

Differential Diagnosis and Treatment for Chronic Hypertension

John Martin*

Department of Medicine, University of Louisville, Louisville, USA

DESCRIPTION

Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition affecting millions of individuals worldwide. Due of its asymptomatic nature, it is frequently referred to as the silent killer. Hypertension occurs when the force of blood against the walls of the arteries is consistently too high. Blood pressure is measured using two values: Systolic pressure (when the heart contracts) and diastolic pressure (when the heart is at rest). A blood pressure reading of 120/80 mmHg is considered normal, whereas values consistently above 130/80 mmHg indicate hypertension. Primary hypertension, the most common form, often develops gradually over time, while secondary hypertension is usually caused by an underlying medical condition.

Symptoms

The majority of hypertensive persons experience no symptoms. The symptoms of extremely high blood pressure include headaches, impaired vision, chest pain, and others. The easiest technique to determine whether they have high blood pressure is to check blood pressure. If untreated, hypertension can lead to other illnesses like renal disease, heart disease, and stroke.

Symptoms of extremely high blood pressure, which is often 180/120 or greater, include:

- Severe headaches
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Blurred vision or other vision changes
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Buzzing in the ears
- Nosebleeds
- Abnormal heart rhythm

Only by having a medical professional take sample blood pressure can identify hypertension. The process of taking sample

blood pressure is quick and painless. Although individuals can test their own blood pressure using automated devices, a professional assessment is crucial for determining risk and conditions that may be connected with it.

Causes and risk factors

Several factors contribute to the development of hypertension, including genetic predisposition, unhealthy lifestyle choices, and underlying medical conditions. Risk factors include a sedentary lifestyle, excessive salt intake, obesity, tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption, stress, and a family history of hypertension. Additionally, certain medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, and sleep apnea can increase the risk of developing hypertension.

Complications

If left uncontrolled, hypertension can lead to severe complications. The constant strain on the arterial walls can cause damage and narrowing of blood vessels, leading to an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney problems, and vision loss. Hypertension can also impact cognitive function, increasing the risk of dementia and cognitive decline over time.

Diagnosis and monitoring

Regular blood pressure screenings are crucial for early detection and diagnosis of hypertension. Blood pressure can be measured by healthcare professionals or using home blood pressure monitors. The American Heart Association recommends regular monitoring for individuals above the age of 20. Lifestyle modifications, such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, stress reduction, and limiting alcohol and salt intake, are important for managing blood pressure levels.

Treatment and management

Treatment of hypertension typically involves a combination of lifestyle changes and medications. Lifestyle modifications play a vital role in managing blood pressure and include adopting a heart-healthy diet (such as the DASH diet), engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, quitting smoking,

Correspondence to: John Martin, Department of Medicine, University of Louisville, Louisville, USA, E-mail: johnmartin381@gmail.com

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limiting alcohol consumption, and managing stress levels. Medications, such as diuretics, beta-blockers, Acetyl Choline Esterase inhibitors (ACE inhibitors), and calcium channel blockers, may be prescribed to control blood pressure levels effectively.

Hypertension is a prevalent and potentially life-threatening condition that often goes unnoticed until complications arise. It

is essential to be aware of the risk factors, undergo regular screenings, and adopt a healthy lifestyle to prevent and manage hypertension effectively. By prioritizing human cardiovascular health, it can reduce the burden of this silent killer and improve overall well-being.