

HYPERTENSION Berlin 2008

June 14 - 19, 2008, ICC Berlin, Germany



18th Scientific Meeting European Society of Hypertension
22nd Scientific Meeting International Society of Hypertension
In co-operation with the German Hypertension League

Hypertension in old age: Excessive blood pressure reduction increases coronary risk

Berlin - With advancing age the major blood vessels undergo structural and functional changes. This is why elderly persons tend to suffer from isolated systolic hypertension, a special form of hypertension that is frequently difficult to treat with drugs. Moreover, reducing blood pressure too much in elderly persons suffering at the same time from coronary disease may even be dangerous, warn experts ahead of the International Hypertension Congress 2008 in Berlin.

Any form of hypertension increases the coronary and stroke risk in the long term. For doctors, therefore, there is no question that this condition does require treatment. „Isolated systolic hypertension is at the root of the majority of hypertension disorders in the over-sixties age group,“ comments Professor Dr. med. Rainer Düsing of the Medical Polyclinic I at Bonn's University Clinic. Persons with diabetes mellitus, elevated blood lipid levels or kidney disorders, as well as smokers, are particularly at risk. But persons with diastolic hypertension - the form of hypertension most prevalent in younger persons - frequently develop systolic hypertension in old age as well. „Older persons, in particular, should be sure to check their blood pressure regularly and seek treatment if it is higher than it should be,“ advises Düsing. In cases of this kind the choice of blood-pressure reducing drug is decisive for the progression of the disease, for many drugs also reduce the lower, diastolic blood pressure, which is often low in persons with isolated systolic hypertension. A drop to below the normal value can, however, present risks for patients already suffering from coronary heart disease. A study of patients with pre-existing coronary heart disease has shown that reducing the diastolic value to less than 70-80 mmHg increases the risk of myocardial infarction. „We therefore check blood pressure regularly and preferentially use drugs that have been proven to be effective and safe in large-scale studies on elderly people with isolated hypertension,“ adds Düsing.

In elderly persons atherosclerosis - calcification of the blood vessels - results in an increased hardening of the aorta. It loses its natural ability to expand after each heartbeat and briefly store blood, thereby controlling blood pressure peaks. The experts refer to this as an impairment of the Windkessel function of the aorta. „The result is a marked rise in the upper, systolic blood pressure value, while the lower, diastolic value is only slightly elevated, or even normal,“ explains Düsing. For doctors the clue to diagnosing isolated systolic hypertension is increased pulse pressure, namely the difference between the systolic and the diastolic blood pressure. Normally, it is 40 mmHg, but may be significantly higher in old age.

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Official Press Conferences (during the Congress)

Time: Monday, 16 th June 2008; 12.30 - 13.30

Place: Room 43, ICC Berlin, Germany, (Language: German)

Time: Tuesday, 17 th June 2008; 12.30 - 13.30

Place: Room 43, ICC Berlin, Germany, (Language: English)

Time: Wednesday, 18 th June 2008 ; 12.30 - 13.30

Place: Room 43, ICC Berlin, Germany, (Language: English)

Time: Thursday, 19 th June 2008 ; 12.30 - 13.30

Place: Room 43, ICC Berlin, Germany, (Language: German)

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