

Awareness and associated risk factors of hypertension among adult patients attending National Ayurvedic Teaching Hospital, Borella, Sri Lanka

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Hypertension is a major public health problem that affects approximately 26% of adult population worldwide. It is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, stroke and renal failure, and causes about 7.1 million deaths per year worldwide. The prevalence of hypertension is suggested to be increasing worldwide, particularly in developing countries due to nutritional transition and westernization. Moreover, lack of awareness regarding the disease status increases incidence of complications and mortality. Although modifiable through lifestyle interventions and medical management, hypertension accounts for approximately 32% of stroke cases in Sri Lanka. The study aimed to determine the awareness of hypertension status and risk factors among adult patients attending the National Ayurveda Hospital, Borella. After receiving ethical clearance from Faculty of Indigenous Medicine this hospital-based cross-sectional design study was conducted between December 2023 and January 2024. A field-tested, structured questionnaire was used to collect information on demographics, awareness and risk factors for hypertension. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate percentage of participants who were classified to be aware of their hypertension status, with the total hypertensive participants as the denominator. Percentage calculation was used to test the association between significant variables and hypertension. Of the 159 (53%) participants who were hypertensive, 73 (46.2%) were not aware of their hypertension status. Age over 40 years, marital status, smoking, BMI were independent predictors of hypertension. However, increasing level of education was inversely related to hypertension. In conclusion, the high proportion of individuals unaware of their hypertension status could lead to delay in treatment initiation which ultimately increases complications arising from the disease. All the identified risk factors except age are modifiable through lifestyle change interventions. Therefore, there is a need for the health care workers to hold regular health education programmes to increase awareness of hypertension status and promote healthy lifestyle.

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