



Why Do We Keep Ignoring the World's Leading Killer?



High blood pressure is the world's leading killer. It will kill more people than COVID-19, and, in usual circumstances, more than all infectious diseases combined. However, very little coverage or importance is given to this deadly condition, even though high blood pressure is a preventable risk factor. It can be prevented by reducing dietary sodium. It can also be treated quite effectively with drugs.

Nevertheless, it continues to kill numerous people worldwide. Studies show that less than 1 in 7 people with high blood pressure have this problem in control. This means that most people with hypertension globally do not have it under control, even though it is a treatable and preventable disorder.

Studies also show that for every 20-point increase in systolic blood pressure, the rate of death from cardiovascular disease doubles. Findings from the SPRINT study showed that intensive treatment of blood pressure to reach optimum blood pressure goals is safe and can play an important role in preventing heart attacks, strokes and deaths. Despite the common perception that blood pressure should not be too low, clinical evidence now suggests that lower blood pressure is better and that a lower blood pressure goal could save many lives.

Clinical data shows that people treated with a goal of 120/80 had a lower rate of death compared to people treated with the usual target of 140/90. It is also important to note that drug interventions are not the only approach that could be used in hypertensive patients. Reducing sodium, increasing physical activity, eating a healthier diet and reducing air pollution can all contribute to reducing blood pressure.

It is time to take this condition seriously. Lowering blood pressure could save millions of lives if only more awareness, more action and more preventable strategies were adopted when managing patients with blood pressure.

Source: [NEJM, Circulation](#)

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