

Types of Hypertension

Gabriele Piffaretti*

Department of Medicine, University of Insubria, Italy

LETTER

Hypertension is a popular ailment that is quite prevalent amongst the urban population of today. This condition primarily occurs when the blood forcefully pushes against the arteries as the heart pumps. To measure this pressure, doctors use a Sphygmomanometer which gives the blood pressure reading in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) and consists of two numbers.

1. The upper or first number – measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (systolic pressure).

2. The lower or second number – measure the pressure in the arteries between beats (diastolic pressure).

Both these numbers are crucial, for older people, particular emphasis should be laid on the systolic reading. Here you can understand high BP in old age more clearly. Isolated Systolic Hypertension is a condition that occurs when the diastolic pressure remains normal (below the range of 90 mm Hg), but the systolic pressure shoots up (touches beyond 140 mm Hg). This is a common condition that is observed in people above the age of 60 years.

Primary Hypertension (also known as Essential Hypertension)

Almost 90% of the patients, the cause of this Hypertension is unknown. Your doctor will diagnose this Hypertension type after analyzing your blood pressure after three or four visits. People who suffer from this Hypertension type show no significant symptoms.

Secondary Hypertension

This Hypertension type occurs when there is an abnormality in the arteries that supply blood to the kidneys. A common cause of this Hypertension includes abnormalities or tumors of the adrenal glands, thyroid, hormonal imbalances, excessive salt or alcohol

intake. Symptoms depend on how the rise in blood pressure affects your organs. A common symptom is bleeding and swelling in the tiny blood vessels in the retina. The retina is the layer of nerves that line the back of the eye. It senses light and sends signals to the brain through the optic nerve, which can also be affected by malignant hypertension. When the eye is involved, malignant hypertension can cause changes in vision.

Malignant Hypertension

Here the blood pressure rises rather quickly and causes a medical emergency where the patient needs to be rushed to the hospital. It is typically observed in small fractions of society such as young African-American men and women with pregnancy toxemia, to name a few. A common symptom includes numbness in arms and legs, headache, chest pain, blurry vision.

Resistant Hypertension

This type of Hypertension is usually observed in people who are aged, obese or are suffering from diabetes or kidney ailments. Resistant hypertension is defined as blood pressure that remains above goal in spite of the concurrent use of 3 antihypertensive agents of different classes. Ideally, one of the 3 agents should be a diuretic and all agents should be prescribed at optimal dose amounts. Although arbitrary in regard to the number of medications required, resistant hypertension is thus defined in order to identify patients who are at high risk of having reversible causes of hypertension and/or patients who, because of persistently high blood pressure levels, may benefit from special diagnostic and therapeutic considerations. As defined, resistant hypertension includes patients whose blood pressure is controlled with use of more than 3 medications. That is, patients whose blood pressure is controlled but require 4 or more medications to do so should be considered resistant to treatment.

*Correspondence to: Gabriele Piffaretti, Department of Medicine, University of Insubria, Italy, E-mail: p.gabriele@gmail.com

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