about dieting, but not everyone was clear about it; 13% claimed that the information was unclear and not altogether understandable. Most of the patients (87%) thought that obesity and overweight were the factors that caused hypertension. More than a half of the examined patients (61%) used the diet recommended by their physician, and 31% did not follow the diet restrictions. The most common type of physical activity undertaken by the patients were walking (70%) and cycling (30%).

Most of the examined (62%) identified as harmful the influence of smoking cigarettes on blood pressure, 38% of respondents claimed that smoking did not impact on blood pressure. In analysis of the patients' behaviour connected with smoking, 30% smoked cigarettes, 30% had quit smoking when they found out about the disease, and 40% had never smoked.

Over a half of the patients (65%) were aware of the influence of alcohol consumption on the course of hypertension disease, while 35% did not perceive any connection between drinking alcohol and high blood pressure. In the analysis of the patients' behaviour according to drinking alcohol, it is important to note that 54% did not drink alcohol, 22% drank sporadically, whereas 24% of respondents drank alcohol on occasions.

From the studies it follows that 46% of respondents led a stressful life; however, while 54% of the examined group stated that they did not have a stressful life. In the case of a stressful situation, 24% of patients took medicine or drank calming tea, 46% relaxed, while 30% of the ill talked to a close person.

DISCUSSION

From the data analysis it founds that the examined patients had basic knowledge about hypertension and its complications if it was not treated (93%). Researched by Pachciarek et al. [3] showed much higher lack of knowledge: only 46% of the ill indicated stroke, and 49% of healthy respondents indicated heart attack. 14% of the ill did not note any complication.

Among the examined, 89% took medicine to systematically lower their blood pressure, only 11% used pharmacotherapy irregularly. In the NATPOL PLUS study it was shown that 62% of the patients took hypotensive medicine regularly, 19% took medicine irregularly, and 19% of the examined did not take medicine [4].

In the treatment of hypertension it is vital to control the blood pressure systematically at home. Blood pressure measurements taken at home are a very important source of information about the effectiveness of the hypotensive treatment [5, 6]. In own study, 50% of the patients measured their blood pressure every day; however, many of those examined (22%) controlled their blood pressure only once a month. Own studies have been confirmed by American scientists [7]. Despite the high degree of knowledge about hypertension, there is huge percentage of the ill who still do not effectively control their blood pressure.

Own study has found that over a half of the patients (65%) identified as harmful the impact of stimulants on hypertension. Studies by Szczech et al. [8] showed a higher level of awareness: 90.6% of patients answered in the affirmative that chronic alcohol drinking may be the reason for the disease. In the analysis of behaviour from the aspect of stimulants usage, in own studies 30% of the ill smoked cigarettes. Research by Kara et al. [9] showed a similar percentage of patients suffering from high blood pressure (36%) addicted to nicotine. Despite awareness of the patients that the stimulant is harmful to health and influences the development of hypertension, according to own research and researcher by others [9, 10], a high percentage of the ill who are still addicted to nicotine is noticeable. It is therefore vital to constantly remind both the patients and healthy people about the harm caused by stimulants, the risk to life, or the lack of effectiveness of treatment [11, 12].

The results of own research from the aspect of physical activity showed that the only kind of sports were walking (70%) and cycling (30%). The WOBASZ study [13] confirmed the low level of physical activity – 34.7% of the examined do not undertake any kind of physical activity during their free time.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The patients obtained the largest amount of information about the disease from health-care personnel.
2. Among the patients, 93% know the danger involved if the disease remains untreated.
3. Most of the examined (85%) were aware of the usefulness of the collection of documentation of blood pressure measurement; however, 46% kept a self-control diary unsystematically.
4. Over a half of those examined (62%) identified as harmful the influence of smoking cigarettes on blood pressure, but 30% of the patients still smoked.

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