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Knowledge on hypertension and consequences of its poor control among hypertensive patients at medical clinics, Teaching Hospital, Batticaloa

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Background: Hypertension is one of the major non communicable diseases worldwide and is a major risk factor for stroke, coronary heart disease and chronic kidney failure/ disease. Lack of knowledge on the benefits of controlling and seriousness of untreated hypertension is the barrier for hypertensive care.

Objective: To assess knowledge on hypertension and the consequences of poor control.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out among 424 patients diagnosed with 'Essential hypertension' attending medical clinics at Teaching Hospital, Batticaloa. Systematic sampling technique was used with pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire for data collection and descriptive, inferential statistics were used for analysis.

Results: The study consisted of 174 (41%) males and 250 (59%) females. The mean age was 60.4 (SD± 9.6) years. Knowledge score was inadequate (<50%) among 92% (n=391) with mean of 30.8% (SD ± 15.5) ranging from 4.4 – 89.1%. Nearly half of the participants believed that the heart is affected by poorly controlled hypertension and about 26% mentioned that kidney, nervous system and eyes could be affected too. A statistically significant relationship was observed between knowledge score and marital status ($p = 0.03$), family history of chronic disease ($P < 0.001$), educational level ($P < 0.001$) and monthly income ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusions: This study revealed inadequate patient knowledge on hypertension and consequences of poor control. Targeted health education strategies are needed urgently to improve patients' knowledge level in order to prevent consequences of poorly controlled hypertension.